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East Asian Values Surveys

**Making a case for East Asian-origin values
survey concepts**

Henk Vinken

Content:

1 Introduction

Many East Asian countries participate in internationally reputed large-scale comparative values survey projects, such as the World Values Survey (WVS), the Schwartz Values Survey (SVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) or the National Election Studies (NES). In these surveys values are central constructs measured to predict attitudes and behaviours on a wide range of life domains. Although these studies are building on profound theoretical deliberations, detailed methodological considerations, and extended participatory decision-making processes involving all participants in the studies, it can be argued that many of the concepts and methodologies used in these studies are of Western-origin. Values measured in these surveys, for instance in the life domains of work, politics, religion, and family life, relate to conceptualizations and theories that are likely to be particularly valid and reliable for publics with a Western mind equal to the ones of those who developed these measurements. In comparative survey research, Western or other, there is a potential of, willingly or not, introducing ethnocentric bias. This bias may go two ways. As Hofstede (2007) argues: "Issues prominent in the researcher's culture but not necessarily relevant to the respondents will be included, and issues crucial in the respondents' culture but not in the researchers' may be overlooked".

This white paper is aimed to provide arguments for taking account of this type of biases by looking more closely at East Asian-origin values surveys such as the Asia Barometer, the Asian Barometer, and the East Asia Value Survey. The key rationale is that these by now more widely available surveys may well adopt concepts and methodologies that differ from the Western ones now in use on a global scale. This paper will not yet thoroughly depict or analyse these Asian-origin values surveys. What it does is review key literature on Asian value conceptualizations, in general value research and in research on values in different life domains, to see where we can expect these values to differ from Western ones. This paper aims to contribute to social scientific work towards enhancing the cultural fit of comparative values surveys projects on a conceptual level both for Western and Asian survey research communities and their publics.

The paper starts with a critical note in section 2 on celebrating either Western or Asian values by looking at the notion of orientalism and its counterpart, reversed orientalism. Next, in section 3, we will dwell on the concepts of universalism versus particularism, concepts that underpin the importance of surveying values that are similar in or particular to any set of cultures under consideration. After this, in section 4, we will focus on two crucial notions, usually conceived of as two poles of one dimension: individualism versus collectivism. This key dimension plays a focal role in distinguishing Western from East Asian cultures. From a literature review we will then, in section 5, proceed to look at the assumingly distinctive values profile of both Western and East Asian cultures in key life domains: work, politics, religion, and family life. In the final section, section 6, we will summarize the main arguments of this white paper. Before proceeding to the next section, it may be helpful to define the concepts of values and cultures somewhat more clearly, concepts that play a decisive role in the subsequent parts of this paper.

Values are hypothetical, that is latent, unobservable constructs that refer to what individuals or groups of individuals (grouped in nations, organisations or the like) regard a desired state of affairs over against another state of affairs (see Ester et al., 2006; Haller, 2002; Hechter et al., 2005; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Hofstede, 2001). Values are seen as guiding principles of action, or as "dispositions, to act in a particular (that is biased) way" (Hechter et al., 2005: 91). In a classic Kluckhohnian sense they influence "the selection from available modes, means and ends of action" (Kluckhohn, 1967: 395). Values are thought of as relatively stable and more durable as compared to attitudes or preferences, which are dispositions that are more mutable and may even disappear when situations change or when needs are satisfied (Haller, 2002). Much effort is directed at measuring values empirically, at surveying their impact on behaviour and at addressing value change. Especially predicting behaviour with the help of values does not lead to impressive results (Hechter et al., 2005: 92). Hofstede (2001) has an explanation for this. He argues that many value researchers

focus on the 'desirable' instead of the 'desired'. The former taps what people think they *ought* to desire, something that relates more to ideology than to pragmatic issues. These latter issues are tapped with the 'desired' with which the focus shifts to what people *actually* desire and strive for in their deeds. As Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) show, in daily social science practice values are not precisely defined, let alone along the lines of strictly separating the desired from the desirable. More so, values in the large number of publications these authors review are variously referred to as interests, pleasures, likes, moral obligations, goals, needs, aversions, and the like. The idea of converging conceptualizations and measurement of values in social science today is most probably a utopian one.

Yet, many scholars argue that values can be regarded as such a core and stable part of cultures that comparing cultures on the basis of values is probably the most if not only fruitful strategy. Comparing cultures on other less nuclear and more mutable features would introduce all kinds of problems. Attitudes in one culture, for instance, might not be at work or unknown in other cultures. Symbols that are dominant in one culture might well be unheard of in others. Desires that are real in one culture, do not necessarily surface in others. More fundamentally, these problems relate to comparing the etic or the emic. Etic refers to what is general in cultures; emic to what is specific in one or more cultures (see e.g. Triandis, 2004). Of course, doing cross-cultural research presupposes that there is a common ground to compare cultures, that there are shared polycultural classification schemes, or as Hofstede (2001: 24) puts it "that each culture is not so unique that any parallel with another culture is meaningless". For some classic anthropologists and contemporary postmodernists alike, the etic approach might be a severe challenge to their perspective. The approach is often regarded as an enterprise of comparing incomparables (see Hofstede, 2001, for an overview). Most of the classic value studies authors and most empirical works in cross-cultural value studies, however, take values as the concept with which etic analyses are possible.

Another questionable issue in cross-cultural value research is the unit of comparison. Many works build on comparing cultures on the level of countries or nations, yet few of them dwell on the legitimacy of doing so. There are strong arguments to compare cultures on the national level without disregarding the possibility, however, to compare cultures on other levels (e.g. regions within nations or regions of nations, organisations, or groups of individuals such as, for instance, generations). The arguments can be divided in two strands. The first strand relates, counter-intuitively, to the idea of globalization itself. The other strand builds on empirical evidence. Looking at globalization first, literature (see Ester et al., 2006, for an overview) shows that especially because of globalization – that is, the process of transnational transactions of information, commodities, people and culture – a quest began into the true nature of one's own unique local, regional and national identities. Numerous examples can be given from a wide variety of domains that indicate a rediscovery of national, regional and local cultures: the re-valuation of traditional theatre, the popularity of seasonal festivals, of fashions from one's own culture, songs in one's native language, of regional, artisanal slow) foods, etc. (Berger & Huntington, 2002; Hsiao, 2002). Less comfortable examples include the rise in nationalism and ethnic clashes, which in the last decades can also be observed in large parts of Europe.[1] We are dealing with the so-called globalization-localization 'paradox of modern culture' (Featherstone, 1990).[2] Precisely because of

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[1] Appadurai, a well-known scholar on the cultural dimensions of globalization, calls this phenomenon 'culturalism': the conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of larger national or transnational politics, more precisely involving struggles for stronger recognition from existing nation-states or various transnational bodies. Many of these culturalist movements are examples of the form cultural differences take in the era of globalization, says Appadurai (1998: 15-16). See also Crane et al. (2002).

[2] Featherstone argues that these global cultural flows are not merely the product of flows between nation-states but are embedded in global scale processes. He, therefore, believes it is misleading to conceive of global culture as necessarily involving the weakening of national/local cultures or entailing global homogenization. Rather, various diverse, rich and

globalization, an anxious search for national and local identity can be found. Consequently, one could argue, the national dimension is more likely to gain impetus than to weaken its impacts. Our own German, Dutch, Japanese, Taiwanese, etc. culture, our national values, what it in general is that we in this nation share in terms of the desirable and desired is, partly because of globalization, more emphasized. The second line of reasoning is empirical. As countries become increasingly similar in terms of economic parameters (ways of production, financial markets, working conditions, affluence, etc.), then cultural ones are becoming relatively more important. What is more: in terms of distinctive power, culture attains a decisive role. Consumer research shows that the role of national cultures on consumer preferences and concrete purchases is substantial and even increasing when countries converge in economic terms (see, e.g., De Mooij, 2001). Also, countries that seem to modernize economically in similar ways and/or are subject to globalization in a similar manner still diverge substantially in terms of national cultures (see Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Testing cultural diversity between groups of individuals (e.g., students and teachers, and people adhering to different denominations) in 40 different countries, as Schwartz (2004) did, shows that in almost all cases country differences were more substantial than those between groups. The argument of globalization and the more empirical arguments feed the notion that national cultures are far from irrelevant, what is more, feed the idea that in times of globalization and economic homogenization, national cultures are increasingly important. Of course, there are more reasons, reasons beyond economics and culture, to regard nation-states as relevant categories of comparison. These reasons will not be further discussed in this paper. In conclusion it can be argued that there are ample reasons to take national cultures into account.

