

Asia in the eye of Europe

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Interview Partner

Position	Outlet	Reason for Interview
correspondent in Beijing	ORF	Most popular TV station
correspondent in Beijing	Die Presse	2nd most popular quality paper
editor , foreign policy	Kronen Zeitung	Most popular newspaper
Editor, economy	Kronen Zeitung	Most popular newspaper
editor in chief, economy	Der Standard	Most popular quality paper
editor in chief, foreign policy	Der Standard	Most popular quality paper
chief of news	ORF	Most popular TV station
Editor, international	Kurier	Popular national-wide daily
editor in chief, foreign policy	Die Presse	2nd most popular quality paper
editor in chief	Der Standard	Most popular quality paper
editor in chief, foreign policy	Kurier	Popular national-wide daily
editor in chief, foreign policy	APA	Austrian news agency

News Sources

- News agencies
- Internet/international newspapers
- Own research
- Personal engagement

“And it depends very much on the personal preference of the people that are in the editorial offices. It is very difficult to say something about the pattern. Sometimes it just depends on Mr Wagner or Ms such-and-such.” (correspondent in Beijing, Die Presse)



News Sources II

- Quality papers:
 - Correspondents (China, India, Japan, Thailand)
 - International organizations (IMF, ADB, WB, OECD)
- News agency:
 - International news agencies (Reuters, AFP, DPA) and internet



Budget

- No special budget allocated for Asian news
- exception for correspondents in quality papers and TV

“There is no special budget defined. It falls in the category of foreign countries. We have a travel budget, a budget for correspondents and within this pot it is decided whether to report on Japan or on South America.”

(editor in chief of economic section, Der Standard)



News Selection Criteria

- Relevance for Austria (6)
- Topicality (4)
- General Relevance (3)

“Relevance for Austria for sure does not mean that it is given when Austrians appear somewhere or when Austrian politicians travel but this relevance for Austria has to be evaluated within an international and globalized context.”

(editor in chief of foreign policy section, APA)

“[A] selection criterion for everything is the relevance for Austria [...]. Are there any effects on a journey, political instability, any threat of war [...], is there any impact on tourism.” *(editor of economic section, Kronen Zeitung)*

Editorial Approach

- No officially formulated policy on covering news on Asia
- Generally reactive role in reporting on Asia; no agenda setting (except for correspondents)

“It [agenda setting] happens but it would be swaggering to say we set the agenda and are proactive, that’s not the case.” (editor in chief of foreign policy section, Kurier)



How difficult is it so sell an Asia-related story?

- Generally easy (8)

“Asia is relatively sexy, I think at the moment it is easier to sell an Asian story than a Latin-American story, for example.” (editor in chief of foreign policy section, Die Presse)

- Easy selling differs highly with regard to section and country

“Mongolia sells worse.” (correspondent in Beijing, Die Presse)

“To spark interest for issues that are related to the social development of countries or to sustainable development is quite difficult.” (editor in chief of foreign policy section, APA)



Expectation for the Future

- Increase in importance and coverage of Asia (9), especially China (4), India (2), Indonesia (1)

“It is absolutely obvious that Asia will occupy a broader scope in the reporting. I think increasingly particularly China because many [correspondents] are based there but we may not forget India in this context.” (chief of news, ORF)

“I think that there will be an increasing interest in Indonesia, for example. I think that it will increasingly be perceived as a player. I also think that India will emerge from the shadows even more than before [...] and China is also just at the beginning.” (editor in chief of foreign policy section, Die Presse)

