Why Public Engagement Matters to China's Rise in Global Science?

and how Chinese stakeholders have come to realise it

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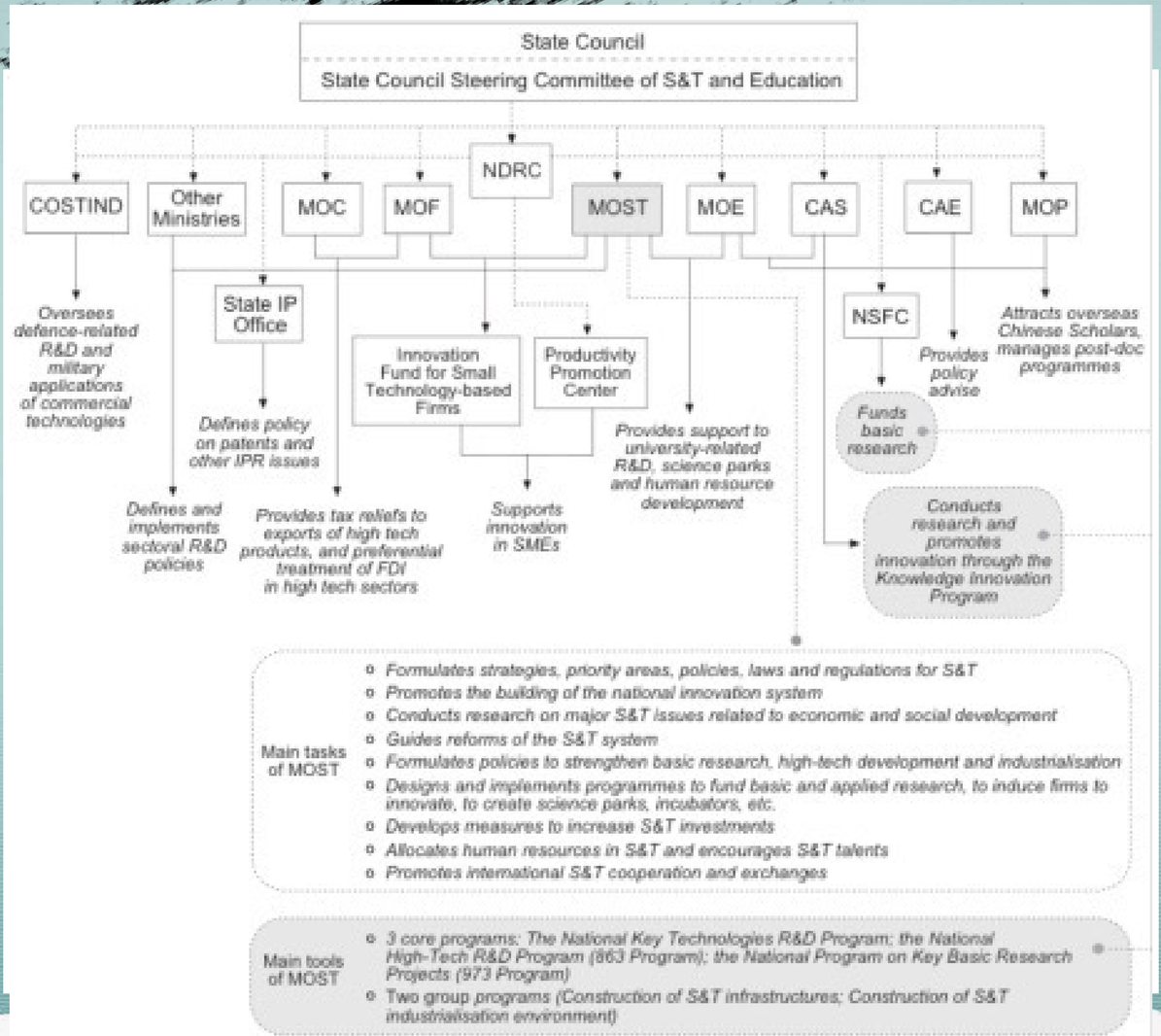
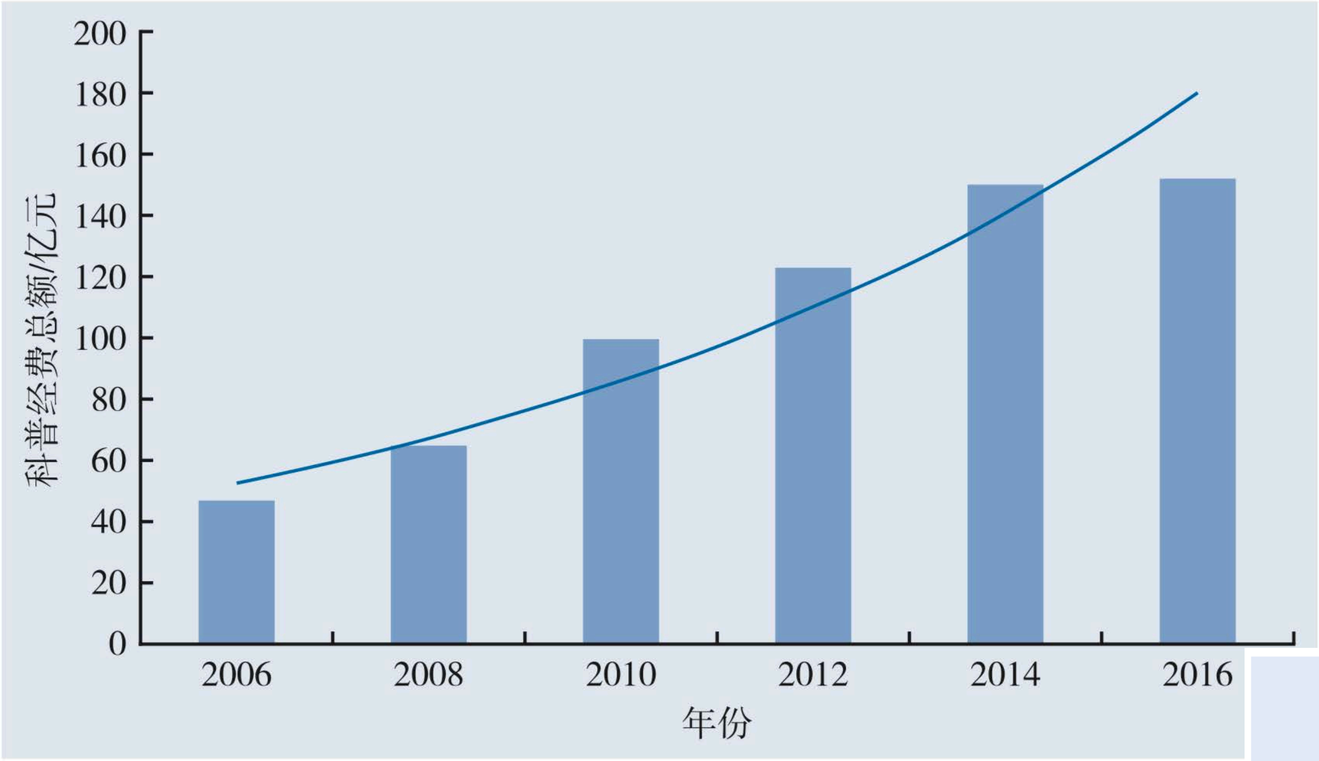
Public/~~—~~Public Engagement?