The question that remains, of course, is whether or not we can identify cultures that cross national borders: is there a reason to believe there are Western values (or, more narrowed down, European values or even Western European values) in contrast to Asian values (or, e.g., East Asian values)? Are there regions of nations that share core values and consequently that comprise a distinct set of values different from sets of values of other regions? Can we arrive at a first glance of the key similarities and differences when we concentrate on Western versus East Asian values and what consequences does this first assessment have for doing comparative quantitative research involving nations from both regions? These and related questions are the leads of this paper.

2   Orientalism and Reversed Orientalism

The claim that there is a distinct set of Asian values has a relatively long history in social science and certainly is in some respects highly contested. As Hill (2000) shows the notion of discrete Asian values has long been used, by Western scientists (e.g. Bellah, 1957) but also by political leaders in the East and Southeast Asian region, as a catch-all explanation of the region's remarkable economic success (and, interestingly, also of it's collapse), as a framework of nation-building processes and as a tool to legitimize reluctance to adopt 'Western'-style notions such as human rights, democracy, individual freedom of choice, and other 'undesirable' Western values. The key reference here is Confucianism, what Hills calls 'a Weberian version of Orientalism'. Confucianist doctrine is interpreted as either an obstacle or a stimulus for economic development. In the first version Confucianism inhibits individual, rational pursuits of economic gain that, in turn, signals divine favour as is found in Western Protestantism. This inhibition would prevent a modern (i.e., Western-style) economy to develop. In the contrasting second version, inner-worldly asceticism and the strive to be a hard-working, skilful and ambitious member of society contributing to the group

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popular local cultures are both feeding and resisting global culture. The variety of these responses to the globalization process is viewed as evidence that there is little prospect of a unified global culture. Still, Featherstone, like may theorists in the field of cultural globalization, relies heavily on persuasion and anecdotal evidence instead of sound empirical and comparative data.

rather than to follow one's own interest, are key factors in the successful modernization of economies in the Southeast and East Asian region. Under the world-market conditions, as also Hofstede and Bond (1988) argue, of the last 30 years of the 20th century the cultural inheritance of Confucianism has given countries in the East Asian region (more precisely, the 'Five Dragons': Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) a competitive advantage for successful business activity. In reference to the above mentioned key factors, an alternative to the Protestant Ethic, being the Confucian Ethic, was 'invented' in the late 1970s and early 1980s, interestingly that is, by Western scientists (Kahn, 1979; Vogel, 1979; Hofheinz & Calder, 1982; see also Hill, 2000).

Orientalism is a notion tapping on processes of constructing a binary opposition of the Orient and the Occident characterizing 'the East' as weak or at least as 'other' (Said, 1979). This assumingly helped 'the West' to maintain ruling power over 'the East'. With the invention of the Confucian Ethic, among others, Orientalism is now reversed: Asian values are now celebrated as the positive pole of some overarching value pattern that serves as an example to the stagnant and disoriented Western world. With this process, modernization itself was uncoupled from Westernization. Yet, in a post-colonialist way of reasoning, a line of reasoning following the debates on Orientalism, adherence to the notion of Asian values as opposed to Western values is seen as a fiction, whatever type of purposes it may serve (Young, 2003). However important in for instance defining national identities in societies that are dealing with the legacy of colonial rule, the concept of Asian values builds on a binary notion of the East versus the West that inevitably triggers a process of 'othering'. As Masuzawa (2005) argues when looking at the invention of 'world' religions, this process of othering means that some categories (in this case religions from, e.g., Africa or the Pacific East) are seen as specific, historically unique traditions while others (and especially so Christianity) are seen as generic, supernatural, a-historic and universalist systems (see also below). At the peak of Orientalism, late 19th and early 20th century, the West was the generic and the East the specific. With the gain of Reversed Orientalism since the late 1970s, the East catched up, if not overtook the West in terms of becoming the generic standard. In both periods, one of both took the role of the 'other', the historically non-standard, the deviating specific, and the abnormally unique.

Acknowledging the dangers of 'othering' and more in general of reification by using terms as East and West or Asian (East Asian) and Western (European, Northern European, etc.), it is worthwhile to more closely look at the core issue that according to scholarly literature sets both regions of nations apart. As stated, Confucianism plays a major role in distinguishing East Asian countries/city states from Western ones. Underlying many values in these countries is a system of beliefs that dwells on (contemporary versions of) the teachings in practical ethics of Confucius (or Kong Fu Ze, living around 500 BC). The pragmatic rules (void of religious connotations) for daily life include (see Hofstede & Bond, 1988): 1) a stable society based on unequal relationships (ruler/subject, father/son, husband/wife, old/young, etc.) in which the more powerful receive respect and loyalty and the less powerful protection and consideration; 2) the family as prototype for all social organizations which defines people primarily as members of a family instead of individuals and induces restrain, harmony, maintenance of 'face' or dignity; 3) virtuous behaviour towards others or basic human benevolence; and 4) virtue in taking on one's tasks in life which means trying to acquire kills, attain education, work hard, have perseverance, be patient, frugal and moderate, and avoid conspicuousness. These rules are believed to be felt also in contemporary East Asian nations/city states: the cultures of this region are believed to be still rooted in these teachings and therefore sometimes labelled as 'neo-Confucian' (Kahn, 1979). Empirical evidence for the impact of neo-Confucianism in the domain of values has been found in the mid-1980s (in the same period that Reversed Orientalism gained popularity): the so-called Chinese Culture Connection, a group of researchers in China (including Western-origin researchers) since 1979 searched for 'culture-free dimensions of culture' (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) building first on a modified version of Rokeach' values battery (overlapping strongly with the results of Hofstede's values survey) and then administrating a self-created values questionnaire in 22 Asian and Western countries. Some

items were new to Westerners, such as a question on 'filial piety' explained as 'honouring of ancestors and obedience to, respect for, and financial support of parents' (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 2001), as probably, previously, the Rokeach values battery was unusual to Asian respondents. A value dimension now was found that did not come to the fore from a study conceived of by Westerners (more precisely the Hofstede IBM-study; see Hofstede, 2001). This dimension was first called Confucian Dynamism (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), but later, as it was also found in non-Confucianist countries, re-labelled as Long-Term Orientation (see Hofstede, 2001) or even later simply summarized as Virtue (Hofstede, 1996a; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Persistence and perseverance, ordering relationships by status, thrift, and having a sense of shame are key values and, the authors argue, indicate a focus on the future instead of a focus on the past and present (which is the opposite pole labelled Short-Term Orientation). East Asian countries lead the top of longest term oriented (most virtuous) nations, Anglo-Saxon, but also African countries are tailing the list or have the shortest term orientation. Across the list are Asian, European and other nations, indicating that Asia, Europe and other regions are not culturally homogeneous. Moreover, non-Confucianist countries such as India or Brazil are on the top-end of the list, opposing the idea that the dimension is reserved to Confucianist countries only. Yet, the study yields a dimension with elements that previous Western instruments had not registered. The top of the list is taken up by East Asian countries that, however, are not unique in their top position, but still form a clear cluster that they did not form on other presumingly universal dimensions.

3 Universalism/Particularism

What is universal and found in any culture versus what is unique to one culture and not found in any other relates to another crucial issue, that of universalism versus particularism. A classic example can be found in the controversy over the absolute nature of values inductive for human rights. According to Xiao (2005) there are two antagonistic camps in the debate on human rights. The first camp takes the universalistic approach emphasizing this absolute nature of human rights with principles that mimic basic moral codes of humankind meaningful and applicable in all cultures (e.g. Fukuyama, 1995). The second camp is relativistic stressing the contingent nature of human rights and challenging the universality when pointing at standards of morality that are culture-bound (Emmerson, 1995). Typically China is an example of a culture that builds on other priorities and whose inhabitants do not acknowledge the universality of human rights standards. Xiao's analyses of comparative (Western-origin) value survey data (World Values Survey or WVS) show some stereotypes on China are supported (and others not; Xiao, 2005). Economic and social issues are much higher on the agenda than in Western countries, while issues of co-governance, political rights, individual freedom and autonomy are much lower. However, the Chinese public is familiar with the concept of human rights and are able to evaluate society along these lines, beit that the priority of the issue is not high. Also respect for authority, believed to be at the centre of Confucianism and very particular for East Asian societies in general, is much lower in China than in the Western countries with which Xiao made comparison. Finally, younger cohorts and well-educated Chinese citizens are prioritizing human rights more than older and less well-educated ones do.

