



Nanyang Technological University
DIVISION OF ECONOMICS
Seminar Series

The Division of Economics invites you to a seminar by Assistant Professor Bei QIN

- Speaker** : **Bei QIN**
University of Hong Kong
- Topic** : **"The Political Economy of Social Media in China"**
- Chairperson** : **Assistant Professor Laura WU**
Division of Economics
School of Humanities & Social Sciences
- Date** : **14th April 2016 (Thursday)**
- Time** : **1.00pm to 2.00pm**
- Venue** : **Meeting Room 6 (HSS-04-91)**
Nanyang Technological University
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
14, Nanyang Drive
Singapore 637332

About the Speaker:

Dr. Bei Qin is an assistant professor in Economics at the School of Economics and Finance, the University of Hong Kong. Dr. Qin's research fields are political economy and development economics. Her works center around the media bias and political connection in China. Her research on media aims to understand the structure and ideology change of Chinese newspapers/Chinese microblog, and then discover the impact of the media on the social welfare and economic efficiency. Her research on political connection aims to investigate how the political connection with governments affect firms' performance

Abstract:

This paper examines the role of Chinese social media in three areas: organizing collective action, surveillance of government officials, and propaganda. Our study is based on a data set of 13.2 billion blog posts published on Sina Weibo -- the most prominent Chinese microblogging platform -- during the 2009-2013 period. We find millions of posts discussing explicit corruption allegations and collective action events, such as, protests, strikes, and demonstrations. More intensive use of Sina Weibo is significantly associated with higher incidence of protests and large-scale conflicts. We also find that social media are effective tools for surveillance: Sina Weibo content predicts collective action events one day before their occurrence and corruption charges one year in advance. Finally, we estimate that our data contain 600,000 government-affiliated accounts, which contribute 4% of all posts about political and economic issues on Sina Weibo. The share of government accounts is larger in areas with a higher level of internet censorship and where newspapers have a stronger pro-government bias. Overall, our findings suggest that the Chinese government regulates social media to balance threats to regime stability against the benefits of utilizing bottom-up information.

Reservation:

Admission is free. Please reply to h-dae@ntu.edu.sg to confirm your attendance.