

Jintao Zhu

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Education

University of Chicago *Ph.D. in Political Economy* Sep 2025 – Present
University of Cambridge *MPhil in Economics* Sep 2021 – Aug 2022
London School of Economics and Political Science Sep 2017 – Jun 2021
BSc in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (First Class Honours)

- Top performer: Macroeconomics (ranked 2nd of 613); Econometrics (ranked 2nd of 298)

Research Interests

Law and economics; political economy; development economics; formal and informal institutions; AI and machine learning methods in empirical economic research.

Working Papers

- **Soft Capture: Career Incentives and the Limits of Formal Oversight**
Examines how career incentives shape regulatory behavior in China’s judicial system; constructs novel measures of oversight intensity using large-scale text analysis of administrative records and court verdicts.
- **Ruling Convergence: The Impact of Chinese Legal Reforms**
with Zhuang Liu, Shaoda Wang, and Wenwei Peng
Constructs a dataset of similar cases from millions of Chinese court rulings using NLP methods; identifies the trend of ruling convergence.

Fellowships, Awards & Honours

Malyi Center for the Study of Institutional and Legal Integrity Research Award, University of Chicago (\$9,375) 2025–2026
Liang Family Fellow, University of Chicago 2024–2025
Posters in Parliament National Runner-Up 2020
Singapore Ministry of Education Senior Middle 1 Full Scholarship
merit scholarship for secondary and pre-university education in Singapore 2013–2016

Research & Professional Experience

EPIC-China, University of Chicago Dec 2022 – Jun 2024
Pre-Doctoral Research Assistant

- Conducted fieldwork in China’s local courts studying the causal impact of court livestreaming on judicial behavior and outcomes.
- Developed machine learning algorithms applied to audio and video recordings from court livestreams, extending text-as-data methods to multimodal (visual and acoustic) data.
- Built predictive classifiers to enhance pre-court mediation effectiveness.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank *Consultant, Economic Research* Jun – Sep 2021
Afrobarometer *Capstone Project Researcher* Sep 2020 – Jan 2021
LSE Institute of Global Affairs *Research Assistant* Jun – Dec 2020

Leadership

LSE Undergraduate Political Review

Apr 2019 – Jun 2021

Editor-in-Chief (2020–21)

International Association for Political Science Students (IAPSS)

Nov 2019 – Feb 2021

Chair, Political Theory Student Research Committee

Conference Presentations

2026: American Law and Economics Association Annual Conference; Midwest Political Science Association Conference; UCSD Young Scholars Conference.

2025: Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics.

2021: 26th World Congress of Political Science, Lisbon.

2020: International Studies Association Annual Convention, Honolulu; British International Studies Association Annual Convention, Newcastle; IAPSS World Congress.

2019: Understanding Value VIII Graduate Philosophy Conference; European Political Science Association Annual Conference; Political Studies Association Annual International Conference.

2018: Political Studies Association Undergraduate Conference; British Conference of Undergraduate Research; European Political Science Association Annual Conference.

Research Skills

- **Programming:** Python, R, Stata
- **Machine Learning:** Supervised/unsupervised methods; NLP; k-means and DBSCAN clustering
- **Causal Inference:** Difference-in-differences, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity
- **Other:** Real analysis; L^AT_EX; dataset construction from unstructured sources

Selected Other Activities

BBC Global Questions *Invited Guest*

Jun 2021

Presented on civil disobedience and sociopolitical dynamics to an international audience

Independent Media Project *Host*

Jul 2020

Interviewed former Governor of the National Bank of Ukraine on financial-sector reforms

Pre-Doctoral Publications

Peer-Reviewed

- “Political Animals in the Modern World: An Investigation of the National Animal Symbol.” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, September 2023.
- “Does Sensitivity Bias Lead Africans to Misreport their Level of Trust in Political Parties?” *Afrobarometer Working Paper Series*, 2021.
- “Evaluation of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Understanding of Just Laws in ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail.’” *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, 3(1), 2021.
- “Does Protest Turnout Affect Regulatory Policy? Anti-Nuclear Energy Protests during the 1970s–90s.” *Stanford Economic Review*, 7, 2019.

Policy Reports & Commentary

- “Environmental Impact of Renewable Energy: A Value Chain Approach.” *AIIB Blog*, Nov 2021.
- “Think Exit Before Entry: How to Anticipate the Costs of Abandoning an Obsolete Policy.” *LSE Covid Blog*, Jan 2021.
- “Review of the World Bank Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility with Reform Proposals.” *LSE Covid-19 Resource Centre*, 2020.