

Asia in the Eyes of Europe

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Selection of Interviewees

News Outlets:

- **Daily Newspapers** (FAZ, Sueddeutsche, Frankfurter Rundschau, Stuttgarter Zeitung, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, Berliner Zeitung, Financial Times Germany)
- **Weekly Newspapers** (Die Zeit)
- **Magazines** (Spiegel, Wirtschaftswoche)
- **Tabloid** (BILD)



Selection of Interviewees

Interviewees:

- Three foreign correspondants (permanent employees)
- Four foreign correspondants (honorary/“free ones“)
- Two editors in chief
- Three heads of department

→ detailed covering of print media elite of all genres
→ No TV journalists: difficult situation, 2010 report caused mistrust



Organisation of Asia News

The approach to organize Asia-related news revealed to be quite homogenous:

- Main sources for Asia news are the NP's own correspondents, followed by national/international news agencies and local contacts.
- Preparation never includes more than the correspondent's research (Internet, local sources), sometimes backed up with information coming from the editorial department.
- ALL interviewees said there was no allocated budget.
- Only two NPs hire staff/experts for special occasions. The others either work with their own honorary staff or assign correspondents located in nearby countries.
- ALL interviewees agreed that the only criteria (news value) to select a story are timeliness and public interest.



Organisation of Asia News in comparison

- Answers surprisingly homogenous
- Slight differences between big newspapers/magazines and smaller/regional ones
- The latter mainly rely on agencies and honorary staff („Freie“/“Free ones“), big players have permanent experts on location



Editorial Approach

- Absolute freedom of reporting → no other official policy for news except timeliness and interesting coverage (foreign + Asian)
- All outlets except the regional newspapers and the Spiegel claimed to assume a proactive, agenda setting role (more difficult for small/regional papers)
- Low interest in disseminated news – scepticism prevails
- Focus on single Asian states. Coverage on regions/regional cooperation only in connection with summits/conflicts → difficult esp. for regional NPs



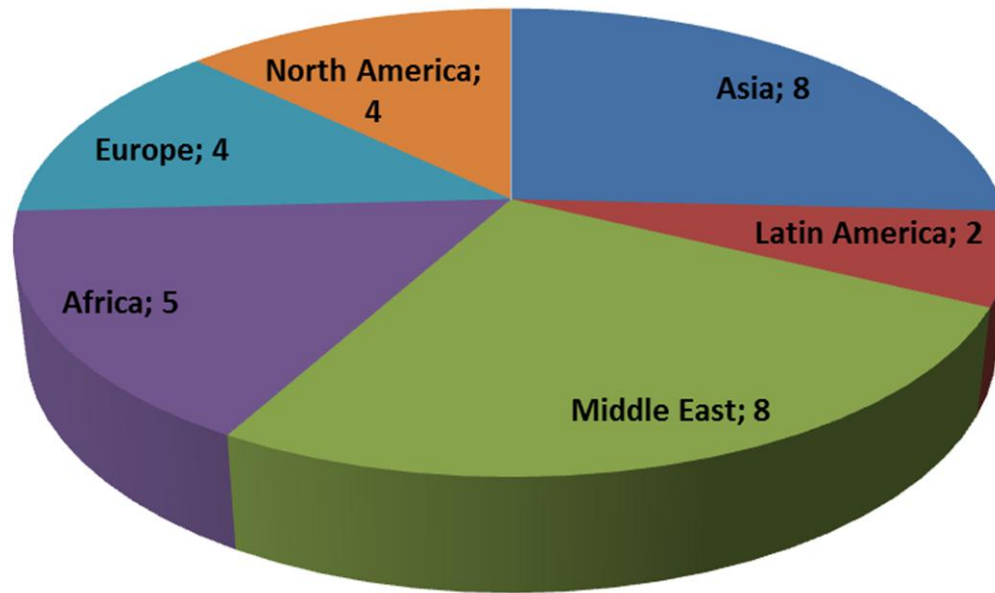
Market for Asia related stories

Different points of view from correspondents/honorary staff and editors:

- **Permanent correspondents:** Asia is booming, esp. sought are articles on economy, environment, human rights and catastrophes (esp. China, India/Pakistan, Japan)
- **Honorary staff:** Asia the place to be (unless a ‚black swan‘ happens → Middle East revolutions). Articles sell really well.
- **Editorial Department:** Readers are interested in a broad overview. Tendency to „China overload“ → Asia doesn‘t sell better than other regions, it’s the content that counts.



