



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION



CHINESE VIEWS OF THE EU AND EUROPE

EC Directorate-General of Research
Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) Project

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中国 China

- ★ National Capital
- Xi'an • District Capital
- 吉林 Jilin District Name
- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- - - Disputed Boundary
- 0 500 km
- 0 500 Miles

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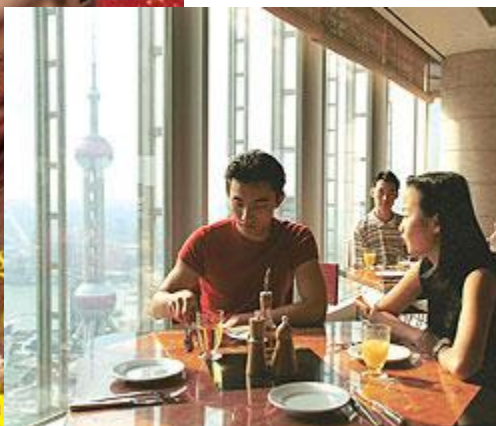
- Municipalities (Zhixia Shi)
- Autonomous Regions (Zizhiqu)
- Special Admin. Regions S.A.R. (Tebie Xingzhengqu.)
- Provinces (Sheng)

**“Long Live Chairman Mao ! All of China’s nationalities sing in
praise of Chairman Mao !”**



万岁！毛主席

— 各族人民歌颂毛主席



DISAGGREGATING CHINESE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EU AND THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- University of Nottingham, UK
- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
- Renmin University
- Leiden University, Netherlands
- Jacobs University, Bremen, Germany
- Royal Institute of International Affairs, at Chatham House in London

SURVEYS AND DATA GATHERING IN 2010

- Public survey of 3,000 people in six cities
- Surveys of 200 people in each of 5 elite groups: government officials, media workers, business people, intellectuals, NGO activists
- Interviews with these elite members
- Focus Group discussions in six cities
- History textbook analysis

KNOWLEDGE OF EUROPE



- When you think about Europe, which countries first come to mind?

Rank	Country
1	France (2064)
2	UK (2031)
3	Germany (1601)
4	Italy (712)
5	Other (333)
6	Russia (328)
7	Spain (309)

IMPRESSIONS OF EUROPE



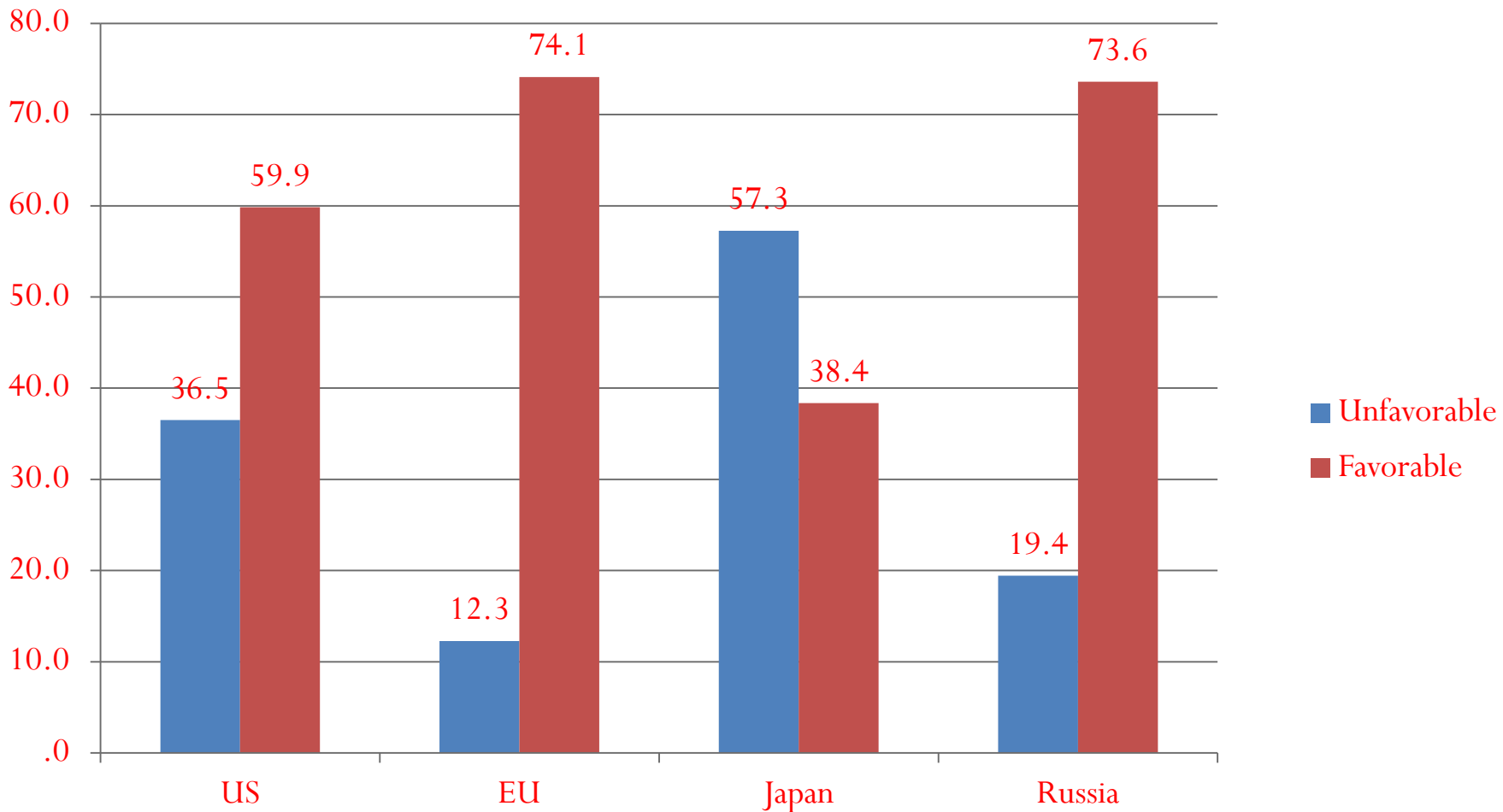
What are you most interested in about Europe (first choice)?