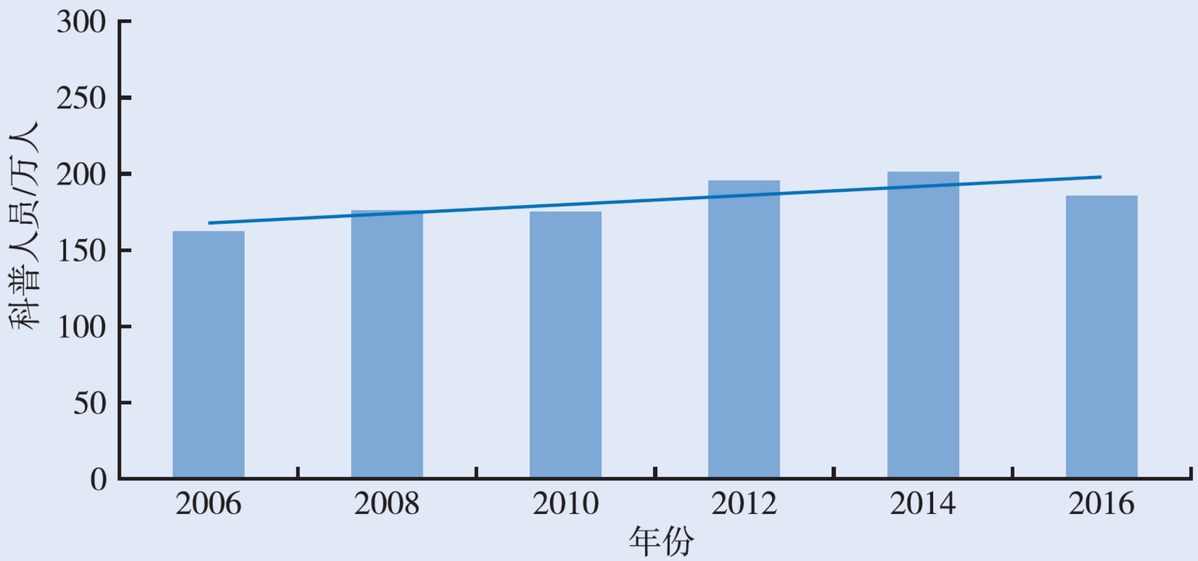




科普经费筹集总额变化情况

Increased funding on science popularisation since 2006

Expansion of science communication professionals since 2006



科普人员规模变化情况

Theoretical/research paper

The 'credibility paradox' in China's science communication: Views from scientific practitioners

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PUS
Public Understanding of Science
1–15

DOI: 10.1177/0963662515598249
pus.sagepub.com
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Abstract

In contrast to increasing debates on China's rising status as a global scientific power, issues of China's science communication remain under-explored. Based on 21 in-depth interviews in three cities, this article examines Chinese scientists' accounts of the entangled web of influence which conditions the process of how scientific knowledge achieves (or fails to achieve) its civic authority. A main finding of this study is a 'credibility paradox' as a result of the over-politicisation of science and science communication in China. Respondents report that an absence of visible institutional endorsements renders them more public credibility and better communication outcomes. Thus, instead of exploiting formal channels of science communication, scientists interviewed were more keen to act as 'informal risk communicators' in grassroots and private events. Chinese scientists' perspectives on how to earn public support of their research sheds light on the nature and impact of a 'civic epistemology' in an authoritarian state.

Keywords

China, civic epistemology, credibility, politicisation of science, science communication

1. Introduction

In contrast to increasing interest in China's rising status as global scientific power, China's public engagement efforts remain under-explored. Among the limited empirical studies on science communication in China, the focus has mainly been on evaluating the *outcome* of related national campaigns, such as public science literacy, rather than the *process* of how such efforts are carried (see Chen et al., 2009; Lü, 2009). This empirical inattentiveness to the actual practice of communication may be partially due to three widely shared characteristics of science communication: (1) science communication in China both as the main sponsor and a 'deficit

Credibility Paradox

'accessible' but not 'assessable'

The public perception of scientists' credibility was often inversely proportional to the level of institutional backing.

Non-engaging ‘Public Engagements’

“if [the public] are determined to be cynical, then I see no basis for a dialogue.”