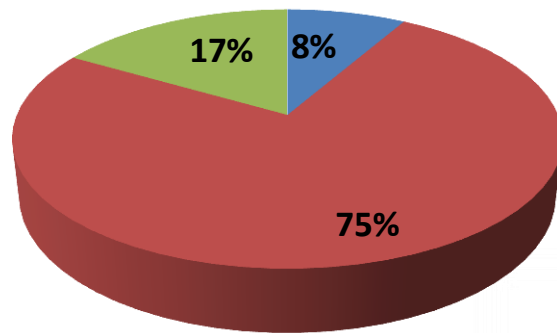
Shift of foreign news reporting in the future



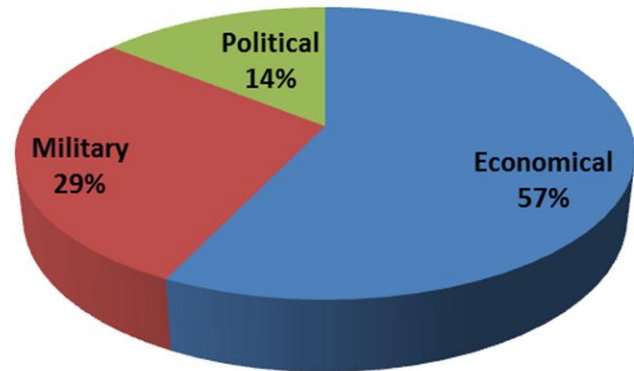
Asia as a Great Power

Great Power in general

■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe/Future



Type of Great power



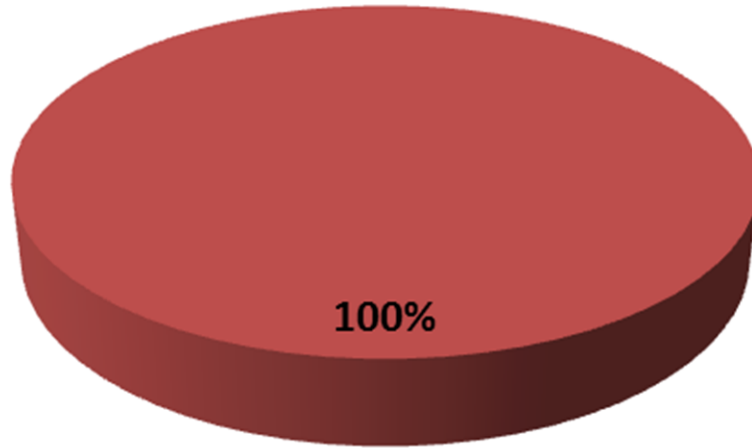
Asia as a Leader in Int'l Politics



Asia as a Political Leader

■ Yes ■ No

0%



100%

Reasons for the Scepticism

Main argument: Asia as a region is not one homogenous player.

- Conflicts within Asia (China-Japan, China-India, China-Taiwan, India-Pakistan, North-South Korea)
- No mutual agenda for inner Asian problems (i.e. Koreas, economical problems, Piracy)
- Wide gaps between rich/developped and poor/underdevelopped countries → no common agenda for social security
- Many very different political systems
- Many different religions, partly fighting each other
- Political rivalries of Asian states within international organisatios (UN)



