

EMPLOYMENT

2024 - Assistant Professor, Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Affairs, Indiana University Bloomington

EDUCATION

2021 PhD Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington VA
Dissertation: *Internationalization of China's Developmental State: Mechanisms and Impacts*
Committee: Jack Goldstone, Ming Wan, Ahsan Butt

2013 MSc Sociology (economic sociology), London School of Economics and Political Science, London

2008 BA Economics (international economy and trade), Renmin University of China, Beijing

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2022-24 Postdoctoral fellow, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government

2021-22 Postdoctoral fellow, China Africa Research Initiative, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

2021-22 Fellow, Columbia-Harvard China and the World Program, Columbia University School of Public and International Affairs

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Global development, infrastructure, global China, developmental state, bureaucracy, economic statecraft, state capitalism, international political economy, comparative political economy

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles (refereed)

- Wang, Yuan and **Hong Zhang**, 2024, "Individual Agency in South-South Policy Transfer: China and Ethiopia's Industrial Park Development", *Review of International Political Economy* (2024): 1-25.
- **Zhang, Hong**. 2020. "The aid-contracting nexus: The role of the international contracting industry in China's overseas development engagements." *China Perspectives* (4): 17.

Working Papers

- **Zhang, Hong**. 2023. "From Contractors to Investors? Evolving Engagement of Chinese State Capital in Global Infrastructure Development and the Case of Lekki Port in Nigeria." Working Paper No. 2023/53. China Africa Research Initiative, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC.
- **Zhang, Hong**. 2021. "Chinese International Contractors in Africa: Structure and Agency." Working Paper No. 2021/47. China Africa Research Initiative, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC.

Book Chapter

- Wan, Ming and **Hong Zhang**. 2019. "China's Investment Relations with Japan," in Ka Zeng (ed.), *The Handbook of the IPE of China*, Edward Elgar Publishing: Chapter 7.

Cases

- Rithmire, Meg, Salaar A. Shaikh, and **Hong Zhang**. "Pakistan at 75: When Will the 'Nazuk Mor' End?" Harvard Business School Case 724-020, March 2024. (Revised March 2025.)

- Meg Rithmire, **Hong Zhang**, and Salaar Sheikh, *forthcoming*, “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” Harvard Business School Case.

Under Review:

- Bureaucratic Coordination and State-led Development Abroad: Case of China’s Belt and Road in Pakistan (R&R with *Development and Change*)
- From Capital Mobilization to Disciplining: China’s Industrial Policy and Risk Management in Global Infrastructure Financing (R&R with *Studies of Comparative International Development*)
- Unraveling Chinese Overseas Financing for Economic Statecraft: Mechanisms and Effectiveness (book chapter)
- Piloting Greenfield Investment at Lekki Port: The Evolving Capabilities of Chinese Firms (co-authored with Vincent Ibonye, book chapter)

In Progress

- Can Chinese Capital Transform Economies in the Global South? Evidence from South Asia (with Meg Rithmire)
- Diasporic State Capital: Why Chinese State-owned Enterprises Expand Overseas (with Yuan Wang)
- Party in Overseas Chinese State-owned Enterprises (with Yuan Wang)
- Geopolitical Challenger or Institutional Follower? China as a Latecomer Development Partner in Pakistan’s Power Sector
- Contractor-Driven Debt: The Role of Chinese Infrastructure Firms in Shaping Sovereign Lending (with Keyi Tang)
- Book project: “*Developmental Statecraft: Bureaucracy, Enterprises, and China’s Global Development Ambition*”
 - This book project examines how China reshapes its developmental state apparatus to assert global influence as an emerging economic power. China’s emphasis on development as a core concept supporting its rise to global status contrasts with earlier approaches by other leading powers, owing to its distinct position in the global political economy, shaped by its Maoist legacy, integration into the global value chain, and its self-identification as a leader of the Global South. This book develops the concept of “developmental statecraft” to capture how China adapts its developmental state institutions—particularly the planning bureaucracy and the state-owned enterprises—to both drive domestic economic transformations within amid global integration and to use development as a vehicle for projecting legitimacy abroad. Drawing on fieldwork in China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Cambodia and Myanmar, the book analyzes the institutional mechanisms that underpin China’s development model abroad centered on infrastructure and industrialization. It highlights both the strengths and the limitations of China’s institutional configuration. The book contributes to broader debates on global development governance, economic statecraft, state capitalism, and power transitions in the international order.