		gender		Sum
		male	female	
	Soccer	751	233	984
What are you most interested in about Europe? (First choice out of three)	Perfume	181	564	745
	Cars	171	91	262
	Fashion	45	184	229
	Music	52	79	131
	Nature	61	68	129
	Historical sites	50	36	86
	Technology	37	20	57
	Beer	10	1	11

VIEWS ON MAJOR POWERS



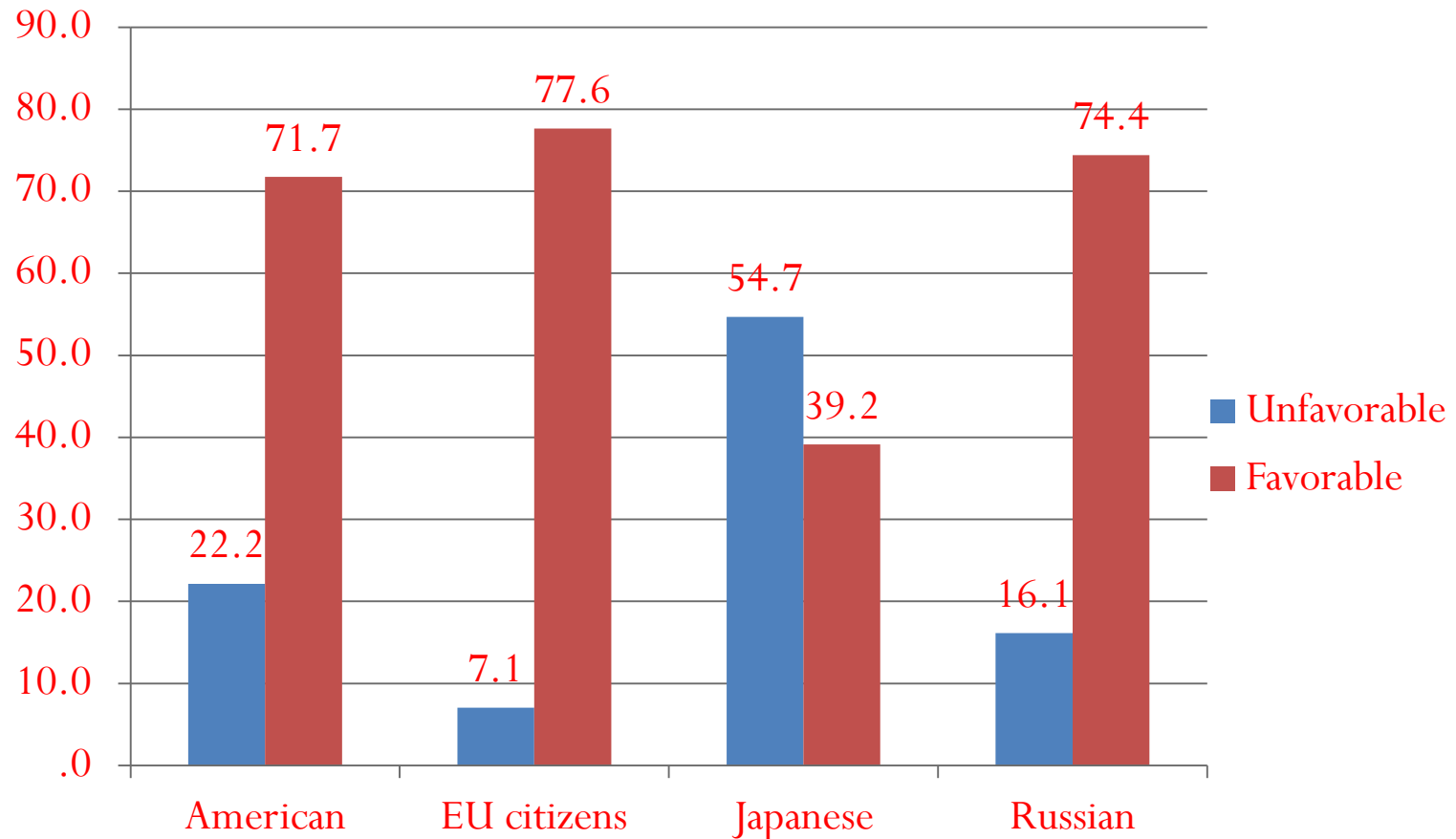
- Favorable or unfavorable impression of the US, the EU, Japan, and Russia ?



OTHER NATIONALITIES



- Favorable or unfavorable impression of Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Russians?



