

# Perceptions of Distributive Justice of People in Contemporary China: an Empirical Study

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**Objectives:** This paper aims to explore the impact of media use, subjective class status, local comparison and demographic variables on Chinese people's perception of distributive justice through quantitative analysis. Based on the existing literature, distributive justice is divided into macro distributive justice and micro distributive justice, of which the micro distributive justice includes two dimensions of outcome justice and opportunity justice. The paper analyzes 2015 Chinese General Social Survey data (CGSS2015) and get some results. First, in terms of Chinese people's macro-distributive justice perception, the use of Internet media has a negative impact on macro-distributive justice perception, subjective class status and local comparison have a positive impact, and gender, degree of education and birth generation in demographic variables also have significant impacts; Second, in terms of perceived outcome justice, subjective class status and local comparison have significant positive impacts on perceived outcome justice, gender has a significant positive impact on perceived outcome justice, and degree of education and birth age have negative impacts on perceived outcome justice; Third, for perceived justice of opportunity, Internet media use and degree of education have significant negative effects, while subjective class status, local comparison, birth generation and other variables have positive effects.

**Key words:** distributive justice; media use; subjective class status; local comparison  
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Since its founding, China's economy has developed rapidly and jumped to become the second largest economy in the world. However, behind the rapid economic development, China's Gini coefficient is also rising, the continuous widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, the degree of inequality is deepening day by day

and so on, causing academic circles to pay attention to the fairness of distribution. On the one hand, the widening gap between the rich and the poor will hinder economic and social development to some extent, leading to a series of social problems such as unemployment, suicide and rising crime rate. On the other hand, the deepening of inequality will

catalyze social dissatisfaction, cause psychological imbalance of some groups, and reduce the perception of distributive justice, which may greatly increase the frequency of social group conflicts and even worse,<sup>1</sup> the level of political trust has been reduced,<sup>2</sup> influencing the stable development of Chinese society. Therefore, promoting social fairness and enhancing social distributive justice are important prerequisites for Chinese sustainable development. Based on this, this paper focuses on how Chinese people's perception of distributive justice is perceived in the current Internet era and what factors will affect people's perception of distributive justice. Different scholars have different definitions of distributive justice.<sup>3</sup> Distributive justice is the first proposed fairness dimension, concerning whether the ratio of outcomes to inputs equals to the ratio of others.<sup>4</sup> Cupit points that distributive justice addresses the distribution of benefits and burdens in society.<sup>5</sup> It is based fundamentally on the principles of social justice, which offer moral directives to a just allocation of resources, a fair compensation to providers, and a reasonable range of services.<sup>6</sup> Jasso believe that the perception of distributive justice refers to people's perception of the justice of the distribution of important social resources.<sup>7</sup> According to them, distributive justice is mainly divided into two levels: micro perception of justice and macro perception of justice.<sup>8</sup> Some scholars regard the macro distributive justice as the resource distributive justice within the whole society, while the micro justice refers to the distributive justice for individual resources.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars in the academic circle mainly focus on the perception of outcome justice and the perception of opportunity justice.<sup>10</sup>

Rising awareness of unfair distribution can engender instability, which would undoubtedly threaten social security and result in conflicts.<sup>11</sup> The manner in which a society deals with distributive injustice has a significant impact on its effectiveness, the pursuit of its goals, and the satisfaction of its members.<sup>12</sup>

In recent years, China has entered the information age. According to the 45th statistical report on Chinese Internet Development released by CNNIC,

the total number of Chinese Internet users has exceeded 900 million by March 2020.<sup>13</sup> The huge number of Internet users shows that today's network media has penetrated into every household. At the same time, the continuous development of Internet technology also makes the network and other emerging media become the main channels for people to obtain information. The popularity of mobile network platforms such as QQ, Wechat and Microblog has brought more and more information into thousands of households, greatly improving people's information access rate. Studies have shown that media use will have a significant impact on people's perception of distributive justice. From the impact of the frequency of Internet media use on the perception of distributive justice, the higher the frequency of Internet media use, the more likely people are to be exposed to more unequal information, so the worse the perception of distributive justice.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, media use is an important factor affecting Chinese people's perception of distributive justice.