Human rights are an interesting case for the issue of universalism versus particularism. Universalist ideas such as human rights do not allow for cultures not believing, understanding or acknowledging these ideas.[3] The core logic of these ideas is that they are independent of who believes them when and where. The ideas are literally part of nature, of the pre-given, inherent psychological make-up

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[3] See for another interesting case the more anthropological analysis of universalism in the ideal of 'longing for common humanity' versus belonging to Asia in nostalgia on the 'Silk Road' by Thorsten (2005).

of all individuals of all times and places, moreover of all individuals in all types of societies and cultures. It is a Western bias *par excellence* to adhere to these ideas. What we believe, what people value, why and how they behave is part of this fundamentally individual, psychological make-up, of an inner self and its pre-given, yet hard to delineate (in some Western theories even subconscious) motivational drivers. Taking this reasoning further, all individuals in any type of societal or cultural circumstances are likely to be driven not by these circumstances but by their psychology. It is no surprise that major high-impact 'individualist' theories in social science dealing with motivational drivers, with learning as a stimulus-response mechanism, with a set of universal personality traits, with the links between beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviours, with reasoned action and planned behaviour, and rational choice, all have their origin in Western or, more precisely, in predominantly American contexts (a society scoring among the highest in individualism with Hofstede; see Hofstede, 2001). Also, in debates on nature versus nurture, on genes versus socialization, or on agency versus structure, et cetera, the choice (an individualist disposition itself) in the Western world is almost self-evidently for the first poles of each contrast. It is part of the core business of science to search for the generalization of theories across times and social and cultural contexts. Yet, the search is one-sided: it is aimed at gaining proof (or, more properly, seeking counter-evidence) that individualistic concepts are universal (or not, for now). Believing in 'what drives us, drives all' in comparative survey research easily translates in the strategy to 'ask all what we ask ourselves'.

Particularism, by contrast, builds in its most extreme form on the idea that any feature, any characteristic is different depending on the context or, more precisely, on the traditions of the group to which people belong. What is characteristic and most determining is not the individuals' inner core or psychological make-up, but the individual's context, especially a context framed by group membership such as membership to the family in its broadest sense including the filial bonds that derive from it (see, e.g., Hashimoto, 1996). More generally speaking, particularism finds its way in analyses aimed at showing the uniqueness of particular cultures, their non-universalistic positions, and their historic or tradition-based 'otherness' in comparison to other cultures. Theories and concepts in these analyses do not claim to be generalizable across the context of investigation. A fine but almost outworn example in this context is the popular culture phenomenon of *Nihonjinron* in Japan indicating a typically Japanese sense of Japaneseness, which builds on race, language and customs (see, e.g., Manabe et al., 2004).[4] The phenomenon received and still receives much social scientific attention, convinced as many scholars are on showing Japan's uniqueness in the world and thus its unique cultural identity that, partly due to its insular position, is believed to have the purity of an ever-unchanging culture. [5] Particularism goes hand in hand with ideas that one's culture, values and customs are singularly unique, with a focus, also among social scientists, on differences rather than similarities, and with a tendency to believe that others, i.e. outsiders or non-group members, ultimately will not really fully understand the basics of that culture and its members. By no means individuals from other contexts are comparable. Most likely science starting from this perspective does not feed the need to cross contexts in search for generalization of

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[4] Alternatively called *Nihon bunkaron, Nihon shakairon,* and *Nihonjinron. Nihon* is Japan. *Ron* refers to theory, idea, hypothesis, model, etc. *Bunka* and *shakai* refer respectively to "culture" and "society." *Jin* refers to "person." Thus, these three terms denote roughly the "theory" of Japanese culture, society, and character (or personality) respectively (see Manabe et al., 2004).

[5] The downside of this focus might be a negative if not xenophobic view of anything and anyone from outside. Yet, Sasaki (2004) has observed a remarkable generational difference with a younger generations having similar views on what makes them Japanese, but having more positive and open minded attitudes towards 'others' compared to parents and other adults groups. There is much debate in Japan on globalization, national identity and (the illusion of) homogeneity (see also, e.g., Nomiya, 2004 and Yuka, 2005; and see also the discussion below on universalism/particularism).

theories and concepts. The outside world is not confronted with their unique ideas. What this outside world is left with, in conclusion, is a vibrant global communication on universal theories. Consequently, what is visible only is the global search for the universalism of principally individualist concepts.

Before looking more closely to the seemingly all-determining dichotomy of individualism versus collectivism, it is necessary to focus shortly on the function of universalism in cross-cultural theories and research. Limiting this focus to the so-called 'big three' of this type of studies (see Vinken et al., 2004, Ester et al., 2006), it seems evident that universalism is an essential assumption, if not an assumption without which the studies of these authors would not thrive. As written earlier (Vinken et al., 2004: 8): "The dimensionalist study aims at finding the ultimate, most frugal, and yet most meaningful basic set of axes with which to explain the broad range of attitudes, beliefs, life styles and the diversity of practices among large populations and/or organizations across societies. The very focus is on empirically validating the existence of a unifying, universal [...] pattern, that regardless of social differentiation, displays homogeneity, is broadly shared, and has the power to shape people's identities, attitudes, and all other aspects of their culture". For instance, one of the big three, Shalom Schwartz, a psychologist, explicitly aims to engage in a quest for 'value universals'. In doing so, however, he uses an all-American value battery developed by Milton Rokeach (the Rokeach Values Survey; see Rokeach, 1972; 1973). Recently, through the new waves of the European Social Survey, again the by now shortened version of this and only this older US-origin battery of values is used to provide information on the role of culture in determining social values and social issues in the European context.6 Another author of the 'big three'-group, Ronald Inglehart, builds his main thesis of the silent revolution on another psychologist, Abraham Maslow, the inventor of the alleged universal developmental stages through a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). Already many years ago (e.g., Möller, 1983), Maslow's theory has been criticized for been a-historic, culturally insensitive, deterministic and overly subjective (see for instance the assumption that 'higher' needs can only be satisfied after 'lower' ones are). Yet, these assumptions underlie the notion that with younger generation having no need to care for their sheer survival when growing up in affluent societies, these generation shift their attention to postmaterialist values and more broadly speaking to self-expression and secular-rational values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004). With this notion in mind, work continues to prove for as much societies as possible that they all move towards these values as these societies develop and as younger generation take over the wheel. In other words, it is implied that all societies modernize in a universal way: walking the path towards postmaterialist, self-expression and secular-rational values. It is striking that the third of the 'big three', Geert Hofstede, is the only one who has opened up his work for input (indicators and analyses) from another cultural context than the one in which this was developed (see above the discussion on the Confucian dimension added to his research).7

As we know from religious values but also from civic and political values studies, finally, there is a constant battle of which theories are universally applicable. The debate on secularisation or on declining civic participation, for instance, are frequently framed as being unique to Europe or the US respectively. The suggestion that there are either universalist or particularist theories is a

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6 The website of ESS includes a strict instruction list of how to arrive at the value universal at the individual level: see http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/. Schwartz is fully engaged in writing instruction on how to construct these universals on the culture-level (personal communication, 23 May 2006).

7 This input was provided by a team of researchers (see Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) led by a Westerner, Michael Bond, working in Asia. This provides some arguments for the hypothesis that scholars from particularist societies, such as many Asian societies, remain focussed on their unique cultures and are less inclined to take their theories and research beyond their own contexts. Vice versa, it could be hypothesized that scholars from universalist cultures aims to compete wih similar scholars to prove their world view is the most appropriate. This cultural bias may prevent the former from entering the world stage of social science, whilst it might explain why the latter dominate this stage.

simplification elaborated here to make a point. The point being that theories are most likely to not have an absolute nature applicable in any cultural context nor that they are likely to be absolutely unique to one culture and one culture only. It is helpful to focus on who is developing these theories that claim one or the other (and who is using them) and from which cultural context they derive. It is neither likely that there is single path towards modernity. Conceiving modernization as a singular process, e.g. as a process of inevitable individualisation, is at the least misleading. Cultural reality is a vibrantly dynamic field with an abundance of societies carving their own path in their own direction and at their own pace. In the process they are likely to share some realities with other societies, and to be distinctive from others on other realities. Taking this notion seriously, simple logic has it that there is no reason to believe that certain values stressed in one modernizing society, will also be stressed or even recognized in another modernizing society.

