



# Chinese Social Media Consumption in Armenia

Digital Presentation of Final Capstone Project

By Iren Nazaryan

American University of Armenia

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# ABSTRACT

Bearing in mind the effects of virtual censorship persisting in modern China, the purpose of this study is to examine the social media consumption of Chinese social media users outside of the PRC as to form a better understanding of their behavioral changes in Armenia.

# Overview

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Research Question
- Methodologies
- Key Findings
- Discussion & Conclusion



# China

● NOT FREE

## 88/100



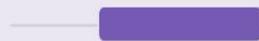
### Internet Freedom Score



Obstacles to access 17/25



Limits on content 31/35



Violations of users rights 40/40



### On this Page

Key Developments

Introduction

Obstacles to Access

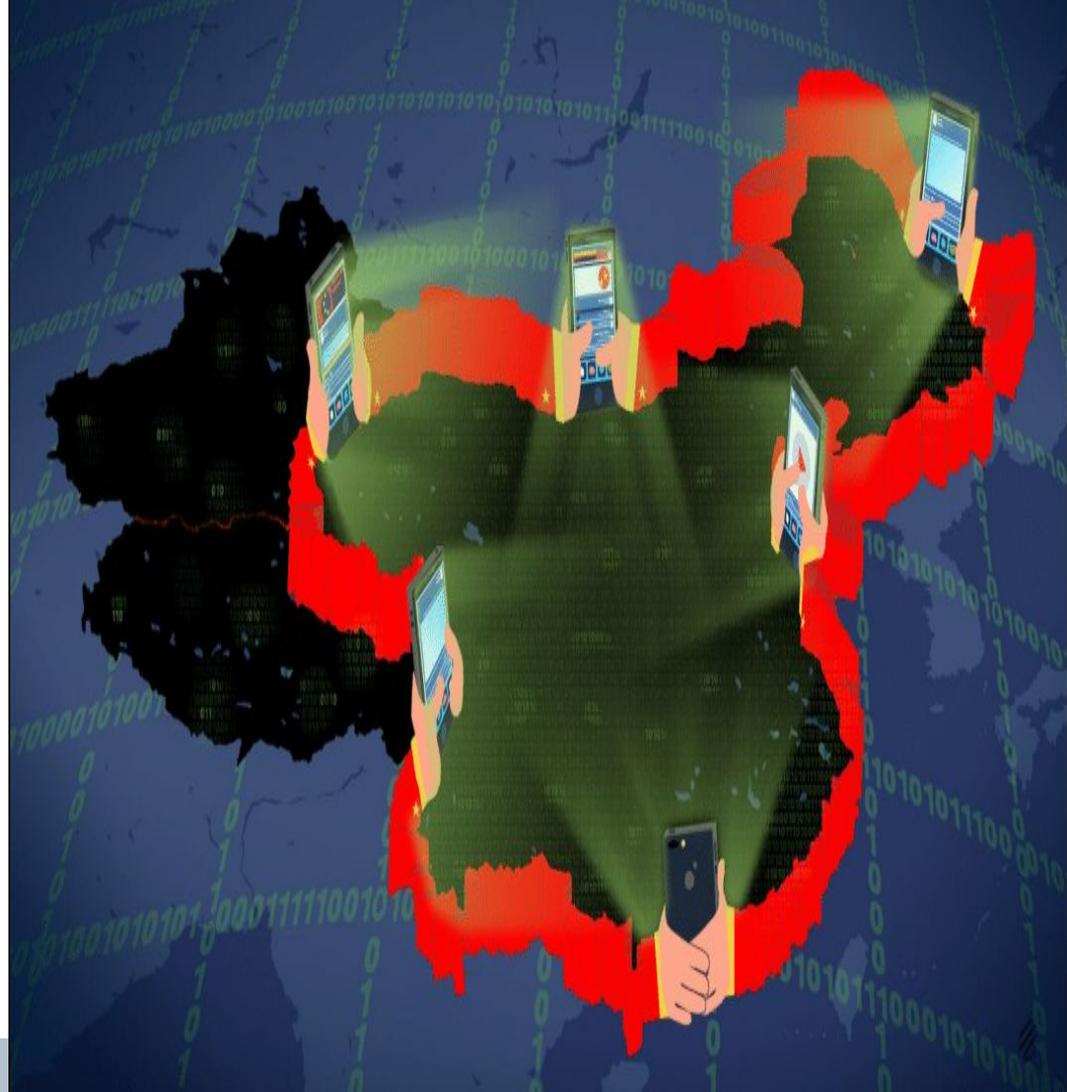
# What is virtual censorship?