Social structure is also an important factor in shaping people's distributive justice perceptions.<sup>7</sup> Also, Ubeda pointed that people's perceptions of distributive justice are associated with their social and economic status.<sup>15</sup> some previous literature stated a direct relationship between people's position in the social structure and their perception of distributive justice.<sup>16</sup> Social class status can be divided into subjective class status and objective class status, subjective stratum status refers to the subjective cognition of individuals about their own state in the social stratum structure,<sup>17</sup> while the objective stratum status reflects the position of individuals or groups in the social structure, and reflects the social integration of individual education, economic income, occupation (stratum) status and so on.<sup>18</sup> Studies have shown that the higher the objective socioeconomic status of individuals, the more they think that the social distribution is fairer, and the higher the recognition and acceptance of social injustice;<sup>19</sup> However, some scholars point out that the subjective class status, as the subjective reflection of the objective class status, is not only an important dimension to measure the modernization of social structure, but

also a key factor to determine the national overall social mentality and political tendency.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the subjective class status can better reflect the individual's actual social mentality and its impact on the people's perception of distributive justice.<sup>21</sup>

The perception of conflict and the resulting social behavior are also more explanatory. Therefore, this paper mainly studies the impact of subjective class status on the perception of distributive justice.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 1**  
**General Characteristics of The Participants**

Variables	Category	n (%) / Mean ± SD
Age(years)	1949 Years ago	2035(18.5%)
	The Socialist (1949-1965)	3660(33.4%)
	Cultural Revolution (1966-1977)	2547(23.2%)
	Reform (1978-1989)	1785(16.3%)
	Post Reform (1990-2000)	941 (8.6%)
Gender	Male	5133(46.8%)
	Female	5835 (53.2%)
Political status	Membership	1130 (10.3%)
	Non- membership	9838 (89.7%)

Note.

M = mean value; SD = standard deviation value

In addition, the perception of relative deprivation caused by local comparison will also affect people's perception of distributive justice. Relative deprivation theory points out that when individuals evaluate their own situation, the influence of relevant reference groups exceeds the influence of individual's actual status, which leads to those with superior actual status may also have a perception of relative deprivation. Especially when people compare with other members in the social environment, their economic, power, cultural and other resources fall into a relatively deprived status, no matter whether their objective hierarchical status is high or low, they will tend to make a judgment of social inequality.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, what affects people's perception of fair distribution is not the specific structural status, but the local comparison of individuals based on their living environment.<sup>24,25</sup>

It can be seen from the existing studies that media use, subjective class status and local comparison will affect people's perception of distributive justice to a certain extent. In addition, some demographic variables, such as gender, age and political outlook should also be considered. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effects of media use, subjective class status, local comparison and demographic variables on Chinese people's perception of distributive justice.

## METHODS

### Participants

A sample of 10968 individuals born between 1920 and 1997 is used and all of them are over 18 years old (46.8% male and 53.2% female). Referring to Solomon,<sup>26</sup> people in the same generation share similar values and attitudes. In the paper we divide respondents into different generations "Before 1949", "The Socialist" (1949-1965), "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1977), "Reform" generation (1978-1989) and "Post-Reform" generation (1990-2000), accounting for 18.5%, 33.4%, 23.2%, 16.3% and 8.6% respectively. The proportion of female respondents is 53.2%, while the percentage of the respondents with membership is 10.3%.

### Measure

Referring to the existing literature, according to the needs of this study, the corresponding items are extracted from the CGSS2015 questionnaire, compiled into the questionnaire for this study, and some options are reassigned as needed. In order to measure the perception of macro distributive justice, we use the item "In general, do you think today's social justice is unfair?", which is represented by

