

Chinese **Trust** in Europeans and Chinese **Affect** towards European Culture:
Research Findings and Policy Implications

Research Project Dissemination Seminar

“Chinese Views of the EU: Disaggregating Chinese Perceptions
of the EU and the Implications for the EU’s China Policy”

29th November 2011
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
Berlin, Germany



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“Chinese Views of the EU: Disaggregating Chinese Perceptions
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28th November 2011
Warsaw School of Economics
Warsaw, Poland



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“Chinese Views of the EU: Disaggregating Chinese Perceptions
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25th November 2011
Chatham House
London, United Kingdom



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“Chinese Views of the EU: Disaggregating Chinese Perceptions
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24th November 2011

Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation
Brussels, Belgium



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OUTLINE



LEVELS



DETERMINANTS



CONSEQUENCES



IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

TRUST

Definition: The expectation that others will behave in a predictable and friendly manner

Importance: Reduces transaction costs & evokes positive attitudes and actions towards the trustee

Types of trust: Particular vs. general trust (→ international trust)

AFFECT

Definition: An individual's summary evaluation of his/her feelings towards a particular object

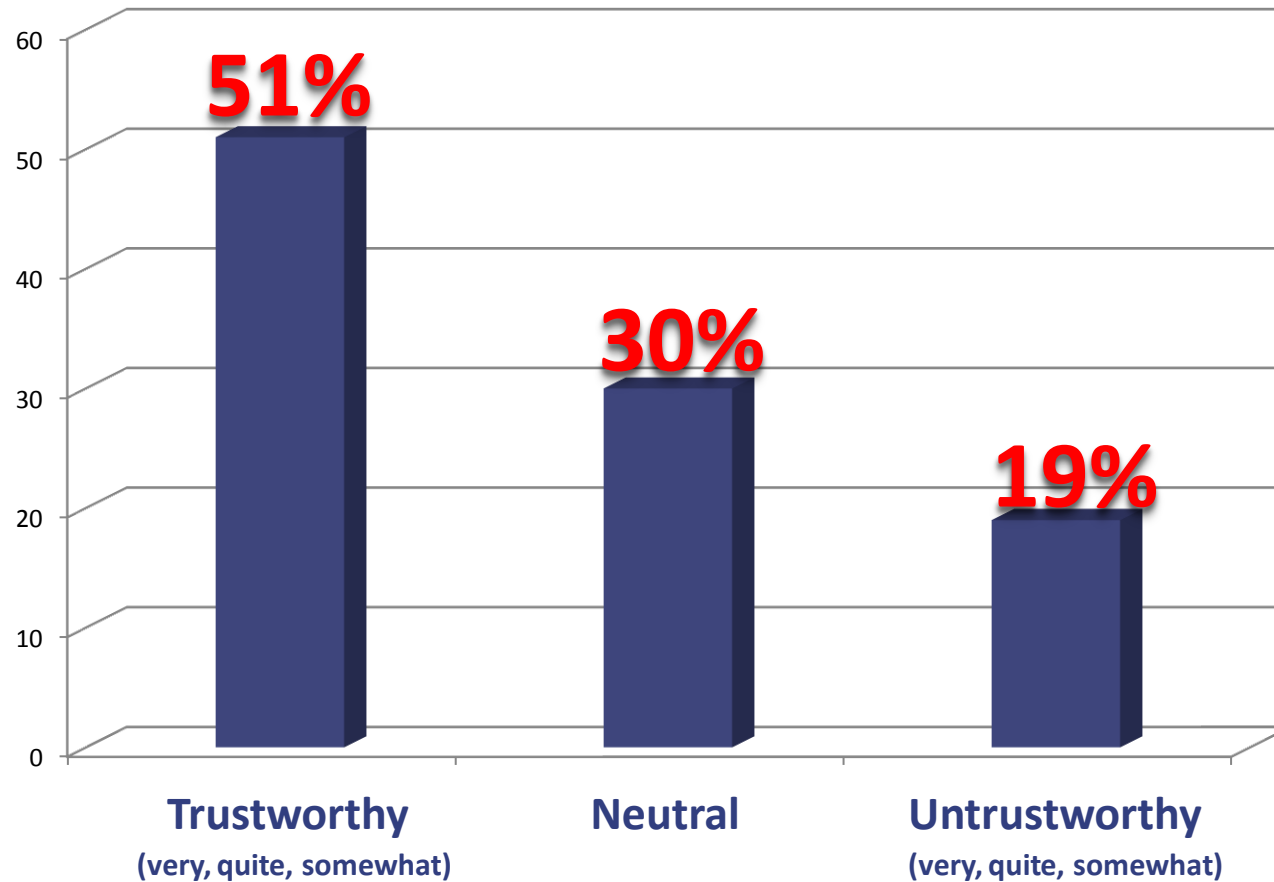
Importance: "Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others with intangible assets such as [...] an attractive culture" (Joseph S. Nye)

