

Traffic, Bans, and Cyberspace: Gender Politics in the Yunchichi Account Ban Incident

Yan Zhu*

Henan University, Henan, China

**Corresponding author: Yan Zhu.*

Abstract

In 2026, the Yunchichi Joining the Family incident triggered extensive discussions on RedNote regarding the marriage market, gender power, and female awakening. However, this public debate, largely initiated and led by female users, ultimately culminated in the permanent ban of the core account, Yunchichi. Drawing on case study and text analysis within the theoretical framework of platform capitalism and digital gender politics, this paper examines the incident to explore the structural contradictions that commercial platforms face when addressing gender-related issues. The findings suggest that RedNote, as a community platform with a predominantly female user base, experiences an inherent tension between its beautiful life positioning and gender-antagonistic discourse. The emergence of millions of Yunchichis following the ban demonstrates users' forms of algorithmic resistance through the creation of virtual identities. Meanwhile, the platform's governance decision reflects the difficulty of balancing traffic-driven incentives with public opinion risks. This paper argues that the incident reveals the complexity of gender politics under platform capitalism: platforms simultaneously depend on female users' traffic and consumption power, while fearing the fragmentation of community cohesion caused by gender conflicts. This structural contradiction ultimately renders feminist expression fragile on commercial platforms.

Keywords

platform governance, platform capitalism, algorithmic resistance, RedNote

1. Introduction

In 2026, RedNote user Yunchichi posted about joining the family that sparked widespread discussion. Under the guise of seeking a partner, the post proposed that the man must join the woman's family and accept various conditions. By imitating the male gaze logic in the marriage market, it exposed gender double standards. The post quickly ignited intense debate, with male users responding with bidding-style comments using keywords like dignity, while Yunchichi used ironic statements like thank you for helping me set a price to co-opt the male gaze, achieving a reverse deconstruction of gender power structures. The discussion rapidly spread to Weibo and Douyin, becoming one of the most representative gender issues of early 2026. However, as public attention peaked, the Yunchichi account was permanently banned, and all related content was removed. This sparked controversy regarding platform governance, free speech, and gender politics.

This paper argues that this incident presents a paradox: RedNote is a platform centered on female users—women account for over 70% of its monthly active users [1], and content heavily revolves around beauty, fashion, and lifestyle. Yet this platform, which relies on female users and advocates female power, chose to ban the central figure in a discussion initiated by women about women's rights. This leads to the core research question: Why would a female-user-based social platform ban this female awakening discussion? The central argument is that the permanent ban of Yunchichi was not an isolated incident but exposed a structural contradiction: platforms both depend on female users' traffic and spending power, yet fear the public opinion risks and community strife brought by gender issues. This contradiction stems from platform capitalism, where traffic equals capital, platforms must maintain a facade of harmony to attract brands, while gender-antagonistic topics inherently threaten this facade. Thus, when feminist discourse shifts from consumption-oriented female power narratives to critiques of gender structures, platforms activate governance mechanisms to exclude dangerous voices.

2. Platform, Governance, and Resistance: The Triple Logic of Digital Gender Politics

2.1 Platform Capitalism and Gender

Srnicek notes in *Platform Capitalism* that digital platforms have become the core business model of contemporary capitalism [2]. Scholars have since introduced gender perspectives into platform research, finding that while platforms offer women new spaces for expression, they also reproduce traditional gender divisions—women's bodies, emotions, and even feminist enthusiasm can be commodified by platforms.

2.2 Platform Governance and Content Moderation

Platform governance research focuses on how platforms manage user content through guidelines, algorithms, and manual review. By moderating published content, platforms effectively exercise the right of an editor. RedNote's Community Convention 2.0 explicitly opposes creating division, listing gender, region, and race as sensitive dimensions. Since 2025, the platform has addressed over 534,200 accounts and 4.598 million notes related to creating division. This indicates that harmony is being established as a core community value superior to discussion.

2.3 Algorithmic Resistance by Female Users

Female users have developed creative strategies for algorithmic resistance. Wang Qin and Cong Ying's study on avoiding the male gaze label phenomenon on RedNote found that female users use specific tags to evade male gaze and harassment, achieving resistance through algorithms that require constant adjustment to platform changes [3]. This resistance is not static but involves a dynamic algorithmic game with the platform. The millions of Yunchichis phenomenon after the ban extends this resistance—users create new spaces for expression beyond the banned account through collective action using virtual IDs.