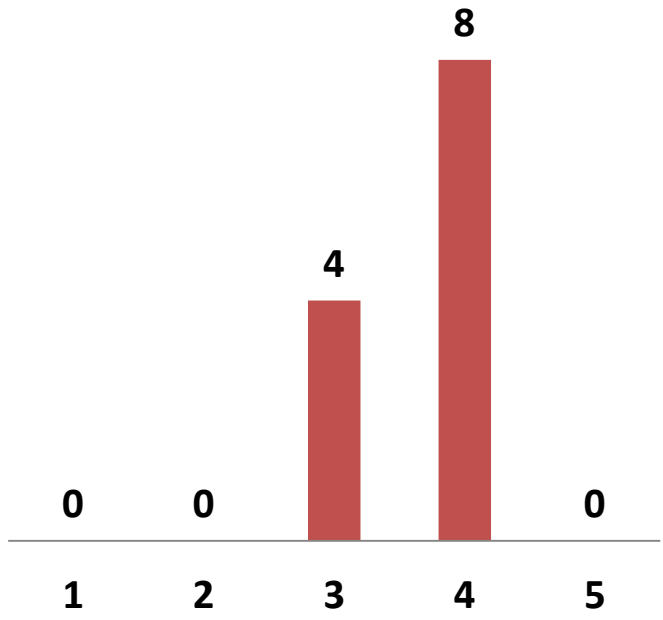
Reasons for the Scepticism

- Agreement on the fact that single Asian players are on their way to becoming a Great Power (China and India leading the way).
- Military Power yes, if regarding the sheer amount of military staff located in Asia.
- BUT: If there is no institutionalised cooperation or even mutually agreed policies, powerwise Asia can only be seen as the sum of its parts but not as a unified actor.

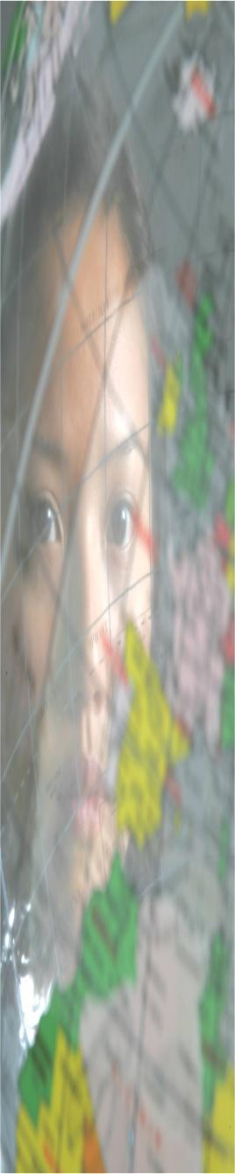
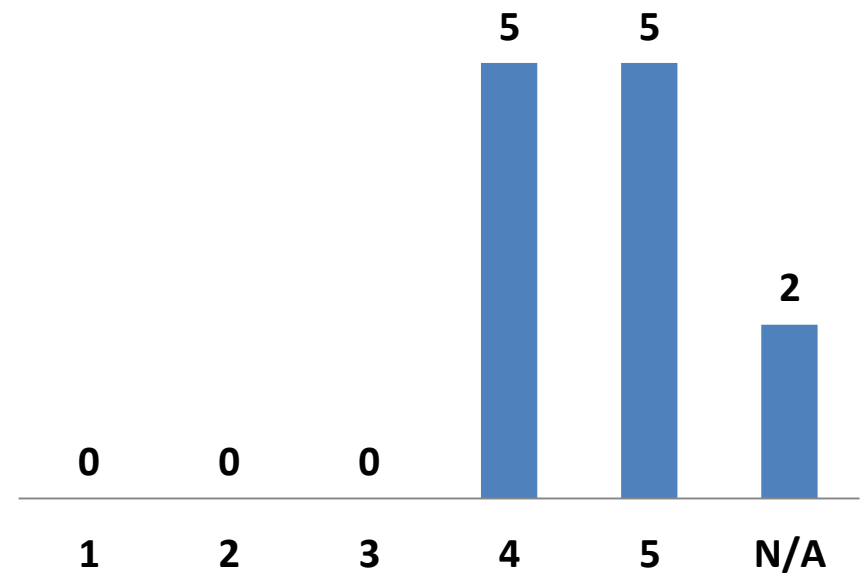


