

EMPLOYMENT

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

EDUCATION

2021 PhD Public Policy, George Mason University
2013 MSc Sociology (economic sociology), London School of Economics and Political Science
2008 BA Economics (international economy and trade), Renmin University of China

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, state-led development, foreign aid, bureaucracy, statecraft, state capitalism, international political economy, comparative political economy

BOOK PROJECT

- “*Developmental Statecraft: China’s Domestic Foundations and International Ambitions for Structural Power*” (in progress)
- This book examines how emerging powers seek to construct structural power in the global political economy. Moving beyond conventional approaches that emphasize geopolitical competition and transactional forms of economic statecraft, the book argues that China pursues structural influence through *developmental statecraft*: the mobilization of domestic developmental institutions to build markets, coordinate economic actors, and reshape patterns of growth and integration across borders. Drawing on research on China’s bureaucracy, state-owned enterprises, provincial governments, and overseas development initiatives, the book analyzes how domestic state-building and external power-building are mutually constitutive. It shows how China attempts to translate domestic infrastructural power—the capacity to organize and integrate markets—into structural power within global development and production networks, while also highlighting the tensions, fragmentation, and constraints that limit this process. By bridging international political economy, comparative political economy, and development studies, the book offers a new framework for understanding how development becomes a terrain of structural power construction for emerging powers.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles (refereed)

4. **Zhang, Hong**, 2025, China's Belt and Road Initiative in Pakistan: Bureaucratic Coordination and Chinese State-led Development Abroad. *Development and Change*.
3. **Zhang, Hong**, 2025, From Capital Mobilization to Disciplining: China's Industrial Policy and Risk Management in Global Infrastructure Financing. *Studies of Comparative International Development*.
2. 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.

1. **Zhang, Hong**, 2020, “The aid-contracting nexus: The role of the international contracting industry in China’s overseas development engagements.” *China Perspectives* (4): 17.

Book Chapters

4. **Zhang, Hong**, forthcoming, “The Internationalization of Chinese State-Owned Enterprises,” in Ka Zeng (ed.) *The Handbook on the International Political Economy of China*, 2nd edition, Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. **Zhang, Hong**, forthcoming, “Unraveling Chinese Overseas Financing for Economic Statecraft: Mechanisms and Effectiveness,” in Matthew Erie, Jacques deLisle, and Jaclyn Neo (eds), *Chinese Developmentalism in the Global Legal and Economic Order*, Cambridge University Press
3. **Zhang, Hong** and Vincent Ibonye, forthcoming, “Piloting Greenfield Investment at Lekki Port: The Evolving Capabilities of Chinese Firms,” in Jean-Marc Blanchard (ed.), *Chinese Overseas Ports in Africa and the Middle East*, Routledge.
1. Wan, Ming and **Hong Zhang**. 2019. “China’s Investment Relations with Japan,” in Ka Zeng (ed.), *The Handbook of the International Political Economy of China*, 1st edition, Edward Elgar Publishing: Chapter 7.

Working Papers

2. **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.
1. **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.

Cases

2. 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.)
1. Meg Rithmire, **Hong Zhang**, and Salaar Sheik, *forthcoming*, “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” Harvard Business School Case.

Book Review

1. **Zhang, Hong**, forthcoming, Review of *Markets with bureaucratic characteristics: How economic bureaucrats make policies and remake the Chinese state*, by Yingyao Wang. *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Work in Progress

Under Review

- Fusing Party and Corporate Governance Abroad: The Chinese Communist Party in SOE Overseas Operations (with Yuan Wang, Revise & Resubmit, the *China Quarterly*)
- Can Chinese Capital Transform Economies in the Global South? Evidence from South Asia (with Meg Rithmire, under review)

In Progress

- Contractor-Driven Debt: Corporate Influence in Chinese Lending (with Keyi Tang)
- Diasporic State Capital: Why Chinese State-owned Enterprises Expand Overseas (with Yuan Wang)
- Disconnected Latecomer: Structural Power and the Limits of Chinese Development Intervention in Pakistan’s Power Sector
- Foreign aid apparatus institutional capacity: A Comparative Framework

Public Scholarship

- Zhang, Hong. 2025. "[Infrastructure and State-Building: China’s Ambitions for the Lower Yarlung Tsangpo Project.](#)." *Made in China Journal* 9, no. 2 (2025).
- Zhang, Hong. 2025. "[What if She Is a Spy?: Gatekeeping, Trust, and Access in Global China Research.](#)" *Global China Pulse* 4(1).
- Zhang, Hong. 2025. "[Taking the Slow Lane to Green Transition in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.](#)" *New Security Beat*, July 24.
- 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.