4 Individualism/collectivism

Under the explicit acknowledgement that more value dimensions beyond individualism and collectivism are of relevance when comparing cultures, this paper yet wishes to focus on this core dimension. The main reason is that individualism and collectivism serves the key role in distinguishing many Western from many Asian societies. Whether it relates to family life, politics, work and even religion, especially the contrast between individualism and collectivism is used to 'explain' divergence between Western and Asian-origin institutions, organisations and values, attitudes and behaviours. It is no exaggeration to regard this fundamental dimension (or dimensions, see below) as the ultimate template to address value differences between these societies. Put stronger, given the multitude of publications building on these concepts when addressing various kinds of diversity, individualism versus collectivism has become such a catch-all binary that it is increasingly hard to clearly define what it is and, moreover, what it is not. Yet, in this section an attempt is made as in the remainder of this paper individualism versus collectivism is often used in the literature to clarify concepts and indicators that are typically Western and/or typically East Asian.

An almost equally traditional reference on the subject is the one to the review article on individualism and collectivism by Oyserman, Croon and Kemmelmeier (2002; see also Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004). The analysis they provide focuses on the core elements that empirically make up individualism and collectivism and on the robustness of effects of individualism and collectivism found for psychological phenomena, such as self-esteem, personality traits, well-being, emotion, and attribution styles. Interestingly, considering their US- and psychology-training, they also go into effects for relationality and groups. The data they use to arrive at their conclusions have serious limitations and are sometimes extremely poor (e.g., covering 15 US-students versus 15 Korean students, all from one school, age or social bracket, etc.), as they themselves also acknowledge (and which has been researched further by Schimack et al., 2005). It seems, however, opportune to at least regard their conclusions as interesting suggestions for further study, including their suggestions for what not to include in measurements of individualism and collectivism. A key point they wish to make is that individualism and collectivism, at the individual level, may prove more a two- rather than a one-dimensional construct (see also Kagitcibashi, 2005, Schwartz, 1994). Elements that form the fundaments of both dimensions are not mutually exclusive, they seem to argue, and both these elements can be manifest in one and the same individual (Oyserman et al., 2002: 9-10). Individualism scales predominantly consist of personal independence, and the collectivism ones of obligation and duty to others and relatedness to others. Now, US-respondents seem to stress both more than many Asian respondents do. That is, particularly when contemplating relationships with their family, they also seem to act collectivist. Oyserman et al. (2002) argue that for US-respondents this perhaps relates to choice.

This is a crucial finding, but perhaps not sufficient to regard individualism and collectivism as two separate things. The finding reflects some misunderstandings of the one-dimensional individualism versus collectivism concept as for instance proposed by Hofstede (2001). Hofstede (2001: 225) defines individualism, as opposed to collectivism, as standing "for a society in which ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty". The first striking thing is that Hofstede includes a relationship with the immediate family in the individualism notion. In other words, individualism does not seem to exclude familialism or relatedness to family. Moreover, perhaps familialism, at least when that relates to the nuclear family, is an individualist stance par excellence, particularly so if one reviews the exact item content of the questions on family relatedness on which these US-respondents score high. They did so only when items were included that tap feelings of belonging and enjoyment of membership, both items that tap an individual's emotions. When for instance items such as duty to the in-group were included the US-respondents where less collectivist. Duty is not a matter of individual choice. Americans, say Oyserman et al. (2002: 40): "do feel obligated to family… though they view these obligations as voluntary". In a collectivist perspective family relatedness – which goes well beyond the nuclear family and stretches out to a very wide circle of relatives (including ancestors) – can often be framed as a pre-given set of rules and obligations. An individual's emotions, choice rationale or even joy are hardly the matter of concern. The individual is not the smallest unit in the family, the family itself is. Addressing collectivism scores therefore on the basis of feelings and emotions towards one's family as just another voluntary association yields a bias, indeed again an individualist bias in cross-cultural studies.

Moreover, collectivism also involves a pervasive and often all-encompassing integration in groups of non-relatives, in other in-groups in which people serve, especially those related to the workplace. Interestingly, as regards the latter in-group relationships, the higher collectivist score of Americans compared to Japanese disappears when the scales include a preference to work in groups (again caution is advised considering the quality of the data).8 Yet, this is a first hint that including items that go beyond the self and/or choice-based family relatedness in measurements of individualism versus/and collectivism might dramatically change the scores on these dimensions. For now, it seems that the scores follow expectations as voiced by Hofstede: individualism is all about perceiving one's self as an independent and smallest unit who sees all he/she values as his/her personal choice aimed to give him/her individual pleasure. For collectivism these considerations are less important, obligation and duty as well as relatedness to others are, not only to a wider circle of relatives but also to colleagues.

Another issue that can be picked up from Hofstede's definition is, shortly, that he refers to societies and not individuals, as Oyserman et al. (2002) and many other cross-cultural researchers do. This is another interesting issue that might well explain why – if that is at all defendable – one may regard individualism and collectivism as two dimensions. At the individual level this may well be so, but that does not prevent the two from forming opposing poles at the collective, culture level. At that level, when taking value dimensions not as simple aggregates of sum of individual scores, but applying some second-order associational analyses, a culture can be relatively more individualist or collectivist than other cultures and still have many individual members in these cultures that adhere to respectively collectivist or individualist views.9

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8 The bulk of studies reviewed refer to US-Japanese comparisons. The Japanese are followed by Koreans and Chinese people in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, in terms of popularity as a US-reference group.

9 An interesting hypothesis is that this so-called ecological fallacy, equaling individual level and culture level concepts and notions, may be something that especially individualists respectively people (either individualist or collectivist at the

In this short section other authors on the issue will be left unreviewed. It is beyond the aim and scope of this paper to update the review article by Oyserman et al. (2002), a review article that has reached a classic status in social science. The review includes numerous references to authors dealing explicitly with individualism and collectivism and adjacent concepts. The latter includes (see also Vinken et al., 2004 for an overview) the famous independence versus interdependence self-construals dichotomy (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, Gudykunst et al., 1996), the notions of high context and low context cultures (see Hall, 1976; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988), of idiocentrism and allocentrism in individuals and of tight and loose cultures (see especially Triandis, 1995). These dichotomies and notions all to some extent overlap substantially with the contrast between colletivism and individualism. For the remainder of this paper it is most interesting to note that individualism and collectivism – whether or not viewed as one or two dimensions – predominantly feature values such as personal independence and obligation, duty and relatedness to others. These keywords can serve the purpose of understanding the literature on 'unique' East Asian values in specific domains, as we will do in the next section. It is also interesting for that purpose to note that not only according to Oyserman et al. (2002) Japan is most frequently mentioned as a modestly collectivist country as compared to Korea and countries with Chinese populations, but that this is also the case in the Hofstede rankings as the next scheme reveals.

Individualism/collectivism in a selection of Western and Asian countries

Individualism/collectivism index (0-100)			
Western		Asian	
Australia	90	China	20
Denmark	74	Hong Kong	25
Finland	63	Indonesia	14
France	71	India	48
Germany	67	Japan	46
Great Britain	89	Korea (South)	18
Italy	76	Malaysia	26
Netherlands	80	Pakistan	14
New Zealand	79	Philippines	32
Spain	51	Singapore	20
Sweden	71	Taiwan	17
United States	91	Thailand	20

Source: Hofstede (2001: 500-502); high scores represent individualism, low ones collectivism

It is important to not focus too much on the exact scores, some of which are from different studies and assessments in different years, but on the relative diversity of scores of both regions and of the countries within them. It is clear that individualism and collectivism varies substantially between

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individual level) from individualist cultures are prone to make (see Vinken et al., 2004 and Vinken & Rammstedt, 2006, for more on this issue).

the two regions, more so than it does within regions, although indeed Japan (and India) seems to take up a rather distinctive position in Asia.

As also Oyserman et al. (2002) found, the majority of studies focus on comparing the US with Japan, at a substantial distance followed by US-Korean comparisons and those on US publics versus Chinese populations (either in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan or Singapore).[10] This not only goes for studies comparing psychological aspects, such as self-esteem, but also for studies comparing basic concepts and fundamental values in the realms of work, family life, politics, and religion. The West (which is usually limited to North America) is most often compared with Japan, Korea, and China (including Taiwan). In the remainder of this paper we will (have to) limit ourselves to these East Asian countries, which as can be shown bear a very distinct cultural make-up.

