



## China Goes Global: The Partial Power

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Most global citizens are well aware of the explosive growth of the Chinese economy. Indeed, China has famously become the "workshop of the world." Yet, while China watchers have shed much light on the country's internal dynamics--China's politics, its vast social changes, and its economic development--few have focused on how this increasingly powerful nation has become more active and assertive throughout the world.

In *China Goes Global*, eminent China scholar David Shambaugh delivers the book many have been waiting for--a sweeping account of China's growing prominence on the international stage. Thirty years ago, China's role in global affairs beyond its immediate East Asian periphery was decidedly minor and it had little geostrategic power. As Shambaugh charts, though, China's expanding economic power has allowed it to extend its reach virtually everywhere--from mineral mines in Africa, to currency markets in the West, to oilfields in the Middle East, to agribusiness in Latin America, to the factories of East Asia. Shambaugh offers an enlightening look into the manifestations of China's global presence: its extensive commercial footprint, its growing military power, its increasing cultural influence or "soft power," its diplomatic activity, and its new prominence in global governance institutions.

But Shambaugh is no alarmist. In this balanced and well-researched volume, he argues that China's global presence is more broad than deep and that China still lacks the influence befitting a major world power--what he terms a "partial power." He draws on his decades of China-watching and his deep knowledge of the subject, and exploits a wide variety of previously untapped sources, to shed valuable light on China's current and future roles in world affairs.

- Description from Amazon.com

## **China Goes Global: The Partial Power Details**

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### W.T. Anderson says

<http://www.postwesternworld.com/2013/...>  
by Stuenkel, Oliver

China Goes Global: The Partial Power, by David Shambaugh, OUP USA, £20/\$29.95, 320 pages

Today's debate about the future of global order is marked by a near-certainty that China's economy will overtake that of the United States within the next decade. Most analysts also believe that as a consequence, China will be able to challenge and eventually supplant the US as the global hegemon. We are heading, the story goes, towards a 'Chinese world'.

David Shambaugh, Director of the China Program at George Washington University, disagrees. He argues that China "has a very long way to go before it becomes - if it ever becomes - a true global power." According to him, "China will never rule the world." The reason, according to the author, is not merely economic. The book argues that China lacks close friends or allies, and that China is not normatively integrated into the community of nations. It lacks a military network similar to that of the United States. Furthermore, its reactive foreign policy keep it from taking the initiative, leaving its diplomatic footprint smaller than its economic weight would suggest. Above all, China has no soft power - its cultural products fail to set global trends like that of the United States.

Adopting Joseph Nye's argument that resources do not constitute power unless they can be used to influence actors or the outcome of a situation, Shambaugh argues that China is a global actor without yet being a global power. Perhaps most provocatively, the author argues that "one does not see Beijing proactively and positively trying to resolve any global problem."

This points to an interesting debate about how to define power in international relations. Is cultural influence a necessary ingredient to be a global power? Would it not be natural that Chinese culture would be met with skepticism in a world strongly influenced by Western cultural norms?

In addition, Shambaugh's overall argument seems to assume that China's economic rise does not increase its capacity to influence others. Yes, China has only a limited number of leading multinational corporations and is only the world's fifth-largest overseas investor, yet this will inevitably change in the coming decades. China's soft power is certain to increase as its economy becomes more powerful. Conscious of this, the government in Beijing is financing a growing number of Confucius Institutes around the world. The number of university students studying Mandarin across the world will dramatically increase, leading to a greater comprehension of Chinese society and culture.

I therefore tend to disagree with Shambaugh's suggestion that the hype about China's rise is unwarranted. China clearly faces enormous challenges, unlike the United States a century ago. China's way to the top will thus be far more difficult and less predictable. And yet, paradoxically, China Goes Global provides simply too many statistics in favor of China's dominance to agree that it is only a partial power.

Irrespective of such questions, Shambaugh's book is extremely well written and researched, providing the reader relatively balanced and comprehensive overview of China's role in the world and about the internal debate in China - a debate which remains opaque and little understood.

## **Weibo Xiong says**

The book provides ample evidence of China's increasing, yet limited international presence, i.e., a partial power.