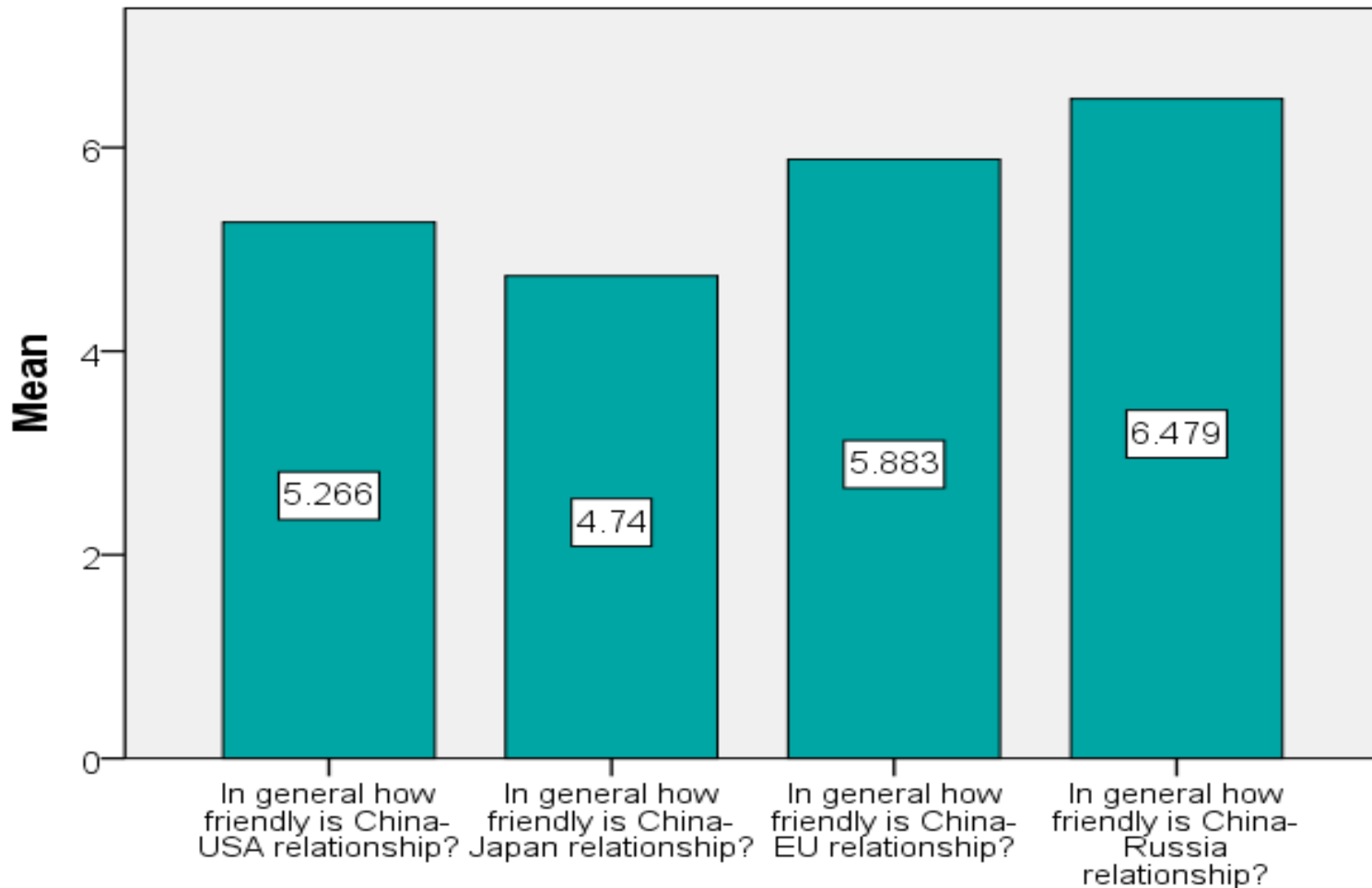
THE EU IN THE WORLD



- Attitudes towards the EU's role in international issues (percentage)

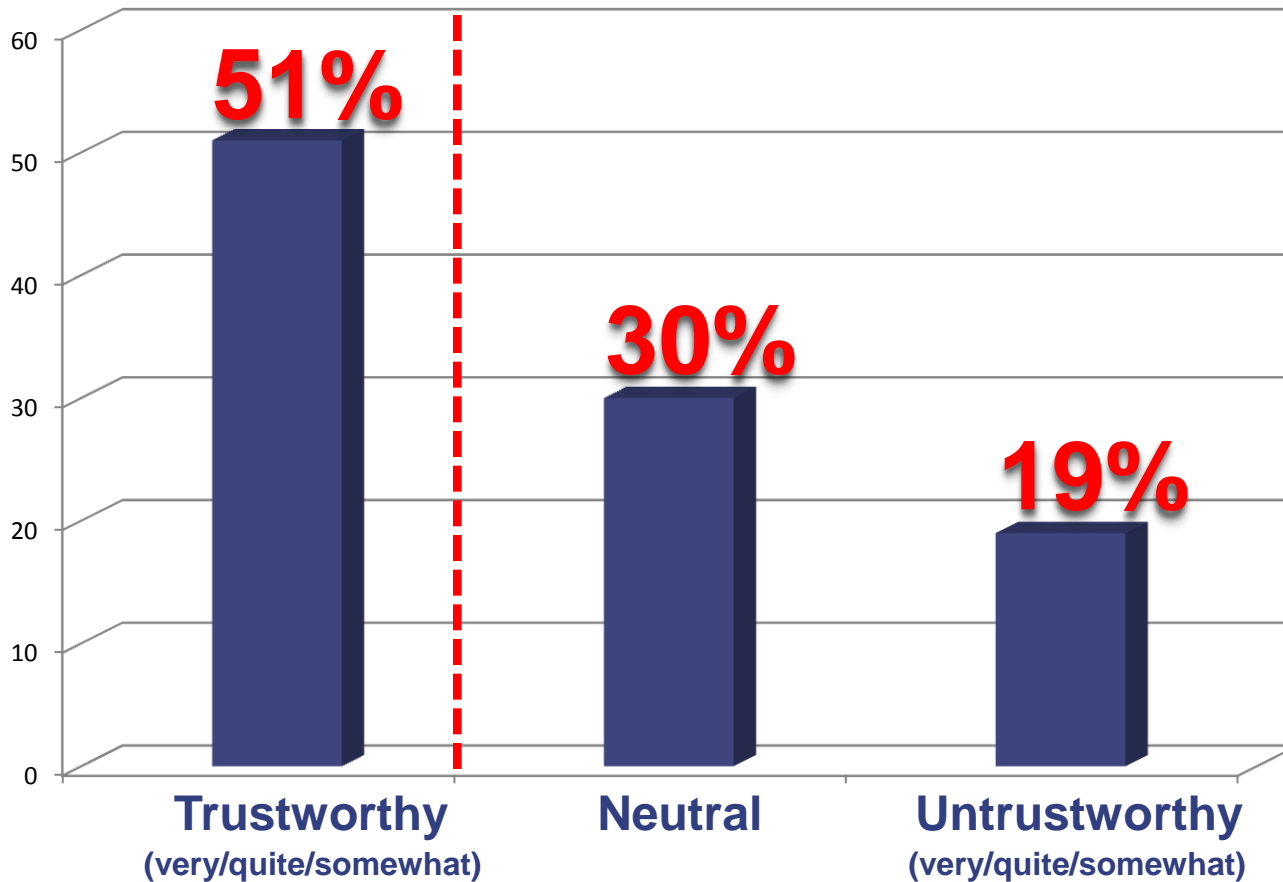
	Positive	Negative	It depends	Do not know	No answer
Peace in the world	69.8	8.3	12.0	8.7	1.3
The international economy	75.4	5.8	9.2	8.0	1.6
Protection of the environment	81.6	3.6	6.5	7.0	1.4
Scientific progress	85.2	1.9	5.1	6.4	1.5
Fighting poverty in the world	62.2	10.5	13.2	12.3	1.9
Fighting international terrorism	62.9	10.3	12.3	12.2	2.2