Importance of Asia to Germany

Importance at present
3.75 Average

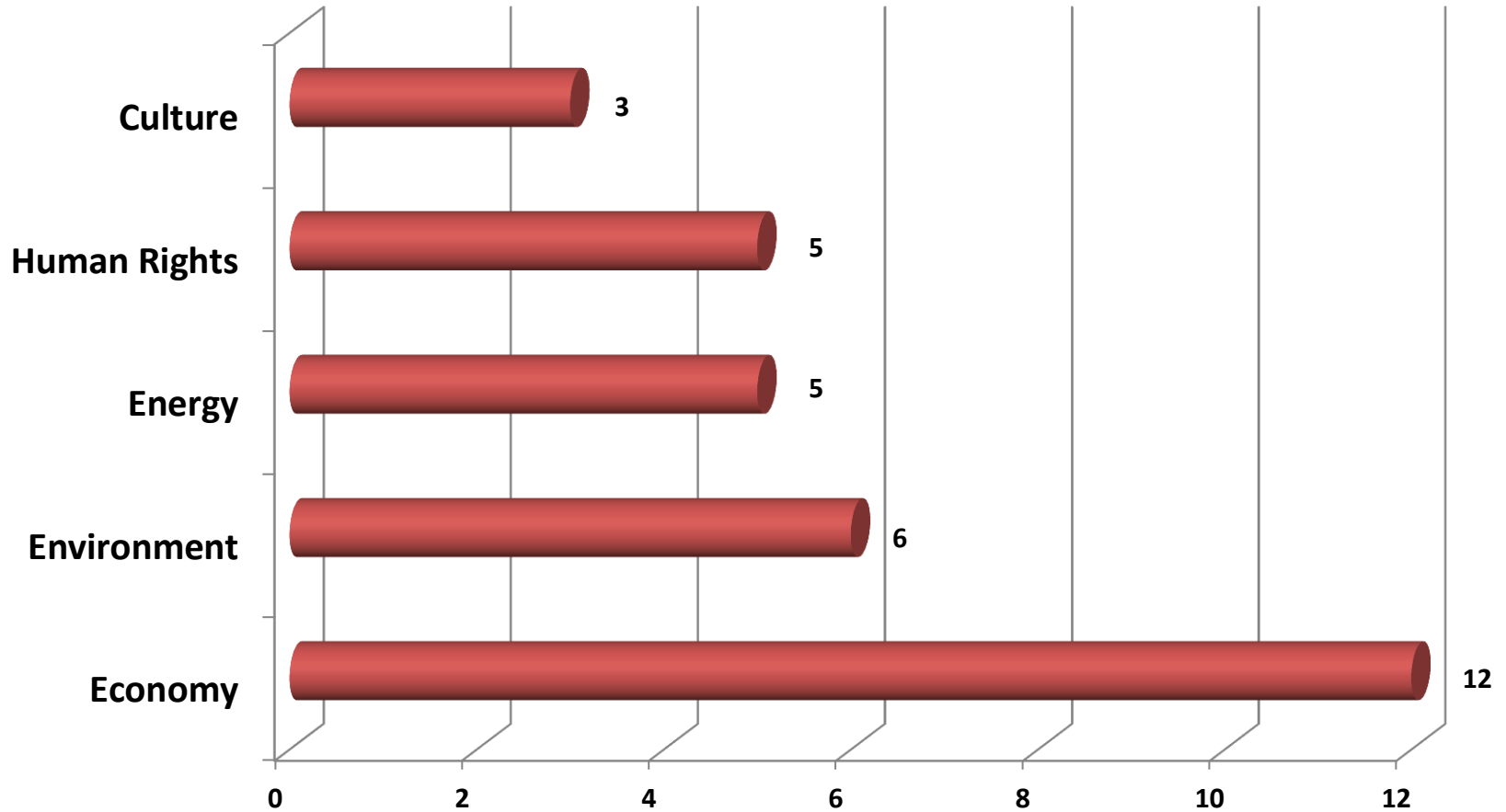


Importance in the future
4.5 Average



Most important Issues

(Multiple answers were permitted)



