

Journal of Economics Library

econsiences.com

Volume 12

September 2025

Issue 3

The Future of China's Development and Globalization.

By Henry H. Wang and Mabel L. Miao. Springer 2024

By Scatt CARSON [†]

Abstract. *The Future of China's Development and Globalization* is an insightful collection of essays and candid discussions from various ambassadors posted in Beijing, published by the Center for China and Globalization (CCG). The volume addresses the shifting global landscape marked by post-pandemic recovery, increasing geopolitical tensions, and the growing influence of the Global South. The book's central purpose is to provide an essential diplomatic perspective on China's current state and its evolving role in the global order. It is divided into three main parts: examining the historical and current state of China's diplomatic relations with various countries (e.g., Pakistan, Croatia, Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Spain, and the EU), focusing on specific areas of potential cooperation such as economic governance and digital transformation, and discussing the future of global development in which China plays an essential role. The collected views underscore the necessity of maintaining open communication channels, fostering multilateralism, and ensuring China and major global powers collaborate on transnational challenges like global governance, climate change, and technology.

Keywords. China-Global Relations; Global Governance; Multilateralism; Chinese Development; Diplomatic Perspectives.

JEL. F50; O53; F02; F13; P16.

Book Review

The *Future of China's Development and Globalization: Views from Ambassadors to China*, edited by Henry Huiyao Wang and Mabel Lu Miao of the Center for China and Globalization (CCG), is a unique and timely compendium of diplomatic insights into China's evolving global position. Emerging from the dialogue platforms established by CCG, notably the annual Ambassadors Roundtable, the volume gathers contributions from a diverse array of Beijing-based ambassadors, representing nations from both the Global North and the Global South. The book's publication occurs during a period of pronounced global instability, characterized by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating geopolitical tensions, and a fundamental shift in the influence structure of the global economy.

The core intellectual merit of the collection lies in its pragmatic, on-the-ground assessment of China—a crucial nation whose development and diplomatic choices are increasingly viewed as "an essential part of the overall equation" of the future world order. By prioritizing the perspectives of official diplomatic envoys, the editors successfully move beyond abstract geopolitical theory to provide granular accounts of bilateral and multilateral engagement across a spectrum of issues, from trade and technology to culture and environment. This review will examine the book's structure, its key arguments regarding the necessity of communication and multilateralism, and its overall contribution to understanding China's role in a fragmented world.

[†] University of Texas, Permian Basin, East, Odessa, Texas, USA. 

II. The Theoretical Frame: Open Channels in a Fragmenting World

The book is implicitly framed by the concept of "perpetual flux". The world is acknowledged to be moving through a phase of constant geopolitical and economic transition, where established norms are challenged by regional conflicts, the rise of the Global South, and changes in globalization. In this volatile context, the diplomatic envoy is presented not merely as a representative but as a "pivotal contact point" whose core function is to maintain clear, correct communication and understanding between nations.

The collective viewpoint of the ambassadors consistently reinforces the idea that, regardless of ideological differences or specific policy disagreements, open channels of communication are non-negotiable. This diplomatic realism is perhaps the book's most significant recurring theme. For instance, the Ambassador of the European Union, Jorge Toledo Albiñana, emphasizes the vital need to maintain dialogue with China in a fundamentally changed world. Similarly, the Ambassador of Spain, Rafael Dezcallar de Mazarredo, stresses the importance of continuous links despite "issues on which both countries have very different views". The book thus serves as a practical demonstration of diplomacy's role as the stabilizing factor amid global tensions.

III. Part I: The Ebb and Flow of Relations with China

Part I, "The Ebb and Flow of Relations with China," provides a crucial historical and contemporary context for China's bilateral relationships. The chapters here illuminate the heterogeneity of China's diplomatic ties, showing that the relationship is far from monolithic.

A. Traditional Friendships and Historical Narratives

Contributions from Pakistan and Sri Lanka illustrate the historical depth of China's connections with nations in the Global South. Ambassador Moin Ul Haque's chapter on Pakistan, referred to as an "oldest friend," focuses on personal experiences and the meaning of being a "batie" (a strong Chinese term of endearment for a Pakistani). This focus on the historical, cultural, and personal dimensions grounds the formal diplomatic relationship in narratives of solidarity and mutual development, illustrating the long-term consistency of Sino-Pakistani relations. Similarly, Ambassador Dr. Palitha Kohona of Sri Lanka details a historical narrative of the two nations as "friendly neighbors that have contributed to each other's development for centuries". These essays underscore the enduring importance of historical goodwill and non-interference as key tenets of China's diplomacy with its traditional partners.

