
Foreword

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In late 1978, when China began its economic transformation under Deng Xiaoping, China watchers were fascinated by the opening of doors that had been closed for so long. At that time, China's engagement with the world seemed to focus on 'bringing in' – importing new technologies, finance, foreign investment, and advice. Little noticed at the time, the open door also allowed China to begin to transform its 'going out.' In the 1980s, mainland Chinese firms started to explore foreign investment for the first time since 1949. Trade started to accelerate, and Chinese companies began bidding on engineering projects overseas.

I noticed these trends when I first went to Africa in the 1980s to do research on China's foreign aid program. In Liberia, I ate at a restaurant set up by Hunan International Economic and Technical Cooperation Corporation. A company owned by Heilongjiang province was managing a private clinic in a wealthy suburb of Monrovia. In The Gambia, China Harbour Engineering Company competed with the British firm Kier in the Banjul port project tender. Hainan province sent oil palm experts to work on a joint venture between a firm owned by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Choithrams, an Indian company long resident in Sierra Leone. Africa was a testing ground for Chinese entrepreneurs and Chinese companies to learn the ropes of international competition. As the chapters in this book make clear, all of this began long before the rest of the world started to notice.

In the 1980s, most China watchers were asking 'how will China change?' Nearly four decades later, this question is still pertinent, but now a new question has arisen: 'how will China change the world?' China's engagement with other developing countries is a testing ground, where the Chinese compete not only for commerce, but for public opinion, and the right to follow a set of norms – for better or for worse – different from those prevalent in the liberal west. This handbook provides a masterful, timely summing up and analysis of these issues. Deftly organized into helpful sections, and seamlessly edited, it knits together original research by new and established scholars. The book begins with chapters that provide the big picture, framing China's rise and querying whether there is a distinct 'China model.' Sections on identity and perception highlight the interactions of the people that are the front line of Chinese overseas

engagement. A strong focus on China's role in the evolving set of rules, norms, and practices that are shaping global economic and political governance provides insights into China's role in UN peacekeeping, finance for development, renminbi internationalization, and the changing expectations toward environmental responsibilities. Finally, the handbook brings us up to date with a set of chapters detailing Chinese engagement with the major regions of the developing world.

In a world where developing countries make up some 85 percent of the world's population and just over 30 percent of its income, the rise of China – and its interaction with the developing world – has the potential to shape the future profoundly, in ways that are still unfolding. This handbook provides a welcome guide to the growing challenges and opportunities of this brave new world – for the Chinese, for their partners in the developing world, and for everyone else.