



清华大学 战略与安全研究中心

CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND STRATEGY
TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY

2025

Public Opinion Survey Report

Chinese Outlook on International Security

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Key Findings

- Respondents' perceptions of the current international security situation have markedly shifted toward a more positive outlook
- Regional conflicts, economic conditions, and great power competition are viewed as the primary factors affecting international security
- Respondents believe China's position is secure amid global transformation
- Favorability toward Russia has declined for the first time but remains highest compared to the United States, whose favorability remains low but shows notable recovery
- Respondents believe China's global influence will continue to grow, with rapid advancement in military and technological capabilities
- Respondents firmly support globalization and endorse China playing a greater role on the world stage
- Respondents believe the United States is attempting to contain China's development, yet still support bilateral economic and trade cooperation
- Respondents view China-US trade as mutually beneficial, but believe China is not afraid of potential struggles in the economic and trade sphere

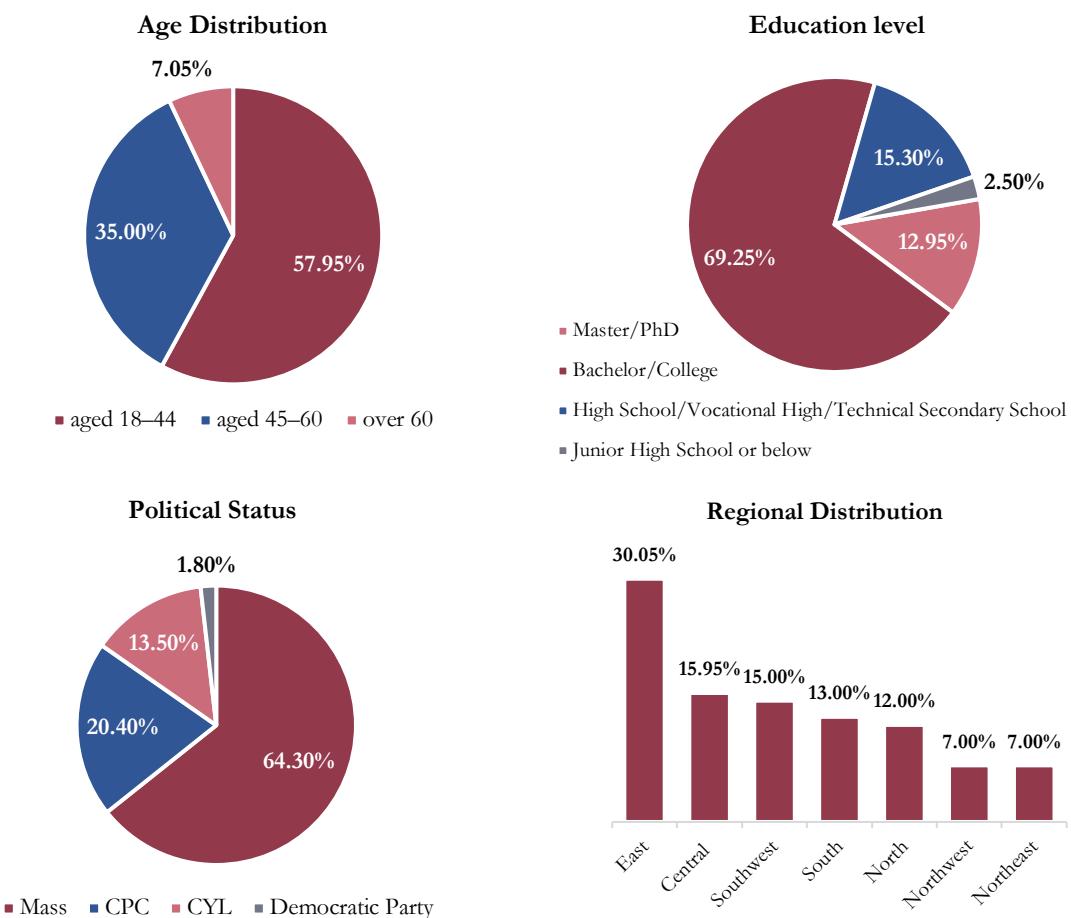
● Introduction ●

This *Chinese Public Opinion on International Security in 2025* report is the third annual public opinion survey released by the Center for International Security and Strategy (CISS) at Tsinghua University over the past three years. Through this research and survey, we aim to continuously present to the world an “unfiltered” view of the latest perceptions and perspectives of Chinese respondents on international security issues.

The current survey was conducted online on July 1–11 and September 5–11, 2025. The survey targeted Chinese mainland citizens aged 18 and above, employing mixed sampling based on the Seventh National Population Census results, and controlling sample proportions by gender, age, urban-rural status, and region. A total of 2,162 responses were collected, with 2,000 valid samples.

To improve measurement accuracy, the 2025 survey incorporated middle options (such as “neutral”) and “don’t know” options for some questions. To ensure comparability with 2024 data, this report adjusted historical data proportionally—meaning, after removing middle/non-response options, standardization was performed according to the original weights of each polar option, establishing a comparable basis for attitude tendencies across different years. Due to rounding, the sum of data points may not equal the total (100%).

The number of valid samples for both male and female respondents was 1,000 each. Detailed information is as follows:



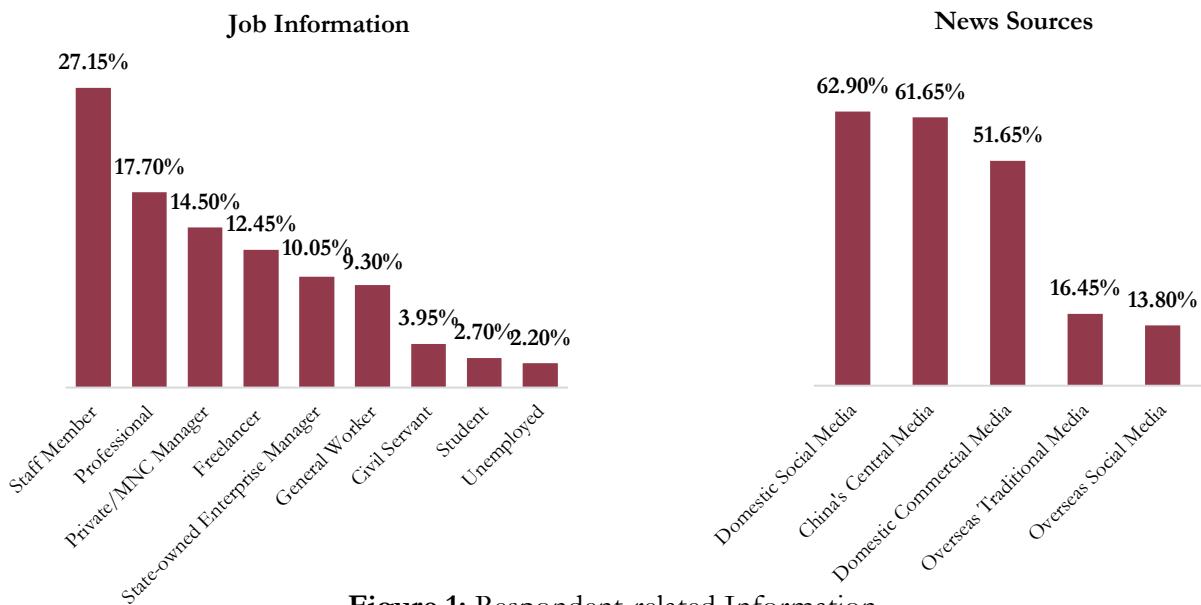


Figure 1: Respondent-related Information

● Information

Office Staff: Office/white-collar workers;

Professional Personnel: Doctors/teachers/lawyers/sports & culture professionals/journalists, etc.;

Private Enterprise/Multinational Company Managers: Including grassroots and middle/senior management;

State-Owned Enterprise Managers: Including grassroots and middle/senior management.

● Detailed News Source Information

Domestic Social Media: Such as WeChat Moments, Weibo, Douyin, Bilibili and other short video or video platforms, online forums, etc.;

China's Central Media Agencies: Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, People's Daily, People.cn, etc.;

Domestic Commercial Media: Sina and other commercial websites, Toutiao and other mobile news apps, WeChat official accounts, video websites, commercial newspapers, etc.;

Foreign Traditional Media Agencies and their Websites: Such as BBC, The New York Times, overseas Chinese-language websites, etc.;

Overseas Social Media Platforms: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, etc.

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| Is This World Safe?

| Nearly Half Respondents Believe the World is Generally Safe

Compared with the 2024 survey results, respondents' perceptions of the international security situation show a markedly positive shift. This year's data indicates that approximately half (49.05%) of respondents believe the world is overall in a "relatively safe" and "very safe" state, while over one-third (32.7%) hold a "neutral" attitude, and only 18.25% hold negative views on the international security situation, a decline of nearly 30% from the previous year. The attitude shift is most pronounced among respondents aged 60 and above, with those believing the world is unsafe declining from 37.5% in 2023 to 17.3% in 2025.

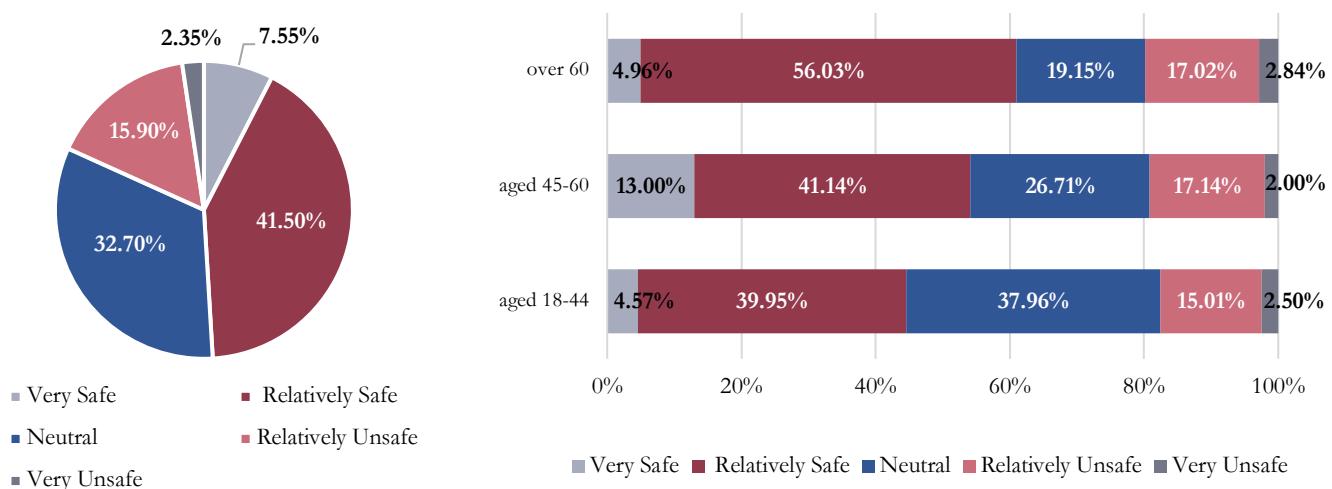


Figure 2: Do You Think the World Is Generally Safe Currently?

