

Stop Ignoring China's New Parallel World: The Biggest Shift in 80 Years

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SUMMARY

Jin Liang, an economist and industry expert, introduces his new series "Decoding China," aiming to clarify misconceptions about China's rapid development and its societal dynamics. He emphasizes that while many foreigners perceive China as a futuristic utopia due to its advancements, the reality is more complex, with significant social pressures and challenges that Chinese citizens face.

- China's visa-free entry policy has allowed foreigners to experience the country firsthand, challenging Western narratives.*
- Visitors often describe China as a futuristic society, impressed by high-speed trains, cashless payments, and advanced technology.*
- Despite the perception of utopia, China faces internal challenges such as social pressure and an overload birth rate.*
- The rapid adoption of technology, like hotel delivery robots, is driven by strict COVID-19 measures and competitive business culture.*
- Liang argues that China's development model is distinct from Western theories and has roots in its historical industrialization efforts.*
- He highlights the importance of understanding China's unique socio-economic structure, which combines strong state authority with market competition.*
- Liang believes that misconceptions about China stem from a lack of comprehensive analysis and understanding of its development.*
- The series aims to foster better global relations and understanding through factual explanations and insights into China's growth and future.*

Hello everyone. This is Jin Liang, an economist and industry expert focusing geopolitics from Hantang Economic Research, think tank China. I'm also the Chinese friends of Think Greece. Starting today, I will launch a new series called Decoding China. Over the past 3 years, I have been lucky enough to travel to many countries. I also received lots of foreign guests here in China. Some of them are from Western countries, some from Russia, and some from Global South. During these years, China has become the world's center of attention without any doubt. I believe that China's visa-free entry policy for foreign visitors studying China has greatly speed up the learning of China today. When foreigners see China with their own eyes, they will form their own opinions.

I'm glad that these real-life experiences have largely broken the false narrative on China spread by the Western mainstream media between 2015 and 2022. Facts will speak for themselves. Now, more and more people

describe China as a country living in the future. I hear these words from time to time in the past months, especially from people from Europe and America. I mean, developed countries. They often say such thing after they visiting China or watching the videos filmed in China.

For many Chinese people, actually, such comment is quite surprising for us. We are proud of our fast-changing society achievements. Yet, what's look like futuristic scenario to foreign visitors is just our daily lives. Foreigners are amazed by China's many, I call what I call as name cards, key scenery. For example, high-speed trains, electrical vehicles, solar and wind power, clean cities and towns and villages, plenty of public parks in these cities, tidy shops, delivery robots in hotels, cashless payment methods. And by the way, actually we have rarely even used bank cards for 13 years.

Widespread everywhere 4G and 5G networks. Fully online business and government services. And also the low-cost health care and medicine. All these achievements have existed in China for many years. So, what I call from 4 years to 70 years. For example, the high-speed railway network began to go into our lives 17 years ago and continues growing. Well, the hotel delivery robots, which you many of the guests foreign people come here notice appear start to appear in our daily life about 4 years ago.

Changes is still in going on very rapidly. The latest I can share with you is that people are turning to AI APP for information. Chinese AI APPs are quickly becoming our part of daily life. For example, for myself, I use Taobao, China's AI APP, dozens of times more often this year than last year. I know that over the past 5 years or so life in Western countries and global south has not improved much because of the reasons of continuous inflation. Whereas in the contrast, China is in the opposite situation. We have almost no inflation or I can I can say it's only deflation.

Everyday here today you not only deflation, today many of the daily goods is cost less than what it did 7 or 8 years ago and while the same time the quality maybe greatly improves because new technology application. So, this huge gap, I mean in the west there's inflation and China is deflation, has made China look like more like an ideal country or in English word utopia to many of foreigners who visit China. Still, I should say that such utopia image does not match much with how Chinese people see our self ourselves.

Our society has its own concerns. Many of these problems actually oriented from our overly productive economy and our fast growth and our extremely high efficiency. Because of this I call this fierce competition among the companies and you know, people are employees of companies they also produce not only consumers. So this in this direction it creates heavy pressure on people leading to many of social problems such as overload birth rate. Actually a well-known patriotic influencer of my friends told his a foreign friends also that don't picture China so perfect or you are you are you are picturing China as a too good.