Other Publications

- Zhang, Hong. 2025. “[What if She Is a Spy?: Gatekeeping, Trust, and Access in Global China Research.](#)” *Global China Pulse* 4(1).
- Zhang, Hong, and Ammar A. Malik. 2024. “[Fulfilling Promises for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.](#)” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. December 16, 2024.
- “[Comrades against colonists? China to the international aid system,](#)” *Baffler Symposium*, no. 71, November 2023.
- “[How the BRI Changed China,](#)” *Global China Pulse*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 131-134.
- “[Democracy Vs Development? Why the Debate between Development and Democracy Misses the Mark,](#)” Democracy Paradox blog, October 2022.
- “[Builders from China: from Third World Solidarity to Globalised State Capitalism,](#)” *Made in China Journal*, May-August 2021, pp. 87-94. ([Spanish translation](#) by *Latinoamérica Sustentable*.)
- “[Chinese Industrial Policy: How A City Turned Itself Into a VC Fund,](#)” *ChinaTalk*, September 14, 2021.
- “[Is China’s Belt and Road Initiative Slowing Down?](#)” *Made in China Journal*, January-April 2021, pp. 15-21.
- “[Understanding the Structural Sources of Chinese International Contractors’ Market Power in Africa,](#)” Policy Brief No. 2021/56. China Africa Research Initiative, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC.
- [Pakistan country profile](#), People’s Map of Global China, April 2021.

- [Gwadar Port and Free Zone profile](#), People's Map of Global China, April 2021.
- ["China's Manifesto for Leadership in Global Development,"](#) Panda Paw Dragon Claw, February 8, 2021.
- ["Service for Influence? The Chinese Communist Party's Negotiated Access to Private Enterprises,"](#) *Made in China Journal*, July-September 2019, pp. 41-45.
- ["Beyond 'Debt-Trap Diplomacy': The Dissemination of PRC State Capitalism,"](#) *China Brief*, January 5, 2019.
- ["Globalization's Broken Promise,"](#) (with Hilton Root). *US News*, March 7, 2016.

TEACHING

Instructor

- INTL-I203 Global Development, Indiana University, Spring 2025
- INTL-I427/503 Infrastructure and Development, Indiana University, Fall 2024|Spring 2025
- GOVT-S 1282 The Political Economy of China, Harvard Summer School, Summer 2023
 - o Course evaluation score 4.7 (compared to Harvard Summer School average of 4.5)
- Chinese language and culture, Ateneum-University in Gdansk, Poland. Spring 2007
- Chinese language and culture, Stanley's School of Languages, Sopot, Poland, Oct 2006-Jul 2007

Teaching Assistant

- DPI-450 The Political Economy of Transition in China, for Professor Tony Saich, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, Spring 2024
- GOVT368 Tools for Economic Policy Analysis, George Mason University, Spring 2016

Guest Lecturer

- Graduate level class, guest lecture on China-Pakistan relations, University of Hawaii, Oct 2023
- Graduate level class "Engaging with China," guest lecture on the Belt and Road Initiative, Australian National University, Dec 2022, Oct 2021
- Graduate level class "Maritime security," guest lecture on State-owned Enterprises and China's Economic Statecraft, Johns Hopkins University-School of Advanced International Studies, Nov 2021
- Graduate level class "China and Africa," guest lecture on Chinese foreign aid and development finance, Columbia University-School of International and Public Affairs, Nov 2021
- Graduate-level class PUBP710 Dictatorship, Democracy, and Human Rights: "China's Democracy Prospect," guest lecture on Chinese politics, George Mason University, Feb 2018
- Undergraduate-level class GOVT101 Democratic Theory and Practice: "Politics of the People's Republic of China," guest lecture on Chinese politics, George Mason University, Dec 2017
- Graduate-level class PUBP710 Energy Security: "Energy and Infrastructure Policymaking in China," guest lecture on Chinese energy policy, George Mason University, Oct 2017

