


# Factors Affecting the Institutionalized Political Participation of Chinese Women: An Empirical Analysis Based on CGSS2021 Data

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## ABSTRACT

This study utilizes the CGSS2021 dataset to explore institutionalized political engagement among Chinese women. Key findings include positive correlations with social circle involvement, housing area, and traditional media consumption. Interestingly, younger women are less politically engaged. Cross-tabulation reveals that daily social interactions and disagreement with prioritizing marriage over career boost institutionalized political involvement, particularly in Beijing. By contrast, women from Inner Mongolia show the least engagement. Surprisingly, frequent internet usage has limited influence on political participation, whereas traditional media use boosts it. Women in their first marriage also show higher engagement. The study offers policy recommendations to enhance Chinese women's political participation.

## KEYWORDS

Chinese Women, Institutionalized Political Participation, New Media, Social Circles, Social Status, Traditional Media

## INTRODUCTION

Political participation, integral to democratic development, has gained unmatched significance as a metric for evaluating the strides made toward modern democracy, especially in transitional nations like China. With each passing era, the dynamic interplay between modernization and political evolution becomes even more pronounced. Modern China, straddling the line between age-old traditions and contemporary transformations, offers a multifaceted canvas for such studies. Against this backdrop, the role of and challenges faced by the distinct demographic of Chinese women in their political pursuits command attention. In this context, the study aims to discern the factors driving the institutionalized political participation of Chinese women. Unraveling the answer has implications for strengthening democratic processes and ensuring an inclusive representation of all segments of society. Researchers have shown a burgeoning interest in political participation in this context, with notable contributions from scholars like Cheng and Han (2023). Broadly, political participation can be bifurcated into

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institutional and non-institutional categories. The former predominantly includes traditional offline activities, such as voting and demonstrations, while the latter has witnessed an expansion due to the advent of online channels facilitated by cutting-edge media technologies (Alryalat, 2015; Kapoor et al., 2018; Rana et al., 2013; Rana et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2018; Simintiras, 2015; Singh et al., 2019). Such technological strides have diversified participation mediums and bridged traditional and modern civic engagement methods (Shah et al., 2005; Zhang & Ge, 2023). As society navigates this evolution, it becomes essential to understand how various sectors of society, especially Chinese women, adapt and engage with these mechanisms.

A comprehensive examination of the existing literature reveals that many scholars have predominantly explored political participation through the lens of different groups, such as urban residents, university students, and women (Cheng & Han, 2023). Such a search reveals an emerging need to focus on a particular demographic: Chinese women. Women's participation in institutional politics has far-reaching implications for policy formulation, representation, and advancement of democratic processes.

To effectively address this agenda, the first task is to conduct an in-depth exploration of the factors that stimulate the participation of the female demographic in institutionalized political activities. The extensive literature on this topic has considered the factors influencing political engagement. In the early stages, scholars primarily focused on social capital and the provision of public goods, delving into the macroscopic dimensions of how diverse societal attributes impact overall civic political participation. However, from an individual perspective, engagement in political behavior is influenced not only by external stimuli but also by intrinsic motivation. Consequently, the roles played by psychological factors, such as life satisfaction and political efficacy, should not be overlooked (Su et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, beyond focusing on the psychological aspects of political engagement, a thorough examination of social circles and modes of institutionalized political participation is necessary. The female demographic shows a pronounced homogeneity in terms of public goods and societal attributes. Within this context, beyond intrinsic psychological drivers, research must consider the social environment women inhabit. In this regard, factors such as social well-being, perceptions of fairness, and trust hold significant importance. These factors are the emotional foundation for female participation in political activities. These emotional facets are closely intertwined with the characteristics of social circles and avenues for institutionalized political participation, jointly shaping the attitudes and behaviors of the female demographic toward political engagement.

For instance, concerning social well-being, female individuals' satisfaction with their personal lives and the societal milieu directly influences their stance toward political participation. Similarly, the perceived sense of fairness is intricately linked to their inclination toward political engagement. This perception is a crucial yardstick for the female demographic to assess whether resource allocation and decision-making processes are equitable when participating in political activities. Additionally, trust is a pivotal emotional factor. The degree of trust the female demographic places in government, social organizations, and other participants affects their willingness to participate in institutionalized political activities. Therefore, it is essential to consider the perceived sense of social equity and contemplate how to enhance the potential for female demographic engagement in institutionalized political activities. Therefore, this research explores these issues comprehensively, incorporating a holistic perspective. The study's research question is: What factors influence the institutionalized political participation of Chinese women?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

### **Literature Review of Chinese Institutionalized Political Participation**

The existing research into institutionalized political participation in China is diverse, encompassing citizens, farmers, migrant workers, students, and other groups. Early investigations predominantly concentrated on citizen groups, probing the rationale, motives, and trust in government tied to

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