2.4 RedNote's Platform Positioning

Founded in 2013 as an overseas shopping sharing community, RedNote transformed into a lifestyle platform. In 2025, it upgraded its slogan to Life Interest Community, marking a strategic shift from an information tool to a lifestyle leader and community ecosystem builder. The 2026 Lifestyle Economy Report notes that RedNote's core values are people-oriented, beautiful life, and technology empowerment. This positioning determines its inherent rejection of antagonistic content—gender-antagonistic discussions fundamentally conflict with the beautiful life atmosphere.

3. Conflict, Resistance, and Paradox: Three Analytical Dimensions

3.1 Generation of Conflict: Structural Tension

RedNote's positioning dictates expectations about content's emotional tone. Beautiful life is not merely a slogan but the foundation of its business model—brands advertise because users are in a state of being inspired to buy, receptive to lifestyle improvements rather than structural critique. The Yunchichi Joining the Family

post violated this expectation. Using irony to expose gender inequality in the marriage market, its core emotions were anger and confrontation, not the pleasure and aspiration required by a beautiful life. The discussion rapidly escalated from individual experiences to collective criticism of gender power structures, clashing violently with RedNote's cultivated atmosphere. Data shows female power topics on RedNote receive billions of quarterly views. However, the content accommodated—fitness girls, mature vitality, working mother narratives—focuses on individual growth, not structural critique. The platform accommodates the consumer version of female power, not its political version. Yunchichi's experience delineates this boundary: when feminism shifts from self-pleasing consumption to gender critique, it becomes a platform liability rather than an asset.

3.2 Escalation of Conflict: From Individual Expression to Cyber Guerrilla Warfare

After Yunchichi was banned, numerous virtual IDs modeled on Yunchichi emerged, continuing the discussion. This phenomenon of millions of Yunchichis represents algorithmic resistance with several characteristics: First, virtual IDs are renewable. When the platform bans one account, users create new ones, exploiting the gap between banning speed and account creation. Second, it is distributed and self-organizing—users participate without coordination simply by mimicking ID names. Third, these IDs carry multiple meanings: continuing the original discussion and protesting the ban. The statement I am Yunchichi declares: You can ban one account, but not a voice. This reveals platform governance's limits: banning power relies on accounts as identifiable units, while users' renewable virtual IDs deprive this power of its target. As Wang and Cong's research shows, female users engage in algorithmic resistance to seek inclusive online spaces. Millions of Yunchichis represent the latest form of such resistance.

3.3 Consequences: The Ban and Governance Costs

The Yunchichi incident was a stress test for RedNote, exposing several contradictions. First, the traffic-risk paradox: the post brought hundreds of millions of views, but when the discussion spilled beyond the platform, traffic became risk. Second, the conflict between core users and community atmosphere: female users are the source of commercial value, but gender antagonism might drive away users and brands. The platform must balance catering to core users with maintaining harmony. Third, the self-consistency of platform values: banning a feminist discussion account contradicts the female power values the platform promotes, potentially damaging credibility and user trust. When users feel platform values are easily discarded when facing real dilemmas, the foundation of emotional trust begins to erode—an immeasurable loss of public credibility lurking behind the business logic. Faced with these contradictions, the platform chose to permanently ban Yunchichi, reflecting its value prioritization: community harmony over gender discussion, commercial stability over user expression, risk avoidance over value identification. This is not unique to RedNote but represents the common logic of platform capitalism.

4. Feminist Visibility under Platform Capitalism

4.1 Conditional Empowerment

RedNote provides female users with unprecedented expression space—female power topics receive billions of views, and Girls Help Girls has over 5 billion views. However, this empowerment contains a screening mechanism: when feminist discussions stay within individual growth and self-realization frameworks, the platform amplifies them as they can be smoothly commodified. But when discussions become collective critiques of gender structures, the platform shifts from empowerment to banning. This dual logic stems from the platform's commercial nature—it is private property, not a public sphere. Yu Chunsheng and Li Zhuowei's research confirms that platforms incentivize digital labor through carefully designed mechanisms, with the fundamental goal of monetizing user content [4]. When feminist critique threatens this asset, private property logic activates. Yunchichi's fate illustrates this: the post touched on structural inequality, crossed the safety boundary, and its removal delineates the invisible boundary of platform empowerment.

