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# Digital Nationalism and Affective Governance: Propaganda, Public Sentiment, and Soft Authori- tarianism in China

Guest Lecture with ZHANG Dechun, Postdoctoral Researcher  
at Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen

**Time: October 30, 2026, 14:15-16:00**

**Venue: 1483-354**

How does the Chinese government use social media to shape public opinion?  
And how do ordinary citizens respond?

This lecture explores how digital nationalism influenced public debate during the first wave of COVID-19 in China. Through case studies from Weibo, it examines how official media, censorship, and emotional storytelling were used to promote national unity and strengthen state legitimacy, while also showing how citizens supported, challenged, and reshaped these narratives.

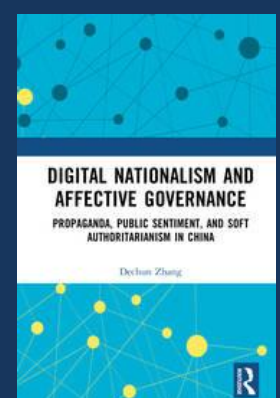
Using digital methods to analyse millions of social media posts alongside close readings of key events, the study reveals how online nationalism is created, spread,

and challenged in China. The lecture offers new insights into the relationship between digital media, nationalism, and authoritarian governance in contemporary China.



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