Other

- Updating supplementary Powerpoint slides for textbook "An Introduction to International Economics," Summer 2020

GRANTS & AWARDS

- Flexible Early Career Fellowship (\$15,000), Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS Program in China Studies, 2023
- Research grant (\$3,000), Weatherhead Research Cluster on Business and Government, Harvard University, 2023
- Research grant (\$2,000), China Africa Research Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Fall 2020
- Doctoral Fellowship (\$20,000), Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, 2018-2019
- Summer Research Fellowship (\$7,000), George Mason University, Summer 2019
- Grant Writing Fellowship (\$5,000), Schar School of Policy and Government, Summer 2018
- Daniel Druckman Fellowship Award (\$6,000), Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, 2017
- Henry Owen Memorial Award 2016 Essay Contest: First Place (\$1,000). "Maintaining Relevance for the IMF in Asia: A Forward-looking Approach toward Regional Partners."

SERVICE

- Founding Co-editor, [People's Map of Global China](#) & [Global China Pulse](#) journal, July 2020 –
- Member of editorial board, [Made in China Journal](#), June 2020 –
- Book manuscript reviewed: Lexington Books
- Journals reviewed:
Asian Perspective | *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* | *Competition and Change* |
China Quarterly | *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* | *Eurasian Geography and Economics* |
Behavioral Scientist | *Geopolitics* | *Studies in Comparative International Development* | *Journal of*
Development Studies | *New Political Economy*

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- “Global China: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Future Directions,” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, March 2025.
- “Diasporic State Capital Between Home and Host: Transnationalization of Chinese State-owned Enterprises,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, March 2025.
- “Geopolitical Challenger or Institutional Adapter? China as a Latecomer Development Partner in Pakistan’s Power Sector,” Workshop on Global d/Development and contemporary geopolitical rivalry, Cambridge University, December 2024.
- “Lekki Deep Sea Port: Heralding A Commercial Turn?”, Workshop on Chinese Overseas Ports in Africa and the Middle East, San Francisco, July 2024.
- “Navigating Risk and Expansion: Exploring China’s Shifting Engagement in Global Infrastructure Development,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, April 2024.
- “Mapping Global China,” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, Seattle, March 2024.
- “China’s Global Infrastructure Engagements: Source of State Power?” Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, November 2023.
- “Evolving Engagement of Chinese State Capital in Global Infrastructure Development and the Case of Lekki Port in Nigeria,” Symposium on “Africa, China, and the Middle East: Trade, Investment, and Development,” Cornell University, November 2023.
- “China’s Evolving Financing in Global Infrastructure Development,” Workshop on “US, China and the Global South,” University of Pennsylvania & University of Oxford, September 2023.
- “Economic Entanglements and the Limits of Economic Statecraft: Evidence from South Asia” (co-authored with Meg Rithmire), American Political Science Association’s annual conference, September 2023.
- “Individual Agency and Structural Constraints in South-South Policy Transfer: China and Ethiopia’s Industrial Park Development” (co-authored with Yuan Wang), International Studies Association’s annual conference, March 2023.
- “‘National Champions’ as Policy Diffusers: Chinese State-owned Enterprise’s Instrumental Role in Africa’s Industrial Park Strategies” (co-authored with Yuan Wang), The Development Studies Association’s annual conference, July 2022.
- “Internationalization of China’s Developmental Statecraft: Goals, Tools, and Performance”, Columbia University China and the World Program, November 2021. [Link](#).
- “Pilot Agency in China’s Developmental State and the Operationalization of the Belt and Road Initiative.” American Political Science Association Annual Conference, September 2021.
- “Can the Chinese Developmental State Transform Its ‘Iron Brother?’ Case of China’s Development Engagement in Pakistan.” The 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12), August 2021.
- “Chinese International Contractors in Africa: Structure and Agency.” The 7th Annual China-Africa Research Initiative (CARI) Conference, May 2021.
- “Developmental State Going Abroad: The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) as Coordinator in China’s International Development Cooperation,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, April 2021.
- “The Belt and Road Initiative and the Internationalization of China’s Developmental State.” Australian Center on China in the World, Australian National University, March 2021.
- “BRI as a ‘Chinese Solution’ of Development: The Case of Pakistan,” Workshop on “Global BRI,” Queens University in London (virtual), October 2020.
- “Aid-contracting Nexus: Evolution of China’s Strategic International Development,” conference on “Chinese Global Engagement Abroad: Changing Social, Economic, And Political Configurations” organized by the French Center for Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong, July 2019.