Governing Scientific Accountability in China

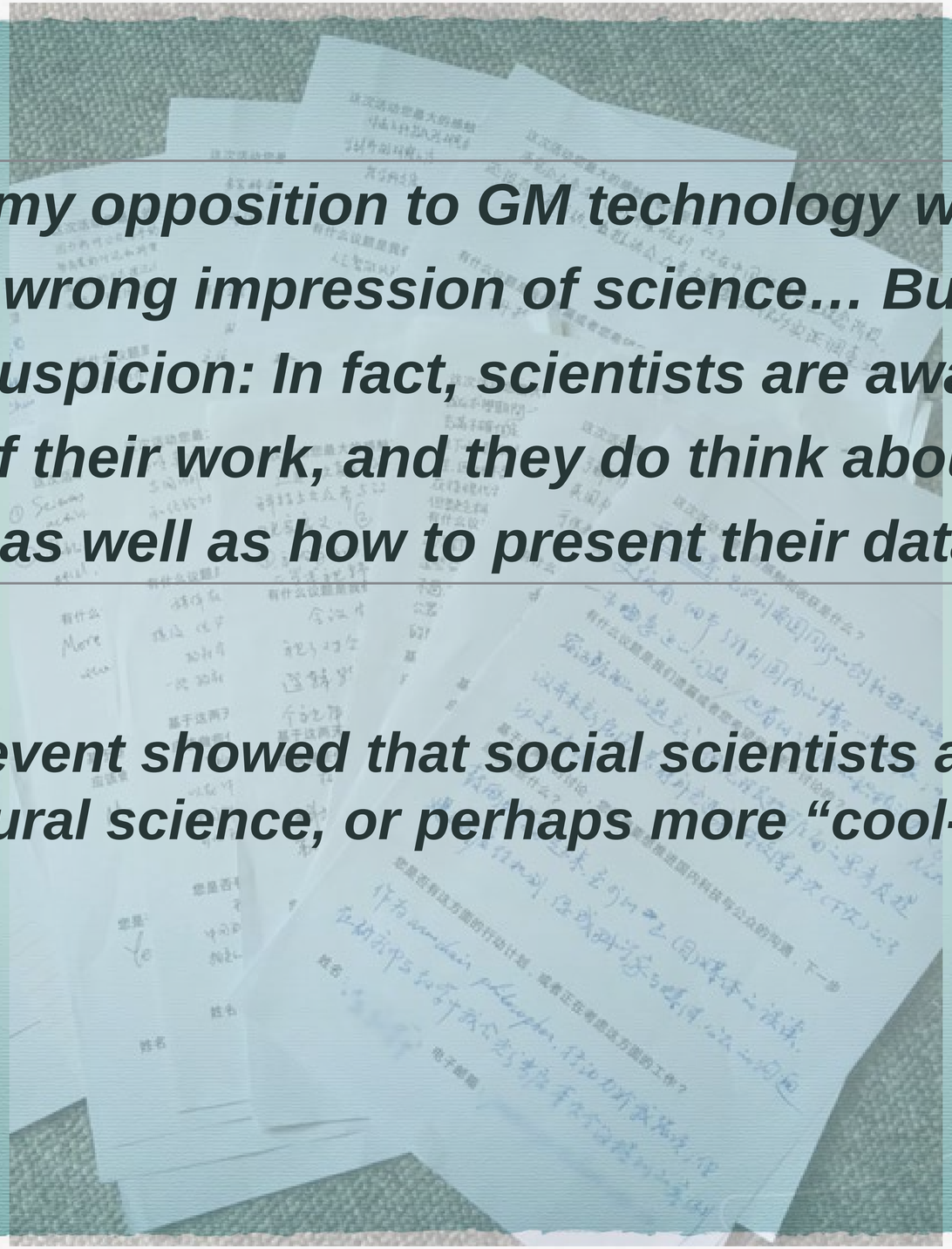
www.kent.ac.uk/gsa

- **First** UK-China multi-stakeholder public engagement **training workshop**
- **UK-China Consortium** on Scientific Risks and Public Engagement
- **Pilot Educational Module Resource (EMR)** on public engagement that speaks to Chinese particularities.
- Internal **policy recommendation** submitted to Ministry of Science and Technology
- **Expanded partnership** with the Chinese Medical Association

Spring 2019 **widening training** with CAS and initiation of **‘EMR 2.0’**


To make the world a better place
让世界变得更加美好
To create a more efficient, dynamic and sustainable economy
To enhance my career


CHUNYAN WU



‘I realised that my opposition to GM technology was because I used to have a wrong impression of science… But XXX’s video corrected my suspicion: In fact, scientists are aware of the uncertainties of their work, and they do think about how to plan their research, as well as how to present their data.’

‘This two day event showed that social scientists are just as rational as natural science, or perhaps more “cool-headed” in some cases.’

Institutional

Confidence building + Capacity building

Governing Scientific Accountability in China

www.kent.ac.uk/gsa

- **First** UK-China multi-stakeholder public engagement **training workshop**
- **UK-China Consortium** on Scientific Risks and Public Engagement
- **Pi** [redacted] at speaks
- [redacted] nd Technology
- **Expanded partnership** with the Chinese Medical Association

Spring 2019 **widening training** with CAS and initiation of **‘EMR 2.0’**

[redacted]您正在从事的项目非常有意义。如果您有为中国政府提供咨询的机会，不妨强调一下“培训刻不容缓”的意思。[redacted]

Institutional

Confidence building + Capacity building

(global) Science <== > (global) Society

Co-developing PE capacity for transnational research