the number "1" to "5" respectively" completely unfair" to "completely fair"; the two items "As long as children are hard-working and smart enough, they can have the same opportunities for further education" and "In our society, the descendants of workers and farmers have the same opportunities to become rich and influential people as the descendants of others" are used to measure the perception of opportunity justice, which is represented by "1" to "5" respectively" very disagree" to "very agree"; use the item "Considering your ability and working conditions, do you think your current income is reasonable?" to measure the outcome justice, from "1" to "4" to "very unreasonable" to "very reasonable". In terms of self-variables, use the item " In the past year, you have the following media (the use of newspapers / magazines / radio / television / Internet (including mobile Internet access)) is measured from "1" to "5" respectively represent "never" to "very frequent"; the highest education level and individual annual total income are used to comprehensively measure the individual's objective social class status. For the measurement of education level, CGSS2015 sets from "no education" to "master's degree and above", a total of 13 options are set. In this study, the education level is divided into seven categories: no education, primary school education, middle school education, high school education, college education, undergraduate education, graduate and above. The education level in the answer options is transformed into the corresponding education year limit and assigned: 0 = no education, 6 = primary school education, 9 = junior high school education, 12 = senior high school education, 15 = college degree, 16 = bachelor degree, 19 = graduate degree or above; as for the subjective class status, the item "In our society, some people are at the top of the society, some people are at the bottom of the society, what level do you think you are at", from "1" to "10", represents "the bottom" to "the top". In addition, this study also discusses the impact of local comparison on the perception of distributive justice, that is, ask "what do you think your own socioeconomic status is compared with your peers", "1" to "3" means "lower" to "higher". In addition,

the demographic variables of this study are gender (0 means female, 1 means male), age (transformed into age of birth), and political status (0 means non-membership, 1 means membership) and individual annual total income.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analysis is conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics (IBM, Chicago, Illinois, USA). In the case of qualitative variables such as sex and gender, the number of categories and their percent value were given. Quantitative variables were described using descriptive statistics: average and standard deviation. Correlations between the analyzed variables are tested using Spearman correlation coefficient. To analyze the factors affecting people's perception of distributive justice, a multiple regression analysis is used. The results achieved were accepted as statistically significant at  $p < .05$ .

## RESULTS

### General Characteristics of Participants

Table 1 shows the general characteristics of the subjects. The average age is about 50.4 years old. 18.5% of the respondents were born before 1949. The respondents born between 1949 and 1965 are called "The Socialist" generation, accounting for 33.4%, the "Cultural Revolution" generation accounts for 23.2%, and 16.3% of the respondents are "Reform" generation and "Post Reform" generation accounts for 8.65%. Female respondents account for 53.2% and male respondents account for 46.8%; the respondents with membership account for 10.3% and the appearance of the masses is 89.7%.

### The Overall Situation of Perception of Distributive Justice, Media Use, Subjective Class Status and Local Comparison

Table 2 shows the average value and standard deviation of the main variables. The respondents' perceived macro distributive justice is  $3.20 \pm 1.005$ , the perception of opportunity justice is  $3.66 \pm 0.867$ , and the outcome justice is  $2.66 \pm 0.567$ ; the respondents' traditional media use frequency is 2.33

$\pm 0.714$ , the network media use frequency is  $2.37 \pm 1.71 \pm 0.549$  compared with the surrounding people.  $1.635$ , and the subjective class status identity is  $4.32 \pm 1.638$ ; the perception of local comparison is

**Table 2**  
**The Overall Situation of Distributive Justice, Media use, Subjective Class Status and Local Comparison**

Variables	Mean± SD
Perception of macro distributive justice	3.20±1.005
Perception of opportunity justice	3.66±0.867
Result justice	2.66±0.567
Use of traditional media	2.33±0.714
Network media usage	2.37±1.635
Subjective class status	4.32±1.638
Local comparison	1.71±0.549

**Comparison**

Note.

M = mean value; SD = standard deviation value

**Correlation Analysis of Main Variables, Demographic Variables and Perception of Distributive Justice**

Table 3 shows the correlation analysis between the main variables and the perception of distributive justice. From the perspective of macro distributive justice, there is a significant negative correlation between network media use and macro distributive justice ( $r = -0.017, p = 0.000$ ), traditional media use ( $r = 0.013, p = 0.028$ ) and subjective class status ( $r = 0.150, p = 0.000$ ) and local comparison ( $r = -0.144, p = 0.000$ ) are significantly positively correlated with the perception of macro distributive justice; network media use ( $r = -0.154, p = 0.000$ ) and traditional media use ( $r = -0.051, p = 0.000$ ) are significantly negatively correlated with the perception of opportunity justice, but subjective class status ( $r = 0.043, p = 0.000$ ) and local comparison ( $r = 0.034, p = 0.000$ ) are positively correlated with it. Outcome justice is significantly correlated with network media use, subjective class status and local comparison, which is negatively correlated with network media use ( $r = -0.024, p = 0.019$ ), and positively correlated with subjective class status ( $r = 0.194, p = 0.000$ ) and local comparison ( $r = 0.289, p = 0.000$ ).