ASSUMPTION

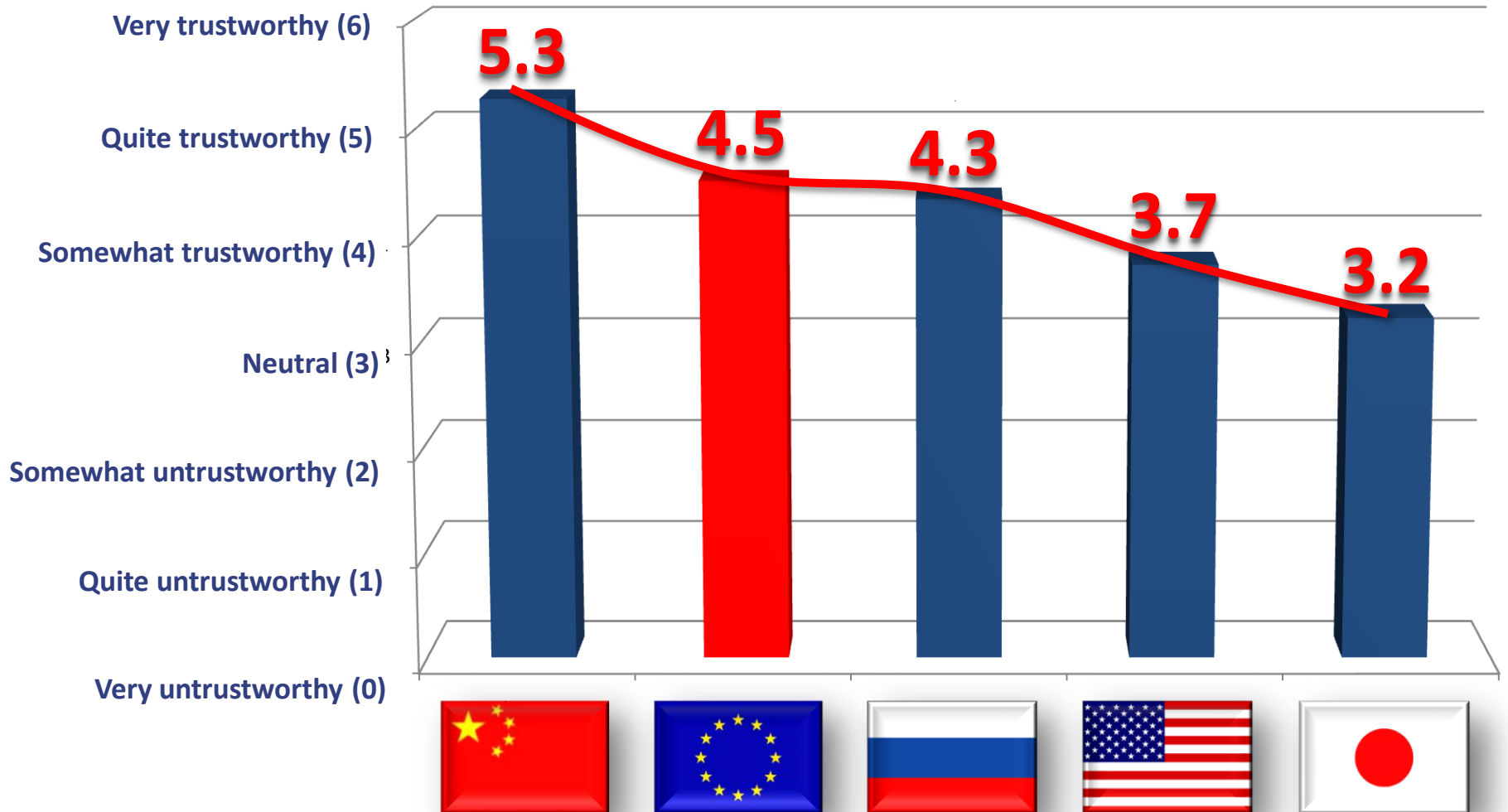
Urban Chinese citizens utilize their **trust in Europeans** and **affect towards European culture** as cognitive heuristics to evaluate the EU as an international actor as well as China-EU relations