To be sure, to underestimate China is a great danger to the rest of the world. But the danger appears to be even greater if China overestimates itself. Obsessed with the economic achievement is misleading. It is likely to encourage China to continue its preoccupied self-interested, economic-driven foreign policy while ignoring other equally important international responsibilities.

Such a combination of arrogance and blindness would deteriorate China's relations with those who regard the country's rise as a threat to them, undermining the government's effort to build soft power, and in turn jeopardising China's long-term prosperity which increasingly depends on global integration.

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## **Stephanie Roach says**

Good read for sinophiles.

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## **Scott Zuke says**

The thesis, clearly stated in the book's title, is extremely well defended with exhaustive research into China's rapid growth--and still significant limitations--in topical areas including diplomatic soft power, cultural influence, economic engagement, and projected military capability. The depth and breadth of Shambaugh's research, as well as the scope of the project itself, would make this a good primer for those seeking a more informed opinion on where China really stands on the world stage, and what it means for the United States.

Certain sections were a little dry and overburdened with details and statistics for a casual reader, but would be quite useful to scholars since current (and reliable) data on some subjects can be hard to come by.

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## **Atila Demirkasımolu says**

Çin hakkında eleştirel bakışın hakim olduğu bir değerlendirme. Ancak yine de epeyce veri sunulmuş. Öte yandan pek çok açıdan yapılan değerlendirmeler ise konunun geniş bir yelpazede ele alındığını gösteriyor.

Görünen o ki Çin'i önemsemek gerekiyor ve oldukça ciddiye almak gerekiyor. Çin hakkında insanların kafasındaki. Çinlilerin de kafasındaki. Bunun çok farklı sebepleri var. Bütün bunlara bir bakış açısı kazanmanız için yardımcı olacak bir kitap.

## **T.I. Harris says**

A fine but at times dry read critiquing China's rise to power and what it means for the world at large. Shambaugh's research is impressive, and his conclusions are nuanced and well-considered. I think his analysis of China's economic power is weak, and he fails to address the inequality at the heart of that growth. For the uninitiated reader, you'll find yourself confused by numerous events he references but does not discuss in detail. That said, as a primer on China's status in the world, it's worthwhile.

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## **Maria Sirunyan says**

In "China Goes Global: The Partial Power" David Shambaugh presents and defends the main argument of the book: China's influence is increasing globally and yet it still remains only a partial world power. This book is a constructive answer to "China threat" (see Carpenter, 2006) and "When China rules the world" (see Jacques, 2009) perspectives.

Shambaugh employs Nye's interpretation of power: based on Dahl's "power is the ability of A to make B do what it would otherwise not do" Nye presents the essence of power as the conversion of resources into influence (Shambaugh, 2013, p. 8). Hence, based on this understanding of power, Shambaugh provides numerous examples of how and where China lacks this influence and as a result its power in the world is limited.

What sets this book apart is the way in which its main argument is substantiated. Shambaugh defends it with objective, comprehensive and up to date evidence, rather than ancient historic postulations or claims about the future, as it is done in Jacques (2009) book for example.

"China Goes Global: The Partial Power" is well written, extensive and complete; its structure and arguments are carefully considered. It is hard to deny that this is a must-read book for anyone interested in China's rise and Chinese foreign policy.

There are, however, few points where this book is lacking. Namely, Shambaugh's writing style could be critiqued as mundane and overwhelming at times. The author structures the entire book around the main narrative: China has an increasing global presence yet it remains only a partial power. Almost every chapter is summarized along these terms. Hence, the dichotomy itself sets limiting boundaries, especially in terms of variance between the realms discussed in the book.

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## **Adrian says**

David Shambaugh provides a comprehensive, and highly academic account of both China's foreign policy and its impact on the world stage, with the overall thesis that China is in many respects, a partial power, as opposed to a global power like the United States.

Although China's impact is widely felt in many areas, not least of which is the economic realm, Shambaugh provides various case studies throughout the book that show that China's impact is not yet on a par with the United States, and that proclamations like "rule the world" (a counterargument to Martin Jacques's best seller) are at this stage, premature.

China has an ambivalent, and in some ways, half-hearted approach to global governance, and its impact is rarely felt in areas that do not coincide with its core interests. This in many ways aligns with its comparatively slow awakening on the global scene, with the early years of the PRC being insular and inward looking, followed by Deng Xiaoping's dictum of keeping a low profile.