CHINA AND THE WORLD

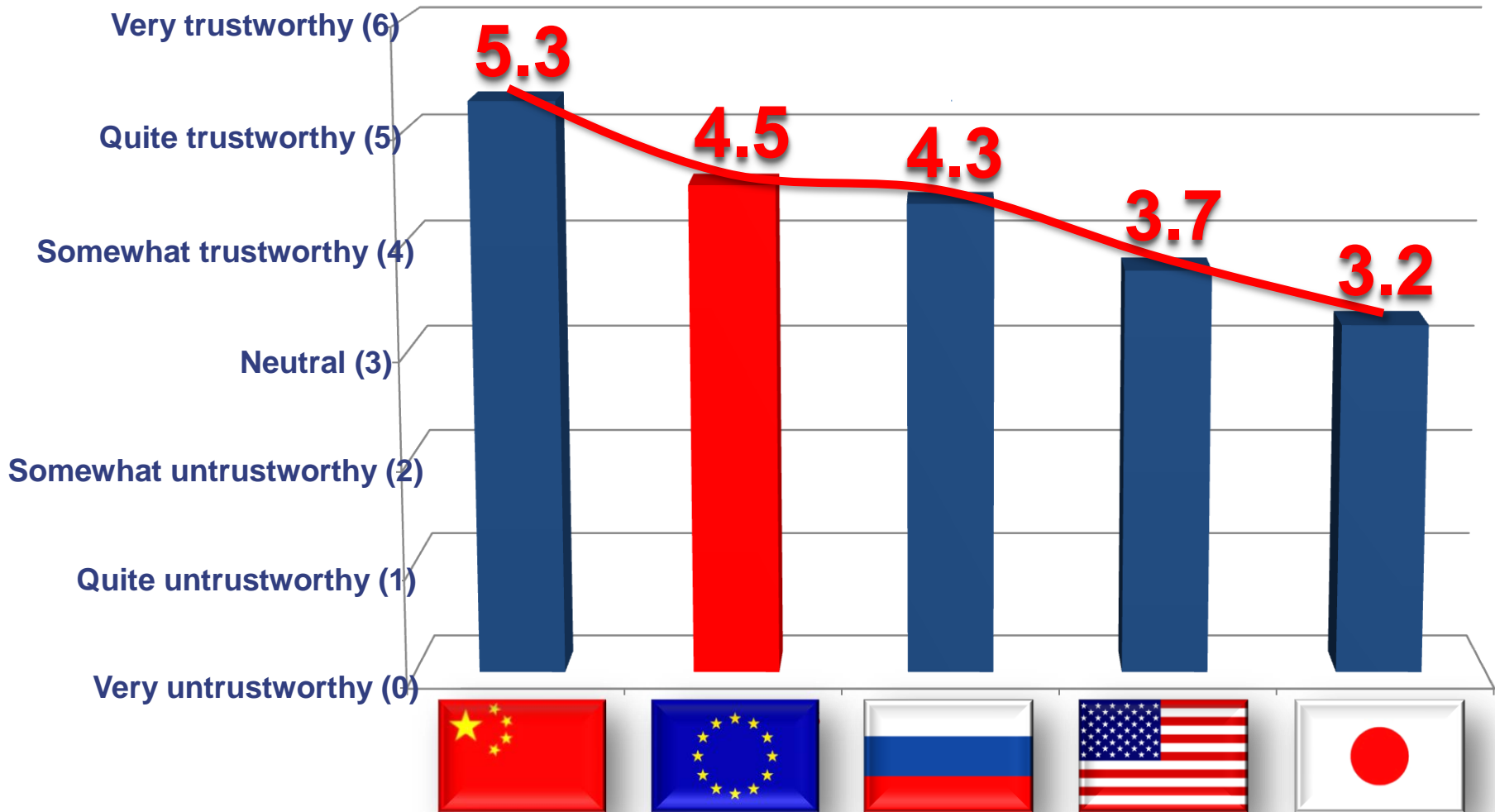


LEVELS OF TRUST

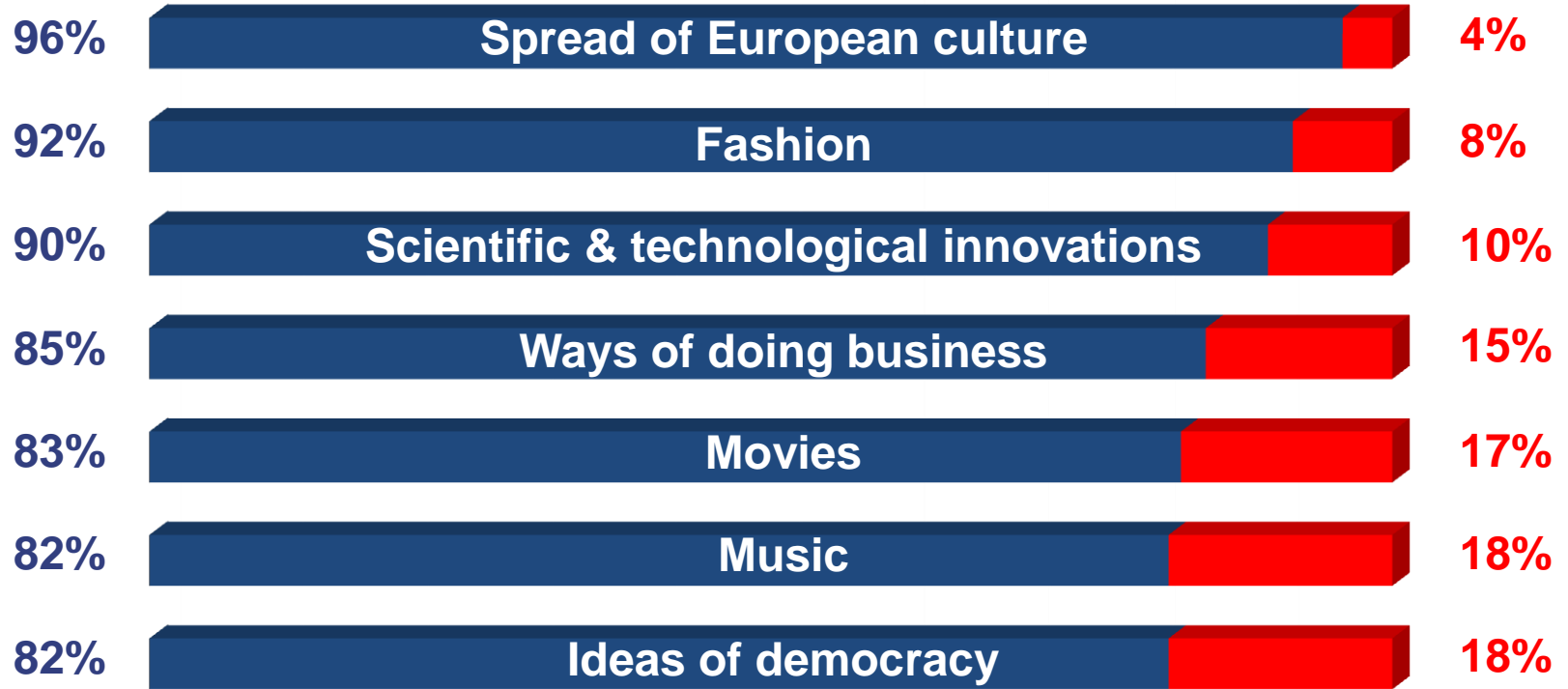
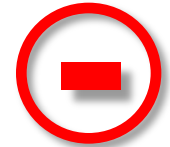
Do you think in general Europeans are trustworthy or cannot be trusted?