Looking back and toward the future in increments of five-year periods regarding the international security situation, respondents similarly demonstrate strong optimism, with nearly 70% (65.75%) holding positive attitudes toward world security trends, and pessimistic attitudes accounting for a very small proportion.

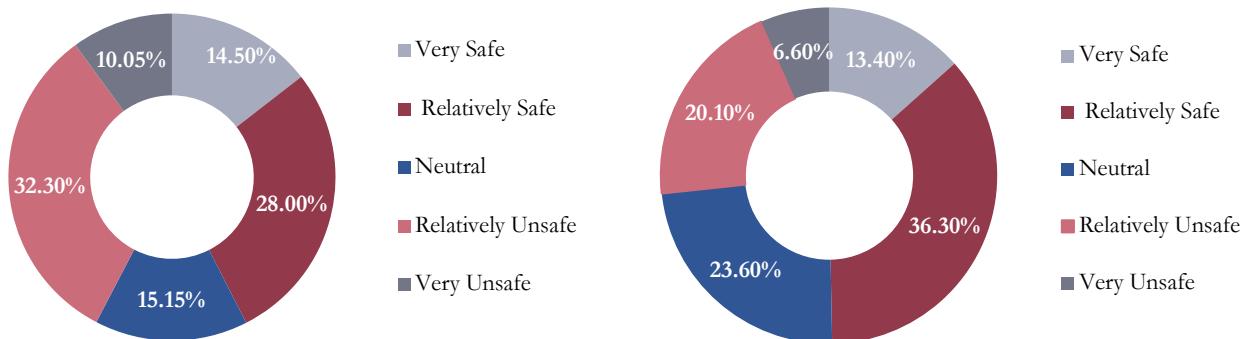


Figure 3: Compared with Five Years Ago, Is the World Generally Safer Today?

Figure 4: Looking Ahead to the Next Five Years, Will the World Become Generally Safer in the Future?

| Military and Economic Security Draw Greater Attention

To further refine the dimensions of public security perception, this survey assessed six domains: military security, economic security, technological security, environmental security, public health security, and social security. Results show that respondents' perceptions of international security risks are evenly distributed. Differences in perceived insecurity across the six domains are limited, with no single domain exhibiting significantly heightened security anxiety. Nevertheless, economic security is relatively more concerning, followed by military security and environmental security.

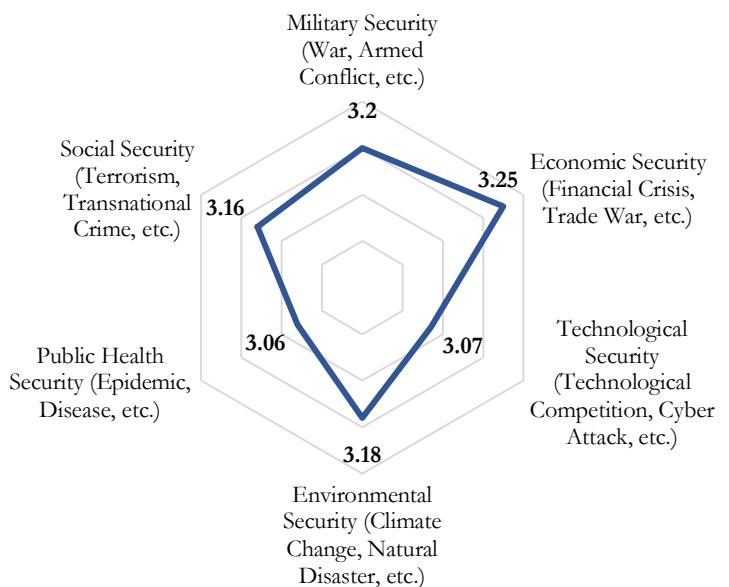


Figure 5: Global Insecurity Status in Various Fields
(Higher scores indicate greater insecurity)

Regarding the primary causes of global insecurity, regional conflicts (61.45%), economic conditions (56.75%), and great power competition (56.35%) constitute a highly overlapping cognitive structure, each selected by over half of respondents. In comparison, fewer than 20% of respondents identified technological development as a current risk source.

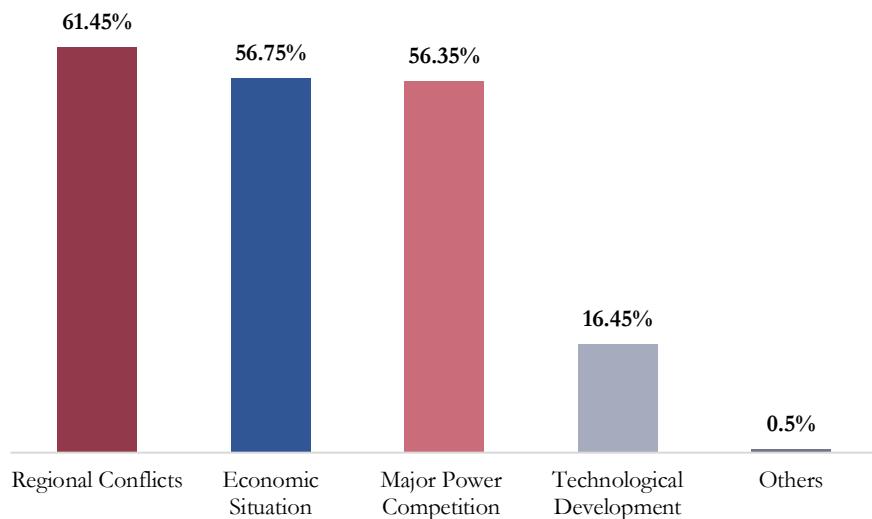


Figure 6: What Do You Think Are the Main Reasons for the World Becoming Safer/More Insecure?

PART I

| Is China Safe In This World?

| Over 70% of Respondents Hold Positive Views on China's Current and Future Security

In last year's survey, over 70% of respondents believed that China's security situation in the international environment is "very safe" or "relatively safe," and this proportion has roughly remained unchanged this year. The vast majority of respondents hold positive expectations for China's future security environment, with negative expectations remaining low for three consecutive years.

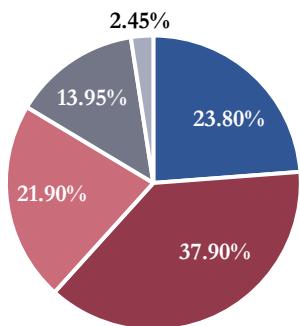


Figure 7: How Has China's Security Environment Changed Compared with Five Years Ago?

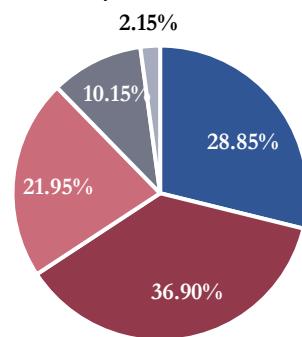


Figure 8: Outlook for China's Security Environment Over the Next Five Years?

Assessment across eight security domains reveals characteristics of "confidence in core security, aspiration for improvement in social security." Indeed, respondents express strong confidence in sovereign security (such as territorial and maritime security), military security (such as preparedness capabilities in the new era), economic security (such as food security and supply chain security), technological security (such as technological innovation capacity and quality and quantity of tech talent), and cultural security (such as core socialist values with Chinese characteristics and international discourse power), with all receiving over two-thirds in positive evaluations. However, in domains related to daily life, 17.45% of respondents believe "social security" (such as food and drug safety, and the public security situation) can continue to improve, while 15.95% focus on enhancing "cyber and information security" (such as network security and data security), and another 15.75% believe "ecological and environmental security" (pollution prevention, green and low-carbon development) still requires sustained effort.

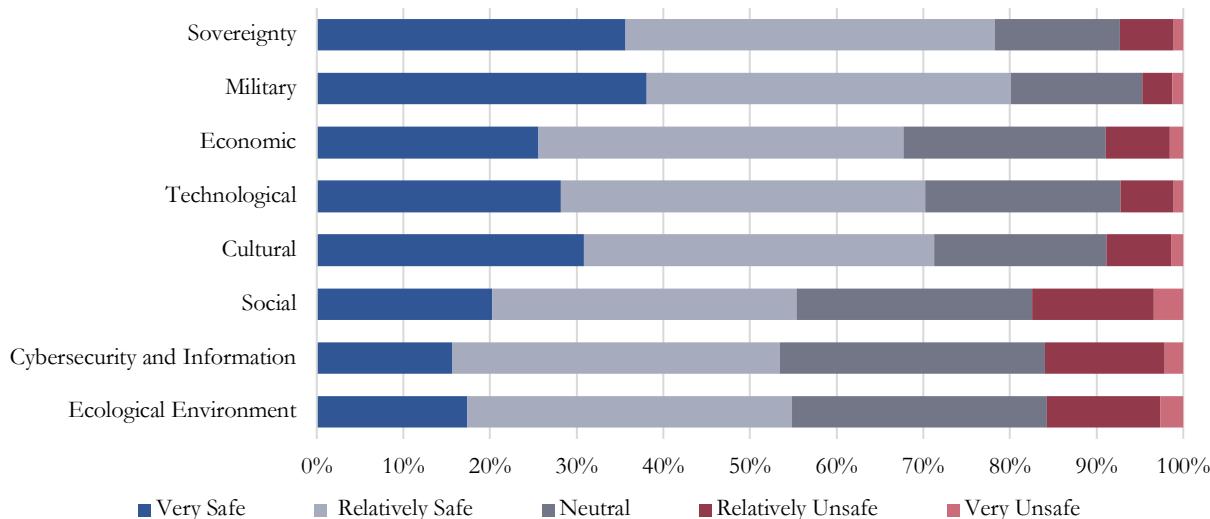


Figure 9: How Do You Evaluate China's Current Security Situation in Various Aspects?

| “China–US Strategic Competition” Remains the Most Pressing Security Concern

Respondents’ ranking of known security threats shows minimal change. “China–US strategic competition,” “international financial/economic crisis,” and the “Taiwan Strait situation” remain the security threats of greatest concern. “Technological blockade and decoupling from China” has emerged as a new security concern, while attention toward online misinformation, the outbreak of war, and artificial intelligence in nuclear applications have also notably risen.

