

CHINA CROSSROADS

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The Wenzhou Model Today: The Entrepreneurs, Networks, and Global Connections of Wenzhou

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China is often understood through Beijing's political decisions, Shanghai's financial markets, and Shenzhen's technological innovation. But some of the country's most revealing economic transformations have taken place far from these familiar centers. Wenzhou offers a fascinating case. Once known for its entrepreneurial households, family businesses, and informal financing networks, Wenzhou became one of the most recognizable examples of China's private-sector development. Its entrepreneurs have built businesses and commercial networks reaching across China and around the world. But what has become of the famous Wenzhou Model? How are its businesses adapting to changing economic conditions, international competition, new regulatory pressures, and China's evolving relationship with the world? And what does Wenzhou reveal about the opportunities and challenges facing China's private sector? Drawing on their experience living, teaching, and working in Wenzhou, our speakers examine the city's distinctive economic history, entrepreneurial culture, global connections, and ongoing transformation. Combining legal, institutional, and business perspectives, they explore what this often-overlooked city can tell us about the future of the Chinese economy.

[Asen Velinov](#) is a California-licensed attorney, Lecturer of Business Law and Business Ethics at Wenzhou-Kean University, and Founding Director of its Law and Business Center. Originally from Bulgaria, he has spent more than two decades in China, working across international legal practice, business development, higher education, and China-Europe cooperation. His professional experience includes working with leading Chinese law firms and coordinating cross-border legal, business, and institutional initiatives. His many interests include China's business environment, internationalization, legal development, and relationship between local institutions and global economic activity.

[Rob Kim Marjerison](#) is a tenured Associate Professor of Global Business at Wenzhou-Kean University and Director of its Global Business and Global MBA programs. Before entering academia, he held senior positions in international business, including Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of AT&T International Maritime Services, and Senior Consultant at KPMG. He has taught international business in several countries including the US, Korea, Mexico and Bhutan. He has published over 60 research papers on entrepreneurship, international trade, cross-cultural management, AI adoption and business development. His academic and commercial experience provides a practical perspective on the evolution of China's entrepreneurial economy.

[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.