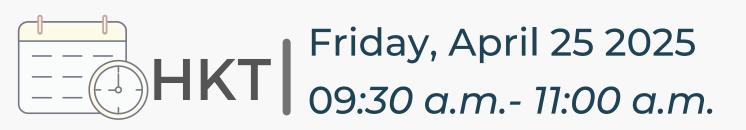# Protect or Hurt? Social Networks and Well-Being Inequalities across Societies

by Prof. Lijun SONG
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09:30 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

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Webinar via **zoom**

Do social network factors jointly protect or harm well-being in its various forms across societies? We propose an external-internal well-being continuum and introduce a theoretical framework to explore the interplay between two fundamental network factors: accessed status and tie strength. The framework includes theories or propositions on the main impacts of accessed status and tie strength on both external and internal well-being, their combined impact across these two dimensions of well-being, and how these impacts vary across societies. Our analysis of data from three societies—the U.S., urban mainland China, and Taiwan—reveals that in Taiwan, a more egalitarian society, accessed status and weak ties, individually and jointly, are more likely to promote (rather than harm) external well-being. In contrast, accessed status and strong ties, individually and jointly, are more likely to protect (rather than harm) internal well-being.

Lijun Song is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Social Networks and Inequalities Lab (SNAIL) at Vanderbilt University. Her research focuses on how societies produce and reproduce inequalities, with core interests in social networks and health. Currently, she is developing social cost theory to explain the detrimental impact of social networks and is leading a high-priority R56 project, funded by the National Institutes of Health, to design the first nationally representative survey of older never-married adults, focusing on their social networks and health. She has received two publication awards from the American Sociological Association (ASA): one from the Section on Asia/Asian America and another from the Section on Sociology of Mental Health. Additionally, she has been elected to chair two ASA sections: Medical Sociology and Sociology of Mental Health.