5 Life domains

Chen et al. (2006) have argued that it is necessary to apply a domain specific view on cultural differences. Even on an issue of individualism and collectivism there are substantial variations on the distribution of this dimension in the East and the West depending on the life domains under investigation (see also Matsumoto, 1999). The assumption that individualism and collectivism is a generic and systemic phenomenon or a deep structure underlying different surfacing features and thus is 'domain general' does not seem to hold. The argument of domain specific variation seems to make more sense than the argument of intracultural variation. As stated, the latter argument overlooks the ecological differences of comparing cultures at the cultural level and comparing groups or behavioural or psychological phenomena within cultures. The argument that individualism and collectivism might evolve 'domain'-specifically is strong as it does not prevent comparisons at the culture level, for instance when comparing work-related orientations and actions between a given set of cultures. In this paper a detailed, but concise look will be taken at values in domains such as work, politics, religion and family life. The below mentioned is illustrative aimed at building arguments to focus on non-Western concepts and indicators and does not pretend to be exhaustive. As mentioned before the focus will be on East Asia.

Work

The 'corporate warrior', the 'economic animal', the 'salaryman' and 'office lady', just a few examples of stereotypes of East Asian employees that seem to need not much further explanation. They seem to represent key values in the domain of work, a domain that, probably only matched by the family, can be regarded fundamental to East Asian societies. Serious literature on (changes in) work values that does not apply value concepts from Western scholars (see e.g., Ralston et al., 1999, applying Schwartz' value index without much contemplation), that goes beyond citations of newspaper articles and that covers a general populace (not only a handful of students) is, however, scarce. The literature that met these criteria (e.g., Mathews, 2005, Mori, 2005, Miyoshi &Yoshino, 2005) shows that 'sacrifice' is a keyword. The East Asian worker, especially the male worker, should be willing to give up everything and everyone outside the workplace for the sake of the group he works with. Personal benefits (more material rewards or more personal growth) are not the key aim. One may even doubt if the work or task itself is an important goal. What is important is to aim at fitting in and conforming to the group he is working with, at making efforts to establish and

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[10] See the similarity in scores on individualism and collectivism in the above shown scheme for China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and also Singapore. Note that in Singapore a majority of about 75% is ethnically Chinese (see http://www.singstat.gov.sg/).

preserve good relationships with others in his group or with those who may benefit his group, and at trying as hard and as long (in terms of hours) as he can to help achieve the group's goals. In return lifelong security, guidance, and protection is offered.

In Japan this has translated in en bloc hiring of freshly graduated students who were offered full- and lifetime employment, training on the job, corporate housing (including group dormitories), and the security that they would climb the corporate ladder just by aging. Good companies still prefer to hire graduates from elite universities. Graduates from these universities keep strong ties with fellow-graduates throughout their life course, and with hiring them the company thus hires entrance to an elite network, including the powerful civil and political sectors with which the business sector is heavily intertwined. The new workers are expected to exert influence in their network to the benefit of the company or their own group in the company. As long as the company offers lifelong security, guidance, and protection, the employee will exert this influence and do his utmost to conform. As long as the employee does the latter – at least as long as he shows he is trying: note the emphasis in the above description of work values on 'trying hard', 'making efforts', 'aiming at'; what matters, again, is to try, to have tried and keep trying, yet as a group member and for the sake of the in-group, not as an individual or for one's own personal well-being – the company will stand firm for your future.

This small excursion in Japanese reality – which according to some is hardly touched by the decline following the burst of the 'bubble economy' since the early 1990's and the much talked about, if not only talked about changes in recruitment, seniority system and corporate structures (Mori, 2005) – may help to reveal the inadequacy of questions asked in Western-style work values survey. What is the importance given this reality of questions on self-enhancement, on developing one's own abilities at work, having a say at work, being able to take initiatives, on – in short – intrinsic motivations, or even, for that matter, extrinsic motivations (such as the pay, number of days off, the working conditions of a job)? Might other, or at least also other questions when comparing beyond East Asia, not be more important? Questions that relate to sacrifice for the benefit of the own group, to doing one's utmost to fit in, to the focus on preserving good relationships (much more than on the work itself, perhaps), to work in teams that create a sense of a common purpose, to be loyal, to work for a company that provides not just the security of a lifetime job, but also actively guides and protects the team members, to being able to use one's network, and also to have one's ideas followed by younger group members (another result of group-focus in a seniority-based system; see also later at the religion section where respect for elderly – including ancestors – is a crucial element)? These and probably more questions on work values are more adequate in terms of closing in on the reality East Asian respondents live in and have to deal with. Developing good questions along these lines would contribute to the validity of a cross-cultural surveys' findings. It simply yields opportunities for people to recognize their reality in the questions asked to them, which would allow them to no longer just serve as 'outliers' in Western origin based surveys. More on the consequences of building appropriate questions and methodologies for cross-cultural surveys will be presented in the final conclusive section.

Andolšek and Štebe (2004) analyse the impact of cultural factors on employee commitment using the ISSP data. While using this data they have to focus on individualist notions of commitment: affective (emotions of adherence, identification and inclusion) and continuance commitment (awareness of costs of leaving an organization). They have to discard normative commitment that relates to the feeling of duty. Yet, they continue comparing these notions among non-Western nations, such as Japan. Still, it is found that affective commitment in individualist countries relates strongly to the material experience an individual has with an organization (simply put: pay precedes emotional commitment). In collectivist countries the mechanism is based on non-material experiences (thinking one's work is beneficial to the community, e.g.). Values therefore in the collectivist cultural perspective play a more important role in affective commitment than they do in an individualist one. Values did not play an important role in any country, individualist or

collectivist, as regards continuance commitment. Job insecurities did (higher commitment if insecure).

Finally, according to Hofstede (2001: 235-240), individualism versus collectivism is a crucial dimension as regards the domain of work.11 Personal issues related to time, freedom, challenges, using one's skills, following one's own interests, having individual opportunities, behaving as (and hiring) an individual and not a group member are more found in individualist cultures. Emotional and social ties to work are tight in collectivist cultures, yet commitment to work is weak as work is not per se a personal choice, a result of personal effort or aimed at personal gain. Loyalty to those who protect is the basis of commitment. It is interesting to note that Hofstede mentions wide ranges of indicators that relate to work, much more than his initial IBM-study measured. Hofstede has associated his work with that of numerous other authors (also from non-Western contexts) up to very recent dates and on this basis he is able to draw a broad picture of possible relationships with indicators that are not usually in values surveys conceived of in the West. Schwartz and Inglehart only very indirectly make statements about their values and the work domain (see Schwartz, 1999). The problem moreover is that they use Western-origin indicators only, such as the Rokeach Values Survey indicators in the case of Schwartz.

Politics

Among Western and East Asian scholars alike there is a strong interest in the political developments of East Asian countries. The issues of building democratic institutions, addressing models of good governance, and promoting conflict-free international cooperative relationships seem at the core of this interest. In the process, many examples can be found that Western scholars tend to celebrate the universal nature of liberal democracy, individual rights, and capitalism and to argue that non-Western nations must face the inevitable challenge of coping with the 'renaissance of liberal individualistic values' in their societies (Bauer & Bell, 1999; see Bell, 2006, for some fine examples). Few focus on where their ideas (and democracy in general) might be enriched by engaging with ideas and practices from non-Western traditions. One alternative model is based in the East Asian traditions of Confucianism and legalism (see again Bell, 2006, and also see the religion section below). This model is perhaps better than an opposing alternative, seen as the filter through which also influences from the West are perceived, worked with, and institutionalized in forms and shapes that may vary strongly from those in the West. Political practices and the way social problems are dealt with carry the logic of Confucian emphases on working for the good of the family, material well-being, and virtue as a key facet of leadership quality. Virtue as a quality may need more explanation (see also Hofstede, 1996a). It refers to claims that one is fit for leadership if one display virtuous behaviour, such as persistence, perseverance, devotion and sacrifice (all proven by successfully passing through a competitive civil service examination system), but also tolerance, respect for differences, and an awareness of reciprocal obligations. Morally and intellectually educated, public-spirited elites thus claimed to be most fit for these positions, while common people are not assumed to posses these qualities to begin with. Even when introducing democratic elections the political system seems to keep its character of a system based on rule by a talented and benevolent elite, regardless whether one or more parties are in place.12 As

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11 See Braun and Vinken (2006) for a full overview of the dimensions of Hofstede, Schwartz and Inglehart and their meaning for work values. The lines presented on Hofstede, Schwartz and Inglehart in this paragraph are a short summary of the work of Braun and Vinken (2006).

12 Neumann (2002) reports that in Japan, a formal democracy after the end of WWII, voters first take account of personal ties with candidates before looking at the parties they represent (see also below for the personal ties of political elites and support and neighborhood organisations).