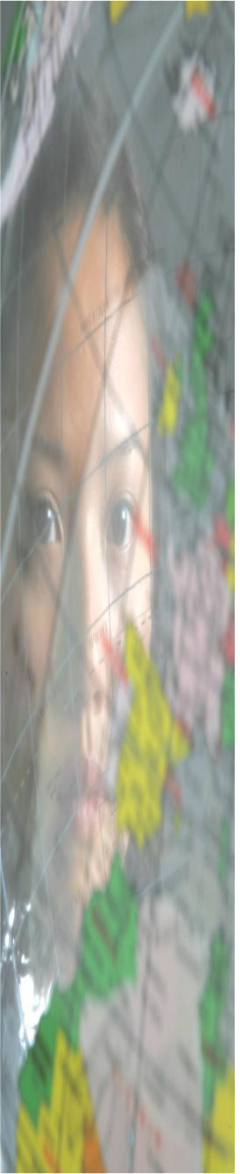
Asian Regional Organizations

- No interest in news from Asian regional organizations (10)

“Probably not, that’s kind of a naive imagination. I receive about 300 emails every day, a lot of them through distribution boards because I was a foreign correspondent before, and the reaction would be that I press the delete button even more often.” (editor in chief, Der Standard)

- Asian regional organizations lack interest because of
 - Lack of problem solving capacities
 - No substantial regional integration





Personal perceptions on Asia

Asia as a Great Power?

- Hard for interviewees to refer to Asia as a whole
- Asia is dynamic but diverse

“Asia is not a great power to me. It’s nothing at all, it’s a geographical concept. Individual countries, of course I would see them as a great power but I see no cohesion.”

(editor in chief of foreign policy section, APA)

- Only China is mentioned to act or at least have the potential of acting like a great power (9)
- However:

“Even China is too fragmented than seeing it as a unity. I consider China as an emerging country but not as a new great power because I just know how big the problems within the country are and how much energy has to be spent to actually keep the country together and keep the population satisfied.” (chief of news, ORF)

Asia as a Leader in International Politics?

- China and India as crucial players
- Climate issues and security politics as most important fields
- BRIC countries as an important group in international politics (3)

“I think that the BRIC states are much more interesting. As an antipole to the currently prevailing balance which actually isn’t one any more.” (chief of news, ORF)

“I think that Asian countries already play a significant role, not only within the United Nations. If I take the Security Council, without China nothing at all works out [...]. And that is of course increasing, not just, not just in terms of the significance of China but also in terms of other larger and more important countries in Asia.” (editor in chief of foreign policy section, APA)

Importance of Asia to Austria

- Scale of 1 to 5
 - Present: 3
 - Future: 3.8

“Well, the real importance or the perception?” (editor of economic section, Kronen Zeitung)

“Do you mean politically or economically?” (chief of news, ORF)

“In what area do you mean? Economy, politics, culture, media?” (editor in chief, Der Standard)

“State, society or national economy?” (editor of foreign policy section, Kurier)

Important Issues in Austria's Relations with Asia

- Economy/Trade (11)

“Mutual trade. Austria [...] needs Asia so that we can maintain higher growth levels. They will not come from Europe and they will probably not come from the US but they will come from East Asia.” (correspondent in Beijing, ORF)

“Well, economic relations of course, that’s for sure.” (editor in chief of economic section, Der Standard)

“Of course economy is a priority for Austria and politics lag behind.” (editor in chief, Der Standard)