Security Challenges	Average Score	5-Very High	4-Relatively High	3-Medium	2-Relatively Low	1-Very Low	0-Not Sure
US-China Strategic Competition	3.60	17.20%	42.45%	27.39%	9.27%	3.69%	2.61%
Outbreak/ Escalation of Global or Regional Conventional Wars	3.04	7.58%	26.27%	36.76%	21.40%	8.14%	2.46%
Taiwan Strait Situation	3.23	14.49%	28.32%	31.69%	17.20%	8.35%	2.56%
South China Sea Disputes	3.07	9.06%	26.37%	34.15%	21.81%	7.63%	3.58%
Korean Peninsula Situation	2.83	5.58%	19.61%	37.48%	24.17%	11.93%	3.84%
China-India Border Issue	2.93	6.76%	23.35%	35.54%	23.66%	10.09%	3.23%
Nuclear War	2.66	8.70%	15.87%	27.19%	24.27%	20.84%	5.73%
International Financial/Economic Crisis	3.30	11.73%	34.36%	32.21%	16.59%	5.48%	2.25%
Technological Blockade and Decoupling Against China	3.28	13.72%	30.06%	32.41%	17.67%	5.89%	2.87%
Climate Change	3.01	8.45%	23.60%	37.07%	22.07%	8.50%	2.92%
Application of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Fields	3.05	9.27%	25.14%	35.38%	19.56%	9.63%	3.64%
Dissemination of False Information, Public Opinion Manipulation and Perception Influence Through Cyberspace	3.21	11.98%	30.06%	32.92%	18.18%	7.53%	1.95%
Uncontrolled General Artificial Intelligence and Super Artificial Intelligence Becoming a Reality	2.86	8.09%	21.45%	30.98%	23.45%	14.18%	4.45%
Major Energy and Food Crises	2.78	7.22%	19.87%	32.10%	24.73%	15.87%	2.82%
Transnational Organized Crimes Such as Human Trafficking, Drug Trafficking and Fraud	2.93	8.65%	24.17%	30.67%	24.12%	12.14%	2.87%
Public Health Crises Like the COVID-19 Pandemic	2.99	8.40%	25.50%	32.26%	23.55%	9.93%	2.97%
Terrorist Activities	2.63	7.07%	16.13%	29.03%	24.78%	20.69%	4.92%

Figure 10: How Threatening Do You Think the Above Security Challenges Are to China?

PART III

| How Do Chinese People View
Other Countries?

| Notable Changes in Respondents' Favorability Toward Several Countries

Remaining consistent with the previous two years, 2025 data shows that respondents have the highest favorability toward Russia and the lowest toward Japan. However, Russia's favorability score experienced its first slight decline over the past three years, falling from 3.66 to 3.49, while the United States' score increased from 1.85 last year to 2.38, reaching a three-year high.

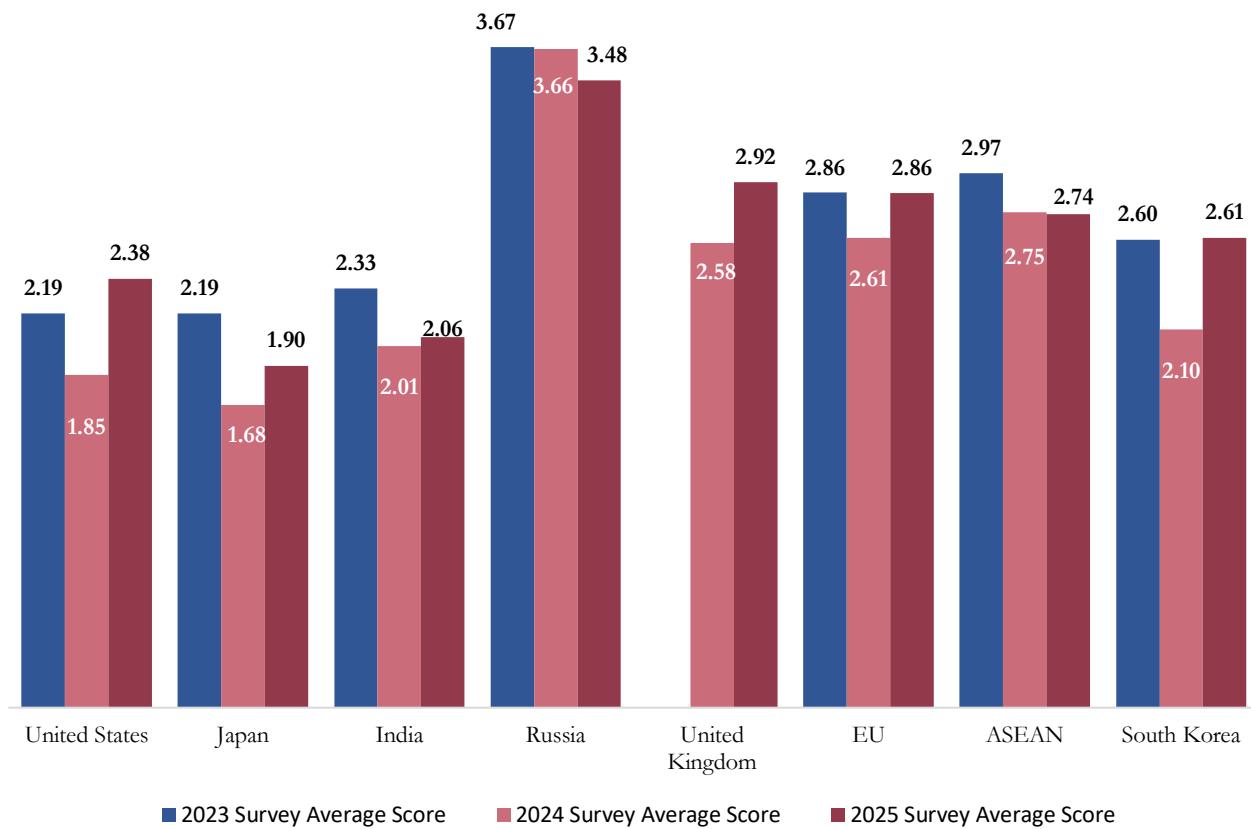


Figure 11: How Favorable Is Your Opinion of the Above Countries?
(Higher Scores Indicate Greater Favorability)

Specifically, as demonstrated in the chart above, respondents aged 18–44 show higher overall favorability toward the specified countries and regions, with an average score of 2.68. For the 45–60 age group, the average favorability drops to 2.55, while the average score for respondents aged 60 and above is only 2.28. Female respondents' average is 2.72, 0.15 points higher than that of male respondents. Tier-1 city respondents give the highest favorability scores toward different countries and regions, averaging 2.86. However, the pattern of highest favorability toward Russia and lowest toward Japan does not change regardless of respondents' city of residence or education levels. Further, survey results indicate that respondents' understanding of other countries relies heavily on media channels, with 80.55% obtaining information through news media reports and 69.65% relying on social media.

This survey added favorability ratings toward countries and regions neighboring China. Data shows overall impressions tend toward neutral, with no scores exceeding 4 (somewhat favorable). Respondents have relatively higher favorability toward Pakistan, North Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore, and relatively lower favorability toward Myanmar, India, and the Philippines.

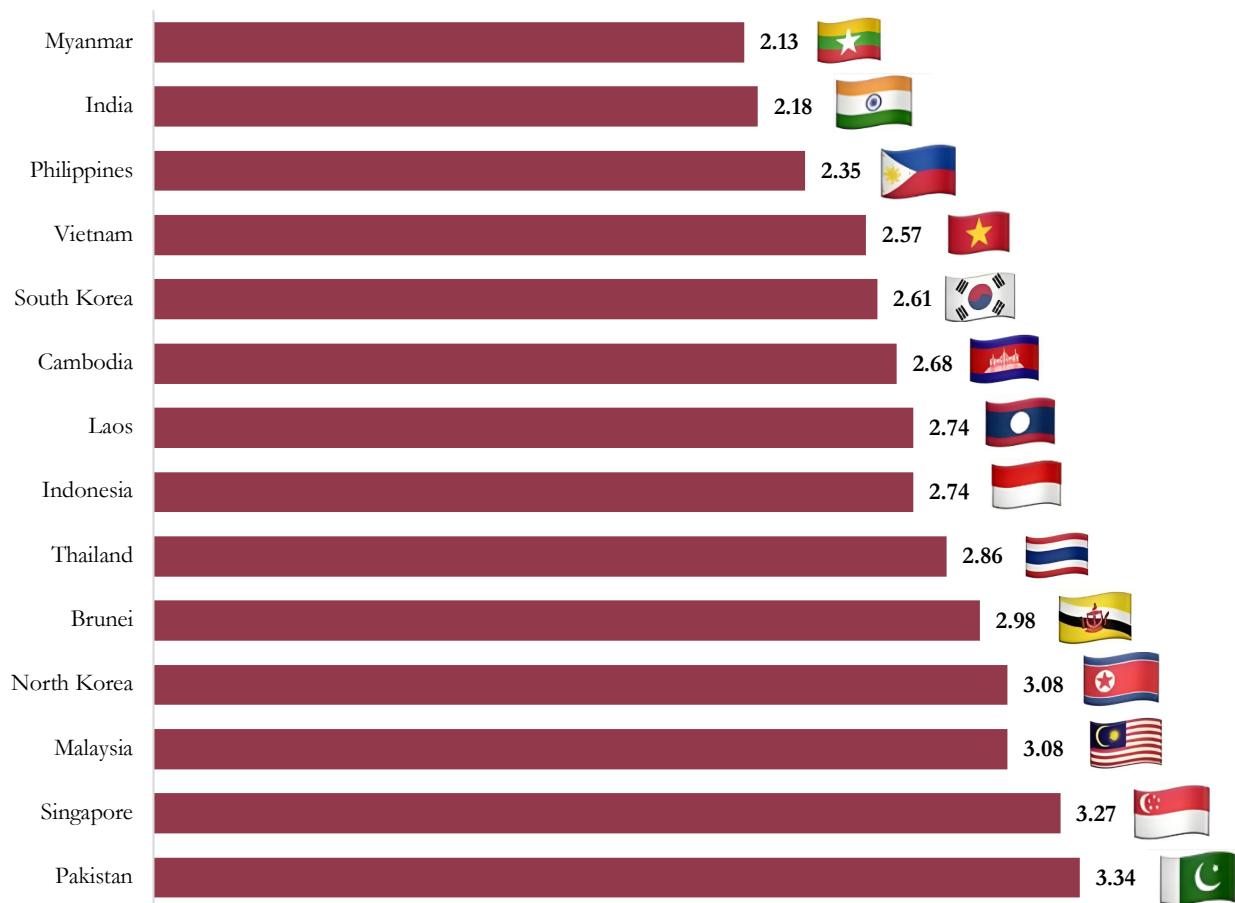


Figure 12: How Favorable Is Your Opinion of Neighboring Countries and Regions?
(Higher Scores Indicate Greater Favorability)