Ikeda and Richey (2005: 242) report, this goes hand in hand with 'carte blanche leadership': "leadership based on unconditional and unanimous dependence of the rank and file on their leader... with the general expectation that services will be rendered on their behalf by their leader". Legalism refers to the instalment and the expectation and acceptance of all-encompassing strong state and bureaucratic institutions that are judged on their aptness to address the need of the times. The culture-hypothesis referring to values such as filial piety, loyalty, obedience and respect extended to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, is, by some, counterbalanced by a political-reality-hypothesis: it is because political rights are curtailed in some countries that the populace of such countries have negative views of the political rights situation (Carlson, 2006). If culture would filter reality no such relationship between rights restrictions and public opinion or perhaps only a weak one would be found. Analyzing the Asia Barometer 2003 and 2004 data no evidence at the country-level for the political reality hypothesis is found: especially ethnic fractionalization impacts people's view of political rights (more fragmented societies are more positive) and the political rights situation (operationalized along Western lines, one should bear in mind) only has a very modes effect in Asian countries (Carlson, 2006: 331-332). Indicators to check the culture-hypothesis at the country-level are missing. It seems that at the individual level political allegiances with the current regimes are important: those satisfied with the political system also evaluate political rights more positively.13 This might point to a role of Confucian values, which promote respect for authority of the ruler and 'carte blanche leadership'.

At the level of the individual and its political values and especially its trust and social capital, and its political participation patterns, there is also an increasing body of research that emphasizes East Asian's distinctiveness. Trust is an issue that has gained strong attention, especially since 'Making democracy work' by Putnam (1993) and the seminal work 'Trust' by Fukuyama (1995), which, in summary, claims that intense family ties in many Asian (collectivist) countries prevent trust from developing beyond the confines of the family (Fukuyama, 1995; see also Yamagishi et al., 1998). High interpersonal trust beyond members of one's in-group allows for spontaneous sociability and low transaction costs between individuals, stimulates enterprises to emerge beyond the family, which at the societal level, in turn, boost economic advancements and prosperity. Similarly, trust is needed to stimulate voluntary cooperative behaviour and collective political action. China, Korea and Taiwan, according to Fukuyama (1995) are low trust societies in which familialism (see also below at the section on family life) is emphasized and which depend on strong state interventions to build economically crucial large-scale companies.14 Relative to these countries Japan is a high trust society. Relative to the US, with which most comparisons are made in later publications (see e.g., Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; Yamagishi et al., 1998; Yoshino, 2002), Japan is a low trust society. Of course, this would all be perfectly in line with the mid-range position of Japan on the collectivism scale presented earlier in this paper.

Yet, these assertions are all based on the early-1970s Western-origin and famously if not notoriously frugal statement tapping trust by presenting respondents one choice option that "generally speaking" either "people can be trusted" or "you can not be too careful in dealing with

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13 Interestingly this refers to the statement 'statisfaction with the democratic system' with respondents from non-democratic countries, such as China or Uzbekistan, displaying similar and sometimes even stronger positive effects of this type of satisfaction on political rights perceptions as those from longstanding democratic countries (India or Japan) (Carlson, 2006: 334).

14 Interventions also that suffer from public administration inefficiencies and political corruption, according to Fukuyama (1995). See Chang and Chu (2004) on Asian corruption exceptionalism and trust in Asian democracies.

people" (Rotter, 1971).15 As Yoshino (2002) points out the latter choice might be an option for Japanese respondents as its wording "sounds as if concerned with, not distrust, but self-discipline" (Yoshino, 2002: 248). This might explain the relatively high proportions of Japanese not choosing the first option. A serious problem, therefore, is that the measurement instrument does not seem to measure what it intends to do in (some) East Asian countries. In general, it is argued that the instrument does not live up to its promise when considering that it is seen as an indicator of social capital in a society. What should be measured is real relational trust in real social networks (Dekker et al., 2006). 16 Instead, an individual stating that 'in general' people can be trusted is taken as an indicator for social capital. It has been found that this choice is much more the result of self-confidence and an optimistic view of life rather than of real positive experiences with the reliability of people (Dekker, 2004). Now let us combine these findings: those who say they trust, display their self-confidence and life optimism, those who don't, give away their preference for self-discipline. The former refers much more to personal if not psychological characteristics that, as we already indicated, are more likely to be displayed by individuals in individualist cultures where a display of such characteristics (like honesty, self-esteem, personality, belief in one's self, being convinced of one's own goal as the sole prerequisite to attain goals, etc.) is functional, if not the sole basis for judgements of one's self and others and for social interaction and cooperation. The latter, self-discipline, refers much more to an individual's relationship with its social environment and one's dependence of this environment: being careful with others as a form of self-discipline, exactly as a form of not being outspoken as an individual in a social setting and of restraining exposure of one's self and one's own goals in order to assess the other and his context and to see whether or not one, depending on this contextual assessment, may or may not cooperate with the other. In other words, the classic trust instrument may very well, unwillingly, tap into the very distinctions between Western and East Asian ways of dealing with others along the lines of individualism and collectivism.

This evaluation is supported by many examples especially Yamagishi and associates (e.g., Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, Yamagishi et al., 1998; 2003) provide of strong mutual trust and strong social ties in interpersonal and interorganisational relationships. They also point out numerous inconsistencies between survey results and conventional images of (in this case) Japan, which, as they argue, result from confusing trust with concepts that only on the surface resemble trust. Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) argue that trust in the Japanese (East Asian?) context is based on gaining assurance of the incentive structure surrounding the relationship more than on an assessment of the partner's personal traits or intentions of goodwill (its benign nature). They state that trust requires social uncertainty (and I would like to add: personalized certainty, or attributing stable personal characteristics to the other, e.g., seeing the other profoundly as a benign being), and that assurance requires the lack of it. The Japanese score lower than Americans in general trust lacking assurance. They rather confide in mutual assurance in stable relationships through 'connections'. In their dealing with others, most effort is put on commitment formation that boosts this mutual assurance.

Ikeda and colleagues (e.g., Ikeda & Huckfeldt, 2001; Ikeda & Richey, 2005; Ikeda et al., 2005) confirm the notion that especially 'network capital' in Japan does increase political participation,

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15 This item and others known to measure trust are also used in the Asia Barometer Survey (Inoguchi et al., 2005). Analyzing these items and items refering to adoption, favouring relatives, and seeking help in the community when unable to provide for income, Inoguchi (2005) found three factors in Asia, among which general trust on which China scored higher than Japan. The inclusion of these items in the analyses is rather unconventional. Analyses of more waves of the Asia Barometer (see also Inoguchi et al., 2006) have to provide more conclusive details.

16 See Inoguchi et al. (2005) for an attempt to measure informal social ties in Asian countries with the Asia Barometer Survey. The focus is on social ties related more to the economic than the political domain.

just as surveys among Western people suggest. However, the 'universal' notion that vertical relationships decrease this participation could not be found. Ikeda and Richey (2005) speculates that this might either be due to 'vertical society' characteristic of Japanese society or to the Confucian notion that rules are expected to have more virtue and wisdom than those ruled. Evidence also points to the boost in participation when formal support and neighbourhood organisations (see also below) are open to visits from politicians and, vice versa, when members of these organisations have access to people in politically powerful positions. This finding does undermine the traditional and as universally framed conception of social capital as an voluntary associational environment of equals interacting with large groups, which in turn is believed to be the ideal setting for political participation. The Japanese findings show that also in closed and hierarchical environments positive political participation effects can be found. Yet, comparing Japan and Korea with Denmark and Sweden shows that formal political participation in the two Western countries is positively related to political conversation (Ikeda, 2006). In formal participation environments conversation and possible disagreements seem to be suppressed. Less formal participation leads to political conversation in both these Eastern and Western countries.

Among low voter turn-out, almost non-existent partisanship, very modest trust in political institutions, and limited possibilities to participate in political decision-making (e.g., in citizen initiatives and referenda), there is a structure, at least available in Japan, that may help to provide some East Asian logic to these 'negative' scores. This structure consists of support and neighbourhood organisations that formally are not political organisations, but whose representatives are directly linked to government authorities that, in turn, act on behalf of these organisations in the political arena (see Neumann, 2002, for an extensive analysis; see also Mizukami, 1995). In return, these organisations are helpful in the mobilisation of voters and in creating support relationships for the political elite. Now consider the much-reported idea that concepts from Western societies, such as 'citizenship' itself or 'civil society' for that matter, are almost non-translatable in East Asian societies (Alagappa, 2004; Schak & Hudson, 2003; Weller, 2005). It is argued that civil society (to avoid misunderstanding alternatively phrased as the 'third sector'; Gu Xin, 1998; Takao, 2001) is not only strictly tied to government, but is frequently manipulated by the state and conservative forces to control democratic movements (Alagappa, 2004: 13). A civil society that is a principally separate entity from the state or the business sector in which voluntary associations between citizens working for the 'common good' are the main stake, is a hard to conceptualize phenomenon in East Asian societies. Yet, while acknowledging that civil society in Asia is much more complex and goes beyond the state/society dichotomy, much effort is made to operationalise these Western concepts and notions in surveys also covering East Asia. The impression, considering the modest amount of literature on the specific political position of the support and neighbourhood associations, is that much less effort is made to emphasize the distinctive role these associations play in the political domain. Conceptualizations and indicators tapping into the vivid interlinkages, mutual interests and relational dependencies of these organisations and political institutions are rare. For now, it is uncertain whether or not this Japanese profile is helpful to understand relationships between citizens and the state in other East Asian nations, but it might be a start to hypothesize that this Japanese model in various shapes and forms might also be found in these other nations.