ASEM

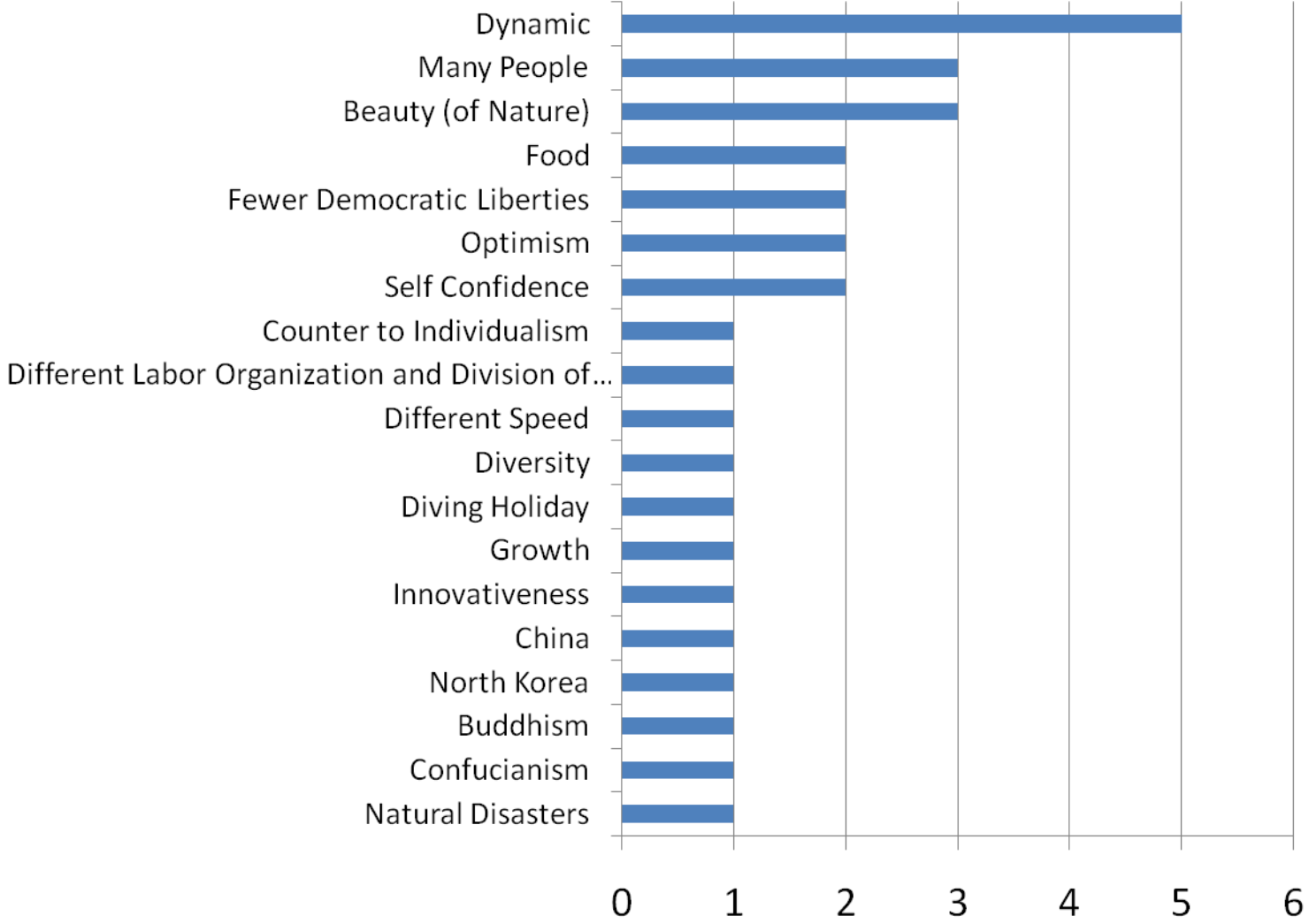
- Impact of ASEM to Austria-Asian relations close to zero
- 4 interviewees didn't respond to the question at all

“Uninteresting. Well, the only interesting thing was that the Chinese combined this with a Europe-tour and promised investments in Greece and in Portugal.

That's what we reported about.” (editor in chief of economic section, Der Standard)

“No, no. I think nothing at all of such meetings.” (editor of foreign policy section, Kronen Zeitung)

Images of Asia



Conclusion

- media elites are generally aware of actual and future importance of the region; however, media coverage lacks behind
- Asia is not perceived as a region; China is definitely the most important individual country
- Asian regional organizations lack importance, both in coverage and in perceived importance
- Asia cannot be compared to Europe in terms of regional integration; Asia is not a political player but a geographic concept

