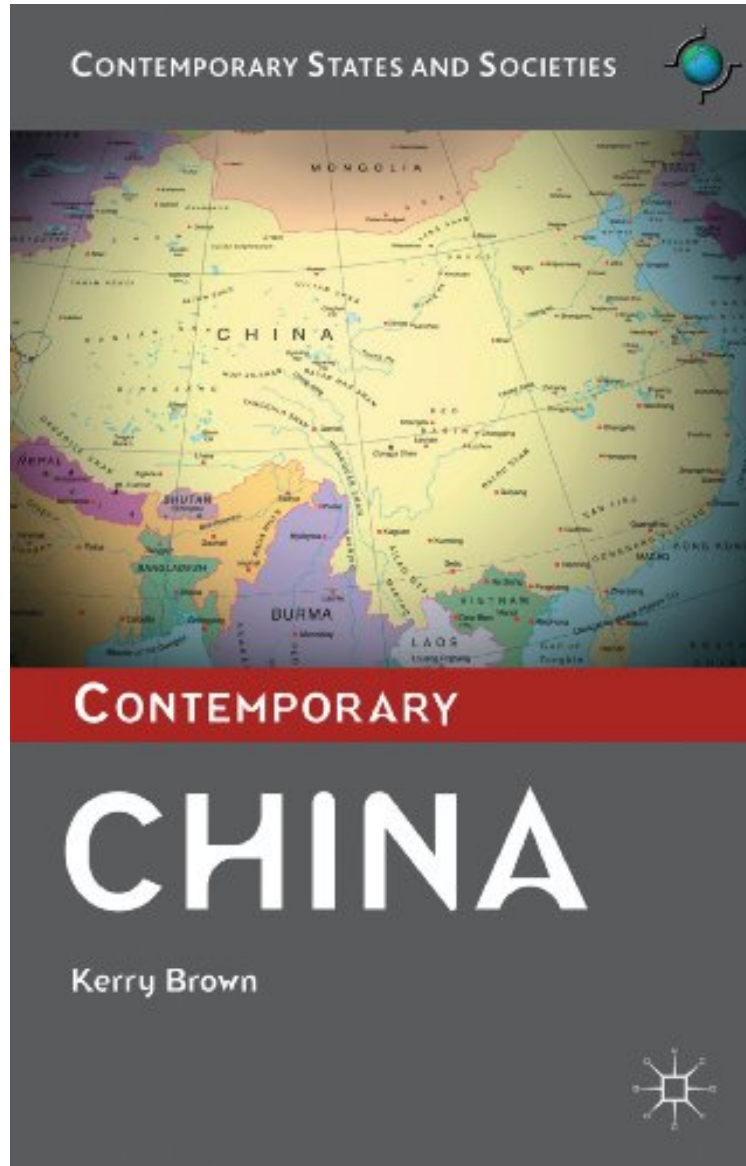


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China has created its own distinctive pathway to becoming one of the world's largest economies ndash; and the country's economic and political development over the next decade will have profound implications for the rest of the

world. Knowledge of contemporary China is therefore essential for anyone who seeks to understand politics, business and international affairs in the twenty-first century. Assuming no prior knowledge, this book presents an accessible and engaging introduction to all aspects of China. Following a scene-setting chapter on the making of modern-day China, the book moves on to examine the country's political and economic structures, its society and culture, and its changing place in the world. Looking to the future, the book also considers the demographic and political challenges which China now faces. Kerry Brown shows that there is a vibrant debate within the country about what China is, in what direction it might go and what sort of power it should become. The text is illustrated throughout with figures and tables, boxes focusing on key issues and an extensive guide to further reading and useful websites. This accessible and lively book is the ideal starting point for students and general readers who want to know more about this important country.

About the Author Kerry Brown leads the Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN) and is Head of the Asia Programme at Chatham House. From July 2012 he will be Professor and Executive Director of the China Studies Centre, University of Sydney, Australia.