

# The Sisterhood and Liberation: Representation of Hui'an Women in Film and Their Socio-Cultural Contexts

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## Abstract

*This study analyzed three films depicting Hui'an women from different historical contexts, exploring how these films portray sisterhood and the ways in which these portrayals intersect with local social cultures and national politics to advance female emancipation. The sisterhood formed by female characters in response to the pressures of traditional social and cultural discipline includes: the labor community transitioning from the "family" to the "society"; the "same-sex relationships" that result from the extreme evolution of the alliance of disadvantaged women; the emotional, spiritual community that transcends familial bonds. The formation and maintenance of sisterhood among Hui'an women are deeply linked to regional cultural characteristics and historical conditions, and to varying degrees, they challenge societal norms and restrictions imposed on women. This defiance and deconstruction present a rebellious stance, playing an indispensable role in the awakening of self-awareness and the liberation process of marginalized female groups.*

**Keywords:** *Hui'an Women, Chinese Film, Sisterhood, Liberation, Marginalized Groups.*

## Introduction

Hui'an women refer to the women residing in the four towns of Chongwu, Jingfeng, Shanxia, and Xiaozuo, located in the eastern part of Hui'an County, Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China. These women, born and living in the eastern part of Hui'an, are part of the Hui Dong ethnic group, a distinct subgroup of the Han Chinese. This region—geographically remote, with barren land and surrounded by the sea on three sides—has profoundly influenced the cultural and social practices of its people. Historically, Hui'an men often spent extended periods at sea fishing or left their hometowns to earn a living elsewhere. In contrast, Hui'an women, living in relative isolation, became the bearers of the region's unique cultural identity.

Hui'an women are celebrated for their distinctive attire, unique marriage customs, and industrious spirit. Due to the region's challenging geographical conditions, these women not only managed domestic chores but also undertook much of the physical labor on land. Over time, this dual responsibility shaped their unique mode of production and lifestyle. Among their cultural practices, Hui'an women observed customs such as child marriage and early marriage, as well as the distinctive tradition of "long-term residence in the maternal family." Under this custom, couples were prohibited from engaging in sexual relations during the first three years of marriage. Women could only visit their husband's home briefly during major festivals or peak farming seasons before having children. Violations of this custom carried social stigma: if a woman became pregnant within the first three years of marriage, she was considered unclean; conversely, failure to conceive soon after the three-year mark subjected her to ridicule (Zhang, 2015). These unique marriage customs added a layer of tragedy to the image of Hui'an women, who were both beautiful and hardworking.

Women-themed films serve as mirrors reflecting women's issues and the ideological consciousness of female communities. In films focusing on the unique culture and lived experiences of Hui'an women, the expression of sisterhood plays a central role. Initially a political term, "sisterhood" emerged as a slogan during the women's liberation movement and became a cornerstone of feminist discourse. Over time, it evolved into a vital source of strength for the women's liberation movement and a key concept in feminist criticism, particularly in Black feminist theory (Wei, 2003). Since Virginia Woolf's articulation of the "sisterhood covenant," feminists have debated the nature of relationships between women and whether

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these differ from gender-neutral relationships. Broadly, "sisterhood" refers to the spiritual support, communication, and mutual assistance that women offer each other. This theme is deeply significant for highlighting feminist ideals, amplifying women's voices, and advocating for gender equality (Li, 2020).

This study examines three Hui'an women-themed films—*The Legend of Eight Women*, *The Twin Bracelets*, and *Koali & Rice*—set against different historical backdrops. Drawing on gender theory and employing textual analysis, the paper explores how the concept of sisterhood is portrayed in these films and how these portrayals intersect with local social culture and national politics. Additionally, the study investigates the role of sisterhood in the liberation of marginalized female groups. The findings aim to contribute to research on films depicting specific women groups and to inspire for engaging in social and cultural reflections on the empowerment of women.