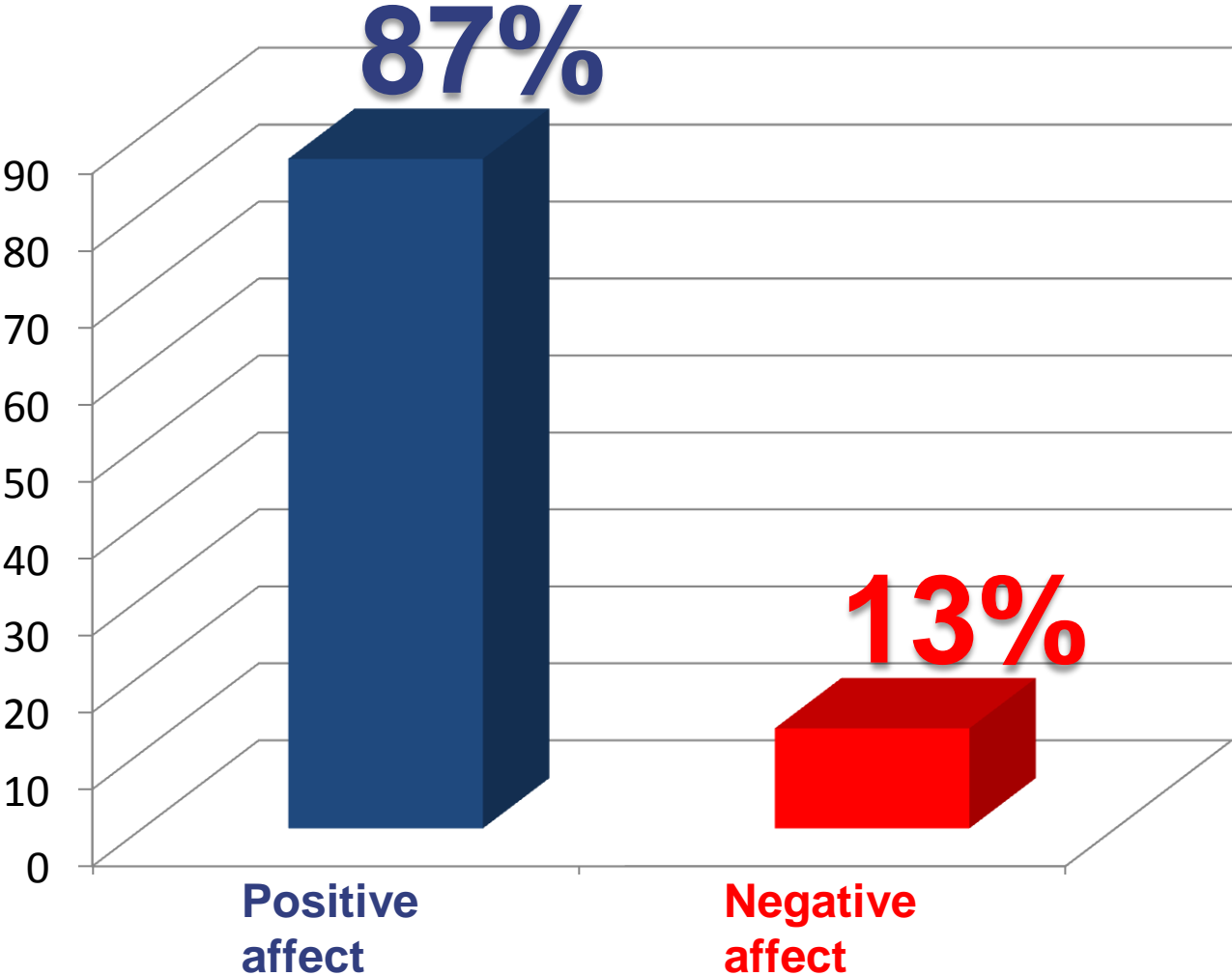
LEVELS OF TRUST



LEVELS OF AFFECT



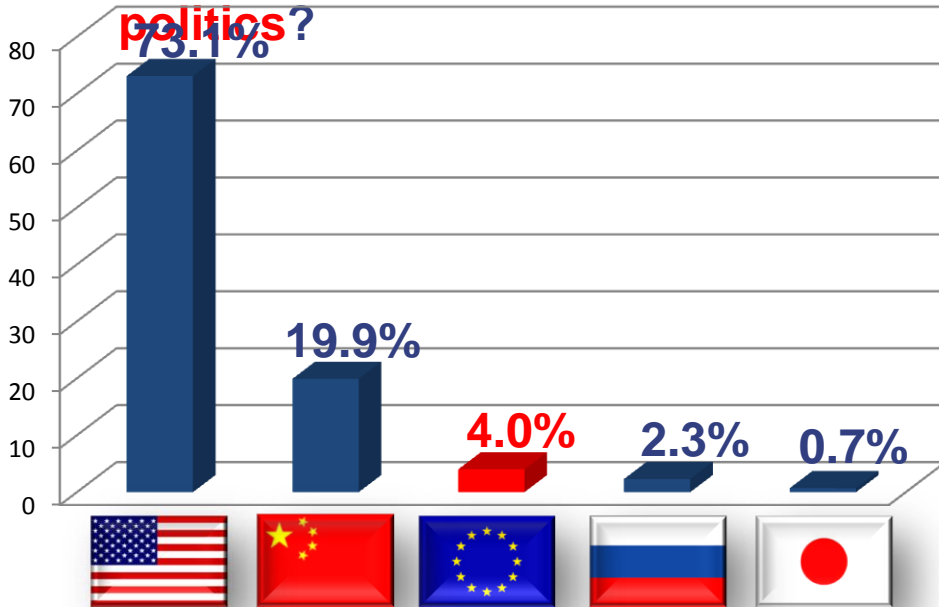
LEVELS OF AFFECT



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

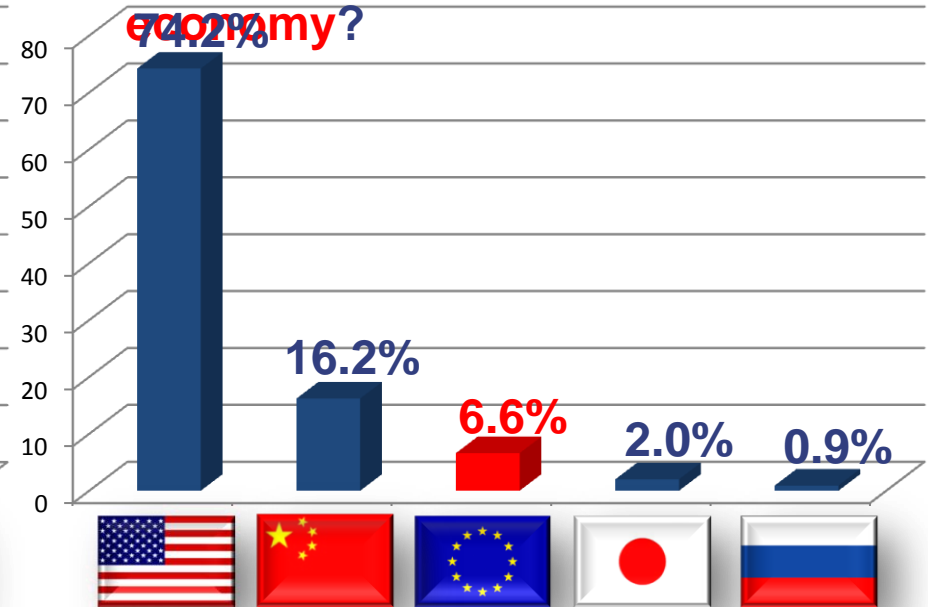
Most important actor in **world**

politics?



Most important actor in **world**

economy?



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU-CHINA YEAR OF INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

Chinese AFFECT towards European culture:

- **Finding:** High level of cultural affect is indicative of EU's soft power
- **Impact:** Cultural affect is associated with more positive views of the EU as an international actor, China-EU relations and the **EU compared to China**

Implications:

- For the EU to continue to build its soft power in China, building cultural affect or attraction is the key to many other benefits
- Continuation of “engagement and partnership” more promising than confrontational approach

DETERMINANTS OF TRUST & AFFECT

PREDICTOR	TRUST R ² =0.126	AFFECT R ² =0.163
Perceived aggressiveness	-0.211***	-0.110***
Communicated image of EU	0.126***	0.084*
Self-reported knowledge	0.084*	
Factual knowledge	0.057*	
Perceived trustworthiness		0.176***

Sig. levels: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Nationalism & cross-group contact have no significant effects!

