

SHEN Zekai

📍 ✉ zekai.shen@phd.unibocconi.it 📞 3520700393 **in** SHEN Zekai [🔗](#)

Education

- Bocconi University** *Aug, 2025 - Present*
PhD in Economics and Finance
- **Award:** Bocconi University PhD Fellowship
- Singapore Management University** *Aug, 2023 - Aug, 2024*
Master of Science in Economics (Econometrics and Quantitative Economics)
- GPA: 4.0/4.0
 - **Award:** Dean's List; Robert S. Mariano Excellence in Applied Economics Award
- Shanghai University** *Aug, 2018 - Aug, 2022*
Bachelor of Economics
- GPA: 87.28/100
 - **Award:** Excellent Graduation Thesis

Research Interests

Political Economy, Applied Microeconomics, Economics of Science, AI for Economics

Pre-doctoral Publications

- [Economic Voting Behavior: The Peak-end Growth Rule \(With Jin Yiyang, Dong Yuanyuan, Liu Yazhou\), *Economics & Politics* 2024 \[🔗\]\(#\)](#)

Working Papers

- Attention is All You Need? The Causal Effect of Eye-Catching Titles in Economics (With Aljoscha Janssen)
- Social Media vs. Democracy: Evidence from the January 6th Insurrection (With Karsten Müller, and Carlo Schwarz)
- The Geopolitics of Industrial Policy: Evidence from Export Credits (With Karsten Müller, Adrien Matray and Chenzi Xu)

Selected Work in Progress

- Cheat and Get Promoted: The Political GDP Manipulation Cycle in China
- Does a Political Environment Cycle exists in China?

Research Activities

- Full-Time Research Assistant** *Singapore*
Under Karsten Muller, NUS Business School, National University of Singapore *Aug, 2024 - Present*
- Part-Time Research Assistant** *Singapore*
Under Aljoscha Janssen, School of Economics, Singapore Management University *May, 2024 - Aug, 2024*
- Part-Time Research Assistant** *Singapore*
Under Xuan Zhang, School of Economics, Singapore Management University *Sep, 2023 - Jan, 2024*

Working Experience

- Co-founders** *China/Singapore*
AI SocioEconomic Frontier [MVP Stage] *May 2023 - Jul 2024*
- Teaching Assistant** *Shanghai, China*

- Teaching Assistant in Master of Finance Programme, 2022

Awards

- Roberto S. Mariano Excellence in Applied Economics Award in the Master of Economics Programme in the Graduating Class of 2025, Singapore Management University 2025
- Dean's List, Academic Year 2023-2024, School of Economics, Singapore Management University 2024
- KWANPEN Postgraduate Summer Venture Awards, Singapore Management University 2024
- Honorable Mentions in Generative your AI Library Hackathon, Singapore Management University 2023
- Third prize in the First National Large Language Model Innovation and Creative Application Competition in China 2023
- Excellent Graduation Thesis, Shanghai University 2023
- First Prize of the 3rd Undergraduate Academic Forum of SHU, Shanghai University 2021

Computational skills

Python

- Web Scraping: Playwright; Requests
- Data Processing: Pandas/Numpy/Matplotlib
- Regression Analysis: Statsmodels/Linearmodels
- Machine Learning: Scikit-learn/Xgboost/Lightgbm
- Demo: Streamlit/Gradio
- AI/Deep Learning: PyTorch/Langchain/Transformers/Wandb
- Web Developing: Flask

Stata/R

- OLS/GLS/Logit/Probit
- IV/FE
- DID/Synthetic Control Method

NLP

- Finetuning PLM: Roberta/Bert/T5/GPT2
- Finetuning LLM: Lora/PPO tuning LLAMA
- RAG: Langchain

LaTeX/Overleaf

Javascript

Language Skills

- **IELTS:** Listening: 8.0; Reading: 7.5; Writing: 7.0; Speaking: 6.0
- **GRE:** Verbal: 158; Quant: 167
- **Language:** Mandarin (native), English (fluent), Italian (beginner)