

Global China
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 EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,
We are happy to announce the release of this inaugural issue of *Global China Pulse (GCP)*, a new open access biannual journal dedicated to all facets of Global China.

This publication stems from *The People's Map of Global China* (thepeoplesmap.net), an online map in which nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), journalists, trade unions, and academics come together to provide up-to-date information on various dimensions of Global China in their localities. Alongside the informational infrastructure the *Map* provides, with this journal, we are creating a new space to publish content in a variety of styles and, possibly, experiment with different approaches and formats.

GCP also draws from the experience that some editors have accrued over the years by editing the *Made in China Journal (MIC)*, (madeinchinajournal.com). Just like *MIC*, *GCP* rests on two pillars: the conviction that today more than ever it is necessary to bridge the gap between the scholarly community, civil society, and the general public; and the related belief that open access is necessary to ethically reappropriate academic research from commercial publishers who restrict the free circulation of ideas.

Ideally, the two journals should be read side by side, with *MIC* focusing on Chinese domestic politics and society and *GCP* looking at China's international footprint. We realise this distinction between 'domestic' and 'global' is blurred and China's internal issues are often not separated from broader international trends; it is not by chance that for the past few years, we have covered Chinese international engagements in *MIC*. However, given the level of attention and scrutiny that Global China has been receiving over the past decade and the polarisation between opposing narratives on the subject, we believe such an important and controversial topic warrants a separate, free-standing publication.

Our aim in launching this publication is to create a platform where it is possible to discuss Global China from a more grounded perspective that is not consumed by the geopolitical speculations and abstract and sweeping macroeconomic discussions that often dominate current debates. With this goal in mind—and in line with what we are attempting to do with our *Map*—in this space,

we will mostly offer views on how Global China is playing out at the grassroots, focusing on how Chinese engagements overseas impact the lived experiences of people in different localities and the environments in which they live. Our contributions will be written not only by scholars, but also by NGOs, civil society practitioners, and journalists.

So, what will you find in this inaugural issue? We open with a series of briefs in which we provide summaries of key events related to Global China that have attracted our attention in the past few months and with an Op-Ed section featuring four pieces. **Ching Kwan Lee** discusses ‘Global China Studies’ as an emerging field of knowledge and argues that we can discern at least three meanings of ‘Global China’ in circulation. **Latinoamérica Sustentable**, an NGO based in Ecuador, offers a critical take on the operations of the China Development Bank in Latin America and proposes some steps to improve its operations in the region. **Vida Macikenaite** goes behind the scenes of the recent diplomatic spat between Lithuania and China over the opening of a Taiwanese Representative Office in the Baltic country’s capital. Finally, **Ryan Mitchell** philologically excavates the genealogy of the concept of a ‘community of shared future for all mankind’—one of China’s most important foreign policy slogans during the Xi Jinping era—showing how this has less to do with Marx or Mao than it does with mid-twentieth-century German Christian Democrats and Japanese industrialists.

In the Essays section, **Siman Li**, **Danqing Li**, and **Mark Bo** take stock of the consequences and implications of Xi Jinping’s announcement in September 2021 that China would no longer build new coal power plants overseas. **Charlotte Goodburn** and **Jan Knoerich** explore the impacts of trying to import a Chinese ‘model’ of special economic zones (SEZs) into southern India, displaying how this model interacts with local Indian contexts to create new, uneven forms of urban experience, particularly for local villagers and migrant workers. **Mark Bo** and **Neil Loughlin** focus on the Sihanoukville SEZ in Cambodia and, by taking a deeper dive into the history and development of the project, seek to cut through the competing narratives about the Belt and Road Initiative in Cambodia, outlining how China’s global interactions often build on existing initiatives and development models, and how they can align with, adapt to, and support prevailing local and global dynamics. **Shawn Shieh** recounts how Chinese companies and investors have faced increasing pushback from communities and civil society

organisations across the world and examines some of the common themes and strategies that emerge from this. **Austin Strange** analyses the link between Chinese infrastructure projects overseas and the country's pursuit of international influence, highlighting how these projects create significant risk by providing unique forms of political capital for different actors beyond China's control. Finally, **Romain Dittgen** unpacks the personal stories and experiences of two Chinese individuals who have lived in Johannesburg for a considerable time, offering contextualised glimpses of living and ageing in a city in which opportunity, success, hardship, and inequality coexist in complicated ways.

In the Project Spotlight section, we offer insights into Chinese projects that feature on our *People's Map of Global China*. Here, **Jessica DiCarlo** and **Nicholas Bosoni** dig into the lived reality of the Boten SEZ, Laos's largest infrastructure project to date in terms of capital investment. They do so through images and texts that take us to the streets of Boten to allow readers to feel the rhythms, pace, and experiences of city-making at the Laos–China border.

We wrap up the issue with a series of conversations. In the Voices from the Ground section, **Mark Bo** meets **Paulina Garzón**, the director of *Latinoamérica Sustentable*, to discuss how she came to work on issues related to Chinese investments in Latin America, as well as how she thinks the environmental and social performance of Chinese projects in the region can be improved in the future. Finally, in the Books section, **Nicholas Loubere** interviews **Maria Repnikova** about her latest book, *Chinese Soft Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), and **Hong Zhang** talks to **Ho-fung Hung** about his *Clash of Empires* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

We would like to thank you, our readers and contributors, for starting with us on this exciting journey. We hope that, with your help and enthusiasm, we will be able to make *GCP* into a prime site for informed debate on Global China, and hence a space for important conversations about some of the most crucial social issues of our time.

The Editors ●