4.2 Depoliticization through Commodification

Platforms depoliticize gender issues through commodification, transforming structural problems into individual consumption choices. Song Jialing's research on RedNote's platform vernacular shows how gender issues are encoded as consumption narratives: women express independence by purchasing products, and brands use support women marketing to build emotional connections [5]. This reframes gender inequality—a structural issue requiring collective action—as a private problem solvable through consumption, filtering out political content. The Yunchichi post triggered intervention precisely because it broke this framework, using irony to expose power structures and repoliticizing gender issues. The ban reaffirmed the rule: gender issues can only circulate in commodified, individualized, depoliticized forms.

4.3 Risk-Prioritized Governance

Platform governance is never a neutral technical operation but a set of political practices prioritizing risk avoidance. Content moderation, algorithms, and account decisions shape what is visible. The power to define division rests with the platform: is exposing inequality creating division or revealing truth? The community harmony standard has a gendered dimension—on RedNote, harmony means maintaining the beautiful life emotional atmosphere, which is itself constructed by depoliticized female images aligned with consumer culture [6]. This harmony is predicated on screening out structural critique. Moreover, risk assessment is biased: platforms often deem marginalized voices high-risk while treating attacks on them as low-risk, making banning a feminist account a more economical choice than addressing mass gender-based attacks. The Yunchichi incident exemplifies this governance structure.

5. Conclusion

This case study reveals several key findings regarding the intersection of platform governance and digital gender politics. First, there is an inherent conflict between RedNote's beautiful life positioning and gender-antagonistic discourse. While the platform actively promotes and benefits from a consumer-oriented version of female empowerment, it tends to exclude its political form, particularly when such discourse challenges structural inequalities and disrupts the affective atmosphere required for commercial engagement. Second, the millions of Yunchichis phenomenon demonstrates a form of algorithmic resistance through the creation of virtual identities. This distributed and self-organizing practice leverages the renewability and anonymity of digital accounts, enabling users to circumvent platform control and sustain discourse despite content moderation efforts. As a result, platform governance mechanisms that rely on identifiable accounts encounter structural limitations when faced with collective and replicable forms of resistance. Third, the platform's decision to ban the account reflects a complex balancing act between maximizing traffic and minimizing risk, maintaining core user engagement while preserving community atmosphere, and upholding value consistency under commercial pressure. Ultimately, the platform prioritizes community harmony, commercial stability, and risk avoidance over open deliberation. More broadly, the Yunchichi incident highlights the structural predicament of gender politics under platform capitalism: platforms can simultaneously empower women and co-opt feminist energy; gender issues can be rendered both highly visible and systematically depoliticized; and governance practices may appear neutral while reproducing implicit biases. Addressing these tensions requires not only individual forms of resistance but also the democratization of platform governance and the establishment of accountability mechanisms that are genuinely responsive to users, thereby reimagining platforms as more inclusive and participatory public spaces.

References

- [1] Qiangua Data. (2025). 2025 Active User Research Report (RedNote Platform). Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://qian-gua.com/Home/ArticleDetail?id=3149>
- [2] Srnicek, N. (2019). Platform capitalism (excerpts). *Ekonomicheskaya Sotsiologiya*, 20(1), 72-82. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1726-3247-2019-1-72-82>
- [3] Wang, Q., & Cong, Y. (2024). Avoiding the Male Gaze Label: A Study on Algorithmic Resistance Among Female Users on RedNote. *Journal of China Women's University*, 36(3), 71-79. <https://doi.org/10.13277/j.cnki.jcwu.2024.03.009>

- [4] Yu, C., & Li, Z. (2022). Operational Logic and Digital Labor in Online Communities: A Case Study of RedNote. *View on Publishing*, (8), 77-80. <https://doi.org/10.16491/j.cnki.cn45-1216/g2.2022.08.014>
- [5] Song, J. (2022). Making a Community: Gender, Labour and the Platform Vernacular on RedNote (Master's thesis). Beijing Foreign Studies University. <https://doi.org/10.26962/d.cnki.gbjwu.2022.000273>
- [6] Luan, Q. (2022). A Study of Female Media Image on RedNote from the Perspective of Consumer Culture (Master's thesis). Jilin University. <https://doi.org/10.27162/d.cnki.gjlin.2022.007474>

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgment

This paper is an output of the science project.

Open Access

This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

