

Acknowledgments

I started research for this book in 2015 as a PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This journey ultimately became a sobering learning experience about China. Over the years, I spoke with hundreds of people in government and the business community – conversations that are now nearly impossible to have. Because of these conversations, what began as a focus on infrastructure politics and public service provision expanded into an inquiry into how authoritarian institutions shape the decisions of government officials and businesspeople, and how those decisions affect the business landscape, development quality, and sustainability in China. Research for this book has left me deeply concerned about China's trajectory under its current political economy model, though it has also strengthened my respect for the remarkable resilience of the Chinese people.

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