## Literature Review

"Sisterhood," as one of the core concepts of Western feminism, emerged during the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, sisterhood was regarded as a fundamental principle of feminist theory and critique. It was grounded in the shared experiences of oppression that women face, fostering a bond of mutual understanding and support. Sisterhood encouraged women to recognize the deeply ingrained gender discrimination in society and guided them to perceive their common interests. Today, when Western scholars discuss "sisterhood," they often refer to Shulamit Firestone's definition, describing it as "a powerful emotion of female solidarity." This concept continues to be grounded in the shared experience of oppression, emphasizing emotional support, mutual care, and assistance among women (Wang & Wang, 2006). Sisterhood is regarded as a strategy for women to collectively resist the male-dominated society, while also serving as a significant means for women to construct self-identity and cultural consensus. With the emergence and development of cinema, alongside the New Culture Movement (an intellectual liberation movement initiated by progressive Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century to challenge feudalism), the motif of "sisterhood" in Chinese cinematic art has evolved from nonexistence to existence and from singular to diverse forms. This evolution has led to the intersection of concepts such as "sisterhood," "female friendship," "women's alliances," and "lesbianism" in Chinese film (Wang, 2005).

Gender politics in China has undergone significant historical changes. In traditional society, Confucian ideology established gender concepts centered around patriarchy, emphasizing behavioral norms for women such as the "Three Obediences and Four Virtues" (San Cong Si De) (Zhang, 2009). After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the implementation of policies advocating "gender equality," women made substantial progress in areas such as labor participation and access to education. However, entrenched gender divisions and subtle gender discrimination persist. The culture of the Hui'an women, characterized by distinctive clothing, marriage customs, and a gendered division of labor such as the "male fishing, female farming" practice (which contrasts with the traditional Chinese "male farming, female weaving" division), reflects a rigid set of rules that constrain women's roles. From labor division and family relations to social roles, this culture imposes strict gender norms that remain deeply ingrained in society, showing a marked gender bias (Chen, 2021).

Based on the above, this paper will utilize the concept of sisterhood in feminism to analyze the depiction of sisterhood in three Hui'an women-themed films. It will further explore the intersection of these portrayals with local social culture and national politics, as well as the role of sisterhood in the liberation of marginalized female groups.

## Methodology

### *Scope of Study*

The scope of this study is a specific type of film text. Among the six Hui'an women-themed films released in China, three were selected for their focus on the theme of "sisterhood" among the Hui'an women. These

films are *The Legend of Eight Women*, *The Twin Bracelets*, and *Koali & Rice*.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

This study employs textual analysis as the primary source for data collection and analysis to explore the portrayal of sisterhood in Hui'an women-themed films. Textual analysis is used to systematically interpret texts to reveal their underlying social meanings, cultural contexts, and political dynamics. The specific textual content of each film—such as character relationships, narrative structure, plot development, visual symbols, and dialogues—will be extracted, with particular focus on the sections that highlight the theme of sisterhood, serving as the foundation for subsequent analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

### Hui'an Women Films through Sisterhood Concept

#### *The Labor Community beyond the Household*

In *The Legend of Eight Women*, eight young Hui'an women, in their twenties, actively responded to the government's call during the 1958 Great Leap Forward movement. They formed the "Cross-sea Land Development Team," crossing ten miles of sea from the Liancheng Peninsula in Hui'an to an uninhabited small island. With eight hands and eight hoes, they endured numerous hardships and transformed the barren island into a thriving land that produced tomatoes, peanuts, beans, wheat, and vegetables.

At the beginning of the film, the Party branch office serves as the gathering place for the production team and a meeting point for many Hui'an women. As the organizer and leader of the plan, Yang Yazhao actively calls on the Hui'an women to participate in the land reclamation project on Dazhu Island. Influenced by the traditional customs of Hui'an society, these women not only had to summon the courage to reclaim the land, but also to challenge traditional gender roles and the prevailing division of labor. Sisterhood is a recurring element in literary narratives of women's collective labor, often serving as a medium through which conflicting parties communicate. It also plays a crucial role in persuasion and mobilization through the bonds of sisterhood (Zeng, 2017). The mutual persuasion, encouragement, and mobilization among eight women dispel the doubts of most individuals. However, the system's support was based on labor, and while they stepped out of the household, they remained deeply rooted in it. In the film, Yang Yazhao's husband is portrayed as a selfish, feudal man who plays the role of the patriarch. He imposes strict control over his wife and strongly opposes her involvement in the land reclamation project on Dazhu Island. He believes that her primary responsibility is to care for him and their children, even resorting to the extreme measure of threatening to throw away their child. Similarly, Zhou Yaxi's husband, Yang Yacai's father, and Yang Baozhu's fiancé all oppose or obstruct their efforts to engage in land reclamation to varying degrees. As Engels argued, the first precondition for women's liberation is to reintegrate women into public labor (Marx & Engels, 1972). The conflicts and struggles between the Hui'an women and their respective families, as well as between Yang Yazhao and her own inherent sense of self, highlight the difficulties women face in transitioning from the "family" to the "society". In this context, the organizational nature of productive labor, the need to address food shortages, and the desire for women's self-liberation become the driving forces behind the formation and maintenance of the female community.