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis between the demographic variables and the perception of distributive justice. The perception macro of distributive justice is positively and significantly correlated with gender ( $r = 0.021, p = 0.029$ ), political status ( $r = 0.037, p = 0.000$ ), while it is negatively correlated with education level ( $r = -0.076, p = 0.000$ ) and personal annual income ( $r = -0.018, p = 0.056$ ); all demographic variables, namely gender ( $r = -0.027, p = 0.005$ ), political status ( $r = -0.025, p = 0.008$ ), education level ( $r = -0.137, p = 0.000$ ), personal annual income ( $r = -0.064, p = 0.000$ ) are significantly negatively correlated with the perception of opportunity justice; the correlation analysis between demographic variables and the perception of outcome justice shows that education level ( $r = -0.047, p = 0.000$ ) is positively correlated with outcome justice, and there is a positive correlation between personal annual income ( $r = 0.058, p = 0.000$ ) and outcome justice.

**Regression Analysis of Main Variables, Demographic Variables and Distributive Justice**

Multiple linear regression is used to test media use (including network media use and traditional media use). From the correlation analysis, it can be seen that the birth generation in the demographic

variables has a significant correlation with the people's perception of distributive justice. On this basis, this study further divides the respondents into "Before 1949", "The Socialist" (1949-1965), "Cultural Revolution" generation (1966-1977), "Reform" generation(1978-1989), "Post Reform"

generation (1990-2000). Five different generations are included in the multiple linear regression, so as to further explore the specific role of different birth generations on people's perception of distributive justice.

**Table 3**  
**Correlation Analysis Between Perception of Distributive Justice and Media Use, Subjective Class**

Variables	Macro distributive justice	Opportunity justice	Outcome justice
	r(p)	r(p)	r(p)
Network media usage	-0.017** (0.000)	-0.154** (0.000)	-0.024* (0.019)
Use of traditional media	0.013* (0.028)	-0.051** (0.000)	0.013 (0.211)
Subjective class status	0.150** (0.000)	0.043** (0.000)	0.194** (0.000)
Local comparison	0.144** (0.000)	0.034** (0.000)	0.289** (0.000)

**Status and Local Comparison**

Note.

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

**Analysis of the Influencing Factors of Macro Distributive Justice**

As shown in the table 5, the use of traditional media has no significant impact on macro distributive justice, while the use of network media has a negative significant impact on macro distributive justice, and both subjective class status and local comparison have a significant positive impact on macro distributive justice. Among the effects of demographic variables, gender has a positive impact on macro distributive justice, and the highest degree of education and birth age have a negative impact on macro distributive justice.

**Analysis of the Influencing Factors of Outcome Justice**

From the analysis of outcome justice in table 6, it can be seen that the subjective class status and local comparison among the main variables have a positive and significant impact on the perception of outcome justice. In the demographic variables, gender has a significant positive impact on the perception of outcome justice, while the degree of education has a negative impact on the perception of outcome justice. The birth generation is either "The Socialist" or "Cultural Revolution" has a significant negative impact on the perception of outcome justice.

**Table 4**

Variables	Macro distribution equity	Opportunity justice	Outcome justice
	r(p)	r(p)	r(p)
Gender	0.021* (0.029)	-0.027** (0.005)	0.009 (0.377)
Political status	0.037** (0.000)	-0.025** (0.008)	0.008 (0.451)
Degree of education	-0.076** (0.00)	-0.137** (0.000)	-0.047** (0.000)
Personal annual income	-0.018 (0.056)	-0.064** (0.000)	0.058** (0.000)
Birth age	-0.142** (0.000)	-0.069** (0.000)	-0.064** (0.000)

**Correlation Analysis Between Perception of Distributive Justice and Demographic Variables**

Note.

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

**Table 5**

**Analysis of Influencing Factors of Macro Distributive Justice**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
constant	2.841	0.48		58.989	0.000
Use of traditional media	0.026	0.015	0.018	1.724	0.085
Network media usage	-0.060**	0.009	-0.097	-6.945	0.000
Subjective class status	0.084**	0.006	0.136	13.176	0.000
Local comparison	0.187**	0.019	0.102	9.908	0.000
Gender	0.060**	0.019	0.030	3.098	0.002
Political status	0.008	0.016	0.005	0.481	0.630
Degree of education	-0.009**	0.003	-0.044	-3.393	0.001
Before 1949	0				
The Socialist	-0.229**	0.028	-0.108	-8.131	0.000
Cultural Revolution	-0.271**	0.032	-0.115	-8.504	0.000
Reform	-0.248**	0.039	-0.091	-6.285	0.000
Post-reform	-0.136**	0.048	-0.038	-2.856	0.004

Note.

