

# Weifeng Zhong

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## Research Interests

political economy, Chinese economic issues, machine learning, text analysis

## Education

Ph.D., managerial economics and strategy, Northwestern University, 2015.

M.Sc., managerial economics and strategy, Northwestern University, 2013.

M.Phil., economics, University of Hong Kong, 2009.

M.Econ., economics, University of Hong Kong, 2007.

B.A., business administration, Shantou University, Shantou, China, 2006.

## Employment

Research Fellow, American Enterprise Institute, 2015-present.

Expert, Open Research Group (OpenRG), 2018-present.

Research Assistant and Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University, 2010-2015.

## Research Publications

1. "Policy Change Index: A Simulated Example," *Quantitative Notes*, December 2018. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
2. "Political Institutions and the Governmental Burden on Businesses," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, published online first May 2018. Joint with Ruiqing Zhong. ([working paper version](#))
3. "The Candidates in Their Own Words: A Textual Analysis of 2016 Presidential Primary Debates," *AEI Economic Perspectives*, April 2016.
4. "To What Extent Defining a Group Predicates on Defining Other Groups?" *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, March 2011. Joint with Y. Stephen Chiu.

## Working Papers

5. [“Reading China: Predicting Policy Change with Machine Learning.”](#) AEI Economics Working Paper No. 2018-11. Joint with Julian T. Chan. Under review. ([website](#); [source code](#))  
Selected media: *BBC*; *South China Morning Post*; *Asia Times*; *Am730*; *JoongAng Ilbo*; *Dataconomy*.
6. [“Sanctioning an Unruly Ally: Understanding Sino-North Korean Trade through the \*People’s Daily\*,”](#) AEI Economics Working Paper No. 2017-22. Under review.
7. [“On the Observational Implications of Knightian Uncertainty,”](#) AEI Economics Working Paper No. 2016-17. Joint with Kevin A. Hassett. Under review.
8. [“Governmental Systems and Economic Volatility in Democracies,”](#) AEI Economics Working Paper No. 2018-06. Joint with Chen Cheng and Christopher Li. Under review.
9. [“A Theory of the Material Foundation of Psychology: With an Application to the Non-Salience of Economic Classes.”](#) Joint with Y. Stephen Chiu.

## Work in Progress

10. [“Policy Change Index for Cuba.”](#) Joint with Julian T. Chan and Erin Melly.
11. [“Opinionated News.”](#) Joint with Julian T. Chan and Sita N. Slavov.
12. [“The Politics of Tax Progressivity and Income Redistribution.”](#) Joint with Sita N. Slavov.

## Media and Other Publications

13. [“China’s next policy change: Not what President Trump hopes for,”](#) *AEIdeas*, January 15, 2019. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
14. [“Sinology 2.0: Decoding China’s \*People’s Daily\*,”](#) *AEIdeas*, November 21, 2018. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
15. [“Machine learning with a twist: Detecting structural differences in complex data,”](#) *MLconf*, November 19, 2018. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
16. [“Machine learning with a twist: How trivial labels can be used to predict policy changes,”](#) *Dataconomy*, November 1, 2018. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
17. [“Congress should back White House plan to use tolls to fix infrastructure,”](#) *The Hill*, March 2, 2018.
18. [“China is trying to bribe North Korea into good behavior. Here is what that means for America.”](#) *The National Interest*, November 9, 2017.
19. [“All the general secretary’s men,”](#) *AEIdeas*, October 17, 2017. Joint with Julian T. Chan.
20. [“What \(not\) to expect from China’s upcoming party congress,”](#) *AEIdeas*, August 31, 2017.
21. [“Trump’s high-risk, high-reward trade policy toward China,”](#) *AEIdeas*, August 8, 2017.
22. [“Reading Xi Jinping,”](#) *Foreign Affairs*, July 4, 2017.
23. [“China must rethink free float for the yuan, as US border tax looms,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, March 7, 2017. Joint with Zhimin Li.