After receiving the support of the Party branch and successfully reaching the island, the eight Hui'an women, under extremely rudimentary conditions with limited farming tools and living supplies, relied on their perseverance and strong willpower. They lived in caves, working tirelessly every day to cultivate farmland, dig wells, and plant fruit trees. In the harsh and challenging natural environment, they supported, cared for, and helped each other, and their sisterhood was both expanded and strengthened. This bond, in turn, had a profound impact on the progress of their pioneering work, driving the completion of this revolution between humans and nature, while allowing the eight Hui'an women to realize their sense of self-worth through their labor.

*Untenable Same-sex Relationships*

The story of *The Twin Bracelets* is set in a coastal fishing village in Hui'an during the 1980s. The young women Huihua and Xiugu grew up together, sharing a bond like sisters. Huihua, overwhelmed by fear of the local marriage customs and relationships with men, unknowingly directs her emotions toward Xiugu. "After women experience the awakening (or initial awakening) of their subjectivity, they often face similar situations, realizing that it is nearly impossible to resist the powerful patriarchy on their own. In many of the films directed by Huang Yushan, including *Twin Bracelets*, female characters predominantly choose to rebel against or escape from the patriarchal order." (Sun, 2009) Huihua said to Xiugu, "If we never marry, and remain this close, it won't be in vain... Do you think a husband and wife can share the bond we have? Can they be as close as we are?" The two girls suddenly embraced each other. It was an instinctive impulse, one that no man had ever sparked in them. The two exchanged bracelets in front of the Mazu statue as tokens, swearing to become "sister-couple," bound by the vow of "life and death together." Their hearts were completely open to each other. In the long nights, just before dawn, they were the light that guided each other.

The "sisterhood" between Huihua and Xiugu is not merely a form of "lesbianism" characterized by same-sex interactions, but rather an extreme evolution of an alliance among women who are marginalized. Huihua, through the tragic fates of her sister-in-law, who was tortured to death by her brother, and Meizhen, who was driven to death by villagers for secretly meeting her husband while childless, perceives the doomed fate of women from generations past. She sees in them her own predestined entrapment in the tragic gender relations disguised under the institution of "marriage." Female same-sex love, in this context, "includes the breaking of taboos and the rejection of forced modes of survival. It directly or indirectly challenges the power of men to dominate women." (Rich, 1989) Compared to heterosexuality and traditional forms of homosexuality, the film offers very little sexual depiction of the "sister-couple" relationship. When Huihua and Xiugu bathe together, they genuinely admire and caress each other's bodies. The establishment of the "sister-couple" relationship is not driven by a desire for sexual pleasure, but rather by the creation of a female-centered space that satisfies emotional and spiritual needs, outside of the male-dominated sphere.

However, in the patriarchal and backward fishing village, both women were early on assigned marriage partners. The "sister-couple" relationship constantly faced the existential dilemma of potential disintegration. If both women in the "sister-couple" bond simultaneously encountered misfortune in heterosexual marriages, the sisterhood, influenced by the "long-term residence in the maternal family" customs in Hui'an, might still have the potential for enduring continuity. However, if one of them resigned to her fate within the marriage, or, like Xiugu, was fortunate enough to meet a husband like A Guang who respected her, experiencing emotional fulfillment and pregnancy, then the return to a heterosexual marriage for that individual would directly push the other party in the "sister-couple" relationship into an inevitable and difficult position of emotional awkwardness.

The differences in their personalities and circumstances led to drastically different fates for Huihua and Xiugu. Huihua's husband is a complete scoundrel, even bringing another woman to their new home on their wedding night. When Huihua demanded a divorce, he threatened her by jeopardizing the safety of her family. Marriage trapped Huihua in an inescapable mire, and the news that Xiugu was pregnant and would be leaving with her husband became the final straw, pushing Huihua to the brink of madness. She even entertained suicidal thoughts of joining Xiugu in death. However, in the end, Huihua chose to sacrifice herself, enabling Xiugu's future and fulfilling her own longing for freedom and humanity. The humanity that had truly awakened within her body was in stark contrast to a reality that repeatedly stripped her of the power to control her own life. Faced with the realization that she could not resist and had lost her only female companion, she made her final desperate stand against the forces that were obstructing her.