LEVELS OF TRUST

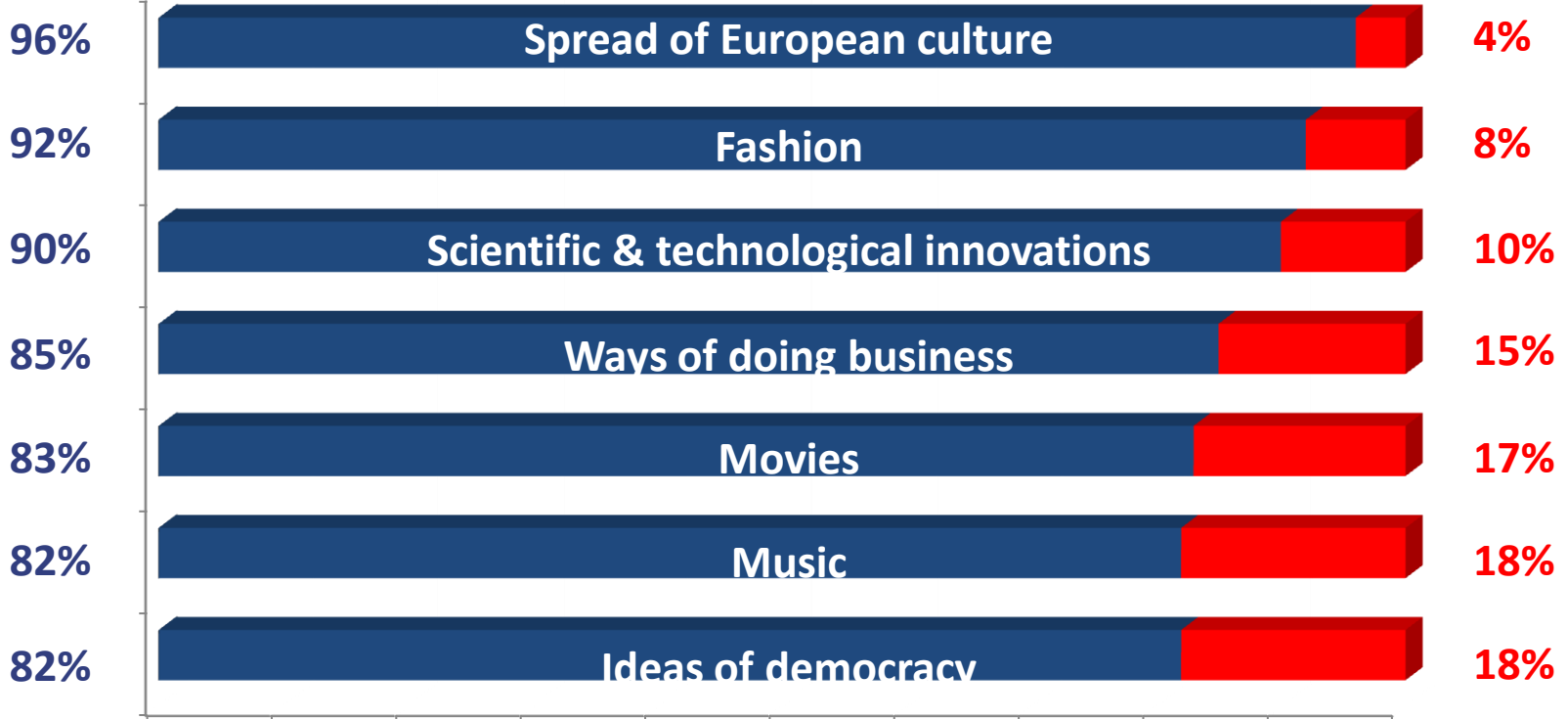
Do you think in general Europeans are trustworthy or cannot be trusted?



