

A Brief Comparison of Chinese and Western Feminism from the Perspective of International Relations

Zhiying Xue*

School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University, County Durham, UK

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract: Chinese feminism is undoubtedly influenced by the West. However, due to the different basic national conditions and different political ideologies, there are great differences in the process of development. This paper tries to analyze the role of feminism in international relations from the perspective of international relations. In this respect, it summarizes the six main differences between Chinese and Western feminism: Appearance Time, Supporter, Trigger Point, Dominant Group, Domestic Status, and International Status. In addition, from a more macro perspective, this paper attempts to identify the three most significant differences mentioned in the classification for analysis, which are policymakers, trigger points, and the level of importance attached to the country.

1. Introduction

The words Feminism and Feminist are used today throughout the Western world to connote the ideas that advocate the emancipation of women; the movements that have attempted to realize it, and the individuals who support these goals. [1] For a long time, international relations have been considered gender-neutral. Gender issues have never appeared on the horizon of mainstream theory. From the emergence and development of international relations theory and practice, it seems that men can define international relations. The processes and behaviours of international relations are manipulated by men, their theories are designed by men and the resulting perspectives are dominated by male thinking and male models. [2] Therefore, women and women's issues are outside international relations. The feminist approach entered the discipline of international relations in the late 1980s, around the same time as the third debate, also known as the beginning of the post-positivist era. Post-positivism, including critical theory, historical sociology, and postmodernism, has challenged the social science methods that dominate the discipline. [3]

V. Spike Peterson has argued that feminism reveals the gender-constructed character of international relations theory and practice, undermines the dualistic conception of international relations, and broadens the boundaries of the discipline. It effectively diminishes masculinity of international relations theory, but the introduction of a female perspective and women's issues has not completely shattered the foundations of international relations, nor is it the intention of feminism to do so. [4] In addition, Chinese feminist international relations scholar Li Yingtao has also written that the way forward for the development of feminist international relations theory lies in the continuous enrichment and improvement of itself in the interaction with other schools of

thought. [5] Thus, rather than a radical rebellion against and departure from the dominant paradigm, feminism is meant to 'add' a gender perspective to existing international relations studies. Feminism, as a perspective from the margins, is valuable for analysing the world, allowing people to see things that are not visible from a central perspective. In this regard, feminist international relations theory has set itself the task of unpacking the gendered implications of the dominant paradigm through a feminist lens.

2. Compare China and the Western Feminism Movement

Western feminism has huge development and a long history. According to a review of Angelica Effiong A Brief History and Classification of Feminism, it is clear that scholars from different historical periods have categorised feminism in different ways. The results of each phase are inseparable from history and time. For example, the main feminist ideas in medieval Europe were opposed to prejudices between men and women and defended women's misogynistic authority over contemporary literature and religion; the Enlightenment period asserted that the seventeenth century is considered the era of rationalist feminism, as feminists of this period placed more emphasis on the rational theory of equality and considered women to have the same rational capacity as men; and so on.

However, since the 1990s, Western international relations theory began to be introduced to China in large numbers. Feminist international relations were also introduced to China in the mid-1990s. It can be said that feminism in China has taken root and developed under the influence of Western thinking. For there has been no such thing as 'feminism' in China since ancient times. The awakening of women's consciousness has been very much a male-led development of feminism in China for over 100 years. The women's movements were closely integrated with social movements, revolutionary processes, and social ideologies.

This paper mainly divides the differences between Chinese and Western feminism into six points for comparison. Based on the collation of Su, and Jing's articles [2], this paper has tabulated the main differences between Chinese and Western feminism as table 1. This section will compare and critique the process, conclusions, and commonalities and point out the gaps.

Table 1: A Comparison of Feminist Movements in China and the Western

	Appearance time	Supporter	Trigger point	Dominant groups	Domestic status	International status
China	1900	Government or authoritative	The wave of social revolution	Star with man	Mainstream support but difficult to implement	Progressive expansion
Western countries	Enlightenment in the 18th century; developed into an organised social movement in the 19th century	Mostly individuals or NGOs	Social inequality; the unequal treatment of women gave rise to	Women themselves	Marginalised	Highly influential and experienced

This table has been compiled by the author.

