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Chinese Impacts and Impacting China

Karsten GIESE

The economic and political rise of the People's Republic of China has stirred widespread debates on China's potential and actual impact on both the international system and individual countries. At the same time, however, individual countries and global systems alike have always impacted developments in China, although these processes previously attracted much less scholarly attention. This issue of the *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* presents a selection of exemplary cases relating to both phenomena that cover different areas of research. This collection of research articles demonstrates that increasing integration within the world system can never be regarded as a one-way street and involves impacting and being impacted simultaneously.

In her case study on Ethiopia, Christine Hackenesch analyses the ways in which China's policies vis-à-vis this East African country have impacted the position and the influence of the European Union as a major donor of development aid in Africa. She argues that Beijing's decision to establish a comprehensive political and economic partnership rather than to become just another aid donor has put considerable pressure on EU–Africa cooperation. The author concludes that by positioning itself as an alternative partner for African countries, China is forcing the EU to reform its development policy system in order to overcome the gap between rhetoric and practice.

Rasmus Lema, Axel Berger and Hubert Schmitz take the global wind power industry as an example. The authors investigate whether and how China's economic development and domestic policies are influencing this new industry globally. Taking the “Asian drivers” debate as a starting point, they demonstrate that while pioneering Western producers of wind power generators have found ways to participate in the growing Chinese market, Chinese domestic policies and government procurement practices clearly favour Chinese enterprises in this sector. The authors conclude that it is not only China's market and production power that is impacting the wind power industry on a global scale but also Chinese state policies and capacities for coordination, innovation and financing.

In the next paper, Axel Berger, Doris Fischer, Rasmus Lema, Hubert Schmitz and Frauke Urban demonstrate that the impacts of China's

rise are manifold and have greatly affected the European Union as well. In the areas of climate-change mitigation and renewable-energy promotion, both China and the EU are big international players. But although both have made considerable progress, the interplay between these two actors is usually framed in terms of conflict rather than cooperation. In their conceptual paper, the authors argue that neglecting the complex structural differences between China and the EU often results in oversimplified narratives. Hence they propose a combination of multi-level governance and value-chain analyses as tools for clarifying the multiple relationships between relevant actors in this field of EU–China relations.

Concentrating on the international oil industry, the two subsequent articles question the power and the impact that China and big Chinese economic actors are able to exercise beyond Chinese borders. Ana Cristina Alves compares the outcomes of China’s infrastructure-for-resources strategy in Africa and South America. She concludes that China has been more successful in gaining the desired results in African countries than in South American states. Taking Angola and Brazil as examples, she argues that infrastructure-for-resources loans as a foreign policy instrument are more suitable for centralized structures, such as the oil sector of Angola, than for liberalized and regulated economic environments, as represented by the Brazilian oil sector. Taking a slightly different perspective, Susana Moreira discusses how the political risks that Chinese national oil companies are exposed to in their target countries have affected Beijing’s global quest for oil. The author discusses unfavourable developments for Chinese oil companies in several countries and concludes that although these companies have adjusted their strategies, the domestic socio-political context of China is still a limiting factor in coping with certain realities, particularly in countries that are less stable than China itself.

This issue of the *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* is rounded off by two contributions in the “Analyses” section. Wang Duanyong also focuses on the risks that are potentially involved in the Chinese presence abroad. However, by concentrating on the physical presence of the rapidly growing number Chinese citizens in third countries, the author employs a different perspective and is mainly interested in the potential risks that Chinese citizens are confronted with when moving or travelling abroad. The author presents a quantitative analysis of the “Special Notes for Chinese Citizens Abroad” issued by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He argues that the protection of the rights and interests

of Chinese individuals in foreign countries has become a key issue within the general policy field of protecting Chinese interests abroad. He discusses the nature of the risks that Chinese citizens were most likely to be exposed to abroad in the period from 2008 to 2010 and concludes that citizens' increasing exposure to all kinds of risk essentially results from China's economic growth, improvements in people's income levels, and political and economic developments that encourage Chinese citizens to travel overseas. Wang's analysis shows that sub-Saharan Africa is the world region where risk to Chinese citizens is most severe overall, and that some of the risks that Chinese citizens face abroad are the result of their own behaviour and practices.

Last but not least, Andreas Hofem and Sebastian Heilmann take up the topic of environmental protection and present a study on the transnational interactions that were relevant for the introduction of the low-carbon economy agenda into policy-making in China. They argue that the agenda-setting activities of foreign-funded transnational actors were met by responsive individuals and institutions in Chinese academia, and that actors at the highest political levels had already considered and deliberated the subject. And although the Chinese administration only gradually adopted the low-carbon policy agenda, the authors conclude that this case has to be considered a successful example of effective transnational diffusion. A receptive Chinese scientific community was exposed to transnational actors and functioned as an access point to the government. As a result, transnational actors indirectly impacted Chinese policy-making.

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Contents

Introduction

- **Karsten GIESE**
Chinese Impacts and Impacting China 3

Research Articles

- Christine HACKENESCH
Aid Donor Meets Strategic Partner? The European Union’s
and China’s Relations with Ethiopia 7
- Rasmus LEMA, Axel BERGER, and Hubert SCHMITZ
China’s Impact on the Global Wind Power Industry 37
- Axel BERGER, Doris FISCHER, Rasmus LEMA, Hubert
SCHMITZ, and Frauke URBAN
China–Europe Relations in the Mitigation of Climate
Change: A Conceptual Framework 71
- Ana Cristina ALVES
Chinese Economic Statecraft: A Comparative Study of China’s
Oil-backed Loans in Angola and Brazil 99
- Susana MOREIRA
Learning from Failure: China’s Overseas Oil Investments 131

Analyses

- WANG Duanyong
The Safety of Chinese Citizens Abroad: A Quantitative
Interpretation of the “Special Notices for Chinese Citizens
Abroad” (2008–2010) 167
- Andreas HOFEM and Sebastian HEILMANN
Bringing the Low-Carbon Agenda to China: A Study in
Transnational Policy Diffusion 199

Contributors 217

Article Index 2012 221