Britain's Opium Wars – The Colonial Carve-up and China's “Treaty Ports”



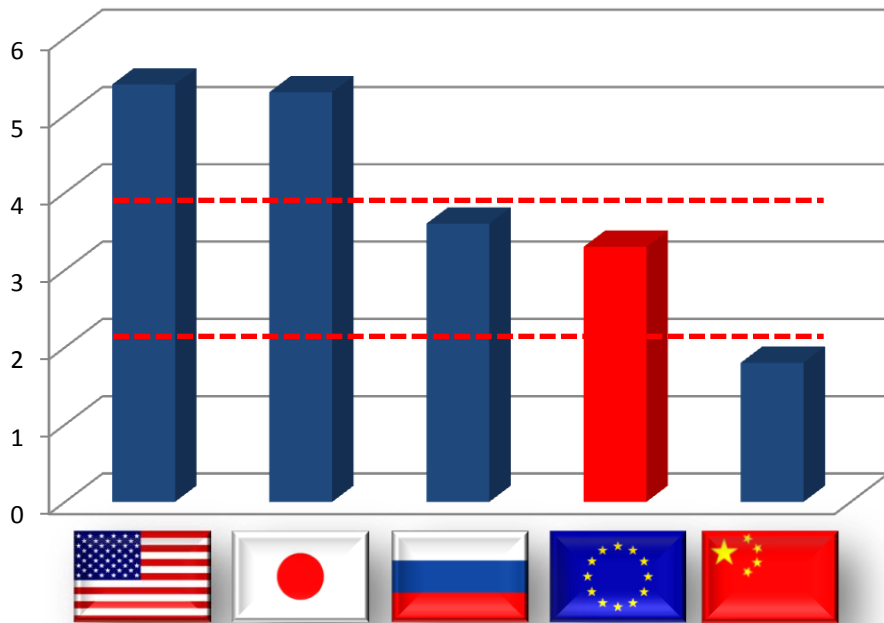
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

How to increase TRUST and AFFECT?

PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPEAN AGGRESSIVENESS:

Need to be reduced!

BUT:



Urban Chinese view Europeans as the least aggressive foreign people

Exact meaning of “aggressiveness” unclear
Causes of aggr. perceptions are unclear and need to be researched

Possible source: Chinese perceptions of “being lectured” by European “teacher”
Youngest age group (<20-30 yrs.) perceives Europeans to be more aggressive than older age groups

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

How to increase TRUST and AFFECT?

COMMUNICATED IMAGE OF THE EU:

- “Public diplomacy” campaigns need to be targeted
- 20-30 age group has the least positive image
- General public: TV (73%); internet (8%); newspapers (6%)
- Chinese youth: TV (64%); **internet (16%)**; newspapers (5%) + **schoolbooks (8%)**

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EU/EUROPE:

- Sponsorship/encouragement of **European Studies** at all levels of Chinese education system
- Extension of **people-to-people links**:



FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

- Words used to describe Europeans:
 - “civilized”, “high-integrity”, “law-abiding”, “industrious”, “innovative”
- But:
 - “conservative”, “inflexible“, “selfish”, “mean” !

FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS ON CULTURE

- “The EU’s **cultural influence** in China is definitely **not as great as the USA’s.**” —from *Nanning Group*
- “The simplest and most effective way of communication is cultural products. What foreign **films** we watch are almost all from Korea and the USA, **rarely from Europe.**” —from *Xi’an II Group*

SHOCK AND ANGER OVER 2008 OLYMPIC PROTESTS OVER TIBET

- ◆ “**When** the EU is mentioned, I am reminded of Sarkozy’s meeting with the Dalai Lama, and when Tibetan separatists grabbed the Beijing Olympic torch in Paris.” — from *Xi’an I Group*
- ◆ “I thought the China-France relationship was friendly, or at least not hostile. But the Olympic torch- grabbing events made me suddenly realise that the French dislike China. This made me feel **shocked**.” —from *Xi’an II Group*
- ◆ “Some member-states of the EU are **irresponsible** about China’s national unity.” --from *Nanning Group*

COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- ◇ The majority of interviewees accepted human rights as universal values.
- ◇ Most said the EU was trying to impose its own standards on China, stressing that China's "national conditions" are different.

“If China could reach the same level of social development as the EU, China should and would protect human rights.”—*from Guangzhou Group*

“EU shouldn't press its own (developed) standards on a still-developing China.” --*from Xi'an II Group*

FOCUS GROUPS – A COLDER ATTITUDE

◆ Fading enthusiasm :

- ◆ “The China-EU relationship is not based on friendship, but only on interests.” -- *Nanning Group*
- ◆ “It is hard to be intimate friends as well as hard to be enemies – we are just in the middle.” -- *Xi’an I Group*
- ◆ “I feel the EU is closer to the USA than to us” -- *Beijing Group*

◆ Rising Vigilance:

- ◆ “I suggest our government should not only develop cooperation with the EU, but also **should be on guard against the EU.**” -- *from Nanning Group*

FOCUS GROUPS – NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS

◇ Europeans have a “superiority complex”, “prejudice” and “misunderstanding” towards China

“Europeans are different, but for me, they have one characteristic in common at least, that **is a superiority complex**. They are accustomed to **look down** upon other people.” -- *Beijing Group*