TEACHING

Instructor

- INTL-I427/503 China and the Global South, Indiana University, Spring 2026
- INTL-I203 Global Development, Indiana University, Spring, Fall 2025, Spring 2026
- INTL-I427/503 Infrastructure and Development, Indiana University, Fall 2024|Spring, Fall 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

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

- Editorship:
 - o Founding Co-editor, [People’s Map of Global China](#) & [Global China Pulse](#) journal, July 2020 –
 - o Member of editorial board, [Made in China Journal](#), June 2020 – July 2024
- Reviewership:
 - o Book manuscript reviewed: Lexington Books | Cambridge University Press
 - o 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* | *The Journal of Development Studies* | *New Political Economy* | *Journal of Asian Studies* | *Global Studies Quarterly* | *Review of International Political Economy*

- Professional Service:
 - o Reviewer, Travel Fund, ACLS/Luce, December 2025 – January 2026
 - o Planning Committee Member, Mini Conference on Chinese Politics, American Political Science Association 2026 Annual Convention
 - o Co-Chair, Division 13: Politics of Communist and Former Communist Countries, American Political Science Association 2026 Annual Convention

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- May/2026: “Contractor-driven Loans,” 4th Political Economy of Aid and Development Society annual conference, Washington DC.
- Mar/2026: “Contractor-driven Loans” & “Disconnected Latecomer,” International Studies Association 2026 Annual Convention, Columbus, Ohio.
- Dec/2025: “Institutional Capacity of Foreign Aid Apparatus,” Workshop on The Political Economy of Foreign Engagement in Africa: Finance, Firms, and Rules, European University Institute (online presentation).
- Dec/2025: “Contractor-pushed Debt: Corporate Influence in Chinese Lending” (co-authored with Keyi Tang), mini-conference on Development Finance at a Crossroads: Lessons and New Directions, Boston University (online presentation).
- Sep/2025: “Can Chinese Capital Transform Economies in the Global South? Evidence from South Asia,” Workshop on Growth Models in the Global South, Brown University.
- Sep-2025: “Fostering Loyalty Abroad: The Chinese Communist Party in SOE Global Operations,” American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chinese Politics Mini-conference (online presentation).
- Mar/2025: “Global China: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Future Directions,” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference.
- Mar/ 2025: “Diasporic State Capital Between Home and Host: Transnationalization of Chinese State-owned Enterprises,” International Studies Association Annual Conference.
- Dec/2024: “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 (online presentation).
- Jul/2024: “Lekki Deep Sea Port: Heralding A Commercial Turn?,” Workshop on Chinese Overseas Ports in Africa and the Middle East, San Francisco (online presentation).
- Apr/2024: “Navigating Risk and Expansion: Exploring China’s Shifting Engagement in Global Infrastructure Development,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco.
- Mar/2024: “Mapping Global China,” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, Seattle.
- Nov/2023: “China’s Global Infrastructure Engagements: Source of State Power?” Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- Nov/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.
- Sep/2023: “China’s Evolving Financing in Global Infrastructure Development,” Workshop on “US, China and the Global South,” University of Pennsylvania.
- Sep/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.
- Mar/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.
- Jul/2022: “‘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 (online presentation).
- Nov/2021: “Internationalization of China’s Developmental Statecraft: Goals, Tools, and Performance”, Columbia University China and the World Program.