Adj.R<sup>2</sup>=0.063 F=66.490 p <0.001

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

the reference categories of demographic variables gender, political status and birth age are "female", "non-membership" and "Before 1949".

**Table 6**  
**Analysis of Influencing Factors of Outcome Justice**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
constant	2.183	0.029		76.560	0.000
Use of traditional media	-0.012	0.009	-0.015	-1.325	0.185
Network media usage	-0.002	0.005	-0.007	-0.481	0.631
Subjective class status	0.045**	0.004	0.129	11.954	0.000
Local comparison	0.260**	0.011	0.252	23.623	0.000
Gender	0.030**	0.011	0.027	2.691	0.007
Political status	-0.019	0.010	-0.019	-1.924	0.054
Degree of education	-0.014**	0.002	-0.113	-8.410	0.000
Before 1949	0				
The Socialist	-0.034*	0.017	-0.028	-2.030	0.042
Cultural Revolution	-0.059**	0.019	-0.045	-3.146	0.002
Reform	-0.026	0.023	-0.017	-1.129	0.259
Post-reform	0.045	0.029	0.020	1.529	0.126

Note.

Adj.R<sup>2</sup>=0.106 F=102.442 p<0.0012

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

the reference categories of demographic variables gender, political status and birth age are "female", "non-membership" and "Before 1949".

**Table 7**  
**Analysis of Influencing Factors of Opportunity Justice**

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
constant	3.651	0.042		86.223	0.000
Use of traditional media	0.007	0.013	0.006	0.544	0.587
Network media usage	-0.076**	0.008	-0.145	-10.144	0.000
Subjective class status	0.030**	0.006	0.057	5.423	0.000
Local comparison	0.074**	0.017	0.047	4.476	0.000
Gender	-0.004	0.017	-0.002	-0.256	0.798
Political status	-0.005	0.014	-0.003	-0.315	0.753
Degree of education	-0.016**	0.002	-0.086	-6.484	0.000
Before 1949	0				
The Socialist	0.037	0.025	0.020	1.492	0.136
Cultural Revolution	0.082**	0.028	0.040	2.931	0.003
Reform	0.069*	0.035	0.030	1.997	0.046
Post-reform	0.120**	0.042	0.039	2.861	0.004

Note.

Adj.R<sup>2</sup>=0.035 F=36.266 p<0.0012

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

the reference categories of demographic variables gender, political status and birth age are "female", "non-membership" and "Before 1949".

### **Analysis of Influencing Factors of Opportunity Justice**

For the impact analysis of the opportunity justice in table 7, the use of network media and degree of education have a significant negative impact on the perception of opportunity justice. Variables such as subjective class status, local comparison, Cultural Revolution generation, Reform generation and Post Reform generation have a positive impact on the perception of opportunity justice.

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study is to explore the influencing factors of Chinese people's perception of distributive justice. Therefore, this paper analyzes the media use, subjective class status, local comparison, basic demographic variables and perception of distributive justice of Chinese people. According to the main results of this study, the discussion is as follows:

In this study, media use is mainly divided into network media use and traditional media use. The average score of online media use is 2.37 points and that of traditional media use is 2.33 points. The use of both types of media is at the lower middle level, which is similar to the research results of Lu and Duan,<sup>27</sup> and is in line with the overall situation of media use in China. In terms of the impact of media use on the perception of distributive justice, traditional media use has no significant impact on the Chinese people's perception of distributive justice. As China has entered the information age, network media platforms are widely used and two-way transmission of information is realized, making the main channel for people to receive information into network media platforms. Therefore, compared with traditional media platforms, network media platform has a significant impact on the perception of distributive justice. As Yao has found,<sup>28</sup> compared with traditional media such as TV and newspapers, emerging media and social media have a more direct impact on college students' cognition and attitude preference of social justice. The use of online media has a significant negative impact on the perception of macro distributive justice and opportunity justice, which is

similar to the research results of.<sup>14</sup> The mechanism of network media on the perception of distributive justice is that as the media for people to obtain a large amount of information, the use of media will affect people's attitude, cognition and subjective evaluation of social affairs, and the contact with specific information will even affect their behavior tendency.<sup>29</sup> The more people use online media, they may be exposed to more social unfair information, which is easy to make individuals look at others and society with more unfair eyes, and the continuous contact with unfair information will reduce the individual's cognitive sensitivity to fairness and justice.<sup>30</sup>

