EMPOWERMENT FROM *SUPER GIRLS' VOICE* FOR FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN CHINA

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Empowerment from *Super Girls' Voice* for Female College Students in China

"超级女声"对中国大学女生的赋权

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Abstract

This thesis investigates young women audience's consumption of *Super Girls' Voice,* one of the most successful television entertainment programs in China in 2005. Based on John Fiske's empowerment theory, this study attempts to examine whether the use of *Super Girls' Voice* has empowered a particular group of women: female college students in China. Through text analysis and focus groups discussions, the thesis attempts to unravel whether this show contains resources which enabled our participants to resist the patriarchic ideology. The thesis also demonstrates whether our participants used these resources to make their own meanings about the show through viewing, voting participation and discussion, and whether they applied the meanings they created to their daily lives.

The data reveals that the show, including its participants, the 'Super Girls', contained resources of the dominant patriarchy ideology, but still provided some resources for resisting it. By using these resources, young female students not only constructed their own meanings, but also obtained pleasure. They made their own meanings about good personalities, genuineness and androgyny, thus resisting and evading the dominant patriarchy value system. Furthermore, the perceived relevance of the Super Girls to themselves pushed some female students, to apply their own meanings about gender characteristics and gender construction in their everyday lives. Most of them changed their attitude to a more flexible gender identity---androgyny. In addition, at the viewing stage they used their viewing with others as a tool to claim their ability to define the meanings of norms for girls and to increase their subjectivity in this defining. At the same time, they used their anticipation of results to endorse

their own life-experiences.

Although the show did not completely overthrow the traditional patriarchic ideology, it did provide some potentials and resources for female empowerment. To be specific, the pleasure, the relevance between text and context, and the meanings of gender and identity created in the whole process to some extent improved the young female students' agency to resist the dominant patriarchic order.

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