While many differing voices exist, and are examined within this book, many of which call for a more strident, aggressive posture on the world stage, Chinese foreign policy remains largely a purely realist school of thought, with a general ambivalence toward involvement in areas far beyond its orbit, although this is gradually changing.

China's economic impact, and the power prediction of its military are examined in detail, and this also shows that China is still a partial power. The military lacks the means for extensive power prediction, as opposed to the US, and China still lacks a full Blue Water Navy.

Shambaugh's overall conclusions are that China's ascendancy has been largely overestimated, and that great power conflict, such as a scenario wherein China and US stumble into conflict due to a declining power being unable to give way to a rising power, are largely exaggerated.

While some may not share the author's views, China Goes Global is still an excellent account of both China's foreign policy and its global impact, and is an essential read for understanding both Chinese foreign policy, and China's impact on the world stage.

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### **Julian Douglass says**

This was a great survey on why, in the author's eyes, China is a partial power and not a superpower (yet). With an additional 5 years since the book was released, I think that China has started to flex its muscle in the economic and global security presence. A great survey that should be updated, but also a very interesting one that can be used for a primer on understanding a more diverse and open China, especially as their footprint does expand.

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### **Allisonperkel says**

while this is a very good overview of the current (2012ish) state of China and it does present conclusions that make sense, the book was a slog to get through. The writing was dense to the point of distraction and extremely dry. This is a book where you know you are reading something more scholarly than poppy. Generally not a bad thing but it did make the book feel more like a challenge to finish rather than a joy to read.

Still the conclusions are solid, the facts are well researched and it's clear the Mr. Shambaugh put together a first rate book on the state of China in the world at this point in time.

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### **Brian Moyer says**

Completely changed my perspective on China, but you had really better love this subject matter to tough out this much comprehensive information.

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## James R Newlin says

I got this from the US State Dept reading

Core point, p 310: "China is, in essence, a very narrow-minded, self-interested, realist state, seeking only to maximize its own national interests and power." This book points to a number of ways in which China is a world power, and ways in which it's a partial power.

World Power: ballistic missiles and space, cyber warfare, and the economy.

Two big weapons that are world class: J-20 stealth fighter and DF-21D antiship ballistic missile, which can destroy an aircraft carrier in one shot! I see things ramping up with Taiwan, and the US will need to backoff due to the ballistic missile -- this is a world class weapon that the US cannot defend against.

Partial Power: military, culture, government...bunch of other points

Bullet Points:

- China dominated by "realists": nationalists, pragmatic and less xenophobic, "China First", and care little of other countries

- They think the west is trying to trap them with policies of joining the world. They are against the concept of "mutual gains", as a trap of the west. They think "responsibility" of China means "containment" and "hedging." They see the west as a trap. China is BIG into sovereignty over global cooperation. "...deep suspiciousness about so-called global governance." This was stressed throughout the book, I'd say it's THE take away.

- Started growth on "Southern Sojourn" of 1992, Tiananmen in 1989 was bad, and 1978 was the opening up of China

- China focused against Taiwan independence (this seems to be top priority) ← Navy focus here

Tibet independence

Christian proselytizers

Dali Lama (who is in Tibet)

Pressures in South China Sea, East China Sea, Yellow Sea, and Taiwan Strait

Tiananmen Square Massacre: 1989, US and EU now have an arms embargo from this

China doesn't contribute much to aid, like AIDS relief, etc.

"...the Chinese government is turning a very valuable potential soft power (the press) and public diplomacy asset into a liability."

Biggest trading partner is EU. USA is behind the EU.

Huawei's strategy is, "Maoist strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside." ← This means, dominate in developing countries, then move to the US later

China does not make good microchips, it's way behind US chip makers

Not a single company in China is on "100 Best Global Brands" (Lenovo is now)

China SUCKS in terms of HR, especially management. Their culture is different.

Environmental issues likely to cause big unrest locally in China

China imports about half oil, most comes in on ships (like 90%+), so securing some key "choke" points is important to them list.