The average score of subjective class status perception of the respondents in this study is 4.32, which is lower than the middle level. This research result is similar to that of Wang.<sup>31</sup> From the overall situation of Chinese people's subjective class status, the proportion of people who think they are in the fifth layer is the most, 35.0%, and the proportion who think they are in the fourth layer and below is 46.7%, while only 18.3% of people think their social class is in the sixth layer and above, showing a "bowling ball" shape, that is, "low identity" accounting for most of the respondents.<sup>20</sup> Based on the existed researches, it is found that the cognition of personal and family conditions and the feeling of better or worse about living environment can sometimes affect people's attitude towards unfair distribution, even more than the characteristics of objective socioeconomic status.<sup>24,34</sup> Therefore, the recognition of their subjective class status can easily affect people's perception of distributive justice.

In the study, the mean score of the local comparison score is 1.71, at the middle and lower levels. Specifically, 33.6% of the respondents believe that their socioeconomic status is lower than that of their peers, 61.6% of the respondents believe that their socioeconomic status is similar to that of their peers, and only 4.8% of the respondents believe that their socioeconomic status is higher than that of their peers. Local comparison is based on the theory of "Relative Deprivation", which holds that the perception of personal distributive justice is generated through reference comparison,

and the reference range is local rather than the whole. The local information can be derived from people's experience and feeling of past life, and may also be based on people's evaluation and perception of the situation of people around them.<sup>35</sup> In this study, through the horizontal comparison with the surrounding reference objects, when they found that it is at a disadvantage, it may produce a perception of relative deprivation, and the value judgment of social distributive justice largely depends on this "perception of relative deprivation". Therefore, the higher the "perception of relative deprivation", the lower the perception of distributive justice. On the contrary, the lower the "perception of relative deprivation", the higher the perception of distributive justice.

By analyzing the influencing factors of the perception of distributive justice, it is found that the influencing factors of the perception of distributive justice at different levels are different.

1. Education level has a significant negative impact on people's perception of macro distributive justice, outcome justice and opportunity justice. The higher the education level, the lower the people's perception of distributive justice, which is consistent with the research conclusion of Whyte,<sup>33</sup> which mainly reflects the enlightenment effect of education and makes people surpass narrow egoism and hold a more critical attitude towards inequality.<sup>35</sup>

2. Subjective class status has a positive effect on the perception of macro distributive justice, the perception of outcome justice and opportunity justice. Subjective class status is its own identification with the social class. Some studies have pointed out that subjective class status can better affect people's perception of justice. The results show that the level of objective class status is not consistent with people's attitude towards macro social inequality. However, some people with lower class status have a mild attitude towards social inequality.<sup>33</sup> As a subjective feeling, the perception of distributive justice is more vulnerable to the subjective class status. People who think that their subjective class status is higher tend to think that their perception of macro distributive justice is

higher. As the research of Sun and Zhu,<sup>35</sup> the perception of distributive justice of social vulnerable groups is not necessarily the actual victims of unfair distribution in the reform, but the groups subjectively aware of their own interests. Therefore, compared with the objective social class status, the subjective class status has more explanatory power on people's perception of distributive justice, which is also the significance of the research.