Clearly today's China needs a proper explanation especially now that the world see China as a futuristic nation. Clear exam explanation will help the the world to understand China better and make other country reflect on their their path of development and see what can be improved. So in fact well sometime I should say today many foreign researchers on China often have holds very conflicting views about China. So that is a problem or

I could I could I would say that is a puzzle.

From my personal international exchange experience over past three years I have noticed a problem. Due to language problem barrier partly and due to recent changes in China's administrative systems arrangement very few Chinese people especially those who truly understand how Chinese system is operated can get opportunity to systematically explain to the world how all this happened in China in a simple understandable language. Also as you say that hardly anyone in China has a fully review and concludes Chinese development over the past 20 years. Not everyone can fully master the knowledge of economics, particularly that I mean the mainstream economics has some problem. I also must the knowledge of sociology or industry knowledge and technology to explain how China achieved all of this. To some degree, even we Chinese underestimate how fast and how far China has gone. If a Chinese person living China in 2000, I mean 26 years ago, traveled to today's China with a time machine, supposedly, I'm sure that he also be very shocked by these 26 years of dramatic change. Hence, we need to both a big picture analysis and real-life examples to explain China's growth. Every big change in China follow actually very clear logical rules.

Let's take example. The hotel delivery robots that many of even people from West will be amazed at. One of the newest Chinese trends, they actually become widely used between 2020 and 2023. That is why I say that it become popular about four or five years ago. So, to explain this happen, this is a I could say micro level case. Three factors made this happen in China. First, there is there was a strict anti-COVID isolation rules from 2020 to 2022. This created real and solid demands in Chinese society in the hotel industry. Second, the industrial level AGV, that is basically that's movements robots. At least transport robots become fully technology mature by the year of 2020 with accumulation of technology around five years from 2015 to 2020.

Third, the Chinese business culture is to compete fiercely. So, when a new technology appear, it usually become common within two or three years. So, the prices of such hotel delivery robots dropped sharply in 2020. One robot cost, if you convert to US dollar, is 13,000 US dollar. And by 2025, this price has failed to around 2,000 to 3,000 US dollar. Hotels can even rent such you know robots from manufacturers for 14 to 18 US dollar each month.

So, that is a case to tell you that every major change in Chinese society has a clear logic and unique explanation. And as a witness of all almost the entire process of China's you know dramatic development miracle, I'm I will be able to explain and contribute explanation. When I was in university, actually, I saw the takeoff of China's high-speed growth model in these recent three decades. When I live in the through the 2008 financial crisis globally, which has started an end to the old wave of Western that globalization. And also, after that, I have witnessed the fast upgrading of China's industry, especially manufacturing since 2010.

That is in the past 15 years. And also, as an insider who followed implementation of what I Maybe you heard of Made in China 2025. I'm an insider person. So, I understand our development system fully and also I understand its strengths and weaknesses. I have and also I sometimes I have a relatively solid knowledge of the major global powers today, including USA, including Europe and Russia. So, that is why I'm ready to tell you how China turned into what it is today.

What I believe the China's bright future will be and how China will build a relationship with the rest of the world. Many foreign public figures, including those people who once held some kinds of hostile or negative views of or China or felt jealous of our Chinese progress, but still be honest and consistent in their logic. So, I still treat these such you know person as friends and people who willing to dialogue, such as Tucker Carlson from the United States and Pankaj Sharma from India. So, I'm sure that they want to know the real China, definitely, and I will tell them.

So, I will offer my answer. I'm glad to build this bridge between China and the world. I will share the history facts together with my analysis. I will avoid all clichés from West and offer truly unique point of view. Better understanding will reduce misunderstanding. I always believe that. And also, as a geopolitical realist, I believe that Western-led globalization has come to the end and unavoidably collapse. I hope to help to shape a better global future. These are the main ideas I will share in this series, Decoding China.