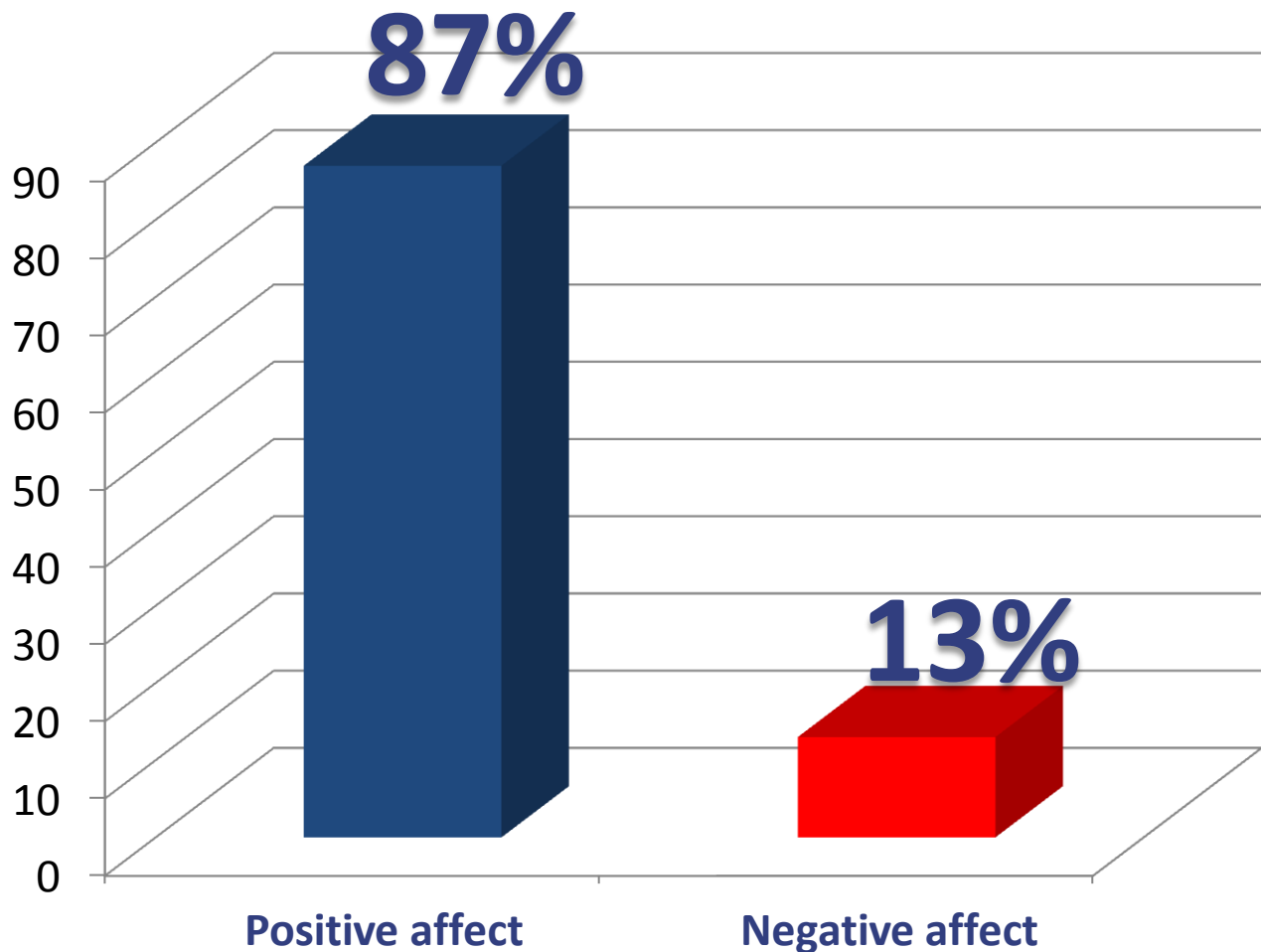
LEVELS OF TRUST



LEVELS OF AFFECT



LEVELS OF AFFECT



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***
Perceived value distance		0.063*

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

Nationalism & cross-group contact have no significant effects!

CONSEQUENCES OF TRUST & AFFECT

DOMAIN	ITEM	AFFECT	TRUST
The role of the EU in the world	Peace in the world	0.26***	0.12***
	Fighting international terrorism	0.25***	0.13***
	Fighting poverty	0.23***	0.13***
	Protection of the environment	0.22***	0.11***
	International economy	0.19***	0.11***
	Scientific progress	0.18***	0.08***
	Promotion of democracy	0.17***	0.10***
China-EU relations	Increased cooperation	0.21***	0.09***
	Prospects of relations	0.18***	0.17***
	Characterization of relationship	0.15***	0.12***
	Friendliness of current relations	0.13***	0.30***
	Evaluation of current relations	0.11***	0.12***
China-EU comparison	Social welfare situation	0.17***	
	Family relations	0.17***	
	Prospects of the economy	0.14***	
	Environmental situation	0.12***	
	Employment situation	0.09**	
	Quality of life	0.08**	