- “Chinese Development Assistance on Recipient State Capacity and Democratic Prospect: Case of Pakistan” Association of Asian Studies’ regional conference, Bangkok, Thailand, July 2019.
- “Chinese Development Cooperation and Authoritarian Legitimation: Where Does It Work?” International Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada, March 2019.
- “Leninist Multinationals: Role of Communist Party-Building in Chinese SOEs’ Overseas Operations,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada, March 2019.
- “Development as Statecraft: Decoding China’s Concept of Development as an Emerging ‘Development Partner’,” Seminar on Revisiting South-South/BRICs/Emerging Powers Investment and Development Aid, George Mason University, January 2019.
- “Exporting Leviathans: How China’s Development Assistance Affects State Capacity and Democratic Prospect in the Developing World,” DC-area Comparative Politics Workshop, January 2019.
- “Assessing Political Impacts of China’s Development Assistance,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, California, April 2018.
- “A Unique Tool of Economic Statecraft: China’s International Contracting Firms,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, California, April 2018.
- “Economic Statecraft with Chinese Characteristics: Role of Subnational Governments in China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ Strategy,” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 2017.

INVITED TALKS

- “How will China’s economic slowdown affect its foreign policy,” panel discussion at International Conference on “China and the World”, China and the World Program, Harvard University, March 2024.
- “Chinese foreign aid,” China Legal Fellows Project, January 2024.
- Panel on “Dealing with China in International Development and Infrastructure Policies,” Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Frankfurt, October 2023.
- “China and Global Change: Chinese State Capitalism and Global Infrastructure Engagement,” ISCTE, Lisbon, October 2023.
- “CPEC Industrial Cooperation and Special Economic Zone Development: Global Lessons,” CPEC-The Road to Prosperity and Growth Amidst Challenges, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan, July 2023.
- “China’s Global Infrastructure Engagements: State Capitalism and the Internationalization of China’s Construction and Engineering Industry,” Chinese Studies seminar, the Institute of International Relations (IDIS), Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, April 2023.
- “China, the US, and the Global South,” panel discussion, International Conference on “China and the World,” Columbia University, February 2023.
- “Beyond the Belt & Road Initiative Narratives: Examining Chinese contractors, African governments, and other African actors in Africa-China infrastructure engagements,” Panel discussion, Africa-China Initiative, Georgetown University, December 2022.
- “Chinese foreign aid,” Africa - China Legal Fellows Project, July 2022.
- “Understanding the incentives of Chinese infrastructure companies,” Regional Infrastructure Monitoring Alliance 2022 workshop, June 2022.
- “China and the World.” Panel discussion, The Transnational Institute, December 8, 2021.
- “China’s development project in MENA.” Panel discussion, Chatham House, November 2021.
- “International Contracting and China’s Trajectory of Economic Globalization.” Panel discussion, Lund University, Sweden, October 2021.
- “China’s International Contractors.” Chinese Overseas Finance and Investment: Online Reflection Workshop, Inclusive Development International. June 2021.
- “The Rise and Evolution of Chinese Development Cooperation.” Guest presentation, Lisbon School of Economics & Management, Portugal, April 2021. [Link](#).
- “Chinese Development Cooperation and the New Era of International Aid and Assistance.” Panel discussion, Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research, Pakistan. March 2021. [Link](#).
- Roundtable on the Belt and Road Initiative, Birkbeck, University of London, December 2020.
- “Interactive map of Chinese FDI: Presentation of tool.” Winter School on Business and Human Rights Teaching and the Socio-Environmental Impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative, An online capacity building event organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, November 2020.
- “Unpacking the Belt and Road Initiative.” Regional Workshop on Chinese Investment in Southeast