3. Processes

3.1 Decided by Whom?

Firstly, it is important to mention patriarchy, a term derived from the Greek word for 'father's rule', a social system in which men have an advantage over women in terms of property, moral authority, and status. The 'classical patriarchy' described by Kandiyoti is characterised by subservience and manipulation and is common in local agricultural societies with large families, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and East Asia. [6]

For China, a Confucian society with a clear class hierarchy, the gender order of male superiority over females is deeply rooted. In the context of patriarchal discourse, women were treated as subordinate to men, their autonomy was not valued in all aspects of social life, and for women, there were not even 'human rights as in Western thought. [7] This phenomenon is embodied in foot binding, arranged marriages, denial of the right to education, and so on. In a highly unequal relationship between men and women, women are not in a position to resist. Some Western-minded men argued that the reason women should be educated was to change their status as "profit-sharers". He argued that the power of a nation depends on the number of producers and consumers and that a nation cannot be strong if women, who make up half of the population, are not productive. Therefore, to fundamentally change the status of women. [8] It can be seen that the women's movement advocated by men during this period was not from the point of view of women themselves, but from the point of view of national development, and it can also be argued that during this period, it may seem that women gained human rights and respect, but in fact, it added more social pressure on women in addition to the family, and even "facilitated men's feminism ". [9] This does not fundamentally change the fact that women are oppressed because patriarchy cannot be changed in a short period.

The West: women themselves, to gain equal rights. More academic, theoretical, and normative.

The Sojourner Truth addressed the issues surrounding limited rights given to women based on the flawed perception that men held about women. Furthermore, Truth maintained that, if a woman's colour can perform tasks that were supposedly limited to men, then any woman of any colour could perform those same tasks. In 1873, Susan B. Anthony's "speech after Arrest for illegal voting", questioned the authoritative principles of the constitution and its male gendered language. She raised the question of why women should be punished under the law but cannot use the law for their protection. She also critiqued the constitution for its male-gendered language and why women should have to abide by laws that do not specify women.

The movement in Western feminism was characterised by writings, speeches, and marches. As early as 1873, for example, Susan B. Anthony questioned the authority and principle of the Constitution and its masculine gender language. In her 'speech after being arrested for voting illegally' she raised the question of why women should be punished by the law but not be able to use it to protect themselves. She also criticised the masculine gender language in the Constitution and why women have to abide by laws that do not explicitly define women. [10] Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy in which it is mentioned that, according to Susan Mendus, feminism asserts that the social and political structures in society discriminate against women. In other words, feminist political philosophy implies that traditional political philosophy suggests that women are treated unjustly and suggests ways in which this injustice can be eliminated. [11]

A side-by-side comparison shows that early Chinese feminism was male-dominated or even 'controlled' to enhance social productivity, not essentially for the emancipation of women and the alleviation of gender inequality, but for the convenience of society and the state; the development of Western feminism was a more academic, theoretical process. Arguably, Western feminist political

philosophy aims to show how traditional political philosophy is implicated in such discrimination and how the resources of political philosophy can be used in the service of women. The latter focuses on the rights of women themselves and can give voice to and examine gender inequities in society, provoking critical thinking.

3.2 Triggers for the Feminist Movement?

Feminism in China is fundamentally different from feminism in the West. China can hardly be said to have a formative feminist movement. [12]

In China, the emancipation of women was subsumed under the emancipation of the entire population, reflecting the growing socialist feminist tendency at the time that gender differences were rooted in class oppression, and that gender equality could only be fully realised when the means of production were transferred to public ownership and individual domestic chores were incorporated into the social commons. [13] The Chinese feminist movement was historical, large-scale, and accompanied by reforms, initially in the context of the male-dominated era of Chinese women's liberation, always closely linked to the class struggle and the revolutionary process, as Song Qingling once pointed out: "Women are part of the national women's liberation movement is part of the Chinese national revolution, so to seek freedom and equality for the whole nation, women should participate in the Therefore, to seek freedom and equality for the whole nation, women should participate in the national revolution, and to seek freedom and equality for women themselves, women should also participate in the national revolution." [14]

The West: Take the example of the American feminist movement, the core of which is the pursuit of equal rights between men and women.

