



International Conference 20-21 June 2019

China's future: domestic and international contradictions and challenges

China is facing difficult challenges both at the domestic and international levels. The economic reforms started 40 years ago have radically transformed Chinese society. While they generated unprecedented economic growth, reduction of poverty and technological progress, they have also generated new contradictions and challenges in China and in its international relations.

At the domestic level, China is now facing growing environmental problems with rising human and economic costs. Demographic shifts raise the possibility of China getting old before getting rich, putting pressure on its welfare system and keeping China in the middle income trap. Domestic economic contradictions in the relationship between state and market leading to overcapacity and high levels of debt are weakening China's growth prospects. Economic, demographic and environmental problems highlight the need to shift from extensive to intensive growth relying increasingly on knowledge, technology and robotics rather than on massive capital investment and cheap labour. At the same time, inequality and regional disparities continue to widen, generating political and social tensions in CCP's core values. Corruption, state embezzlement, real estate bubbles and capital flight have been important threats to macroeconomic, social and political stability of China.

At the international level, China's rising influence in the economic, political and cultural fields has reshaped international relations and global governance. But as China is turning into a global power, it faces new coalitions seeking to check its expansion through diplomatic, economic and even military means as they fear the impact of a rising China. China's Belt and Road may generate an acceleration of economic integration across the Eurasian continent and reshape existing international alliances but outside China it is often seen as an attempt to remake the international order in its own image. Existing multilateral economic institutions are being challenged by China's growing financial resources, but also by the recent unilateralist stance of the US administration, generating worries in the international community of the rise of a confrontational G2 engaged in economic warfare. While tensions exist between China, the US and other powers over access to energy and raw materials they also increasingly focus on technology, markets and the role of the state in the economy.

The purpose of this two-day conference is to bring together international academics and experts from different disciplines to assess the state of play of these current contradictions and challenges and their possible outcomes. The goal is to create networks of interdisciplinary research and to widen the scope of analysis of the participants by providing an insight into China's current affairs from different perspectives and disciplines. It also aims to show the possible domestic and international links of China's contradictions and challenges.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 20TH JUNE

CONTRADICTIONS AT THE DOMESTIC LEVEL

- Panel 1: The demographic challenge: An aging China and its consequences on growth and the welfare system
- Panel 2: The environmental challenge: the consequences of China's extensive growth and energy-mix on air, water, land and people
- Panel 3: The technological challenge: can China shift from an extensive to a knowledge-based intensive growth?
- Panel 4: The social cohesion challenge: rising social inequalities, corruption, tax evasion, sustainability of the welfare system and social stability
- Panel 5: The geographical divergence challenge: rising interprovincial and rural-urban divide in living standards and economic development
- Panel 6: The legitimacy challenge: the Party, corruption, inequality, centralization of power and China's civil society
- Panel 7: The disintegration challenge: the central governments and the pressures from China's localities and periphery (Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong-Kong)
- Panel 8: the long term view: contextualising China's current domestic contradictions in a historical perspective

FRIDAY 21ST JUNE

CONTRADICTIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- Panel 1: The challenge of energy and climate change from the perspectives of China and other key players
- Panel 2: The challenge of rising protectionism against Chinese commercial penetration and China's responses
- Panel 3: The challenge of the insertion of China in the global financial system
- Panel 4: The geopolitical rise of China and the reaction of Asian neighbours
- Panel 5: The challenge of China to US global hegemony?
- Panel 6: The challenge of the adaptation of global governance institutions to China's rise
- Panel 7: The challenge of acquiring technology and knowledge overseas
- Panel 8: The long term view: contextualising China's current international contradictions in a historical perspective