Compared to last year, respondents' views on the Russia–Ukraine conflict, a hotspot international event, have changed dramatically. Over 70% (70.15%) of respondents believe both Russia and Ukraine bear responsibility, compared to only 35.57% holding this view last year; the proportion believing "other third parties bear primary responsibility" fell from 42.41% to 4.35%. Among these, 7.75% and 17.75% respectively believe that Russia and Ukraine should bear responsibility, proportions similar to last year's results.

| Nearly Half of Respondents Believe US Global Influence is Declining

Current results are highly consistent with those of the 2024 survey, whereby Japan and India are still considered countries with relatively weak influence, Russia and the EU are classified as “relatively strong in influence,” and the United States continues to be viewed as the country with the strongest global influence. However, 46.45% of respondents believe US global influence has declined over the past five years, and over half expect it will continue to decline over the next decade (around 2035).

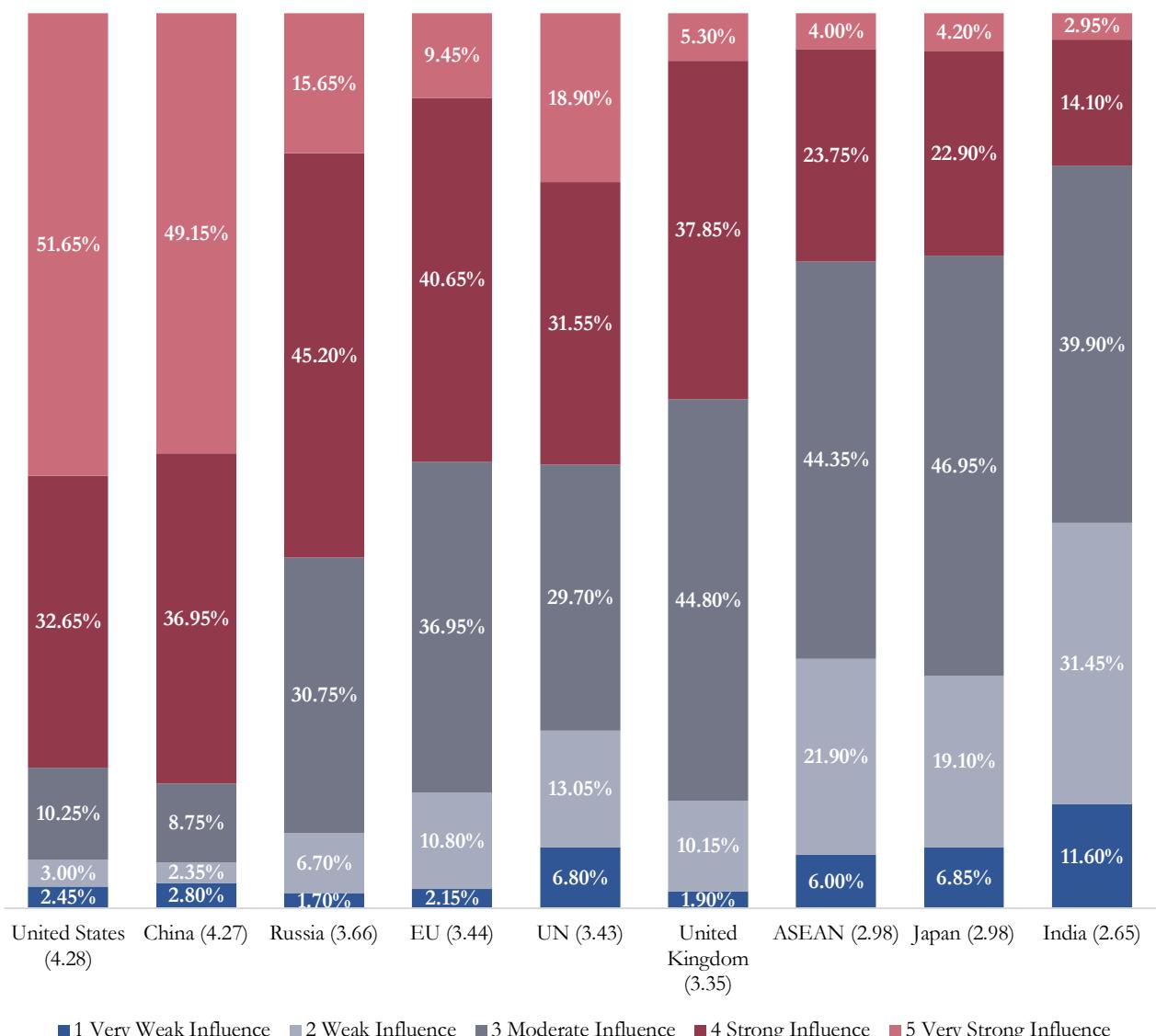


Figure 13: How Would You Rate the International Influence of the Following Countries, Regions, and International Organizations?

PART

IV

| How Chinese People View China?

Respondents are Generally Optimistic About China's Future Global Influence

Over 80% of respondents believe that China's global influence has been rising over the past five years, and are generally optimistic about its potential for further growth over the next decade.

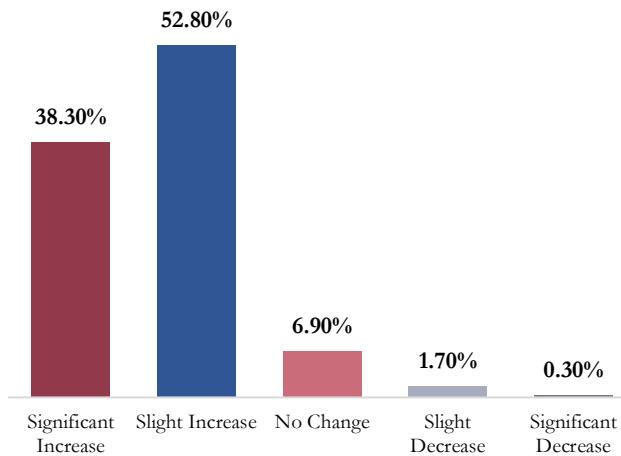


Figure 14: Compared with Five Years Ago, How Do You Think China's Global Status Has Changed?

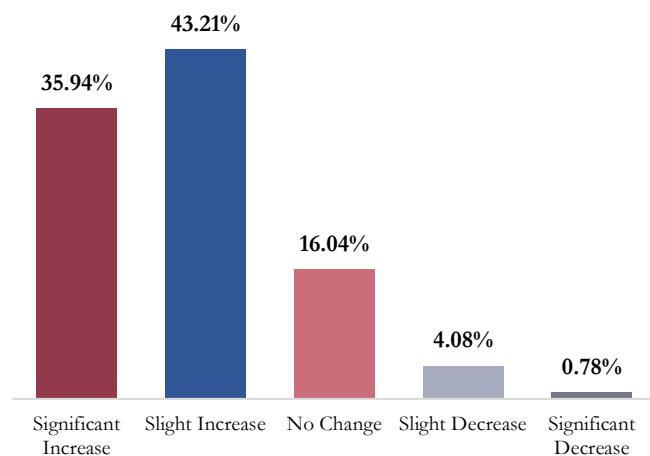


Figure 15: Looking Ahead to the Next Decade, How Do You Think China's Global Status Will Change?

Specifically, respondents hold the strongest expectations for improvement in China's military strength and technological innovation capacity. Most respondents believe economic strength, the capacity to establish international rules, and international recognition of China's development model can gradually increase.

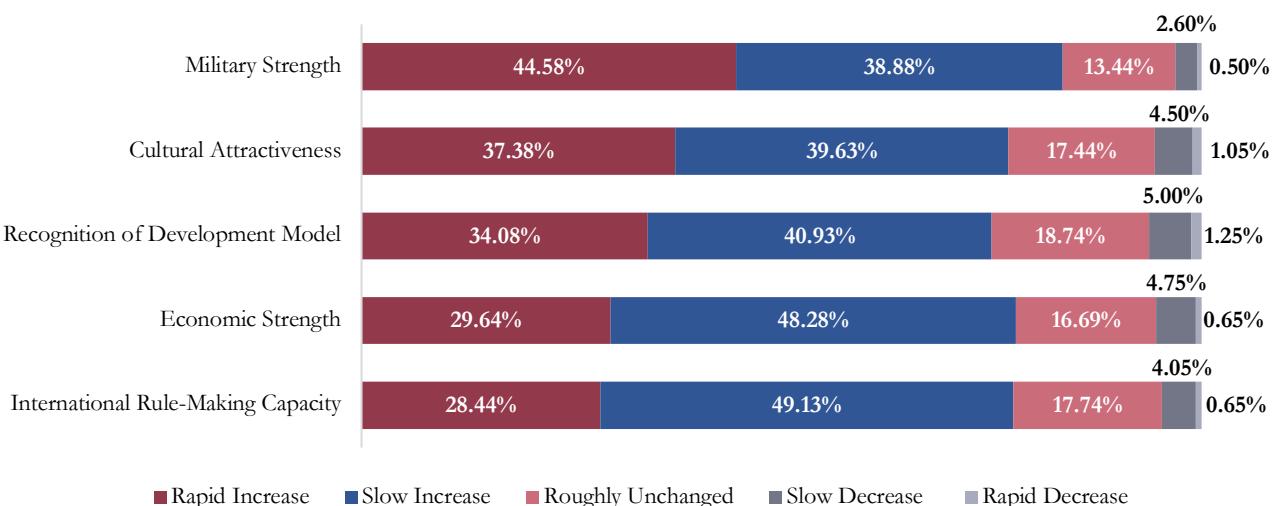


Figure 16: What Are Your Expectations for the Strength Improvement of China in Different Fields?

| Younger Demographics Prove More Optimistic About China's Future Strength

Age factors show clear generational differences in expectations for China's global standing over the next decade. The 18–44 age group is most optimistic about the growth of China's strength, being particularly confident about military strength and technological innovation (both 4.29 points). The 45–60 age group's expectations for rapid economic strength improvement are close to those of young people (4.01 and 4.03 respectively) but more conservative regarding soft power. The 60 and over age group is most cautious, with the lowest proportions of respondents expecting "rapid improvement" across all dimensions.