*Spiritual Community beyond the Family*

The story of *Koali & Rice* takes place in the rural areas of Hui'an in the early 21st century. The film is presented from the perspective of elderly Hui'an women, with the narrative structure centered around these women and their relationships. By focusing on the unique emotional conflicts within this female group, the

film explores their current living conditions. In the film, the two elderly Hui'an women represent two different emotional needs: one is the need for familial love, and the other is the desire for romantic love.

In terms of generational issues, the protagonist Xiumei faces a generational gap with her son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. The only way she can see her son is by feigning illness, and the help she provides her daughter-in-law is met with disregard and indifference. Xiumei's close friend, Qing'e, finds solace in her belief that her son is her anchor amidst a life of domestic violence. However, from the beginning of the film until Qing'e's death, she never manages to see her son, who is constantly away at sea. Children serve as both a pillar for their mothers and an invisible rope that binds Hui'an women within the confines of the family.

In terms of gender issues, Xiumei, who has been widowed for a long time, faces the courtship of A Shuishi, and the two begin to develop mutual feelings, sparking a second longing for marriage. However, within a patriarchal system, women's judgments are often based on male values. Xiumei is subjected not only to the male gaze and judgment but also to the scrutiny of other women, who, under the same patriarchal oppression, also evaluate her. Despite the fact that Xiumei and A Shui's late-blooming romance seems natural and reasonable, their relationship is hindered by the village's criticism and gossip, and they never have the courage to defy societal prejudices and walk through life together. Qing'e represents the female experience under patriarchal control, often suffering from domestic violence at the hands of her husband, trapped in a painful marriage with no way out. She can only confide in Xiumei in the dead of night. The two elderly women find comfort and a sense of belonging in each other. By day, they work together, shoveling salt in the salt fields and collecting oysters by the sea; by night, they often share a bed, staying up late to talk, sharing all the joys, sorrows, and confusions of life. It is only when they are together that they can truly "liberate themselves," even behaving like two innocent young girls, playfully teasing and joking with one another.

After Qing'e's death, Xiumei was deeply affected mentally. Upon hearing that brushing her hair at midnight could allow her to see the person she longed for, she faithfully brushed her hair in the dead of night, hoping for guidance from the divine. Qing'e's ghost appeared in her bed curtain, and Xiumei asked, "How did you get here to visit me?" Qing'e replied, "If I don't come to see you, who else would?" This reveals that, in Xiumei's heart, Qing'e held more significance than any of her deceased family members, including her husband, and it also suggests that Qing'e was the only one who truly cared for her. Qing'e told Xiumei that among her belongings was a set of drum dance clothes, which she had specifically left for her. Guided by Qing'e's spirit, Xiumei disregarded the village's opposition and mockery and joined a waist drum team composed of young Hui'an women. Starting from scratch, she eventually performed successfully during the Mazu birthday celebrations, fulfilling a long-held wish. No longer lost or confused, Xiumei regained hope for life. Her self-awareness awakened, and she even set fire to the vegetable greenhouse that had harmed Qing'e's business while she was alive. This radical act symbolizes Xiumei's rebellion against the traditional societal discipline and restrictions imposed on women, while also highlighting the deep emotional bond between the two women.

In films that explore real-life themes, the deliberate expression of religion and the supernatural from a female narrative perspective sometimes transcends orthodox scientific views. On the one hand, it reflects the reverence that marginalized female groups in the Minnan region (southern Fujian) have for deities. On the other hand, it serves as a further elevation of the mutual dependence, support, and trust that elderly Hui'an women develop in their difficult life circumstances. Xiumei and Qing'e are individuals on the margins of society, easily forgotten, yet they support each other and live together. Even after one passes away, she continues to serve as the spiritual anchor for the other. Their shared experience as women allows them to form a spiritual community that transcends the family unit in the remote, male-dominated coastal village. This mutual support and reliance become the catalysts for Xiumei to defy societal judgment, break free from the shackles of traditional society, and pursue the life she desires.

