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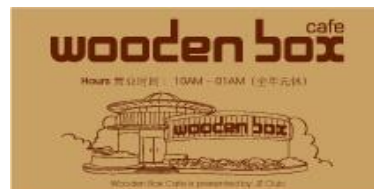
China's Gender Gap in Competitiveness: Culture, Institutions, and Evidence from Gender Egalitarian Policies

Jane Zhang

**Assistant Professor of Social Science
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**

Thursday, December 14th, 2017

19:00pm – 20:15 pm



**9 Qinghai Lu (just to the South of Nanjing West Road)
青海路 9 号, 近南京西路, 地铁二号线南京西路站**

18:45 – Doors Open

19:00 – Lecture

19:45 – Q&A

20:15 – Mixer/Live Jazz

Please RSVP to Frank Tsai of Hopkins China Forum at editor@shanghai-review.org.

While opportunities for women have broadened significantly in the past few decades, gender differences in “competitiveness” – a willingness to enter competitive situations – may prevent women from taking full advantage of this potential gain. Can a change in culture reduce this gap in competitiveness? The wide-ranging gender egalitarian reforms in China that began in the 1950s provide a natural experiment to examine this question. Traditional Han Chinese society and Yi society were both patrilineal, with little economic independence for women. While the Han Chinese were exposed to the full effects of gender egalitarian reforms, the Yi were exempted from some. Of particular importance are reforms increasing the minimum marriage age and marriage autonomy, which have the potential to change gender role expectations. While Han Chinese women began to close the gap in education and workforce participation, the Yi continue to have large gender disparities in education and workforce participation. We will also examine the Mosuo who were also not subject to the reforms but are a matrilineal society with longstanding egalitarian traditions. We will isolate the effects of culture on the gender gap in competitiveness by comparing these three groups within a single high school, ensuring similarity across all other major demographic and socioeconomic factors.

[Jane Zhang](#) is an Assistant Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. She received her PhD in Economics from U.C. Berkeley and her BA in Economics from Stanford University. Her research focuses on how culture, institutions, educational content, and information shape preferences, attitudes, and economic and political behavior. Her work has been published in or is forthcoming in *the Journal of Political Economy*, *Economic Journal*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.