Hofstede (2001: 243-249), to close this section on politics, indicates that in individualist cultures the degree of involvement of interest groups in formal power organizations is lower, that there is resistance against regimes based on particularism (here: rulers from specific groups treating these or other particular groups in society better than others) and a favour for formal law (instead of informal dealings) to settle in- and between-group disputes. Rules and obligations should apply to all (see the issue of human rights) and the norms of tradition or religion, as is the case in collectivist cultures, should not serve as a basis of decision-making. Schwartz found a relationship between self-direction values (in the individualist realm) and the emphasis on civil liberties and political rights. This also reminds us of the discussion on China and human rights mentioned above (Xiao,

2005). Inglehart's self-expression dimension – strongly related to individualism – has vivid relationships with politics: having more say in governance and defending freedom of speech are most crucial. It has to be noted that the make-up of this dimension is itself consisting of the same political items with which suggesting a relationship with the political domain simply becomes tautological.

Religion

An impressive number of studies is devoted to addressing religions, religiosity and religious behaviours in East Asia. A continuous flow of works of theology, history, anthropology and sociology tap into the subject (e.g., Lopez, 1995, 1999; Payne, 2006; Sasaki & Suzuki, 2002ab). Yet, only a few cross-cultural surveys have emerged that deal with religion in East Asia using questions developed in East Asia. Most of these are part of large-scale cross-cultural surveys (see, e.g., the International Social Survey Programme, ISSP) and serve as so-called country-specific modules that tap extra questions, e.g. on religion, in one of the participating countries (e.g., Onodera, 2000). The core module of the surveys aims to be comparative across all cultures and is fielded in all countries. This comparative part of the surveys as far as the subject of religion goes is not without problems, to phrase it neutrally. The Western bias is impressive as will be shown below. Before doing so, a short summary of what typifies East Asian religions and especially East Asian religious values and beliefs is called for.

Diversity in religious beliefs and practices in East Asia is overwhelming. Most accounts of religion in East Asia, however, start with listing all separate religions – ranging from Confucianism (sometimes in, sometimes out of the list), Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto to several types of popular religions – and close with the assertion that they all are fundamentally similar (see Teiser, 1999, who makes this point when addressing religions in China; see also Jagodzinski, 2003; Jagodzinski & Manabe, 2003, and Onodera, 2000 on Japan; see Payne, 2006, for more on Korea).17 Here a first typifying point is touched: syncretism, the reconciliation process of melding various (not per se disparate or opposing) schools of thought. Famous is the proverb that in Japan religion is 'one spoon of Shinto, and a half-spoon each of Confucianism and Buddhism'. This does not mean that one half is Shinto and two-quarters Confucianism and Buddhism as such logic would mean that in Japan all religious ingredients can be separated. Instead they "are thoroughly blended so as to be indistinguishable" (Tanabe, 1999: 154). Yet, in some moments of life, one or the other religious practice may dominate: In Japan, a child's arrival at different ages is celebrated in Shinto style, marriage frequently is sealed in a Christian fashion, and funerals coincide with Buddhist ceremonies. Crucial to bear in mind is that in East Asia, most people may adhere to several religions simultaneously and are unlikely to define themselves as belonging to one religious grouping, to identify with one choice only, and thus to value the doctrines of one school of thought only.

Another defining point is that religions in East Asia, including Confucianism, represent many things with none of these things really standing out as the pinnacle focus of religious values, beliefs and practices: moral codes and rules, conceptual schemes, deities, books, a network of temples and shrines, personalized rituals, communal feasts, social and even government institutions, all can serve as bases to provide specific religious values and beliefs and to practice religion of one kind of

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17 Religious composition varies greatly in East Asia. Shinto, e.g., is an indigenous religion of Japan, not found elsewhere (see Littleton, 2002; Ono & Woodward, 2004). Christians are a small minority everywhere except in Korea. The problem of assessing denominations let alone membership is disputable in a situation when religious beliefs, values and practices are mixed to the point of full merger.

the other. There is not one Bible or Koran, one precise way to perceive the role and meaning of religious figures and doctrines[18], one set of rules to which to abide, or even one separate institution such as 'the' church that has been assigned exclusive power to practice religion. Moreover, deities themselves are not always supernatural, at least not during the whole of their lifetime; if a deity mimics a person at all (and not a stone, tree, mountain, etc.). Nor is there only one foreman (priest, vicar, clergyman, etc.) somehow blessed with more insight in a respective religion to which the common and less insightful people have to turn. What is more, there is not one and all-defining type of ceremony where a crowd, as in Christian traditions, passively listens to this foreman and precisely follows his instructions. Many personalized types of ceremonies exist, together with communal ceremonies (in which one is often free to enter and exit at one's own timing), together also with priests who perform rituals, but often only at the instigation of the adheree. Finally, making things even more abject to Western, specifically protestant, religiously meticulous *gourmets*: ceremonies involve all kinds of offers with especially money offerings having a grand status (Reader & Tanabe, 1998). Also, many items that may help to bring good fortune or distract evil are sold at the temple grounds. What is a blasphemy for Christians is good practice in East Asia. Not separating the material from immaterial, at least not putting one of both above the other as in Western religious traditions, might well be at the core of this practice. Taoism even explicitly builds on this drama of separation. It stresses the chaotic wholeness of things, sees decline in any life and any society resulting from separation and differentiation, and offers a model to regain wholeness (Ching, 1993).[19]

The fact that religion may include many inseparable things, and creates great difficulties for survey researchers, no doubt, but it is a reality that has to be taken into account. There is an understandable resistance among religious researchers to include everything in the concept of religion. It is, however, about time, considering the dominance of Western conceptualizations in comparative surveys also used in East Asia, to work on introducing concepts and indicators that tap into this issue. Not only for the sake of accommodating East Asian publics or scholars, but also to more thoroughly meet unanswered questions in scientific debates governing Western religious studies. What about the much-cited issue of 'bricolage' in Western religious practice (Dobbelaere, 1995, 2002; see also Halman & Draulans, 2004) and religious communities becoming 'chosen communities' (Bellah, et al., 1985) in the era of both secularization and diversifying religious markets in late modern societies, including Western 'new age' movements that dwell on the mystic, occult, and esoteric (Luckmann, 1967; De Hart, 1993)? Do these developments not necessitate good measurement instruments that give respondents more choice to voice their religious values and beliefs? To date most large-scale cross-cultural surveys start with asking people whether or not they are member of (or belong to) one of a list of religions or churches, after which all subsequent questions refer to monotheist, sometimes outrightly Christian concepts.[20] Respondents continue to be forced to make one choice. Not only do they have to choose one religion, the must also

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[18]   Compare that to a separation among Dutch protestants into separate church communties in 1926 who fiercely disagreed on whether or not the snake in paradise really spoke to Eve. Yet another seperation occurred in 1944, one of the gravest of periods in World War II in the Netherlands, on the exact meaning of baptism (main point of debate: is baptism still valid if one no longer believes?).

[19] See also http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/contao/daodejing.html, a classic Taoist text translated by Charles Muller of Toyo Gakuen University, Japan.

[20] These comments on existing largescale cross-cultural surveys and their power to answer basic questions in Western sociology of religion are based on a paper written in 2005 by the author of this white paper as commissioned by Kazufumi Manabe of Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya, Japan. A revised version of this paper will be submitted to an international scientific journal after having received comments from a number of scholars.

contemplate on one God or one Superpower, on services that are mediated by one authority figure, et cetera. The way concepts are framed and questions are presented leaves the researcher no room to test the sweeping statements on fundamental trends in religious beliefs, values and practices in modernizing societies, Western or Asian. Seemingly more intended as an 'encore' some items on the occult are listed at the end of questionnaires, in itself 'othering' the beliefs and values of those who do not fit the monotheist, one-choice Western beliefs and values. This is a grave issue, but would not be so grandiose if these surveys did not also proliferate to non-Western societies as good as unchanged.

