

# *Separating Spheres: Cohort Differences in Gender Attitudes about Work and Family in China\**

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## *Abstract*

We investigate whether attitudes about gender in China have changed across birth cohorts. Using data from the 2010–2015 Chinese General Social Survey ( $N = 34,588$ ), we differentiate two distinct dimensions of beliefs about gender: gender equality in the labor market (public sphere) and gender roles in the family (private sphere). Both men and women show rising support for egalitarian attitudes about gender in the public sphere across cohorts, even after we control for compositional changes in successive birth cohorts' sociodemographic attributes. In contrast, all else being equal, we observe continued (among women) and even rising (among men) support for traditional ideology about gender in the private sphere across cohorts. Moreover, women hold more egalitarian gender attitudes toward work and family. This gender gap in gender attitudes has widened among the more recent cohorts, due in part to the closing of the gender gap in education and the stronger positive effect of education on gender egalitarianism among women than among men. The results highlight the importance of understanding gender ideology as a multidimensional construct in China. We conclude by discussing the findings in the context of the uneven gender revolution and two-sphere separation in contemporary China.

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