*The Reflection of the Local Social Culture and National Politics through Hui'an Women Films*

The historical context of *The Legend of Eight Women* is set during the Great Leap Forward period. The Great Leap Forward, a mass movement in China from 1958 to 1960, was characterized by ambitious goals for industrial and agricultural production. These high targets were set by the Party and government without consideration for China's actual conditions at the time. In response to a labor shortage, the government introduced the policy of "substituting women for men" (Zhang, 2010). To fully utilize female labor and encourage more women to join production, the state made certain adjustments to the social gender system. In the film, an important collective group formed by Hui'an women—the production team—represents a form of labor organization in China's socialist agricultural economy. This organizational structure originated from the rural collective economic organizations established during the process of agricultural collectivization. The purpose of this collective was clearly not the extension of personal emotions, but rather political and productive. Women were liberated from domestic life and integrated into social production, and while this gathering of women had elements of female emancipation, it also raises a fundamental question about women's liberation: Without institutional support, is female emancipation possible, or if so, where does its potential lie (Cai, 2010)? In the film, the "labor community" formed by the eight Hui'an women and their mutually supportive sisterhood are established on this foundation.

*The Twin Bracelets* showcases the outdated marital customs prevalent in the Hui'an region during the 1980s. The women of Hui'an lived in a society dominated by patriarchal values, where they were seen as burdens on their natal families and mere tools for perpetuating the family line in their husband's household. From an early age, they were metaphorically promised to other families through a pair of silver bracelets. The husband's family used yearly gifts to formalize this transaction between woman and property, and the woman herself was bound to repay this cost with her servitude. During this period, the resurgence of traditional gender culture seemed to contradict the social progress in post-reform China, yet it had its inevitability. In the 1950s and 1960s, national ideologies deconstructed traditional gender roles through political, economic, cultural, and legislative measures, aiming to better serve the nation's development. However, these efforts only temporarily relegated certain traditional cultural elements to the fringes of society, failing to eradicate them from the collective consciousness. In this context, Hui'an women were objectified, their desires and needs were systematically ignored. In the face of harsh gender oppression and neglect, gender resistance inevitably emerged. The sisterhood between Huihua and Xiugu, known as "sister-couple," was formed and sustained based on their shared need as marginalized women to break free from the shackles of a patriarchal society and seek spiritual independence.

In *Koai & Rice*, from a female narrative perspective, the protagonist's emotional needs are obstructed by multiple forces, and the voice of women gradually diminishes under external pressures. Although they possess individual desires and seek a sense of self, they are unable to effectively articulate their inner thoughts. In the confined spaces of rural village life, the women's voices are faint. Over time, as contemporary China has evolved, women continue to face various forms of "oppression." However, these forms of oppression are no longer as blatant or overt; instead, they manifest in more subtle and covert ways. The environment not only carries cultural traditions, customs, and social psychology but also serves as a metaphor for the characters' inner worlds. In contemporary Hui'an, the rural areas are experiencing severe youth migration, leaving behind a population of elderly residents, along with a few women and children. Meanwhile, entrenched ways of thinking and value orientations subtly reveal the region's traditional views, which place a more severe burden on women than in other Han Chinese communities. In the film, the sisterhood between two elderly Hui'an women, who share similar fates, emerges, develops, and is sublimated within the contemporary life struggles of marginalized female groups. This bond largely compensates for the emotional voids both women experience, highlighting the profound emotional fulfillment and solidarity between them.

*The Role of Sisterhood in Liberation of Marginalized Female Groups*

Based on the portrayal of sisterly bonds in the three films about Hui'an women, the role of sisterhood in the liberation of marginalized female groups can be summarized in the following three aspects

### *Emotional support, spiritual comfort and self-identity*

Sisterhood provides women with strong emotional support, offering spiritual comfort when facing social oppression, gender inequality, or difficulties in family and work life. The sisterhood between Huihua and Xiugu, and between Xiumei and Qing'e, serves as a vital emotional outlet in their repressive or isolated environments. By sharing each other's joys, heartaches, and pains, and through mutual understanding, support, and consensus, the sense of self-identity and belonging for each woman is strengthened. They no longer rely on external authorities to define themselves, but instead, find validation through their sisterly relationships, recognizing their own uniqueness and value.