3. Local comparison has a significant positive impact on the perception of distributive justice. Through horizontal comparison with people around them, respondents believe that the higher their social class status is compared with those around them, the higher their perception of macro distributive justice is. Through comparison, individuals will have a "perception of relative deprivation", and when they are in an advantageous position compared with others, they will have a low degree of deprivation. "Relative deprivation", it will give people a fairer psychological feeling and increase the people's perception of macro distributive justice, which is consistent with the research conclusions of Zhu, et al.<sup>36</sup> It can also well explain that the Chinese society with the widening gap between the rich and the poor can still operate more smoothly. The groups that feel inequality in the society are not the bottom groups, and the upper groups do not necessarily have a high perception of distributive justice, so the final feeling depends on the individual's reference point in local comparison.<sup>37</sup>

4. There are some differences in the impact of network media use on various levels of people's perception of distributive justice. It has a significant negative impact on the perception of macro distributive justice and opportunity justice, but has no significant impact on the perception of outcome justice, which is consistent with the research results of.<sup>36</sup> The effect of network media use on the perception of distributive justice is reflected in that the higher the frequency of network media use, the lower the people's perception of macro distributive justice and opportunity justice. Due to the frequent use of the Internet, the inequality information people are exposed to come from all levels of

society. The fragmented information from different aspects pieced together adults' overall impression of the whole society, thus reducing people's perception of macro distributive justice and opportunity justice. As the perception of outcome justice is more related to personal interests, it is more affected by subjective class status and local comparison. Therefore, the use of online media has no significant influence on the perception of outcome justice.

5. Gender has different effects on the perception of distributive justice at different levels. It has a significant positive effect on the perception of macro distributive justice and outcome justice, but has no significant impact on the perception of opportunity justice, that is, compared with women, men have a higher perception of macro distributive justice and outcome justice. This may be due to the gender discrimination in the labor market for a long time. At the level of overall employment, compared with men, women are in a weak position, which makes women's perception of macro distributive justice lower than men. At the same time, this weak position will also be reflected in their income. Even if they have the same human capital or even more human capital, women's income under the same conditions is lower than men, which has developed into a common social phenomenon. Therefore, women are married if the perception of justice is less than that of men.

6. From the perspective of macro perception of distributive justice, the generations after 1949, namely The Sociologist, Cultural Revolution, Reform and Post Reform, have a negative impact on the macro perception of distributive justice, that is, the people born in these generations. The perception of distributive justice is lower than that of the generation before 1949. This result is the same as one of the main points of the existing research conclusions on the inter-generational differences of social justice in contemporary Chinese scholars believe that older people are more likely to have the perception of status pursuit, "the more conscious people are, the more they tend to hold a positive attitude towards social inequality". The Socialist and Cultural Revolution generations have a significant negative impact on the

perception of outcome justice, while the Reform and Post Reform generations have no significant impact on the perception of outcome justice. The Socialist and Cultural Revolution generations refer to the period from 1949 to 1977. After two major political events, the founding of the People's Republic of China and the Cultural Revolution, the founding of the People's Republic of China made the Chinese people regain their confidence and expectations for a better life. However, at that time, China was still in a relatively backward state of development, with various distribution systems not yet sound, and social distribution was difficult to meet the psychological expectations of the public, resulting in a certain perception of gap, which made the public less tolerant of unfair social distribution; In addition, during the Cultural Revolution, China implemented the principle of equal distribution, so that everyone, regardless of their high or low production efficiency, can finally get the same return, which makes the pay not proportional to the harvest, reduces the people's enthusiasm, makes the people dissatisfied with the justice of distribution and weakens people's perception of outcome justice. Scholars represented by Whyte have similar views.<sup>33</sup> They believe that middle-aged people are more likely to think that current inequality is harmful and unfair than young or old people. The impact of birth generation on the perception of opportunity justice is reflected in the positive effect of Cultural Revolution, Reform and Post Reform on the perception of opportunity justice compared with the generation before 1949. During these periods, the Cultural Revolution and reform and opening up led social development, and Chinese market economic system replaced the planned economic system, and distribution according to work became the dominant mode of distribution, which made the people more believe in social equality. Through their own efforts, they have the opportunity to live a richer life. This drastic change has greatly impacted the psychology of the "Cultural Revolution" generation, with a sharp contrast, which should strongly affect the perception of social justice of the "Cultural Revolution" generation, so the "Cultural Revolution" generation has felt a stronger perception of justice in the distribution of