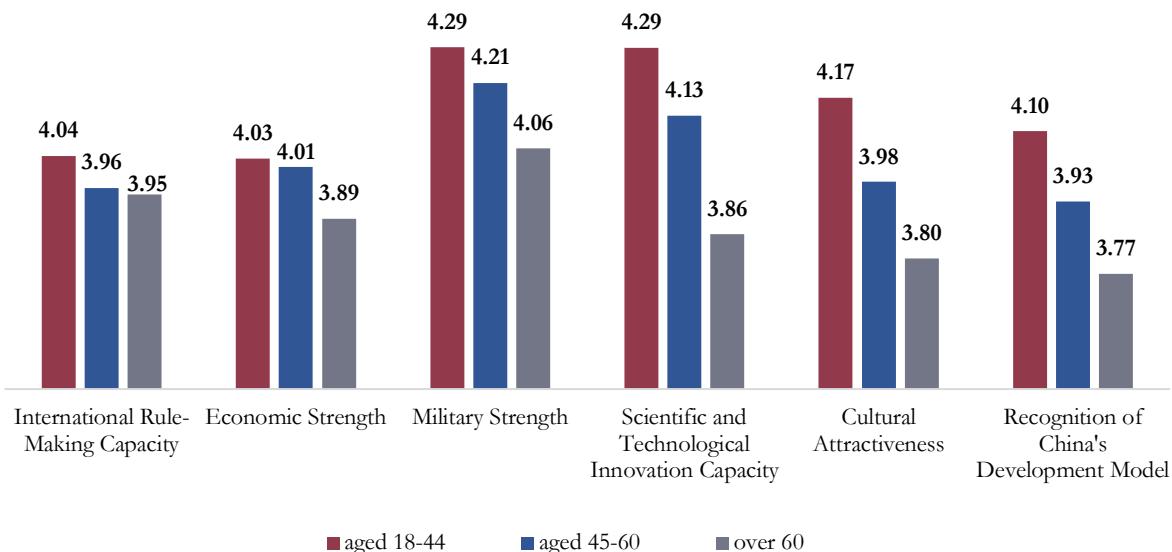


Figure 17: Generational Differences in Expectations for China's Global Standing Over the Next Decade (Higher Scores Indicate Stronger Optimism)

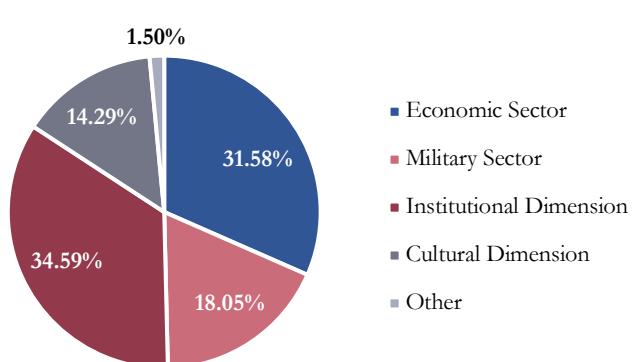


Figure 18: Generational Differences in Expectations for China's Global Standing Over the Next Decade (Higher Scores Indicate Stronger Optimism)

Although respondents are generally optimistic about comprehensive improvement in China's global position, they also have clear awareness of potential obstacles to development. Institutional and mechanistic barriers (34.59%) are viewed as the greatest challenge; economic factors, accounting for over 30% (31.58%), are seen as a major challenge; relatively speaking, military (18.05%) and cultural (14.29%) factors are viewed as secondary obstacles.

P A R T

V

| How Do Chinese People Wish to
Address Security Issues?

| 76.15% of Respondents Support Establishing Overseas Military Bases When Necessary

Regarding overseas military presence, respondents continue to show strong support. Over three-quarters (76.15%) of respondents agree China can establish military bases overseas when necessary, even if this means greater personnel and property losses, with 35.6% expressing “complete agreement.”

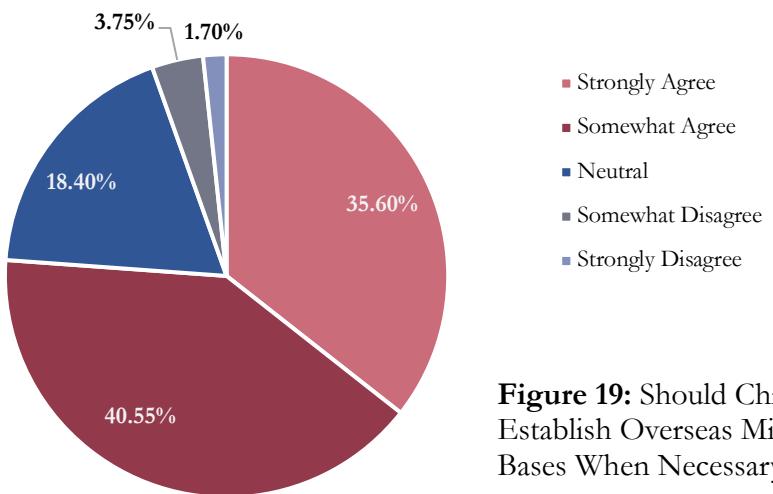


Figure 19: Should China Establish Overseas Military Bases When Necessary?

| Increased Foreign Aid Support Rose by 28.15% Year-over-Year

By contrast, public attitudes toward foreign aid are more diverse. The majority (38.05%) advocate maintaining the status quo, nearly 30% (29.10%) believe aid should be appropriately increased, while a considerable proportion (27.45%) believe foreign aid should be reduced. Compared to the previous year, the proportion of respondents satisfied with China’s increased foreign aid efforts and expecting further advancement rose by 28.15% in 2025.



Figure 20: How Do You Evaluate the Scale of China’s Foreign Aid?

Nearly 90% of Respondents Support China's Continued Commitment to Globalization Over the Next Decade

87.90% of respondents support China in continuing or even adopting a more proactive globalization strategy over the next decade (2026–2036). From international travel to long-term overseas residence, regardless of the depth of international experience respondents possess, over 80% support China in “participating more actively” or “maintaining current participation levels” in globalization efforts, representing a significant majority.

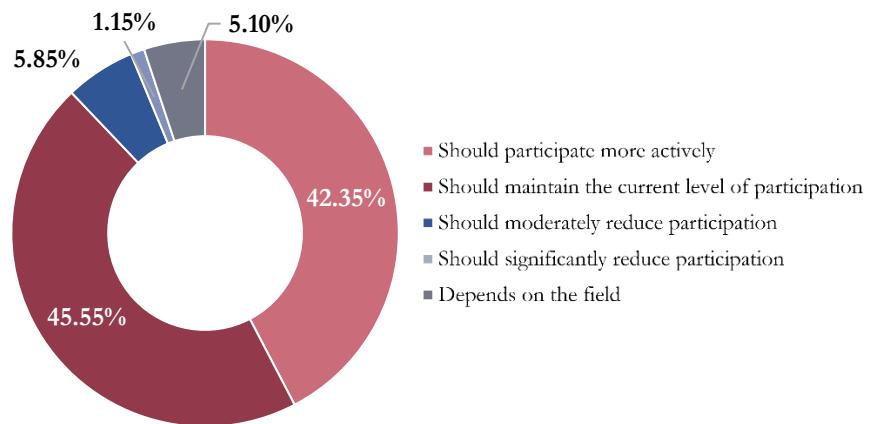


Figure 21: Should China Participate More Actively in Globalization?

It is worth noting that while support for globalization is universally high, respondents show different emphases in specific policy tool choices. The most selected options are “promoting RMB internationalization” and “deepening international cooperation in scientific research,” while enthusiasm for “relaxing policies for foreigners coming to China” is relatively lower.