B. Engaging the West and the Importance of Dialogue

The perspective shifts when addressing European nations, where the relationship is often more complex, characterized by an intertwined balance of challenges and opportunities.

- Croatia and New Potential: Ambassador Mihelin discusses the "great potential for cooperation with China in a 'Dario Diamond Era'" of bilateral relations, pointing toward new economic opportunities.
- Switzerland and Practical Cooperation: Ambassador Jürg Burri outlines multiple areas of cooperation, including trade, green technology, education, and travel, highlighting his country's sustained willingness to "engage even more deeply with China".
- Spain and the EU: Managing Disagreement: The chapters by the Spanish Ambassador and the EU Ambassador are particularly revealing. They acknowledge the necessity of maintaining communication channels despite

S. Carson, JEL, 12(3), 2025. pp.172-175

fundamental policy differences. This reflects the EU's evolving stance, which often categorizes China simultaneously as a partner, competitor, and systemic rival. The shared message is one of pragmatic engagement: disengagement is not a viable option, and stability relies on continuous, candid dialogue.

IV. Part II: On the Issues—Specific Cooperation and Global Challenges

Part II, "On the Issues—The Immense Potential in Cooperation with China," moves from general bilateral status updates to specific, functional areas where global cooperation is critical.

A. Economic Governance and Digital Transformation

Ambassador Signe Brudeset of Norway initiates this section with an overview of Norway's strong system of economic governance, suggesting that both Norway and China can exchange experiences on shared global challenges such as demographic changes and the impact of digitalization. This highlights the book's interest in comparative policy learning. China's massive, rapid domestic transformations—in areas like geriatric care, digital finance, and the environment—are presented not just as local issues but as potentially valuable global case studies.

The contributions in this section implicitly address China's commitment to sustainable development. The urgency of climate change is repeatedly mentioned as a major issue that major global powers, including China, must jointly tackle. This is a diplomatic effort to compartmentalize engagement: even as geopolitical rivalries persist, the sheer scale of transnational challenges necessitates cooperative rivalry, where power is exercised with others, not over them.

B. Multilateralism, Coercion, and Global Order

While the chapters avoid direct confrontation, the discussion often circles back to the tension between multilateralism and unilateralism in international economic governance. L.-K. Mikkola's chapter, for instance, delves into the definition of globalization, tracing its intensification back to late twentieth-century industrialization and shifts in monetary practices.

The necessity of reforming multilateral institutions, such as the WTO and G20, is repeatedly emphasized, reflecting a consensus among the diplomatic community that existing global governance structures need updating to accommodate the multipolar reality. The book champions a world order built on communication, persuasion, and the international rule of law, actively discouraging a system defined by "coercion and dictating rules". Furthermore, restoring the "centrality of the notion of development" is proposed as an essential foundation for achieving global peace and security.

V. Conclusion: An Essential Diplomatic Almanac

The Future of China's Development and Globalization is an important and timely book for practitioners of international relations and scholars of Chinese foreign policy. It succeeds in its objective of offering diverse, candid, and invaluable perspectives from those who serve as the real-time interpreters of China's development and diplomatic stance.

The collection demonstrates that the modern diplomatic challenge with China is not one of understanding what China is doing, but rather how different nations with divergent interests are navigating China's increased presence and capability. The book offers less of a unified theoretical

framework and more of a diplomatic almanac, documenting the practical realities of engagement.

Its primary scholarly contribution is a comprehensive, empirical argument for the resilience of diplomacy and multilateralism even in an era of heightened fragmentation. By continuously providing a platform for dialogue among ambassadors, CCG and the editors underscore the fact that understanding China's trajectory is the most relevant geopolitical fact of the current era. The book ultimately serves as a powerful testament to the necessity of communication, cooperation on transnational issues, and the pragmatic recognition of China's indispensable role in shaping the future of global governance and sustainable development. It is highly recommended reading for anyone seeking an authentic, multi-perspective view of China's engagement with the world.



Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License, which permits any non-commercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this licence to share adapted material derived from this article or parts of it. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

