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## Special Economic Zones: Challenges and Opportunities for Territorial Development

*Michele Pigliucci (Ed.)*

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### 3. The Evolution of Special Economic Zones in China and the Possible Global Geopolitical Perspectives

*Maurizio Scaini<sup>1</sup>*

#### *Abstract*

China, like other regions of the world, has historically experienced the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). In more recent times, the so-called Unequal Treaties, following the end of the Opium Wars, have set the historical and geographical conditions for the establishment of the most recent SEZs, favored by the Chinese government, from the eighties onwards. With the accession of China to the WTO, since the years 2000, the Chinese economy has progressively integrated itself in the international economic circuit while maintaining its specificities. Since then, the SEZs have lost some of their distinctive features as the Popular Chinese Republic has implemented a policy of tax harmonisation covering the entire territory. The Chinese SEZs, of the era of reforms, were and are still much more than simple areas for attracting investments. They have become, rather, the symbol of a model of unprecedented socio-economic development, symbol of dynamism

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and constant process of experimentation, subsequently spread over the entire national territory. Today, these areas are also an important experiment for the *Belt and Road Initiative*. This article aims to define the role and evolution of SEZs in China and in China's rise at global level.

### ***Keywords***

*Special Economic Zones, Belt and Road Initiative, Sustainable Development, East Asia globalization.*



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