Countries such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) provides access to the Internet to their users, but the government puts restrictions on what information can be publicized on the Internet.



# Why & How China censors the information online?

The Chinese government bans all popular western social media platforms to control the outflow of sensitive political information by the help of Internet filtering system known as GWF (The Great Firewall).



# What is the issue at a user level?

The Chinese users are less likely to express their viewpoints on sensitive issues, having a fear of surveillance.

- Violation of freedom of *thought*
- Violation of freedom of *expression*



# What the situation is like in Armenia?

- ❖ Post-Soviet country
- ❖ “Partly Free” democratic status (51/100)
  - The political environment of Armenia: mixed of old *Soviet traditions* embodied with new *democratic values* (Sahakyan, 2014, Atanesyan, 2014).



# The research argues ...

Chinese social media users are so *brainwashed* by the *government* that their behavior are *less likely* to be *changed* after they relocated to a democratic country, in this case Armenia.

# Literature Review

*less research* is done on examining the  
effects of virtual censorship  
*at a user level* among contemporary scholars

# Research Question

Using Armenia's sample of Chinese in Armenia, the researcher examines any possible change in Chinese consumption of social media as well as their perception of the world because of different access.

# Methodology

## Qualitative Method

- Interviews
  - 10 people interviewed

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# Key research findings

**1.Social media preferences & consumption** → no balance between the consumption of Chinese and non-Chinese platforms among the participants

**2.The characteristics of Chinese social media users:**

- non-active Internet users,
- Internet serves for social networking & entertainment purposes,
- accessed VPN to connect back to China

**3.The news consumption of Chinese Internet users and the role of the media:**

- Lack of interest in politics,
- Lack of trust in the Chinese media,
- no change in the news consumption

# Key research findings

## Awareness & experience of virtual censorship

P5 stated,

“It is a common sense that Chinese Internet users are being monitored in China. It’s a communist country, not good things happened in the history and I think the government tries to hide them from the public. If you talk about political stuff something might happen to you or your account.”

P1 said,

“We have access to foreign social media websites in China too, the major difference is the speed. Here, we have easier access to foreign websites. Not a big deal.”

Overall,

- The participants were *informed* about online censorship issues back in the PRC
- The participants (8/10) *circumvented* the wall back in the PRC

# Key research findings

## Attitude toward virtual censorship

P2 shared,

“... you may search an academic article for your school, for example, about the physics, you are like searching it for more than twice on Yahoo, then the website will be blocked. Yahoo’s logo will only show up, with y-a-h-o-o, and you cannot do anything about it. That is very disappointing, and everyone knows, but we cannot do anything to change the system.”

## #dissapointing #inconvinient

P8 stated,

“I did not have had any intention to visit foreign websites because they contain information which discredit the Chinese government and/or society. In other words, the West does not want to accept the revival of China.”

- Overall, only **3/10** shared their experience and attitude toward the government’s act to censor political sensitive info online

# Discussion

## Chinese users in Armenia

- No change in social media consumption after relocation
  - Lack of knowledge how to make use of the Internet services efficiently
  - Face a challenge of communicating sensitive subjects
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# Conclusion

## Cultivation Theory

Given the freedom to access to the foreign networks *have not changed* neither their consumption of social media networks nor their understanding of the world because they *cultivated* strong collective, communist thinking or mentality in the PRC that presumably *controls* their thoughts and actions even in a completely different location.