

CHINA CROSSROADS

Monday, August 18th, 2025, 19:30 – 21:00

Can China be Leader of the Global South? Prospects and Constraints

Chen Dingding

Professor of International Studies at Jinan University

Founding Director of the Intellisla Institute

Author of [Help the World Understand China](#)

WhiteSpace | Jianing Building 5F | 500 Yanan Xi Lu
200rmb admission with drink | FREE for members
Scan to RSVP or email editor@shanghai-review.org



The lecture argues that China is indeed assuming a leadership position within the Global South, a role significantly bolstered by its formidable economic influence, as evidenced by US\$5.05 trillion in foreign trade in 2024 and a record USD 124 billion in Belt and Road Initiative engagement in the first half of 2025. This ascent has been notably facilitated by the United States' perceived retreat from global leadership, marked by withdrawals from international agreements like the Paris Climate Accord and significant cuts to foreign aid, which have led to a shift in global perceptions of reliability. At the same time, this emerging leadership is fundamentally shaped and constrained by the growing agency of other key Global South powers, such as India, contributing 17% to global GDP growth in 2024, and Brazil, a major regional investor where Chinese FDI accounts for only 2% of inflows. These nations actively pursue their development agendas and foster diverse partnerships, ensuring that China's leadership will be shared and contested in an increasingly multi-polar Global South.

[Chen Dingding](#) is Professor at the School of International Studies at Jinan University, and Associate Dean of the Institute for Belt and Road Initiative and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Studies and the Institute for 21st Century Silk Road Studies at Jinan University. He is Founding Director of the Intellisias Institute, an independent think tank focused on international affairs in China. He served as the Vice-President of the International Studies Association for the Asia Pacific region from 2014 to 2018. Currently, he is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) in Berlin, Germany, and at Johns Hopkins SAIS. He is also a Fellow at the Tsinghua Center for Global Studies. His research interests include international relations theory, China-US relations, Chinese diplomacy, and international public opinion. He earned his PhD in Political Science from the University of Chicago. He has been Assistant Professor at the University of Macau as an Assistant Professor, Fellow at the China and the World Program Fellow at Harvard University, and a Visiting Instructor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College. His publications include the book "Help the World Understand China," "International Relations Forecast: Theory and Practice," and translated works such as "Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?" and "Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives for War." He has published numerous academic articles and political commentaries in national and international journals, including International Security, Washington Quarterly, and International Studies Quarterly. Additionally, he is a columnist for The Diplomat, a member of the 11th Council of the Guangdong People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and was recognized as one of the "Highly Cited Chinese Researchers" by Elsevier in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

[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.