

“Leftover women? Gender norms and male-female difference in paid work participation in China ”

Wednesday, 18th October 2017 at 2:30 p.m.

IAS Meeting Room 2.27, Level 2, FASS Building

Abstract

Female labor force participation has declined sharply since China’s transition to a socialist market system giving rise to the so-called phenomenon of “leftover” women (sheng nǚ). Drawing upon data from the China General Social Survey (CGSS) 2010, we therefore re-examine the determinants of paid work participation in China with a focus on gender norms. Data on support for patriarchal notions of gender roles relating to work and family responsibilities in the respondent’s community is used to measure gender norms. Probit model estimates of the gender gap in paid employment probability and Oaxaca decomposition of the gender gap both confirm the contribution of conventional factors such as “health human capital” (i.e. height, body-mass index and self-reported health status) as important explanations for the resurgent gender gap in China. However, even after extensive controls for health and other human capital endowment differences (e.g. language skills), the gap remains mostly unexplained in our data. The decomposition analysis confirms that only 4.59% of gender gap in paid work employment can be explained by endowment differences. Gender-related community social norms, on the other hand, account for 53.85% of the unexplained gap. Therefore, policies that promote favorable social attitude towards women’s outside work would help narrow the gender gap in Chinese labor market.

Speaker’s Profile



Saizi Xiao is a final year PhD candidate of Development Economics at University of Malaya. Her research interests include gender inequality in Chinese labour market, well-being of the elderly issues of aging and fertility, policy challenges of middle income trap, schooling-learning profile in Asian Countries. Her research findings have been published/under reviewed by well-known ISI journals (i.e. China Economic Review) and presented on international academic conferences at Malaysia, China, Switzerland, Singapore, Qatar and Australia. Currently she is working as a Research Assistant for the "Quality of Education in OIC Countries" project jointly funded by OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) and the Ministry of Development of Turkey. She is also a Researcher at Anbound Research Center Malaysia Sdn. Bhd and a Affiliate at Global Labor Organization (GLO). Before moving to Malaysia, she obtained her master degree from Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, UK.