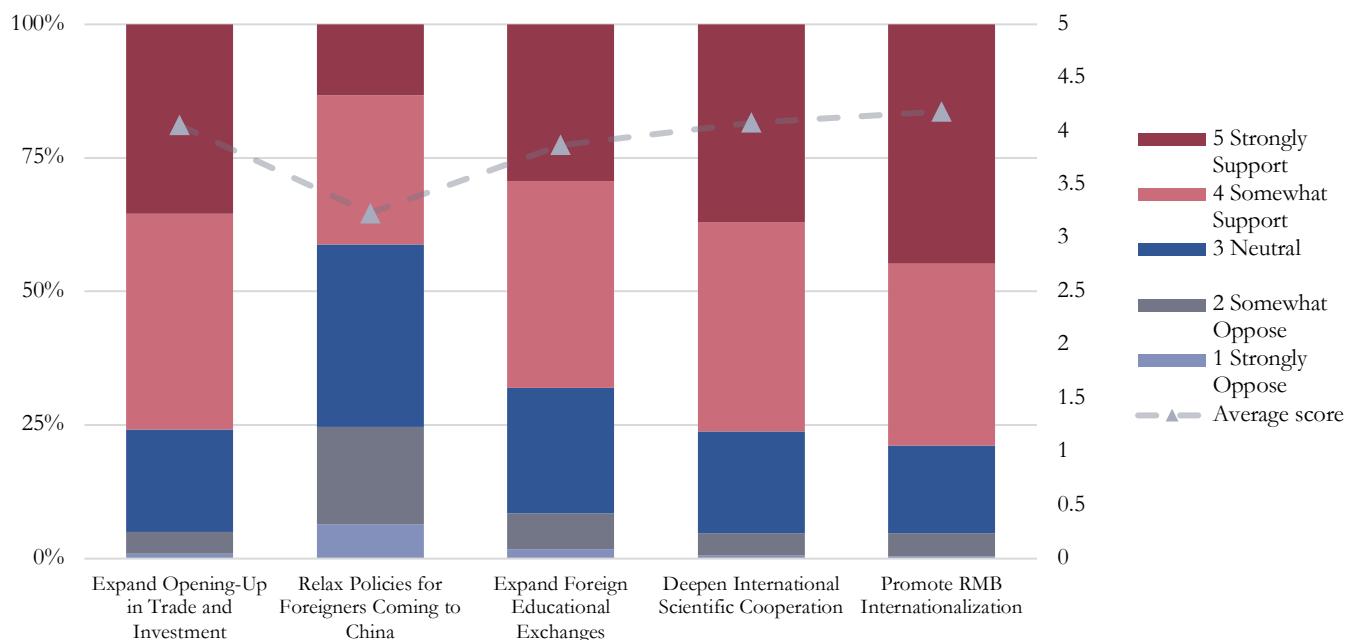


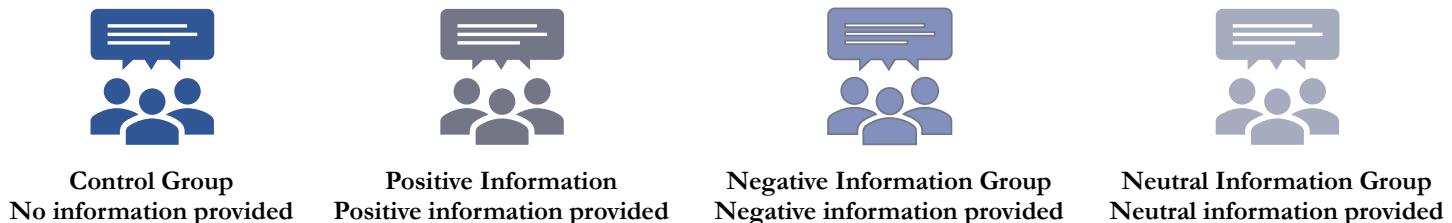
Figure 22: How Should China Further Open Up to the Outside World?

PART VI

| How Do Chinese People Perceive
China-US Relations?

| Experimental Groups Show Varying Attitudes Toward China-US Relations Based on Information Tone

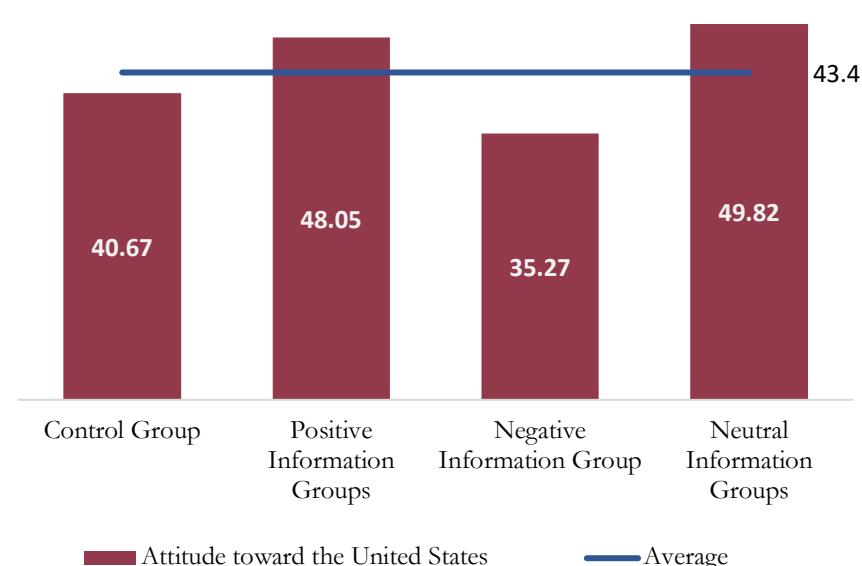
This year's survey provided three sets of news reports with different tones to test public attitudes toward China-US trade issues. The control group read no information, Experimental Group 1 (positive information group) first read positively-toned news reports, Experimental Group 2 (negative information group) first read negatively-toned news reports, and Experimental Group 3 read neutrally-toned reports. Subsequently, each group answered questions about the United States and China-US relations.



The control group, serving as the baseline, gave an overall rating of 40.67 points (out of 100) for the United States, reflecting a notably negative tendency. The positive and neutral information groups showed some degree of attitude softening, with overall scores of 48.05 and 49.82 points, respectively. The negative information group exhibited a clear "negative reinforcement" effect, with an overall score as low as 35.27 points.

Answer the following questions

Figure 23: Average Overall Rating of the United States by Respondents



| Proportion Believing China-US Relations Have Improved Rose by 20.28% Year-over-Year

Although only 28.40% of respondents believe China-US relations improved over the past year, this represents a substantial increase compared to last year (8.12%). Another 33.70% believe relations have basically remained unchanged. Specifically, respondents express an overall strong aversion to the US government, with an average score of 2.07 points (out of 5).

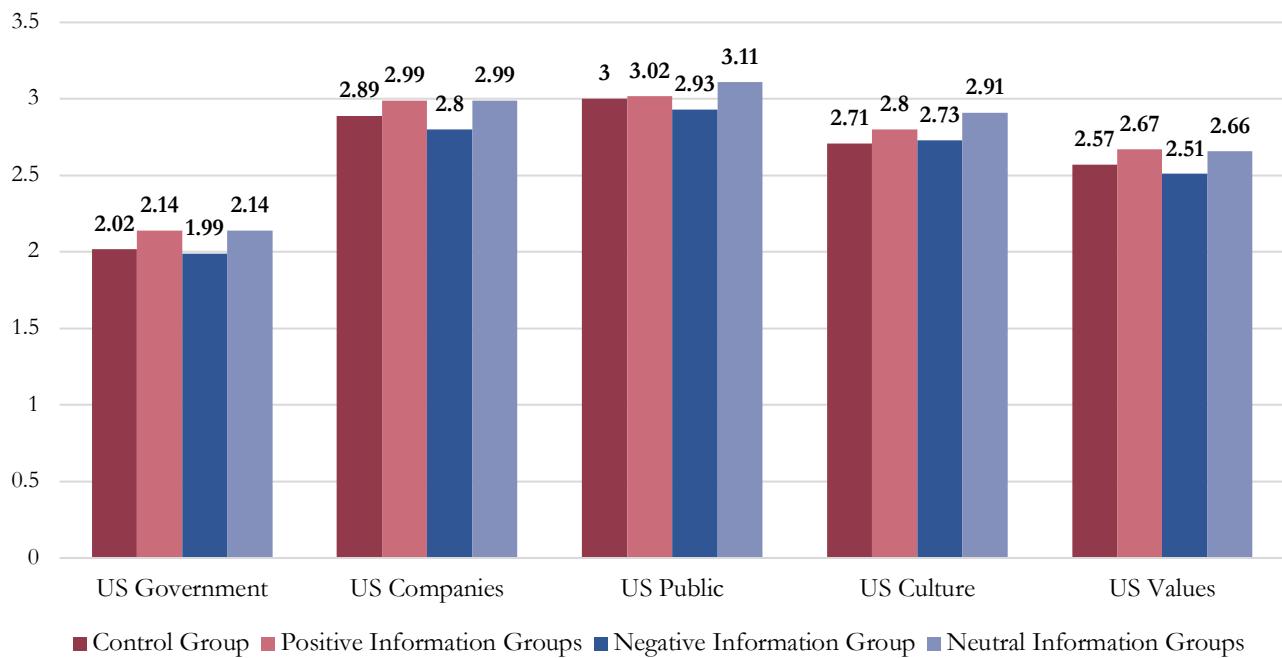
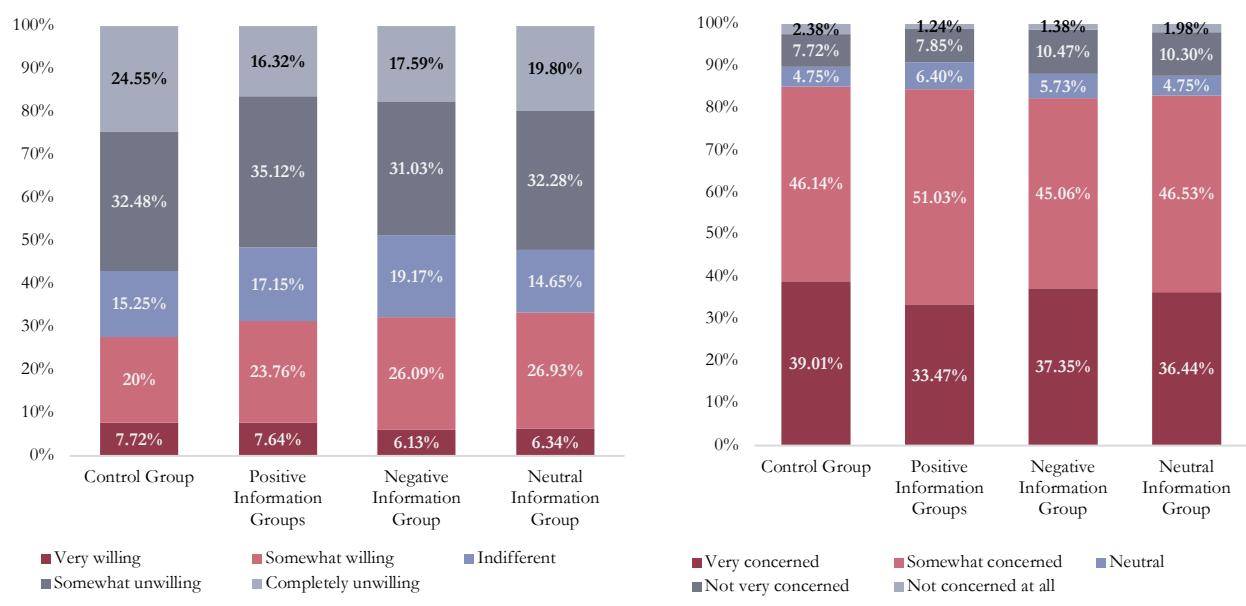


Figure 24: How Do You View the Following Aspects of the United States?

