

FILM CENSORSHIP AND UNDERGROUND CINEMA IN CHINA

BACKGROUND

🇨🇳 Made in China

All films produced in China are required to go under strict reviews. This process has changed over the last two decades, but the overall guidelines remain the same.

🇺🇸 Foreign Films

China also imposes a strict quota system for foreign films established in 1981. Films produced outside of China face even more strict censorship regulations.

Who governs the film industry in China?



What happens if you produced a censored film?

🗨️ Verbal warning 🚫 Professional ban 🏠 Fine

What types of content are not permitted?
(Art. 16, Film Industry Promotion Law, 2016)

🚫 No violence 🍆 No nudity ⭐ No anti-socialist values

FINDINGS

1 Size does not matter

Smaller studios and first-time producers do not face discriminations thanks to the 2016 Film Industry Promotion Law.

2 Content over formalities

Films did not follow the steps were allowed as long as they follow content guidelines.

3 No money, no penalty

The State does not always pursue legal responsibilities of individual filmmakers given they did not profit from the censored films.

4 Clandestine operation

Censored films are circulating outside of the legal framework in a clandestine manner.

STEP 1
SHOOTING PERMIT
OR
PRE-APPROVAL

STEP 2
PRODUCTION
&
POST-PRODUCTION

STEP 3
SCREENING PERMIT
LICENSE NUMBER
ARCHIVE

OBJECTIVES

This research aims to understand the impact of policymaking in the industry and to uncover the underground cinema ecosystem in China.

DIRECTOR JIANG NENGJIE PRODUCED A VIRAL DOCUMENTARY IN 2019. HE UPLOADED THE FILM AND SENT CLOUD DRIVE LINKS ON SOCIAL MEDIA. HE WAS NICKNAMED 'CLOUD DRIVE DIRECTOR'.



MY FILM HAS BEEN CENSORED
WHAT COULD I DO?
DIRECTOR JIANG NENGJIE

- Underground film club
- Cloud drive
- International Film Festivals
- Show in art museums
- Sell as stock footage

METHODS

In-depth interviews to be conducted to over 10 filmmakers who produced, distributed, promoted or screened outside of state-owned studios in China.

Interviews are conducted in Chinese, transcripts translated to English. Complete anonymity is guaranteed.

REFERENCES

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CONCLUSIONS

Underground films have developed a parallel ecosystem outside of the mainstream film industry.

Censored films with limited distribution and not-for-profit nature are unlikely to receive sanctions.

However, once sanctioned, filmmakers are unlikely to be accepted by mainstream media.



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