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

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

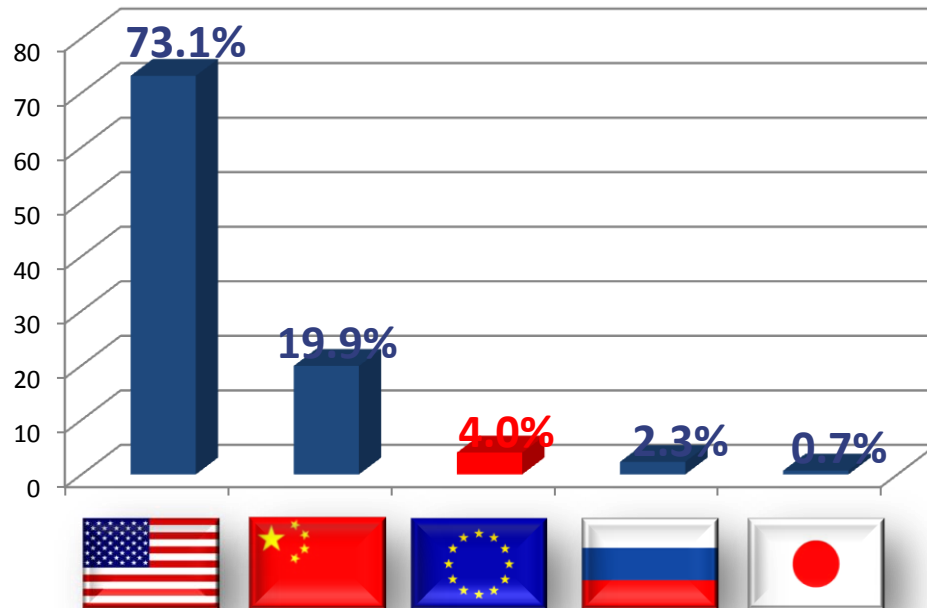
Chinese AFFECT towards European culture:

- **Finding:** High level of cultural affect is indicative of EU's soft power
- **Expectations:** Do not expect immediate effects
- **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:** Attraction is cheaper than coercion and potentially more effective in addressing sensitive issues such as human rights
- Given its soft power, the EU ought to continue its “engagement and partnership” approach rather than pursuing a confrontational “hedging” approach
- Use cultural affect as a vehicle for co-option, but do not pursue an approach of “unconditional engagement”

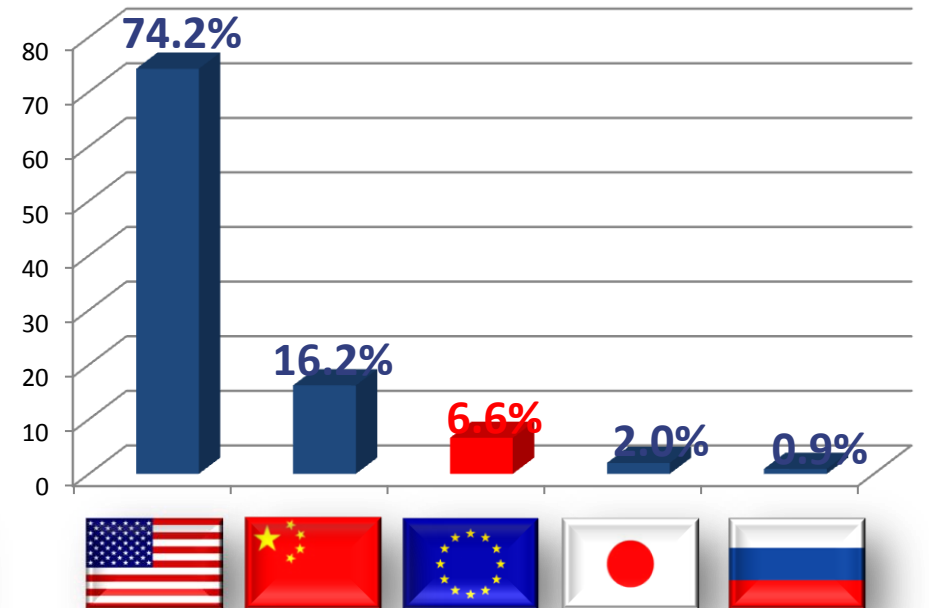
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

Do urban Chinese perceive the EU to possess “**hard power**”?

Most important actor in **world politics**?