Now, here is some previews of the key topics that you can expect from Decoding China. firstly, I should say that and how you call it futuristic or utopia or the peaceful social environment in China that impressed many, including those of visitors from developed countries, is built on extremely strong productivity. So, productivity development is a core elements. And second, I should say that China I should give an example. For example, China is one of the very few countries in the world today where people are never worried about the lost of their smartphones because no one in China will steal smartphones because they they are worthless to sell it in Chinese society.

And also, I can say that people even didn't fears about the the theft of our cars because it actually cars are no longer luxury goods in China. Well, it's it was it is a luxury goods in Europe, America, but it's not in China. They're just common family cars for ordinary Chinese citizens. And and China's achievements are contrast with today's West come from two sides. So, firstly, I should say China choose our own effective development path. Well, at the same time, I should say many developed countries may maybe may they made serious policy mistake. And what's the way taught is wrong theories into the elites from global south and even Russia in 1990s and 1990s. So, it it trapping these countries in failure.

So, these four Western economic theories also influence some Chinese thinkers. I mean, mainly those Chinese economy trained overseas in Western country. That explains actually ironically explain that economies is not so respected in China today because many of them has actually made wrong judgment on China itself on major national issues since particularly after 2008. Now, come to China. I will give you some brief points key core points. After 1949, China was never an ordinary developing countries.

Everyone knows that with 1978 as a milestone. Before 1978 and after that, China is two different countries. But development in China did not start from zero in 1979. And from 1950s to 1970s, there's two rounds of industrialization has laid foundation for our modern productive capacity. So, long before China's explosive economic boom, China's already an outlier among developing countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, especially 1990s, that is a trial run for China's modern development model, but the core formula was not yet completed. The real turning point comes in early 21st century. So, I should say China quietly or unintentionally build a

highly effective monetary system that strongly boost productivity.

And coupled with the Chinese people's hard work, the economy took off rapidly. This growth is very different from the South Asian model, I should emphasize, which that many Western used to think that in the early 2000s. And this model perfectly match China's size, a super large country, a civilization level state. We quickly build a world's most complete industry chain or network, and together with a nationwide infrastructure network. These two systems will push each other forwards, making a positive spiral rise. So, that is the most important part of China's secret. Meanwhile, Chinese culture has always valued social equality, such an ideal of building a harmonious world for all people. Chinese tradition plus the modern socialist values will keep our society committed to fairness. So, Chinese society will tend to cut many social costs and clear the path for fast economic growth. An advantage that today's United States failed to understand. But, I should say that United States used to have similar value in Roosevelt period. Today, our Chinese strong and productive provide solid material support for these socialist social policies, particularly in the fields of health care and education. So, China China's almost utopia or a country living in the future, achievements today is built on the set of logic I mentioned above. So, once you understand how this system operates, or how the system was built, you will see that how absurd and ignorant that those simplistic cues of the Western narrative are. They claim that China is merely communist state, or that every Chinese company acts extension or agency of communist party.

This is totally wrong. By the way, I'm not a party member. Even the label of state capitalism falls short of describing China accurately. The manufacturing sector in China operate under fierce market competition, so it's very different from so-called state corporate state, how do you say, state capitalism. But, at the same time, I should say, China is not also not a radical or fundamentalist capitalist system as some of the self-claimed Chinese expert claim. The Chinese state retains strong authority. And the business owner and manufacturing in China cannot take over or control the Chinese governments. The state, Chinese state, actively intervene the Chinese society to regulate, particularly to regulate big corporations, especially those so-called big tech or big internet monopolies. It it will you also deliver affordable, nice public service in essential areas such as healthcare and education, particularly after 2020. So, today another thing notable thing was no noticed is that China's development model is inevitably will extend beyond Chinese borders. Starting from 2023, Chinese people have been coming outside, you know, to other countries through the world, particularly global south, at I should say accelerated pace. So, this time is a volunteer movement. It's not a country plan movement. And it involved Chinese people from so many aspect of our society. So, I think that we should explore what is most reasonable future relationship between China and the rest of the world. So, this is my introduction. Let us begin our journey with decoding China. Thank you.