24. "Donald Trump and the perils of promising too much," *Real Clear Politics*, October 19, 2016. Joint with Rasa Karapandza.
25. "Yes, low-information voters have the right to vote," *AEIdeas*, April 28, 2016.
26. "A Saudi dump of US assets will only hurt the Saudis," *Real Clear Markets*, April 21, 2016.
27. "Debate text analysis: Trump is the moderate," *Real Clear Politics*, April 14, 2016.
28. "China needs reform not another investment splurge," *Financial Times*, February 17, 2016. Joint with Zhimin Li.
29. "China needs clear market rules and consistent enforcement," *Inside Sources*, January 12, 2016.
30. "China's IPO system badly needs reform," *Inside Sources*, November 24, 2015.
31. "China's new securities superstar, Fang Xinghai, is no hero," *The National Interest*, November 9, 2015.
32. "China's stock market is about to tank – again," *Fortune*, September 28, 2015.
33. "China's troubling lurch back to socialism," *Real Clear Markets*, August 13, 2015.

#### *Media Publications in Chinese:*

34. "Trump's first 100 days: What does his lackluster debut tell us?" *The Paper (Pengpai)*, April 27, 2017.
35. "An evolution of the Senate revealed by the Supreme Court showdown," *The Paper (Pengpai)*, April 12, 2017.
36. "How did Trumpcare collapse and where will other Trump 'deals' go?" *The Paper (Pengpai)*, March 31, 2017.
37. "The looming US tax reform and how China should respond," *The Paper (Pengpai)*, March 15, 2017.

### Selected Media Coverage

38. "AI program reads between the lines of party mouthpiece to study China" (in Chinese), *BBC*, November 23, 2018.
39. "Predicting Beijing's thinking with the help of artificial intelligence and *People's Daily*," *South China Morning Post*, October 30, 2018.
40. TV interview on VOA Mandarin's "Eyes on America" on the US-China trade dispute (in Chinese), April 7, 2018.
41. "Femårsplanen (Five-year plan)," *Weekendavisen*, October 20, 2017.
42. TV interview on VOA Mandarin's "Pros and Cons" on the US trade policy toward China (in Chinese), August 4, 2017.
43. "Saudis have the most to lose by dumping US assets," *Newsmax*, April 21, 2016.
44. "Smart ideas: A new way to confirm justices, and Kasich's radical moderates," *National Journal*, April 14, 2016.
45. "Handle with care: China's porcelain economy," *Ricochet's Political Economy with James Pethokoukis*, February 25, 2016.
46. "Chinese companies are trapped in IPO logjam," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 7, 2015.

47. “China’s rigged IPOs,” *The Wall Street Journal* (editorial), December 2, 2015.
48. Other coverage: Asia Times, The Australian, Biz Republic, The Bond Buyer, Contacto Hoy, Dataconomy, FT Chinese, Investors’ Business Daily, Jiemian, Newsweek, Página Siete, People.cn, Real Clear Politics, Real Clear World, Sina Finance, Sohu Finance, Tencent Finance, WSJ Chinese, Yahoo Finance.

## Panels and Presentations

### 2018 and 2019 (including scheduled)

Presentations of “Reading China: Predicting Policy Change with Machine Learning:”

AEI-Policy Simulation Library, American Association for Chinese Studies, Analytics Frontiers Conference, Association of Chinese Political Studies, George Mason University, George Washington University, IMPAQ International, In-Q-Tel, International Communication Association, International Conference on Communication & Media Studies, International Studies Association, Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Petralia Applied Economics Workshop, Southern Political Science Association, State Street Corporation, Strata Data Conference, Texas AI Summit, TEXATA Summit, US Naval Research Laboratory, World Bank.

Other panels and presentations:

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, International Bridge, Tunnel & Turnpike Association, International Studies Association, Southern Political Science Association

### 2017

Center for China and Globalization, Central Party School of the Communist Party of China, Fudan University, Petralia Applied Economics Workshop, Zhejiang University

### 2015

American Enterprise Institute, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Northwestern University, Petralia Applied Economics Workshop

## Awards and Grants

Academic GPU Grant, NVIDIA Corporation, 2018.

Graduate Fellowship, Northwestern University, 2009-2014.

Graduate Fellowship, University of Hong Kong, 2007-2009.

Li Ka-shing Foundation University Medal, Shantou University, 2006.

## Miscellany

**Fluent Languages:** English, Mandarin, Cantonese

**Programming:** Keras, Mathematica, MATLAB, Python, R, STATA, TensorFlow

**GitHub:** <https://github.com/towashington>

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