Meanwhile, 32.7% of respondents are unwilling to study, work, or live in the United States, and over 80% are concerned about travel safety in the US. Interestingly, 57.03% of respondents in the control group are unwilling to study, work, or live in the United States, showing the most negative attitude compared to other groups.



(a) Willingness to Study, Work, or Live in the United States

(b) Perceptions of Travel Safety in the United States

Figure 25: Are You Willing to Go to the United States?

| Economic and Trade Interests are the Top Factor Affecting China-US Relations

Over half of respondents view economic and trade interests (51.95%) as the most important factor affecting China-US relations; ideological differences (28.30%) are seen as the second major influencing factor; by comparison, factors such as technological competition (7.65%) and military security (10.30%), though also noted by some, are clearly not viewed as having a dominant influence.

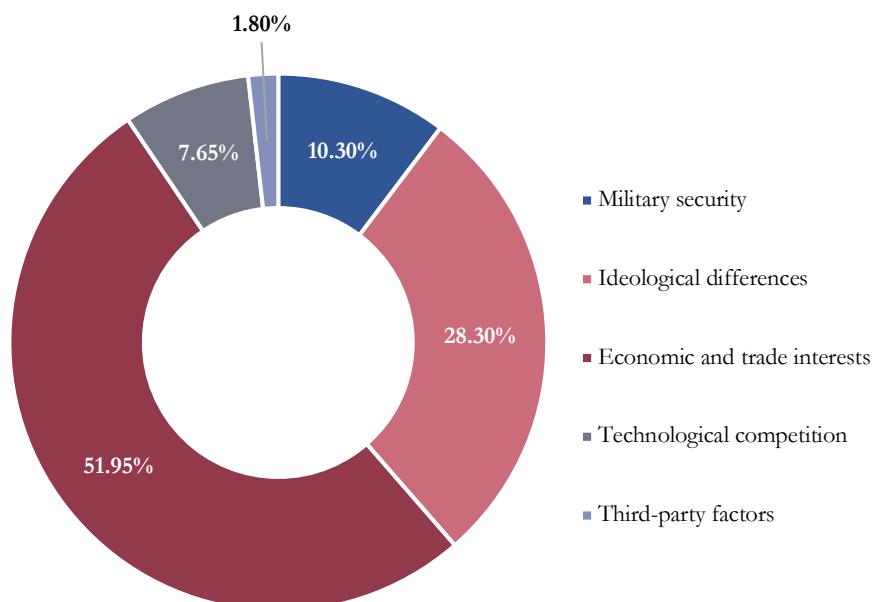


Figure 26: What Are the Most Important Factors Affecting China-US Relations?

| Nearly 80% of Respondents Believe the US is Attempting to Contain China's Development and Rise

Regarding perception of the US's strategy toward China, 78.84% of respondents believe its core strategy is one of "attempting to contain China's development and rise." By comparison, the proportion of respondents holding more positive views is significantly lower: only 12.95% believe "the US hopes to engage in healthy competition with China," and only 14.88% believe the US "hopes to cooperate with China to achieve common prosperity."

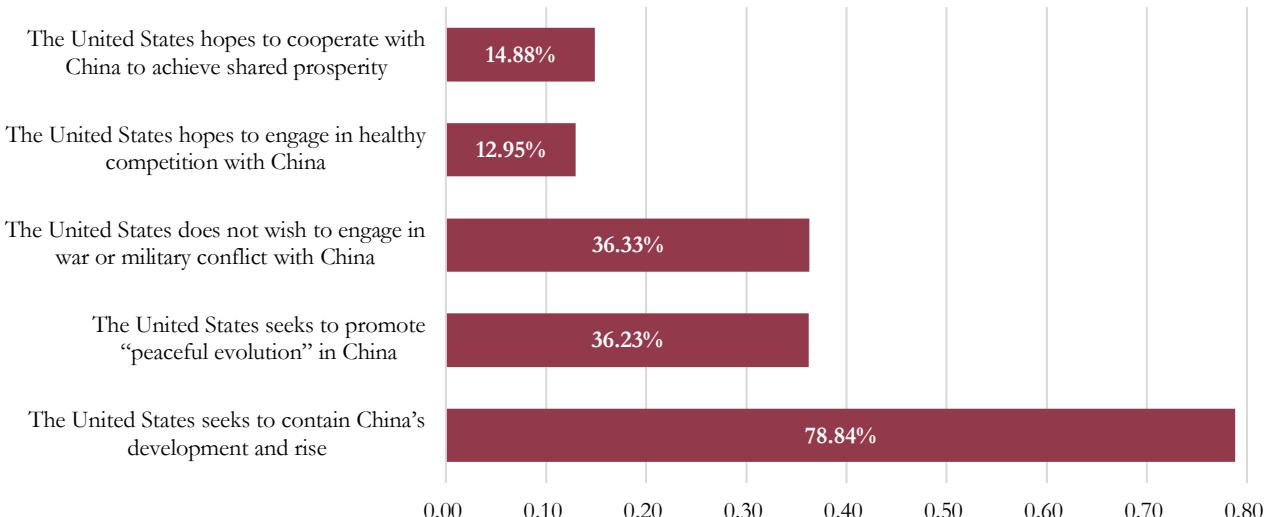


Figure 27: Which Statements About the US Strategy Toward China Do You Agree With?

| The US Has the Greatest Impact on China's Economy and Trade

Respondents unanimously believe that the United States has the most significant impact on China's economy and trade (overall average of 3.42 points out of 5) and technological development (overall average of 3.36 points), while having the least impact on personal life (overall average of 2.28 points). Among these, the negative information group is most concerned about the US's impact on China's economy and trade, with the highest average score among the four groups at 3.44 points; the control group is most concerned about the US's impact on China's technological development, with the highest average score among the four groups at 3.39 points.

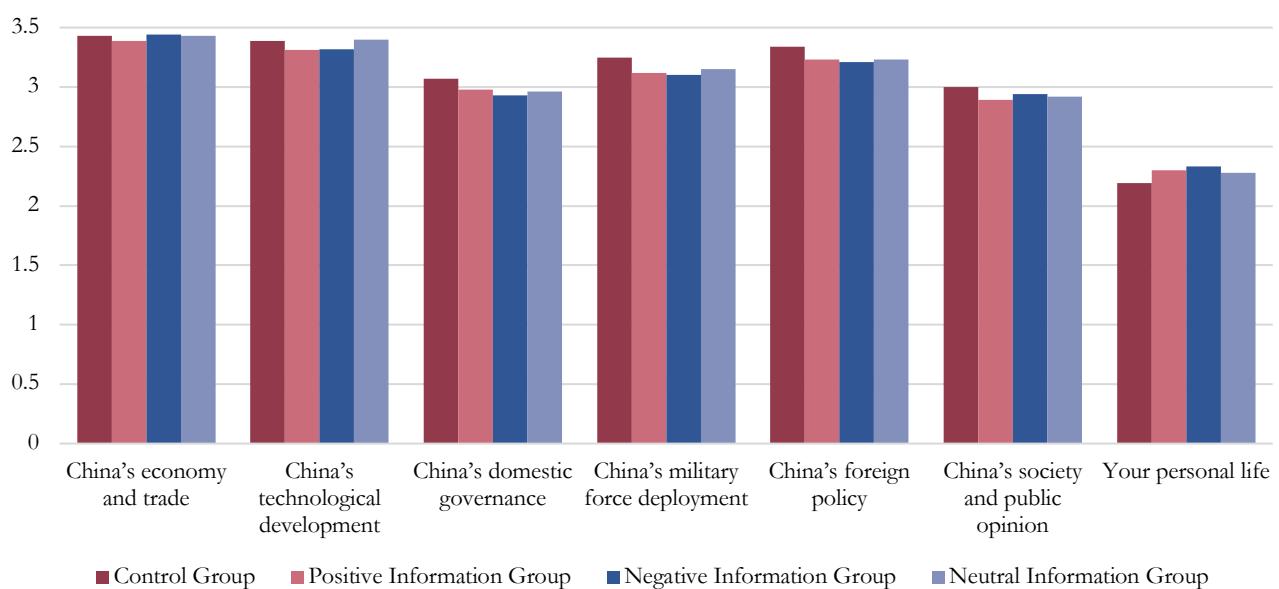


Figure 28: To What Extent Do US Factors Affect the Following Aspects of China?

Regarding views on benefit distribution in China-US trade, nearly half of respondents believe that China-US trade enables "equal benefits for both sides," while very few believe the result of China-US trade is "no benefits for either side." Among these, the positive information group has the highest proportion (50%) believing in "equal benefits for both sides." Further, 41.2% of respondents believe benefit distribution in China-US trade shows some imbalance, with 32% believing China benefits more and only 9.2% believing the US benefits more.

