

ACROSS GENERATIONS IN THE TECH RACE: CHINA'S EVOLVING ATTITUDES ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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As China intensifies strategic competition with the United States in science and technology, understanding public attitudes is vital for assessing national innovation capacity. Cross-national public opinion survey data reveals two key patterns: In China, younger generations are more cautious than older cohorts about the societal benefits of science and technology, reflecting a trend towards “reflective modernisation”. However, mainland Chinese youth have more positive views of science and technology than their counterparts in the United States, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This relative optimism suggests continued broad support among China’s younger generation for the country’s state-led innovation agenda.

Together, these findings highlight both the promise and the challenge facing China’s innovation system. While the next generation remains largely confident in scientific advancement, their more reflective posture indicates an emerging need for stronger public communication and greater attention to ethical concerns and policies that foster public trust. Addressing these dimensions will be critical to sustaining long-term technological momentum in an increasingly complex global environment.

(Click on the link to read the above in [Chinese](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#))

Chinese:

代际视角下的科技竞赛：中国对科技态度的演变

随着中国在科技领域与美国的战略竞争加剧，了解公众态度对于评估国家创新能力至关重要。跨国公众舆论调查数据展示了两个关键趋势：在中国，年轻一代比年长群体对科技的社会效益持有更加审慎的态度，体现了“反思性现代化”的趋势。然而，中国大陆的年轻人对科技的看法比美国、香港和台湾的同龄人更为积极。这种相对乐观表明，中国年轻一代对国家主导型创新议程仍有广泛支持。

这些发现共同揭示了中国创新体系所面临的机遇与挑战。尽管新一代对科学进步仍然充满信心，但他们更加反思的态度也显示出对更强有力的公众沟通，以及对伦理问题和促进公众信任政策重视程度不断提高。在这些方面采取措施，对于在日益复杂的全球环境中保持长期科技发展动力至关重要。

French:

LES DIFFERENCES GENERATIONNELLES DANS LA COURSE TECHNOLOGIQUE: L'ÉVOLUTION DES COMPORTEMENTS EN CHINE VIS-A-VIS DE LA SCIENCE ET LA TECHNOLOGIE

Alors que la Chine intensifie la concurrence stratégique avec les États-Unis dans le domaine de la science et de la technologie, comprendre les postures du public est essentiel pour évaluer la capacité d'innovation nationale. Les données issues d'enquêtes d'opinion publiques transnationales révèlent deux tendances clés : en Chine, les jeunes générations sont plus prudentes que les générations précédentes quant aux bénéfices sociétaux de la science et de la technologie, reflétant une tendance à la « modernisation réflexive ». Cependant, les jeunes chinois continentaux ont également une vision plus positive de la science et de la technologie que leurs homologues des États-Unis, de Hong Kong et de Taïwan. Cet optimisme relatif suggère un soutien large et persistant des jeunes générations chinoises envers l'agenda national d'innovation piloté par l'État.

Ensemble, ces constats mettent en lumière à la fois les opportunités et les défis auxquels le système d'innovation chinois est confronté. Si la prochaine génération demeure globalement confiante dans le progrès scientifique, sa posture plus réfléchie indique un besoin émergent de renforcer la communication publique et de prêter une plus grande attention aux préoccupations éthiques ainsi qu'aux politiques favorisant la confiance du public. Prendre en compte ces dimensions sera crucial pour maintenir un élan technologique durable dans un environnement mondial de plus en plus complexe.

Spanish:

A TRAVÉS DE LAS GENERACIONES EN LA CARRERA TECNOLÓGICA: LAS ACTITUDES CAMBIANTES DE CHINA HACIA LA CIENCIA Y LA TECNOLOGÍA

A medida que China intensifica la competencia estratégica con Estados Unidos en ciencia y tecnología, comprender las actitudes públicas es fundamental para evaluar la capacidad nacional de innovación. Los datos de encuestas de opinión pública transnacionales revelan dos patrones clave: en China, las generaciones más jóvenes son más cautelosas que las generaciones mayores respecto a los beneficios sociales de la ciencia y la tecnología, lo que refleja una tendencia hacia la “modernización reflexiva”. Sin embargo, los jóvenes de China continental tienen una visión más positiva de la ciencia y la tecnología que sus contrapartes en Estados Unidos, Hong Kong y Taiwán. Este optimismo relativo sugiere un apoyo amplio y continuo entre la juventud china a la agenda de innovación dirigida por el Estado.

En conjunto, estos hallazgos resaltan tanto las promesas como los desafíos que enfrenta el sistema de innovación de China. Si bien la próxima generación sigue siendo en gran medida confiada en el avance científico, su postura más reflexiva indica una necesidad emergente de una comunicación pública más sólida y una mayor atención a las preocupaciones éticas y a políticas que fomenten la confianza pública. Abordar estos aspectos será fundamental para mantener el impulso tecnológico a largo plazo en un entorno global cada vez más complejo.

Executive Summary

1. China is now deeply engaged in strategic competition with the United States in science and technology. Public attitudes towards science play an increasingly important role in shaping national innovation capacity and long-term policy legitimacy.
2. Previous research shows that societies in early stages of development tend to embrace science and technology with enthusiasm. As countries grow more affluent, public attitudes often become more reflective, with greater interest paid to long-term risks and ethical implications.
3. Survey data suggest that China's rapid economic growth has begun to foster more reflective attitudes towards science and technology. This shift is widening the generational divide, with younger respondents less likely than older generations to view science and technology as sources of personal improvement and opportunity.
4. Younger Chinese respondents are also more likely than older generations to consider the importance of scientific knowledge to everyday life, suggesting that while their attitudes may be more reflective, their engagement with science remains strong.
5. When asked whether science should prevail over religion in cases of conflict, Chinese respondents across all age groups show similar levels of agreement, indicating a broad societal consensus that prioritises scientific reasoning over religious belief.
6. Despite generational shifts within China, young people in mainland China consistently express more positive attitudes towards science and technology than their peers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States across perceived benefits and everyday relevance, and faith-science trade-offs.
7. Mainland Chinese youth's continued optimism towards science and technology may serve as a strategic asset in aligning public sentiment with national innovation goals,

reducing resistance to new initiatives and supporting long-term state-led planning in the tech sector.

8. However, fostering more reflective engagement with science, particularly through education and public communication, may help China address ethical, environmental and social risks of rapid technological advancement, ensuring more sustainable and inclusive innovation. It could also enhance China's international reputation as a responsible and forward-looking scientific power.