Cong Peng

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Updated November 2026

Research Interests

Urban and development economics, transportation, urbanization in Africa, and e-commerce. Trade and environmental economics, including export credit, forestry, and voluntary carbon markets. Applications of artificial intelligence and remote sensing in economics.

Academic Positions

Sep 2022–Present	National School of Development, Peking University *Assistant Professor*
Oct 2019–Aug 2022	Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University *Postdoctoral Fellow*
Oct 2019–Dec 2019	Halıcıoğlu Data Science Institute, University of California San Diego *Postdoctoral Fellow*

Research Affiliate, International Growth Centre

Journal Publications

Colonial Legacies: Shaping African Cities, with J. Vernon Henderson and Neeraj G. Baruah. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 21(1), 29–65, 2021.

Valuing the Environmental Benefits of Canals and Canal Restoration Using House Prices, with Stephen Gibbons and Cheng Keat Tang. *Land Economics*, 97(4), 858–874, 2021.

A Flexible Framework for Built-Up Height Mapping Using ICESat-2 Photons and Multisource Satellite Observations, with Xiayu Tang, Guojiang Yu, Xuecao Li, Hannes Taubenböck, Guohua Hu, Yuyu Zhou, Donglie Liu, Jianxi Huang, Xiaoping Liu and Peng Gong. *Remote Sensing of Environment*, 318, 114572, 2025.

Policy Papers

Evaluating the outcomes of trade liberalization in Uzbekistan: impacts and paths forward, with Abdurashid Bozorov and Zhuoran Shang. *China Economic Journal*, 19(1), 104–116, 2026.

Other Publications

Demographic and Health Outcomes by Degree of Urbanisation: Perspectives from a New Classification of Urban Areas, with J. Vernon Henderson, Adam Storeygard and Vivian Liu. Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020.

Working Papers

Roads to Development? Urbanization Without Growth in Zambia, with Yao Wang.
Revise and Resubmit: Journal of Urban Economics

Does E-commerce Reduce Traffic Congestion? Evidence from Alibaba Single Day Shopping Event. CEP Discussion Paper No. 1646.

Green Gains from Connectivity: Highway Expansion and Forest Quality, with Xingjian Ding, Yumin Hu, Shilei Liu, Jintao Xu, Mingzhi (Jimmy) Xu, Qinghua Zhang.

Covered to Compete: How Export Credit Insurance Shapes Firm Trade, with Yu Ji, Wei Tian, Yiqun Zhuang.
Revise and Resubmit: Journal of International Economics

The Urban Hierarchy in Africa: Competition and Complementarity, with Vernon Henderson, Yang Song and Tony Venables. Department of Economics Discussion Paper Series, University of Oxford.
Revise and Resubmit: Journal of Development Economics
Previously circulated as Growth in the African Urban Hierarchy.

Online Shopping Reduces Urban Air Pollution Exposure by Redistributing Traffic Across Space and Time, with Lan An, Zhenghong Wang, Ruoming Lyu, Long Wang, Yang Yang, Yi Li, Zhenning Dong, Zhou Huang, Ke Rong.
Previously circulated as From Digital Carts to Cleaner Air: The Role of E-commerce in Reducing Urban Air Pollution.

Tipping Forest Carbon Credits Toward Additionality, with Zilin Chen, Fengze Lin, Xianling Long.

Spatial Pricing Can Halve Utilization Inequality Across Urban EV Charging Stations, with Kaixiang Liu, Jianwei Xing, Zhaosheng Zhang.

Selected Work in Progress

China's Journey to the West: Using High-Resolution Satellite Imagery to Evaluate Transportation Improvement in Central Asia, with Gordon Hanson.

Roads, Domestic Trade, and Production Networks: Evidence from Pakistan's CPEC Expansion, with Dzhamilya Nigmatulina, Zhuoran Shang and Mazhar Waseem.

Long-Term Effects of Settlement Upgrading: Evidence from Kenya, with Alice Duhaut, Sixuan Li and Geetika Nagpal.

Research Grants

Trade, Trans-national Infrastructure Investments and Economic Development: Evidence from the New Silk Road. Co-PI, Swiss National Science Foundation (502,434 CHF) and International Growth Center (64,101 pounds), 2024–present.

Infrastructure, Industrial Policy and Economic Development. PI, International Growth Center (25,000 pounds), 2024–present.

The Socioeconomic Impact of Road Development in Zambia: Phase Two. PI, International Growth Center (12,000 pounds), 2020–2021.

The Socioeconomic Impact of Road Development in Zambia. PI, International Growth Center (19,994 pounds), 2019–2020.

Professional Activities

Jul 2019–Sep 2019	Department of Economics, University of Oxford *Occasional Research Assistant*
Mar 2016–Sep 2019	Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics *Occasional Research Assistant*
Aug 2014–May 2015	Macmillan Center, Yale University *Fox International Fellow*
Dec 2014–Sep 2015	Yale Law School, Yale University *Research Assistant*
Sep 2012–Aug 2014	Public Policy Research Center, Fudan University *Research Assistant*

Education

2015–2019	London School of Economics *PhD in Economic Geography*
2011–2014	Fudan University *MA in Economics*
2007–2011	Zhongnan University of Economics and Law *BA in Economics*
2007–2011	Wuhan University *BA in Law (double major)*

Teaching Experience

Peking University

Urban Economics in Developing Countries (graduate, Fall 2023–present)

International Economic Development (graduate, Spring 2024–present)

Public Policy and Microeconomics (graduate, Fall 2022)

Urban Economics (undergraduate, Spring 2024–present)

International Trade (undergraduate, Spring 2023)

London School of Economics

GIS Workshop, Instructor (Lent term, 2016–2018)

Techniques of Spatial Economic Analysis, Teaching Assistant (Lent term, 2018)

Introduction to Quantitative Analysis, Teaching Assistant (Michaelmas term, 2017)

Academic Conferences and Workshops

2026 10th Urbanization and Development Conference, Washington, DC • SMU Trade Conference, Singapore

2025 ASSA Annual Meeting • 2nd Kiel-Göttingen-CEPR Conference on China in the Global Economy • 19th North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • 2nd Sino-Japanese SPACE Workshop • Jinan-SMU Conference on Urban and Regional Economics

2024 Transforming Transportation Conference • COMPIE Conference • 18th North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association

2023 17th North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • 12th European Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • 10th International Workshop on Regional, Urban, and Spatial Economics in China

2022 World Bank Infra4Dev Conference • 5th International Conference of China Development Studies

2021 15th Meeting of the Urban Economics Association

2019 9th European Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • 14th Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • SMU Conference on Urban and Regional Economics

2018 13th Tinbergen Institute Conference on International Trade and Development • Bruneck Workshop on Political Economy • Seventh International Conference on Industrial Organization and Spatial Economics • AREUEA International Conference • Oxford CSAE Conference

2017 International Transportation Economics Association Annual Conference • 7th European Meeting of the Urban Economics Association • Spatial Dimensions of the Labor Market at ZEW

Selected Invited Seminars

Fudan University (May 19, 2026)

Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Capital Normal University

University of Macau (August 26, 2026)

Academic Referee Service

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Urban Economics, Journal of Economic Geography, Regional Science and Urban Economics, Urban Studies, Economics Letters, China Economic Review, China Economic Quarterly International.