

# CHINA CROSSROADS

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## The Shifting Frontiers of Liberty: How the Global South Will Affect the West's Competition with China

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Much recent debate has revolved around tensions between China and the West, and whether the future will favour re-engagement or a new Cold War. While the geopolitical contest among great powers gets most of the attention, the sheer weight of interests will not shape the whole story of emerging world order. More principled concerns about the nature of liberty and the relationship between state and society lurk beneath the surface as well. Principles may have much that is timeless about them, but still need reframing as the global landscape evolves. Demographic and economic trends are tilting influence in this century southward, away from both the "declining" West and "peak" China. New circuits of cross-border society are also eroding self-contained nation-states. What understandings and institutional underpinnings of liberty are likely to make sense in this new global context? And what are the implications for how the West may frame its "great game" with Beijing?

[Adam Webb](#) is Resident Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Hopkins-Nanjing Centre, an overseas campus of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. He has taught at HNC since 2008 but also has spent significant periods of time in other regions of the world given his interests in themes of globalisation and the challenges of modernisation in different societies. He is the author of three books, including [Beyond the Global Culture War](#) (2006), [A Path of Our Own: An Andean Village and Tomorrow's Economy of Values](#) (2009), and [Deep Cosmopolis: Rethinking World Politics and Globalisation](#) (2015).

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a "crossroads" of the world and itself at a "crossroads" in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at [editor@shanghai-review.org](mailto:editor@shanghai-review.org).