- Sep/2021: “Pilot Agency in China’s Developmental State and the Operationalization of the Belt and Road Initiative.” American Political Science Association Annual Conference (online presentation).
- Aug/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 (online presentation).
- May/2021: “Chinese International Contractors in Africa: Structure and Agency.” The 7th Annual China-Africa Research Initiative (CARI) Conference (online presentation).
- Apr/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 (online presentation).
- Mar/2021: “The Belt and Road Initiative and the Internationalization of China’s Developmental State.” Australian Center on China in the World, Australian National University (online presentation).
- Oct/2020: “BRI as a ‘Chinese Solution’ of Development: The Case of Pakistan,” Workshop on “Global BRI,” Queens University in London (online presentation).
- Jul/2019: “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.
- Jul/2019: “Chinese Development Assistance on Recipient State Capacity and Democratic Prospect: Case of Pakistan” Association of Asian Studies’ regional conference, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Mar/2019: “Chinese Development Cooperation and Authoritarian Legitimation: Where Does It Work?” International Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada.
- Mar/2019: “Leninist Multinationals: Role of Communist Party-Building in Chinese SOEs’ Overseas Operations,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada.
- Jan/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.
- Jan/2019: “Exporting Leviathans: How China’s Development Assistance Affects State Capacity and Democratic Prospect in the Developing World,” DC-area Comparative Politics Workshop.
- Apr/2018: “Assessing Political Impacts of China’s Development Assistance,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, California.
- Apr/2018: “A Unique Tool of Economic Statecraft: China’s International Contracting Firms,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, California.
- Apr/2017: “Economic Statecraft with Chinese Characteristics: Role of Subnational Governments in China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ Strategy,” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago.

INVITED TALKS

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- May/2026: consultative discussion on “How Pakistan Can Compete for China’s Green Manufacturing FDI”, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Pakistan (online). [Link](#).
 - Nov/2025: “China’s Belt and Road Initiative”, Pepperdine University.
 - Jul/2025: “Developmental Statecraft under Construction: China’s Global Projection and Limitations,” invited talk at Berlin Contemporary China Network. [Link](#).
 - Jan/2024: “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.
 - Oct/2023: Panel on “Dealing with China in International Development and Infrastructure Policies,” Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Frankfurt, Germany.
 - Oct/2023: “China and Global Change: Chinese State Capitalism and Global Infrastructure Engagement,” ISCTE, Lisbon, Portugal.
 - Jul/2023: “CPEC Industrial Cooperation and Special Economic Zone Development: Global Lessons,” CPEC-The Road to Prosperity and Growth Amidst Challenges, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan (online).
 - Apr/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 (online).
 - Feb/2023: “China, the US, and the Global South,” panel discussion, International Conference on “China

and the World,” Columbia University.

- Dec/2022: “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 (online).
- Jul/2022: “Chinese foreign aid,” Africa - China Legal Fellows Project (online).
- Jun/2022: “Understanding the incentives of Chinese infrastructure companies,” Regional Infrastructure Monitoring Alliance 2022 workshop (online).
- Dec/2021: “China and the World.” Panel discussion, The Transnational Institute (online).
- Nov/2021: “China’s development project in MENA.” Panel discussion, Chatham House, UK (online).
- Oct/2021: “International Contracting and China’s Trajectory of Economic Globalization.” Panel discussion, Lund University, Sweden (online).
- Jun/2021: “China’s International Contractors.” Chinese Overseas Finance and Investment: Online Reflection Workshop, Inclusive Development International (online).
- Apr/2021: “The Rise and Evolution of Chinese Development Cooperation.” Guest presentation, Lisbon School of Economics & Management, Portugal (online).
- Mar/2021: “Chinese Development Cooperation and the New Era of International Aid and Assistance.” Panel discussion, Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research, Pakistan (online).
- Dec/2020: Roundtable on the Belt and Road Initiative, Birkbeck, University of London (online).
- Nov/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 (online).
- Nov/2019: “Unpacking the Belt and Road Initiative.” Regional Workshop on Chinese Investment in Southeast Asia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Apr/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.

MEDIA (SELECTED)

- May 2026. “[Iron brothers’: How China and Pakistan built an unlikely 75-year bond.](#)” Al Jazeera, quoted.
- April 2026. “[Does this Kenyan rail project provide a model for Chinese and Western firms in Africa?](#)” South China Morning Post, quoted.
- December 2025. “[Skin in the game’: China pivots to operating African railways, ports in funding shift.](#)” South China Morning Post, quoted.
- 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.

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

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