

Towards a More Responsive Legislature: New Media, Public Participation and Pressure-induced Legislation in China

by Dr Xin Zhang, University of International Business and Economics, School of Law

Chaired by Associate Professor Gary F. Bell, Faculty of Law, NUS

9 April 2018, Monday, 12pm to 1.30pm
Federal Conference Room, Federal Building,
NUS (Bukit Timah Campus)

ABSTRACT

To increase responsiveness to societal needs, the issue of improving the quality of legislation first appeared as part of a major Chinese Communist Party policy in the Fourth Plenum of October 2014. For a long time, Chinese legislature unintentionally adopted what is called a “pressure-induced legislation” approach, whereby media voices representing public concern exert strong pressure to introduce or change legislation. This phenomenon may open a “policy window”, giving room for policy entrepreneurs to act while also incentivizing the legislature to be more responsive. However, such hasty changes undermine the legislative process and often compromise the effectiveness of new laws; these unintended consequences have become a noticeable impediment to the development of high-quality, thoughtful legislation in China. Despite its importance, there remains a shortage of studies exploring this new phenomenon of pressure-induced legislation and how a developing legislature should respond to a society transformed by enhanced accessibility to information, more frequent interaction with interest groups, and expanding empowerment of citizens through the media. Scholars typically attribute blame to illegitimate use of legislative power, inadequate public participation, or unethical media practices. These approaches overlook the important roles that the legislature and its law-making procedures have in structuring the public participation environment. This seminar takes a different approach from the common discourse of China’s legal academy, and instead articulates the problem from an interactional socio-political perspective. After a detailed empirical study of 132 public focusing events and national legislations between 2003 and 2016, the seminar will explore the features, the reasons, and the advantages and disadvantages of “pressure-induced legislation” in contemporary China.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Dr Xin Zhang was born in Beijing, China. She received her Ph.D. in Law in 2015, and her LL.B. and B.Ec. in 2010 from Peking University. During 2012-2013, she was a visiting researcher at the School of Law, the University of California, Berkeley. She currently is an assistant professor at School of Law, University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), Beijing, China. Her research focuses on Internet governance, regulation of disruptive technologies, agency rule-making, legislative decision-making, as well as the application of economic theory to public law. She is the recipient of the 2016 Best Conference Paper Award of the Chinese Law and Economy Study and the First Prize of Nationwide Outstanding Young Legal Scholar Forum, sponsored by the China Law Society in 2016. She was invited to present her work on legislative study in Chicago, Rome and Mexico City, etc. She currently serves as a board member of the China Association of Legislation, and the China Association of Internet Research. She teaches *Jurisprudence*, *Internet Law*, *Law and Society*, and *Legal History of China*. She has won six awards for teaching at both university and provincial levels, including the First Prize in Teaching Competition of Young Faculties at UIBE and the 10th Teaching Competition of Faculties in Beijing.

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited. The selected light lunch will be provided upon registration.

Closing Date: **6 April 2018, Friday**

For enquiries, please contact Chris Chan at asli@nus.edu.sg

To register, go to <https://goo.gl/GvkBcX>

Or scan the QR code