Asia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 2019.

- “BRI and China’s ‘National Energy Champions’.” 3rd Annual Mason Energy Symposium: China’s Belt and Road Initiative—New Silk Road, George Mason University, April 2019.

MEDIA (SELECTED)

- July 2023. “[Malaysia's a big draw for China's Belt and Road plans. Finishing them is another story.](#)” NPR, quoted.
- May 2023. “[Will China Build a \\$58 Billion Railway Through Pakistan?](#)” Globely News, quoted.
- April 2023. “[China's Belt and Road Initiative in Cambodia.](#)” Anakut – The Podcast About Cambodia’s Future, featured interview.
- March 2023. “[China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Past, Present and Future.](#)” Voice of America, quoted.
- March 2023. “[Why Chinese players are taking private stakes in Africa’s new megaprojects.](#)” South China Morning Post, quoted.
- February 2023. “[China’s Belt and Road to Nowhere.](#)” Foreign Policy, quoted.
- February 2023. “[What the New Port of Lekki in Nigeria Tells Us About the Future of Chinese Infrastructure Finance in Africa.](#)” The China-Global South Podcast, featured interview.
- February 3, 2022. “[Episode 51: A Systematic Analysis of International Chinese Contractors – w/ Hong Zhang.](#)” Belt and Road Podcast, featured interview.
- November 19, 2021. “[Covid pushed China away from the world stage. But its global ambitions persist.](#)” Washington Post, quoted.
- June 3, 2021. “[How China Does Aid?](#)” Tabadlab’s Dragon Road Podcast, featured interview.
- March 16, 2021. “[A New Era in China’s International Development Cooperation: A Conversation with Stella Hong Zhang,](#)” ChinaPower Podcast, featured interview.
- January 26, 2021. “[China Wants to Become a Major Player in International Aid.](#)” The China in Africa Podcast, featured interview.
- June 19, 2020. “[Pakistan slashes budget for Belt and Road Initiative projects,](#)” Nikkei Asia Review, quoted.
- March 4, 2019. “[Interview: What’s missing in the conversation about China’s expanding global presence?](#)”, Panda Paw Dragon Claw, featured interview.

TRAININGS

- Teaching: PROV 701 Preparing for Careers in the Academy, George Mason University, Fall 2020 – Spring 2021
- Research methods: The Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) Summer Institute, Syracuse University, June 2018
- U.S. Foreign Policy Colloquium, the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, DC, May 2015

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Jun-Aug 2016	Research Intern, American Enterprise Institute, Washington D.C.
Jul-Aug 2015	Fellow, Greenpoint Group LLC, Washington D.C.
Mar–Jun 2014	U.S. correspondent, Caixin Media, Washington D.C.
2009–13	Europe correspondent, Caixin Media, London and Beijing
2008–09	Reporter, Caijing Magazine, Beijing and London

ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS

International Studies Association | American Political Science Association | Association for Asian Studies | Association of Chinese Political Studies

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

- China (ongoing, since 2014)
- Pakistan, December 2019 – January 2020, June 2023 (8 weeks)
- Nigeria, June 2022 (4 weeks)
- Cambodia, July, November 2019 (4 weeks)
- Myanmar, August 2019 (4 weeks)

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Mandarin Chinese + Hokkien: native
- English: fluent