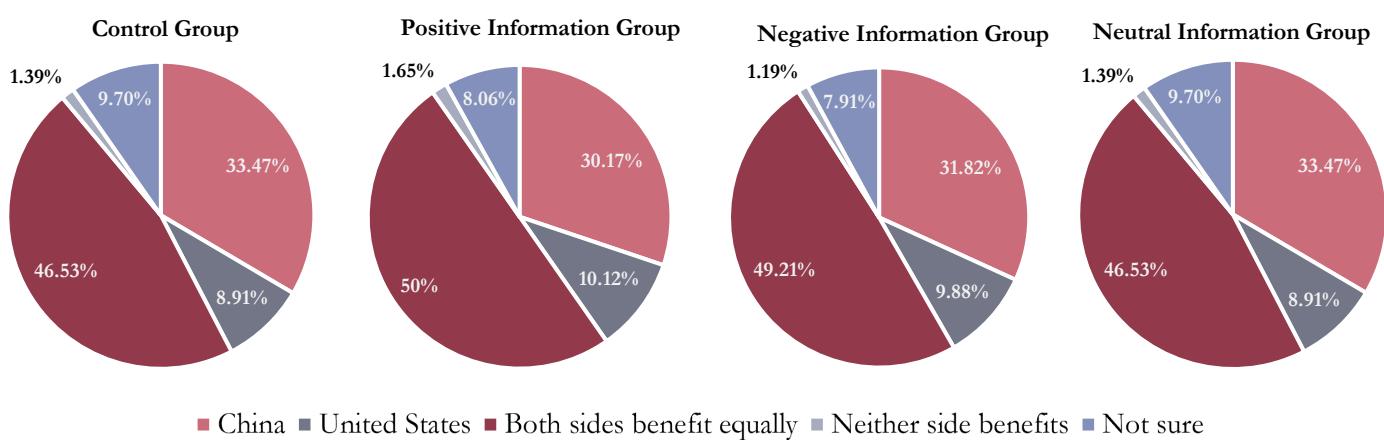
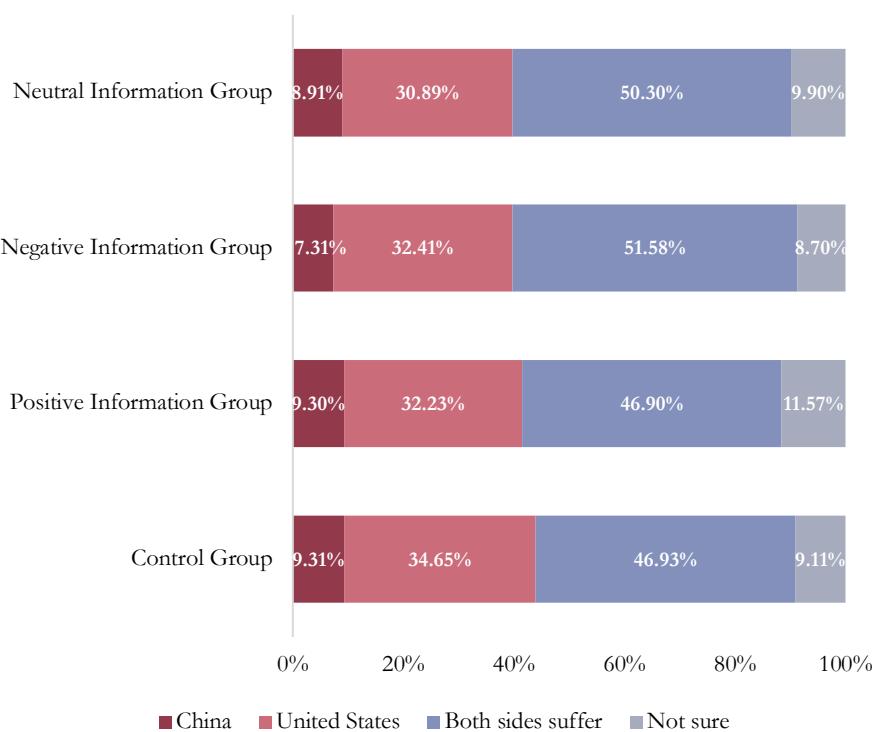


Figure 29: Since China's Accession to the WTO, Which Side Has Benefited More from China-US Trade?

| About Half of Respondents Believe the China-US Trade War Results in Mutual Losses



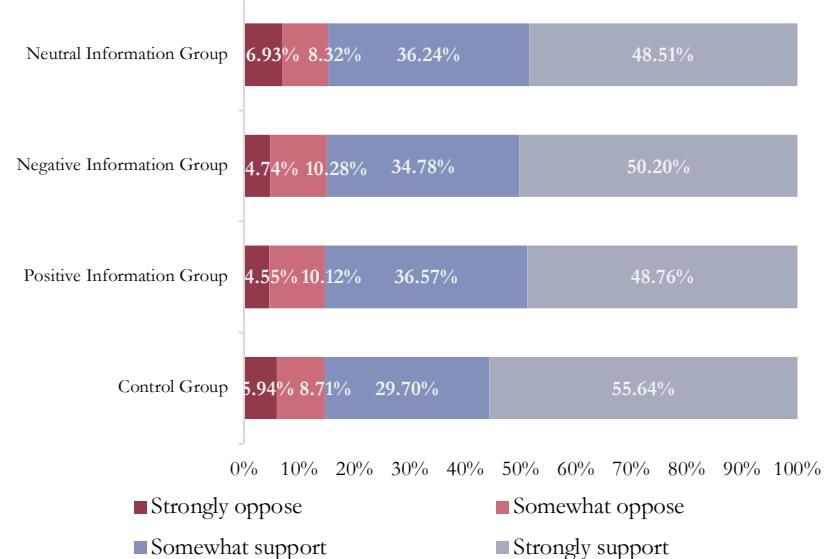
Distribution of views on the China-US trade war shows small differences across the four groups, with approximately 47-52% of respondents believing the trade war results in “mutual losses,” 32-35% believing that “US losses are greater,” and only 7-9% believing that “China’s losses are greater.” The negative information group has the highest proportion (51.58%) believing in “mutual losses,” showing the comparatively most pessimistic attitude as the control group’s proportion reaches 46.9%.

Figure 30: In the Current China-US Trade War, Which Side Suffers Greater Losses?

| Nearly 90% of Respondents Support China Taking Trade Countermeasures Against the US

Among all respondents, 85.10% support China taking trade countermeasures against the US, with 94.78% expressing “complete support.” The positive information group’s proportion of “complete support” (48.76%) is slightly lower than the control group (55.64%). “Safeguarding national dignity” (79-85%), “protecting relevant industries” (72-74%), and “creating negotiation leverage” (68-72%) are the main reasons for supporting countermeasures across all groups, with “safeguarding national dignity” being the predominant one.

Figure 31: When the United States Raises Tariffs on China, Do You Support China Taking Reciprocal Countermeasures?



Respondents Believe Cooperation Possibilities Still Exist in Economic, Trade, and People-to-People Exchange

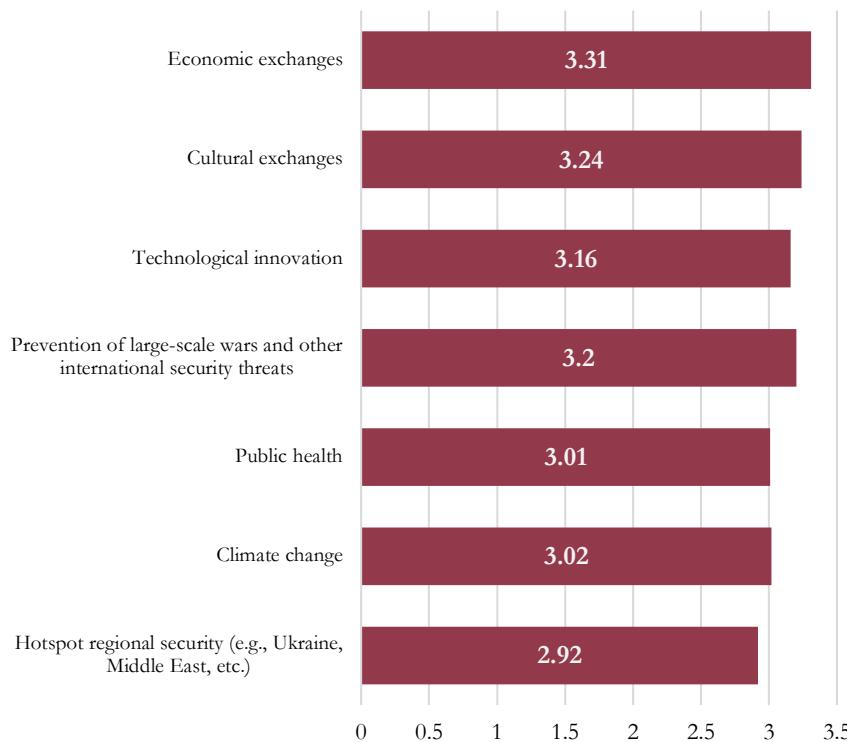


Figure 32: How Much Room Is There for Cooperation Between China and the United States in Various Fields?

Looking ahead to the next five years, respondents hold cautiously optimistic expectations for China-US relations. Nearly half (47%) of respondents are optimistic, 22.60% hold pessimistic expectations, and 30.40% believe relations will remain unchanged. Among respondents with pessimistic expectations, 15.27% are pessimistic about the Taiwan issue. Compared to 2024, the overall proportion of respondents holding pessimistic attitudes toward the future of China-US relations decreased by 13.8%.

Economic and trade exchanges continue to be viewed as the domain with the greatest cooperation potential, scoring 3.31 points (out of 5). This is followed by people-to-people exchanges, international security, and the technological innovation domains. Cooperation potential on global issues such as climate change and public health receives relatively lower scores. Cooperation potential on regional security hotspots (such as Ukraine and the Middle East) receives the lowest scores.

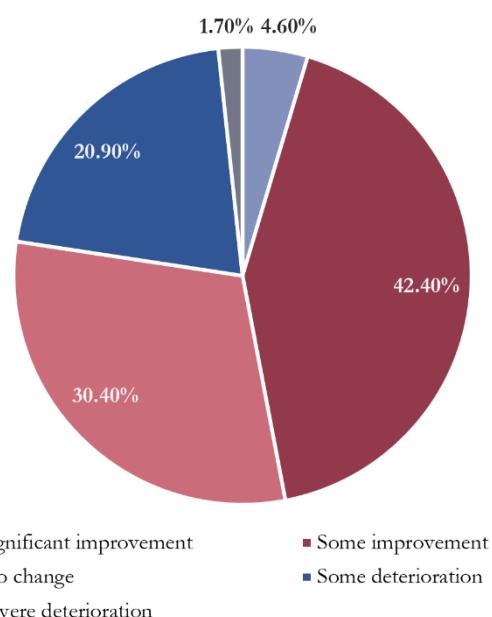


Figure 33: Expectations for the Future of China-US Relations

● About Us

The Center for International Security and Strategy (CISS) at Tsinghua University is a university-level research institution established on November 7, 2018. We aim to build an internationalized and specialized high-end think tank in the field of international security and strategy. The Center has two major objectives: first, to conduct research on international order, international relations, and strategy and security issues, track evolving situations and make assessments, and provide reference opinions and recommendations for decision-making; second, to explain and disseminate China's concepts and policy positions through various forms of international exchanges and cooperation, enhance international understanding of China, and elevate Tsinghua University's international influence in the field of strategic and international studies.

The Center operates under a director responsibility system under the leadership of a management committee, with an academic committee serving as an academic guidance and advisory body. The Center has research directions including US–Europe studies, global governance research, Eurasia studies, and artificial intelligence governance, with a sub-brand “China Forum” dedicated to international communication and a “Strategic Youth” student academic program covering top universities at home and abroad. The Center guides the Tsinghua University Global Strategy Research Association and the China–US New Voices People-to-People Exchange Association.

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