The first Women's Rights Conference, held in New York as early as 1848, adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Women, modelled on the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration begins by stating that "men and women are created equal, and they are both endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, among which are the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." [15] Specifically, the first wave of the feminist movement focused on the fight for women's political suffrage as its central goal, along with various fundamental rights such as women's right to education, freedom to work, and the right to own property. [14] The second wave of the movement, on the other hand, had as its main goal the pursuit of more extensive equal rights for men and women, of which the fight for the adoption of an equal rights constitutional amendment and access to legal abortion were two important goals. Unfortunately, however, the former ultimately failed. [15]

3.3 Government or Marginalization?

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the current version of the Chinese Constitution in 1982 [16];

"Women in the People's Republic of China shall enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life: political, economic, cultural, social, and familial. The state shall protect the rights and interests of women, implement a system of equal pay for equal work, and train and select female officials." (Article 48)

On this point, it can be seen that the Chinese government has high regard for women and a strong sense of defence. In addition, the Constitution emphasises that;

"Marriage, family, motherhood, and children are protected by the State. It is forbidden to undermine the freedom of marriage and to abuse women and children." (Article 49)

These legal articles show the alienation of women by narrowing gender roles, and that the woman is not at this time a dependent, subordinate and auxiliary role to male roles such as father,

husband, or son, but is the embodiment of a collective - a national group.[17] Her economic, political, and personal autonomy and independence are premised on her subordination and subordination to this collective, to obtain the independence and equality promised by the collective, at the cost of the disappearance of the self - not only in terms of differences in gender roles but also between individuals.[18]

The West: Cynthia Enloe (2014) [19] republished *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: A Feminist Understanding of International Relations*. This book focuses on women who have been neglected by traditional international relations: the wives of diplomats, women in military bases and tourist areas in third world countries, and Latin American actresses in Hollywood. By analysing the activities of these women, it reveals how such activities in international relations have remained consistent. This analysis reveals how women's activities in international relations have been consistently overlooked and the extent to which international relations have been influenced by gender.[19] An example is the 'masculinisation' of plantations and the notion that plantations are a male industry. This is even though women make up the majority of plantation workers and their contribution to the family supports the work of men. However, rather than being paid equally, women's contributions are ignored.

Thus, it can be seen that the status of women in China is explicitly guaranteed by the state, but the extent to which this is implemented requires further research to confirm. Furthermore, the examples given here are not sufficient to confirm the overall marginalisation of the women's movement in the West, but only to show the low status of women in the context of historical development.

4. Conclusion

The women's movement in China was very closely integrated with national development and the definition of what gender equality meant unfolded differently depending on the stage of national development. The emancipation of women in China was closely linked to the security of the state and the nation. At many critical points in history, the women's liberation movement in China has always been characterised by a concern for the country and the people in tune with mainstream society. The combination of the women's liberation movement with the social revolution and the link with class liberation is what distinguishes the Chinese women's liberation movement from the Western feminist movement. The Chinese women's liberation movement was brought about by the social movement in China as a whole rather than by a separate feminist movement. In Western countries, women's emancipation is a matter for women themselves, and the feminist movement has always been on the "periphery" of society, not in the mainstream of national and social development. In China, on the contrary, gender equality was a basic state policy, and women's emancipation was always promoted and led by the state as the outcome of a political social movement, an important part of the national and ethnic revolution.

In short, social progress requires the awakening of women, and women must awaken and serve society; whereas the feminist movement in the West took on the goal of women's liberation, and women fought for their rights and more for equality, it can be said that the feminist movement in the West pushed social development, whereas the feminist movement in China was pushed by social development.

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