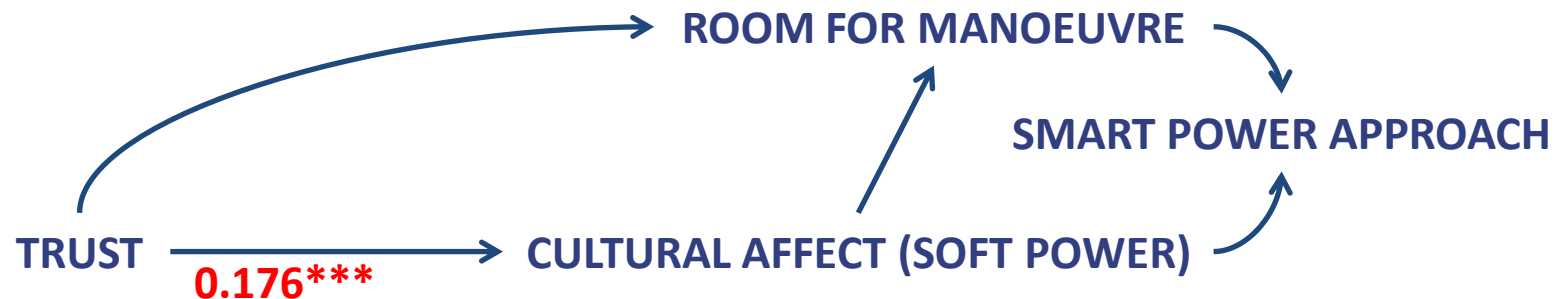
Most important actor in **world economy**?



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

Chinese TRUST in Europeans:

- **Finding:** The EU is not only China's largest trading partner, but its people are also the most trusted of all the "big powers"
- **Expectations:** Do not expect immediate effects
- **Impact:** Trust in Europeans is associated with more positive views of the EU as an international actor as well as China-EU relations
- **Implication:** Chinese level of trust is indicative of the robustness of China-EU relations
→ "smart power" approach:



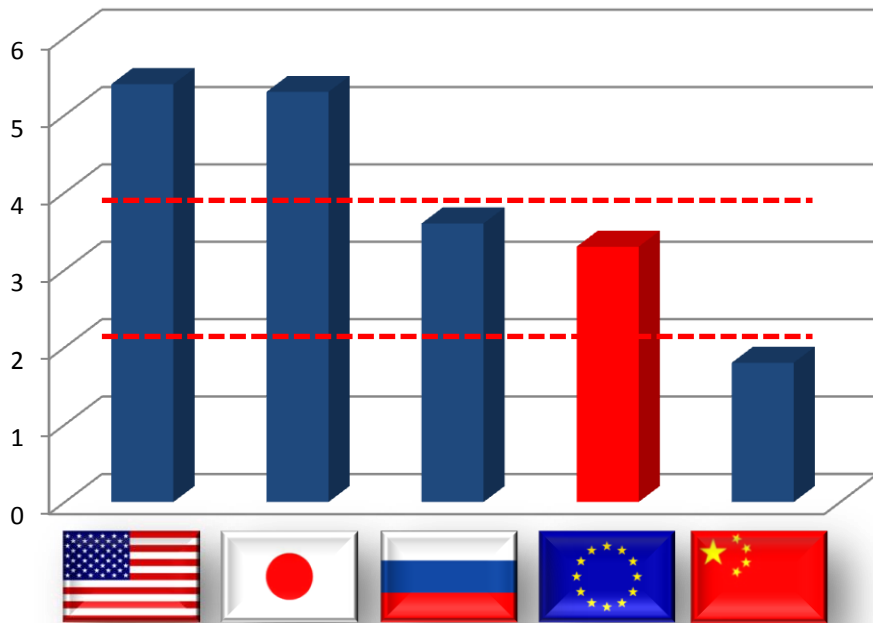
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU'S CHINA STRATEGY

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 feeling 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

- Urban Chinese public relies on TV (73%), internet (8%) and newspapers (6%) as primary sources of information about the EU; youth = TV (64%); internet (16%); teachers and schoolbooks (8%); newspapers (5%)
- Online and print media campaigns (TV if possible)

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EU/EUROPE

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



CONCLUSION

High levels of trust and cultural affect indicate that China-EU relations are standing on an increasingly robust foundation

Creates opportunity for the EU to make its soft power approach “SMARTER” by effectively and subtly combining elements of hard and soft power

A smart approach, however, requires greater policy input from bodies such as, for instance, the Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN)



Thank you for your attention!

感谢您的关注!



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