opportunities in the changing environment. The Reform and Post Reform generations have faced the wave of reform and opening up since their birth, enjoyed the fruits of reform and opening up, had better living conditions, and the principle of due diligence has been deeply rooted in the hearts of these people. With the continuous improvement of Chinese distribution systems since the reform and opening up, people at the bottom of society gets more opportunities flow to the upper class by relying on their own ability, and people born before 1949 may have a more negative attitude towards social justice because they experienced more social unrest and unfair treatments when they were young. Therefore, the perception of opportunity justice of Reform and Post Reform generations is higher than that of people born before 1949.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study takes Chinese residents aged 18 and above as the survey object, divides the respondents into five generations Before 1949, The Socialist, Cultural Revolution, Reform and Post Reform according to their birth years, and discusses the impact of media use, subjective class status, local comparison and demographic variables on people's perception of distributive justice. Generally speaking, Chinese people's perception of macro distributive justice, opportunity justice and outcome justice are all above the average level, and people's perception of distributive justice is relatively strong. The use of media, subjective class status and local comparison are at the lower middle level. Therefore, it is necessary to take corresponding measures to improve the people's subjective class status and reduce the perception of relative deprivation caused by local comparison. From the factors affecting the perception of distributive justice, the local comparison variable is the main influencing factor, which has a positive and significant impact on the perception of distributive justice at all levels, which also shows that individual distributive justice feels a great impact of social comparison. Therefore, it is necessary to explore corresponding strategies to reduce the gap between the same classes from all levels of society, so as to improve the perception of

distributive justice of the people as a whole. Secondly, the use of media and subjective class status are also important factors affecting the perception of distributive justice. In today's new media era dominated by the Internet, network information is gradually diversified, and individuals' selective reception of network information will also affect their political judgment and political attitude. Therefore, relevant government departments should strengthen cyberspace governance and guide network media to promote correct values. In addition, demographic variables such as gender, education level and birth generation all affect people's perception of distributive justice to a certain extent, while political status has no significant impact on people's perception of distributive justice.

On this basis, the following suggestions are put forward:

1. Through legislation to regulate the labor market behavior, we should eliminate discrimination in the labor market, especially gender discrimination, and ensure that the treatment in the labor market is based on individual productivity. Nowadays in China, there are inequalities between men and women in the labor market everywhere. Women are in a disadvantageous position in the labor market. Currently, the liberalization of "Three-child" policy is more likely to aggravate women's disadvantage in the labor market. Therefore, the government should strengthen the supervision of the employment market to ensure gender equality in the labor market; at the same time, enterprises should abide by relevant employment norms and systems, establish a scientific employment concept, standardize the employment mechanism and remuneration system, and ensure equal employment and remuneration between men and women, so as to improve the employment efficiency and promote women's perception of distributive justice.

2. The government strengthens the management of network media. In the current Chinese media situation, new media has been playing a more critical role. However, due to the lag of

management, the content of network media has drifted away from the mainstream values for a long time, or even counteracted or deconstructed the mainstream values. Therefore, the government should strengthen the management of cyberspace, effectively screen the content of network communication, master the voice of public opinion in cyberspace, guide the values of network media content to gradually converge with the mainstream values of society, and improve the people's perception of distributive justice. At the same time, individuals should also improve their ability to obtain, distinguish and think about information, treat network information rationally, do not believe or spread rumors, do not be misled, do not drift with the tide.

3. In this study, the subjective class status of the people as a whole is at the lower middle level, but the subjective class status, as the main factor affecting the people's perception of distributive justice in this study, deserves attention. From the aspect of government, it should cooperate with academic institutions to regularly investigate the people's subjective class status, clarify the reasons for the low perception of subjective class status, and formulate corresponding policies to reduce the gap. From the individual level, individuals should establish correct values, rationally view social injustice and face life with a positive attitude.

### Study Limitations

Our study has some limitations about which readers should be cautioned. Finally, there are still some deficiencies in this study. First, this study uses CGSS2015 data for analysis. Limited by the existing items, it can only explore the impact of existing variables on people's perception of distributive justice, and some new indicators with typical significance in today's China have not been included in the regression model. Second, when exploring the impact of media use on the perception of distributive justice, it only considers the frequency of use rather than the content, there may be some limitations. Third, there are some limitations in the setting of local comparison variables in this study. Only one index compared with peers is selected to measure, which has some

limitations. Therefore, the author hopes that in the follow-up research, more typical variables can be included to explore the influencing factors of people's perception of distributive justice, and make further progress. The second step is to deeply analyze the impact of media use of specific content and specific platform on the perception of distributive justice, select and establish richer indicators to measure local comparison variables, so as to deeply explore the relationship between local comparison and the perception of distributive justice.

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