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## Juan says

Cuando se aborda este tema, se espera desentrañar una trama oculta que explique el comportamiento Chino, pero la realidad es que el tamaño de China y sus presiones internas son suficientemente complejas para

pretender un KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid!)

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### **Renee says**

This was required graduate reading, and was clearly not assigned due to Shambaugh's engaging writing style. That being said, this book is very dense, informative, and a great starting point for getting a grasp on China's current position in the global hierarchy.

I did find Shambaugh's focus on China as a Western power to be a bit tiring. I don't believe that China is really the predominant world power, but it is a bit unfair to judge it by the standards set by the US as if these are the only standards which can be used. It is fairly likely that if China ever does become the dominant culture, it will not look much like the current Western hegemony.

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### **Daniel says**

I work in college admissions, and a surprising amount of my day revolves around China. Chinese students make up something like 60% of our foreign applicant pool. When the Chinese economy slows, or when China encourages attendance in domestic colleges, we notice. Of course, we're not alone in that. The rise of China is a foreign policy cliché in America, and often fits neatly into an American-decline narrative: China is our largest creditor, China is acting aggressively in the South China Sea, China's poised to become the world's largest economy, and America dwindles all the while. Baby Boomers afraid of change eat that shit up with a spoon.

Of course, it's worth looking at this in perspective. The American economy first became the largest in the world at the beginning of the 20th century, but it took four decades and two destructive world wars to turn the US into a global superpower. As late as the 1930s, American elites showed a level of indifference to European affairs that couldn't be imagined now. The rise of America as a global force was hardly inevitable. David Shambaugh tells a similar story in CHINA GOES GLOBAL. An international relations scholar with a focus on China, he examines all facets of China's global influence--their military/security apparatus, their diplomacy, their influence on international institutions, their cultural influence, their economic influence, and their conception of the role China plays in the world. Shambaugh concludes that China actually punches below its weight, and neither able or nor terribly willing to assume dominance in the near future.

Shambaugh argues that the 'rise of China' cliché can easily overestimate the degree to which China wants to overthrow the global international order. When Chinese leaders visit foreign countries, they often bring teams of businessmen with them to encourage trade and overseas direct investment. An executive for the tech company Huawei referred to their business strategy as a "Maoist strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside," only instead of socialist revolution, Huawei is selling low-cost cell phones to the global market. This reliance on the global market encourages China to cooperate more deeply with international institutions, including a successful partnership with Interpol, Chinese participation in anti-piracy efforts near the Horn of Africa, and so forth. Current Chinese policy focuses far more on shifting power within international institutions rather than blowing up the system entirely.

Which brings me back to the South China Sea, which was a major inspiration for me to read CHINA GOES GLOBAL. I am happy to say that, although the book was written more than a year ago, I did find it helpful in understanding the dynamics at work now. China is increasingly reliant on oil imports, the vast majority of which ships through the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea; by securing offshore drilling and their

most critical trade route, the Chinese government can thus maintain the economic development that permitted (relative) domestic stability for the past twenty-five years. In this way, Chinese foreign policy reveals not global ambition, but a focus on narrowly defined national interest. And China's ability to project military power is regional at best. (Shambaugh refers to the PLAN as a 'green water' navy, which means a navy restricted to the coastal areas and not the open ocean; this was a bit of national security argot that I really enjoyed.) When 35,000 nationals needed to be evacuated from Libya the Chinese government was obliged to charter commercial airliners.

Shambaugh also notes China's persistent trouble in establishing firm alliances with other countries, referring to it as a 'lonely power.' Even Russia has slowed their military sales to China, and Shambaugh quotes Russian elites speaking of China with deep ambivalence. Since CHINA GOES GLOBAL was published, Chinese aggression has prompted violent anti-Chinese riots in Vietnam, while the Philippines recently offered America a new naval base to help counter the Chinese. All of this goes to show that China is nowhere close to being a world power, even if that's what the government was seeking.

Like I mentioned earlier, I got this book to help get a basic understanding of China's position in the world from an expert who wasn't prone to media hype. And while Shambaugh's writing can be a little dry--I understand that this book is assigned in IR classes, which makes perfect sense to me--I felt as if it gave me a solid grounding to understand one of the most important issues in the world today. I felt as if I was in reliable hands, and I valued that.

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