



CCCL Seminar: Introduction to Empirical Legal Research (29 Mar 2022)

31 Mar 2022

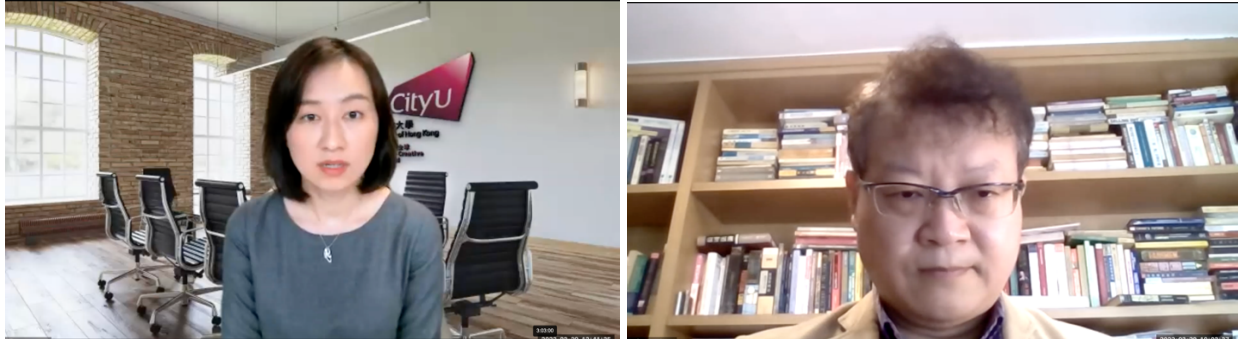
Katy Ng

On March 29, 2022, the Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) of the City University of Hong Kong's School of Law hosted an online seminar to assist students in understanding the empirical legal research studies. **Dr. Lin Lauren Yu-hsin** has been invited as a guest speaker to explain how empirical analysis can inform legal arguments in a legal argument.

The seminar kicked off with a welcoming speech by **Professor Wang Jiangyu**, Director of the CCCL. **Dr. Lin Lauren Yu-hsin**, Associate Professor at the City University of Hong Kong, also an expert in corporate law and governance, employs empirical methods to dissect and understand the effects of different governance rules and regulatory measures on corporations. She is interested in various topics in corporate governance, such as shareholder activism, securities class action, board independence, dual-class share structure, and governance issues in state-owned enterprises. Dr. Lin first defined empirical legal research as research studies that use data to inform legal and policy debates, based on observation but not by reasoning, oriented toward hypothesis testing, with concerns about examining patterns in the aggregate but not the particulars of a single case. She then introduced the methodology of conducting empirical legal research and also the way of law students or lawyers get training in methodology. To being trained in both methodology and law, there are some routes including a double major, a graduate degree in other disciplines, taking courses in methodologies such as statistics and econometrics, or attending empirical legal studies workshops on research design for causal inference. She argued that it is somehow challenging for some lawyers to conduct empirical legal research because of their weak mathematics background or the huge time commitment of pursuing a law degree and attending bar exams at the same time, but it is still important for law students to have a deep understanding on empirical legal research. She then explained the agenda of a quantitative empirical legal research process in detail, which should be passed through eight stages: choosing a topic of study, identifying a research question, choosing a method, operationalizing variables and procedures, collecting data, conducting statistical analysis, interpreting results and drawing implications. She emphasized that people shouldn't overclaim when interpreting the results of statistical analysis, and that there should be more attention to both statistical significance and economic magnitude. She stated that empirical research is an incremental and ongoing process, so it should be more careful to draw any conclusions in the research. She ultimately emphasized that big data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning will be the most important in the future.

of empirical legal research. Therefore, it is essential to utilize computer power to collect and analyze data, such as through the use of web crawlers to scrape data from websites like Python.

Following Dr. Lin's three-hour thought-provoking speech, we moved on to a discussion led primarily by **Professor Wang Jiangyu**, Director of CCCL, who presented his insightful views on empirical legal research. The majority of those in attendance took the opportunity to voice their opinions, many of which were thoughtful and innovative. Professor Wang concluded the seminar with a closing speech in which he thanked the speaker for his valuable contributions and all of the participants for their attendance, which made the seminar a success.



Dr. Lin Lauren Yu-hsin and Professor Wang Jiangyu (from left to right).