### *Inspiring women's resistance and empowerment*

In a society marked by gender oppression and discrimination, sisterhood becomes a crucial force for women to challenge traditional gender norms and collectively resist social injustices. The romantic bond between Huihua and Xiugu symbolizes the resistance of Hui'an women to the male-dominated system, which uses marriage as a pretext to morally and physically violate them. Although the "sister-couple" in the film ultimately dissolve under the overwhelming pressure of patriarchal society, their formation and perseverance represent a significant testament to the awakening of female self-awareness and their pursuit of human liberation. In *Koali & Rice*, Xiumi's act of setting fire to the vegetable greenhouse at the film's conclusion and her defiance in participating in the waist drum performance further highlight how sisterhood empowers women to transcend societal expectations and break free from traditional gender roles.

### *Fostering group unity and cooperation*

Sisterhood not only provides support at the individual level but often plays a significant role within a larger social context, helping women build a sense of community and collective action. Through sisterhood, women can unite, support one another, and form a collective force that promotes female liberation. In *The Legend of Eight Women*, within the collective public labor of the Hui'an women, dignity, discipline, and creativity are activated, allowing women's self-development. This transformation shifts them from the socially prescribed role of the "virtuous wife and good mother" to the image of a new type of laboring woman dedicated to agricultural modernization. Although this image carries class connotations specific to the time and lacks a deep concern for the individuality of women, the Hui'an women gain new social value, challenging traditional patriarchal ideals and redefining women's roles in society.

## **Conclusion**

The depiction of sisterhood among the Hui'an women in the three films reveals distinct characteristics. In *The Legend of the Eight Women*, the significant importance of "collective strength" is evident. While sisterhood inherently involves two or more individuals, thus forming a "collective," the term "collective" holds a unique meaning in socialist China during the 1950s to 1970s. This politically charged labor collective plays a crucial role in shaping the sisterhood among women during this period. In this context, the sisterhood that arises and expands becomes a critical driving force for Hui'an women to break free from the confines of the domestic sphere and attain new social value.

*The Twin Bracelets* portrays the persecution of Hui'an women by pathological marriage customs during the resurgence of traditional gender culture. The "same-sex affection" between the "sister-couple" arises from the shared need of this vulnerable female group to break free from the shackles of patriarchy and pursue self-liberation, and is, to some extent, sustained. Despite the strong oppression of patriarchy and the submissive traditional cultural mindset embodied by Xiugu, which represents a deviation from their path, it does not diminish Huihua's awakened self-awareness or her pursuit and longing for freedom and human autonomy.

*Koali & Rice* offers a perspective on sisterhood that is more closely aligned with the realities of contemporary Hui'an women's lives. These women still face both overt and subtle forms of "oppression" from various aspects of society, with different emotional needs manifesting at each stage of their lives. In

the absence of familial love and romantic affection, the two elderly women from Hui'an establish a community that transcends the family unit in a primitive seaside village where male presence is largely absent. This mutual support and reliance between them becomes a catalyst for Xiumei's awakening of self-consciousness.

In the three films featuring Hui'an women, the formation and maintenance of sisterhood among these women occur on multiple dimensions, closely tied to the regional cultural characteristics of Hui'an and the specific traits of different historical periods. This relationship of sisterhood is depicted as both rebellious and deconstructive. It not only reflects the circumstances of Hui'an women in particular historical and social contexts but also reveals the crucial role of sisterhood in the process of female liberation. The bond and connection between women in these films plays a significant role in promoting the liberation of marginalized female groups in the following three key areas: 1. Emotional support, spiritual comfort and self-identity—helping women achieve a sense of self-worth and belonging; 2. Inspiring women's resistance and empowerment—encouraging women to break traditional gender norms and roles; 3. Fostering group unity and cooperation — forming a collective force for women's emancipation.

In contrast to Han women in mainstream culture, Hui'an women, as a marginalized female group, are subjected to greater constraints from traditional gender ideologies and regional cultural practices. Their awakening of self-awareness and the process of female self-liberation are consequently more arduous and prolonged. The portrayal of sisterhood in Hui'an women's cinema provides a broader space for marginalized female groups to voice their experiences, assert female strength, and express their culture. It also fosters reflection on unique female identities, gender culture, and social transformation.

### Recommendation for Further Research

This study focuses on the representation of sisterhood in films featuring the Hui'an women. Given the localized nature of Hui'an women's culture, future research could adopt a cross-cultural approach, comparing the depiction of similar themes in films from other regions. This would further explore how different film texts portray the sisterhood of marginalized female groups and examine the complex relationship between these representations and women's liberation.

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