This collection looks at various strategies that China has deployed to project its newfound power in different parts of the world. One such strategy has been the rhetoric of “peaceful development” and “harmonious society,” devised to ease anxieties about China’s global expansion, maintain authoritarian rule at home, and articulate an inclusive identity for its diverse populations. Yet China still faces the problem of effective governance, for coinciding with its economic success is the political awakening of its citizens and with it the rise of organized activism on an unprecedented level.

The ten essays address many contradictions emerging in China’s rise as a global player, all related to the top leadership’s obsession with growth and control. Through case studies ranging from feminism and online activism to ethnic unrest in the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang region, the contributors reveal a society with severe tensions and conflicts, which the one-party state has tried to contain through appeals to harmony. As the new generation of Chinese leaders come of age at this critical juncture, authoritarianism should not be the way out of these internal crises. There lies a chance for the leaders to pursue good governance thinking and practices.

Reviews

“An inspiring, highly diverse yet coherent collection of essays that explores the relationship between state and society in contemporary China. CHINA’S RISE TO POWER provides important insights into the strategies employed by the Chinese Communist Party to create an appealing image of its rule, and how various sections of Chinese society are responding to these attempts.”

— Frans-Paul van der Putten, senior research fellow, The Netherlands Institute of International Relations

“These ten essays cover diverse aspects of the rise of China, all related to the state-sponsored wish for the harmonious society and its opposite, which is discontent. By looking at case studies varying regionally from Xinjiang in the northwest to Macau in the southeast and topically from feminism to memories of a 1900 massacre, the writers suggest a society with enormous and worsening tensions, which authorities attempt to ease and cover up through appeals to harmony. Beautifully edited and with well-chosen and interesting themes, this book is a real contribution to the literature on contemporary China.”

— Colin Mackerras, professor emeritus, Griffith University, Australia

“This collection of learned essays broadens our understanding of China’s rapid transformation in the twenty-first century. These valuable contributions offer fresh perspectives on the contradictions emerging in China’s rise as a global player.”

— R. G. Tiedemann, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK

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