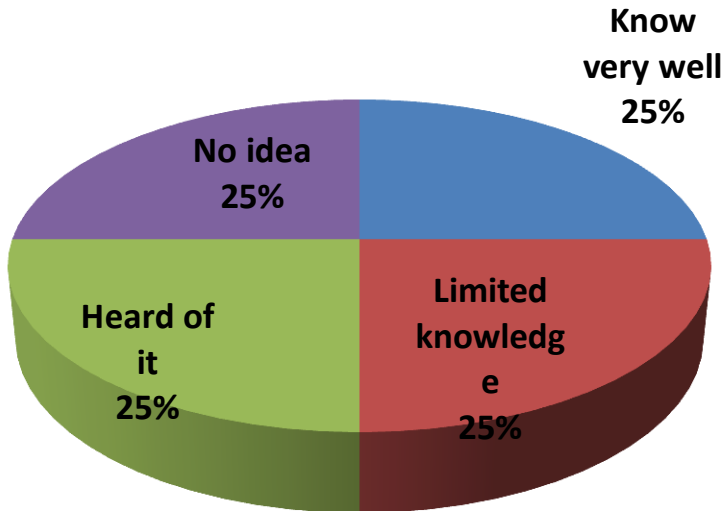
Most important Issues

- Economy is seen to be the issue with the biggest impact on German-Asian relations.
- Within the field of Economy, „worries about the future“, „fear of the Asian Danger“, „insecurity“ were mentioned frequently.
- Within the field of Human Rights and Culture, „social injustice“, „freedom of religion“ and „gender and political equality“ were mentioned frequently.

