



You are cordially invited to

## UCLouvain Economics Seminar

On **Friday June 15, 2018**, from **12:45 to 14:00** **Doyen**  
**22, Place des Doyens, 1**

**Melanie Meng Xue**  
(Northwestern University)

Will give a presentation on

### **High-Value Work and the Rise of Women: The Cotton Revolution and Gender Equality in China**

#### **Abstract**

The cotton revolution (1300-1840 AD) in imperial China constituted a substantial shock to the value of women's work. Using historical gazetteers, I exploit variation in cotton textile production across 1,489 counties and establish a robust negative relationship between high-value work opportunities for women in the past and sex ratio at birth in 2000. To overcome potential endogeneity in location, I use an instrument pertaining to suitability for cotton weaving. I find evidence that premodern cotton textile production permanently changed cultural beliefs about women's worth, and that its effects have persisted beyond 1840 and endured under various political and economic regimes.

*Information: [Gonzague.vannoorenberghe@uclouvain.be](mailto:Gonzague.vannoorenberghe@uclouvain.be)*