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Keynote Abstract

China Studies in the Age of Xi Jason Young

This talk discusses 'change, disruptors and resilience' in relation to the study of the People's Republic of China (hereafter the PRC) in New Zealand. It takes as a working assumption that the PRC, the world's most populous nation-state, the second-largest national economy, and a modern, highly diverse, and innovative and interesting society, is worthy of our attention as scholars. It points out that humanities and especially social science research on the PRC are facing serious disruptors exactly at the time quality independent China knowledge is needed most. Two main disruptors are explored in the talk. The first is that governance in the People's Republic has hardened around the PRC model. The second is that many western governments and publics have hardened their positions toward the PRC to the point where China scholarship and knowledge has become highly politicised. It concludes with a discussion of how to counter these trends and build resilience in New Zealand academia.