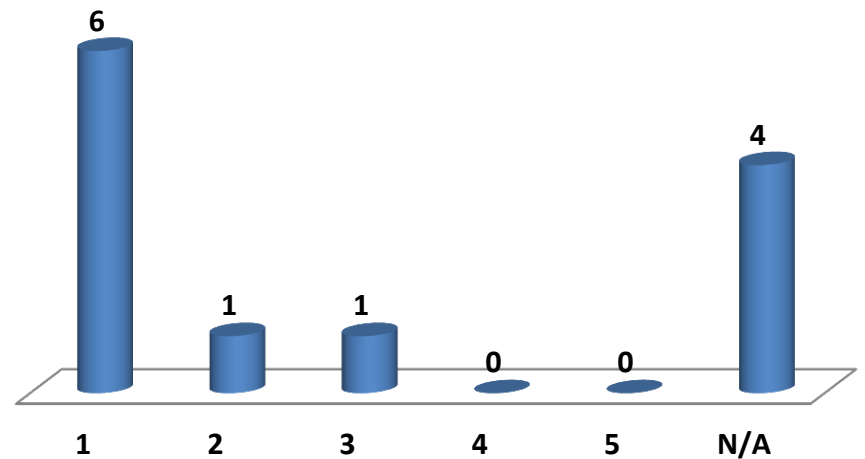


The Role of ASEM

Awareness



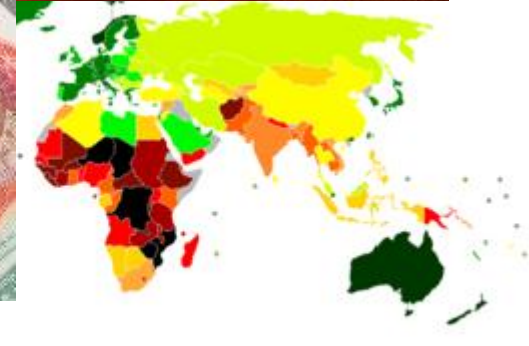
ASEM process impact on Germany



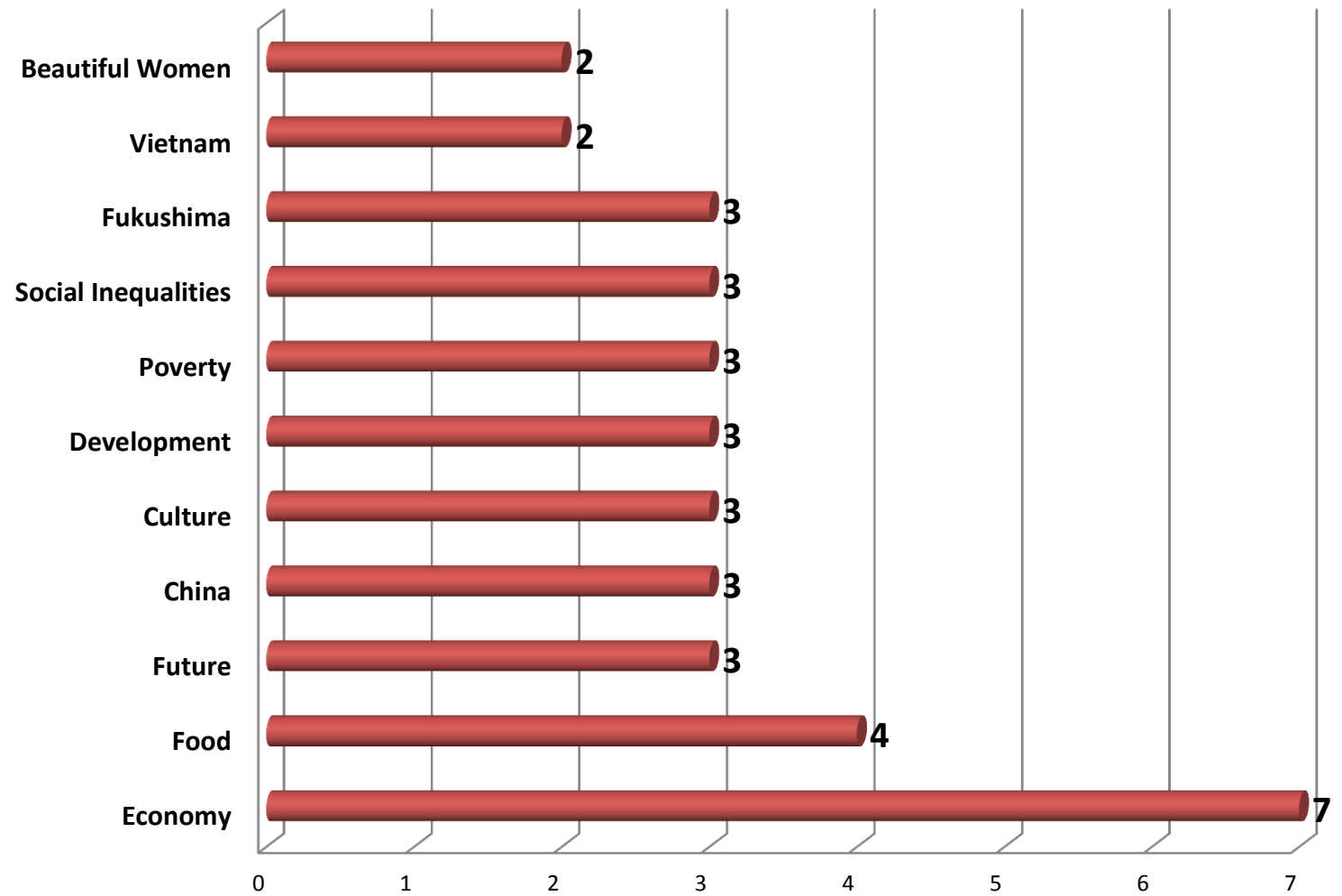
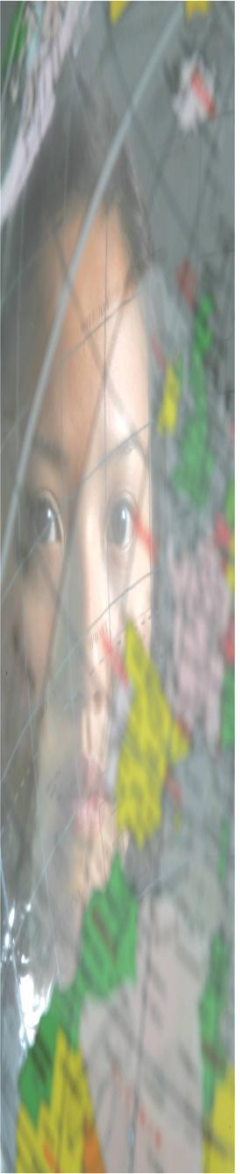
ASEM awareness remarkably low. Very limited knowledge of ASEM's goals and instruments.

→ Impact seen as marginal.

Three images of Asia



Three images of Asia



Summary

- Answers surprisingly homogenous
- Differences in the perception of Asia not between quality or genre, but between grade of circulation: regional NPs rather have a different editorial approach
- Germany's media elite's perception is dominated by Economy and China on all levels
- Media Elite says big parts of the readership still fear the rise of a Asian/Chinese superpower → could easily abused but not an option for serious journalists

So...?

- Why are the answers so homogenous and what does that say about the German media?
- The dominance of topics Economy and China resembles results of media monitoring. Media coverage cause or result of this fact?
- Coverage on regions/regional cooperation and awareness of processes (ASEM) very low → vicious circle of unaware reporters and unaware readers
- Media should try to better balance reactive reporting against detailed background information about political constellations and social structures to broaden the perception of Asia in Germany



Thank you!