“I feel they have **great misunderstandings** of us.” — *Guangzhou group*

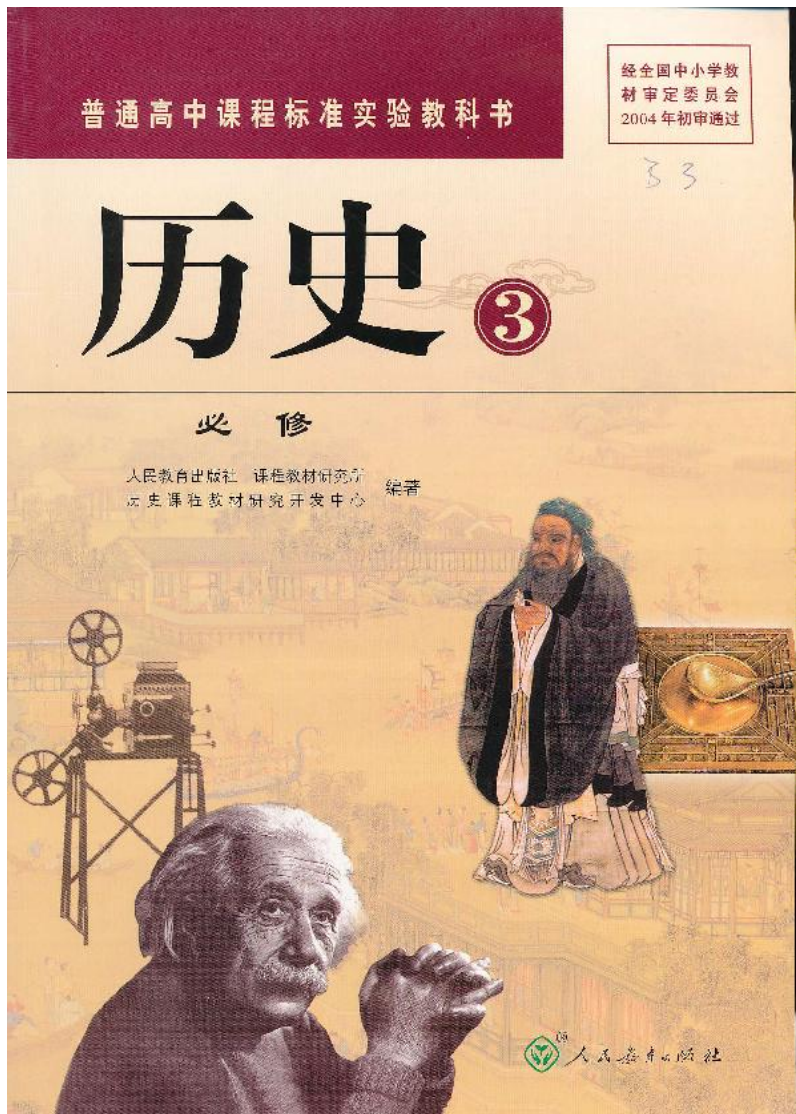
VIEWS OF CHINESE ELITES ON MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

- Government officials, scholars, media practitioners and civil society activists surveyed on this.
- Human rights and Tibet are the most controversial issues overall in the EU-China relationship
- Different political systems ,intellectual property rights and the environment are also seen as controversial issues in the EU relationship

OPINIONS OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THE EU

- Over 80% have a good impression of the EU, better than of the US, Japan and Russia
- Most assess the EU's international influence as positive.
- Most see the EU's concept of democracy and the spreading of European culture in China as positive
- Most are unhappy with the EU's stance on climate change, about pressure for the appreciation of the RMB and the EU's stance on human rights
- Most officials say they need to improve their understanding and study of the EU's democratic politics.

INFLUENCE OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS ON CHINESE VIEWS OF EUROPE



- Chinese textbooks today reflect a political program of „Reform and Opening to the Outside World“.
- Europe has an important place in Chinese history education, as source of examples to learn from
- The portrayal of Europe is predominantly positive (yet selective):
 - origin of modernity
 - center of world history
 - agent of progress

KEY OVERALL FINDINGS



- Chinese people think more favourably about the EU than the US or Japan
- Officials and elites more favourable than the public
- Only 42% think EU-China relations good, although 46% cautiously optimistic about relations in future
- 55% say they like European democracy
- Main controversial issues human rights, Tibet and intellectual property rights

KEY POLICY IMPLICATIONS



- EU has huge reservoir of goodwill in China, including, perhaps surprisingly, among officials, despite differences over human rights and democracy
- The more people know about the EU, the more positively they view it.
- EU has opportunity to build on this to improve relations with China across the board.
- Environment, civil society development, the internet, culture and education are all major opportunities for the EU to develop closer relations

ON THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES:

- TRUST is important element of affect/liking/respect
- Perceived Aggressiveness is important for Trust
- Direct public criticism of China can backfire in terms of trust and affect
- EU seen as “normative power” – wanting to change China and teach China. This not always liked and can have consequences if approached in the wrong way
 - Megaphone diplomacy can be unproductive
- Democracy in Europe is viewed positively, and there is a desire to study it more closely, for whatever reason. The EU has an opportunity to respond to that but needs to do so in a sensitive way.
- On the promotion of democracy and human rights, the EU will benefit from adopting the role of friendly helper and partner rather than that of teacher

FOR EU PUBLIC DIPLOMACY:

- The EU should take note that government officials are generally more positive about it than the Chinese general public
- The EU could intensify its public information policy in China in a targeted way with an integrated communications strategy, clear measurable goals, prioritized actions and a suitable budget.
- Internet strategy needed to target the young
- Different groups should be targeted separately
- Regional differences between richer east and poorer western China

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY:

- EU environment work mainly seen as positive but largely invisible in Chinese media
- Major opportunity to boost image of EU as a tough and effective environmental actor
- Strong public support for strengthening China-EU collaboration on environmental issues
- Climate change policies have to take into account level of development
- Export of pollution a big issue: Some EU firms perceived as behaving worse in China than back home
- EU should call on its businesses to show that they works to same tough standards in China as they do in Europe, boosting corporate social responsibility

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT:

- Major opportunity to help China build its civil society.
- EU could further expand its programmes despite the sensitivity, by sharing Chinese objectives
- European NGOs should be encouraged to focus on China, taking into account China's special conditions and the role of the state
- EU NGOs could help Chinese civil society develop capacity, in a non-politicised way.

FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE POLICY:

- Huge opportunity to boost mutual understanding between young people
- More cultural channels needed: European films etc
- Cooperation between teachers and academics on text books and curricula – two-way street
- Joint history camps for students
- Establish a China-EU Young Leaders Training Programme of Summer courses to learn about history, origins of thought and culture and values
- Support for China Studies in Europe, European Studies in China.
- School partnerships, teacher exchanges and joint projects for teaching materials

CONCLUSIONS

- Close EU-China Relations are vital for our shared global future
- Improving people to people understanding is key for the future of China-EU relations
- There is a strong basis in social science for the EU-China Year of Inter-Cultural Dialogue !
- Policies need to target the younger generation especially:
 - Understanding the realities of social networking and how this works differently in the EU and in China is critical to influencing young people