Another important issue in East Asian religions that is overlooked in the existing cross-cultural surveys relates to the embeddedness of religion in family life and government bureaucracy. In Western religious concepts choice seems to be a crucial element. Those who desire to be religious, and according to rational choice theory everyone does in order to respond to the universal human sufferings and tragedies (another universalist, individualist theory that even states that religious demand is constant across time and place, see e.g. Finke, 1997), choose one or the other religion to adhere and belong to. The supply is abundant and the choice is theirs. Specific ceremonies such as baptism align with this choice, either at a very young age when parents make the choice or at the age of explicit consent. In the East Asian context the issue is not whether or not parents or later the adult individual makes a choice for one or the other religious belief, value or practice system. The issue is that religion and kinship (as well as bureaucracy, see further) are two sides of the same coin, if not the same side of the same coin. Religion is not a matter of voluntarily associating one's self to some kind of school of thought. The kinship system is dubbed with ancestor worship, or a cult of the dead (perhaps more accurately, as worship might imply transcendence), or just a cult (perhaps most accurate as the deceased ancestors are very much alive in the daily behaviour of those who 'worship') in which family members shower the best type of honour on ancestors by bringing a wife in the family, begetting sons and having material success, and, subsequently, receiving respect during life from the living and from succeeding generations (Teiser, 1999). But not only from the living or the generations to follow, also from the benevolent dead, that is, one's in-group among the dead, one's ancestors. If the younger support the senior, these ancestors will give fortune, longevity and birth of sons. Many daily rituals bare the basic premise of this 'filial piety', including family banquets, funeral rituals, and even working within a seniority system (notice also the analogy of the work organization itself with a family). The relationship of religion with bureaucracy seems far-fetched in Western eyes, but is another normality in the East Asian context. A ruler in the dynastic systems in East Asia was he who could clarify, especially over against other influential families, that his virtues made him and his family fit to rule (Teiser, 1999).21 For this purpose institutions and offices were founded. They kept the books of all virtuous and non-virtuous happenings, including the pleasures and displeasures of Heaven (in itself a divine, semi-natural, semi-personal force). The mandate of Heaven could justify continuation or revolution with which a heavy bureaucracy came into place in which officials (selected through fierce examinations tested in their abilities in arts and letters, rather than in technical skills) were not only responsible for running a county, for instance, but also had overt religious functions. Part of his tasks were making offerings at officially recognized temples, giving moral lectures, and watching over religious activities, especially over those involving voluntary organisations emerging outside family groups that might threaten the state. The Chinese conception of Gods is based on the model of bureaucracy with an emperor in Heaven on top who has several bureaus occupied by bureaucrat-Gods each having a specific domain and function, next to city-Gods who in turn top Gods of the Heart who belong to a particular family and who, like in a real Weberian bureaucracy, report on the well-being of the

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21 The following on religion and bureaucracy and Chinese Gods is from an excellent volume of the Princeton Readings in Religion, Asian Religions in Practice edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (1999) and especially the chapter Religions of China in Practice by Stephen H. Teiser (1999). The separate similarly titled volume is also edited by Lopez, Jr. dating from 1995.

family under their jurisdiction. Then these family-Gods rule Gods residing inside each person and who keep the record of good and evil deeds. The lowest types of Gods, those in the underworld, also have reports to fill out, citizens to watch over and jails to manage. This extensive account of the picking order clearly justifies seeing a relationship between bureaucracy and religion. The conception of Gods, the values attached to them, and rituals lived-out daily are fundamentally religious and this-worldly at the same time. There is no unbridgeable gap separating humans from gods, or even separating demons from good spirits (or deciding was is meant when Chinese use the word spirit, which is captured with one word: is it personal agency or psyche, spirits similar to Gods, or is it spiritual meaning something that cannot be comprehended or measured through normal concepts). Yet, was seems clear is that respecting duties and obligations towards the state and its functionaries, thus assuring good fortune and well-being here and now and in the future, can be interpreted as religious acts. Cross-cultural researchers have a formidable task ahead if they wish to include East Asian religious concepts in cross-cultural surveys, a task that, if we wish to make valid comparisons is, however, highly necessary.

Finally, Hofstede (2001) is short on relationships of individualism and collectivism and religion. He states it is typical for individualist cultures to emphasize the personal relationship with a singular God (monotheism) as opposed to collectivist cultures in which religious practices display a devotional focus at service and at more deities (polytheism). Religiosity with Schwartz (see Schwartz & Huisman, 1995) has no clear-cut relationship with individualist values such as autonomy and self-direction, beit that religious people tend to dislike these values that partly build on self-enhancement instead of self-transcendence (Saroglou et al., 2004). There are relationship between religiosity and one of Inglehart's dimensions (the traditional versus secular-rational authority dimension), but this dimension does not relate to individualism and collectivism (see Norris & Inglehart, 2004).22

Family life

The afore mentioned sections already touch upon the all-overriding importance of the family. It is almost a truism that in East Asia all other issues and domains of life are filtered, interpreted and valued through a family-based looking glass. The family is in such truisms claimed to be prototypical for all forms of relationships. The much-cited principle underlying the prominence of the family is that of 'filial piety' or the principle of respecting and loving one's parents and following the norms in interacting with parents (Dong, 1990; Zheng et al., 2005). Filial piety seems to be relevant in most of the East Asian countries. One of many examples comparing the US and Japan (Hashimoto, 1996) shows that in Japan filial bonds are more important than conjugal ones when it comes to giving and getting support. In Japan supportive relationships are generational (framed here in a genealogical sense). In the US relationships between life partners are more important than generational ones. In the US the latter are interpreted from a generational equity perspective reasoning that the younger generation will have their turn in due time when they have sought independence. In Japan support is much more serially ordered from the younger to the older generation and vice versa. Interestingly, filial piety comes with filial anxiety as Kim and Park (2005) note for the Korean case. Filial piety may well be overriding all other areas of life, yet this principle is fraught with contradictions and not always easy to bear, especially not for women. It can be a burden, and it is also experienced as such, to be expected to take care of elderly and frail parents. Several difficulties in the financial, emotional, relational and social domains with caring for burdensome parents are reported. In this respect, Zheng et al. (2005: 253) report on three basic filial

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22 The dimension again yield the issues of tautology as it is itself made up of items such as 'How important is God in your life', which one could criticize as being a rather monotheistic and thus Western item.

and three unfilial acts in China that may illustrate the difficulties of always abiding to the rules. The filial acts are 1) to love and respect your parents in your mind, 2) to let them always have dignity and face as parents, and 3) to support and take care of them until the end. The unfilial acts are: 1) failing to prevent your parents from committing a crime, 2) failing to work to provide food for aging parents, causing them to starve, and 3) failing to marry and have children, thus leaving the family no posterity. The last unfilial act was the number one mention of traditional concepts playing a role in family decisions and was seen as the worst of all three acts according contemporary Chinese people (Dong, 1990).

Set in a tradition of perceiving East Asian family life as fundamentally different from Western family life, Kagitcibasi (2005), a famous cross-cultural psychologist in the family domain, recently has reviewed cross-cultural psychology, adolescence studies and cross-cultural research to seek for concepts related to individualism and collectivism and family life across cultures. The main argument of Kagitcibasi (2005) is that on a discourse level an autonomous and separated self seems to serve as the norm in Western societies and the model in Western-biased research (see also Yang, 1988). Empirically, however, an autonomous self, framed as an active agent, and a related self, someone who is connected to others, seems the dominant model in all kinds of cultures. Autonomy and relatedness, in other words, are compatible which has not always been clear in the concepts of individualism and collectivism. Relatedness as a possibility is not always conceived of as being part of individualism, similarly as autonomy does not figure in collectivism: individuals are either independent and thus active agents or interdependent and passive group members. It is suggested when doing research on family life across cultures to use multidimensional concepts that go beyond the dichotomy of individualism and collectivism and that build on the dimensions of interpersonal distance (separation versus relatedness) and agency (autonomy versus heteronomy). This does allow for more than the classic model of a separated ánd autonomous self (or classic view individualism) versus the model of a related and heteronomous self (as in classic view collectivism). In the former model, still according to Kagitcibasi (2005), the family strives to socialize children towards independence and self-reliance. In the latter model it is interdependence and obedience. Yet, now two 'new' models come to the fore: one building on separatedness and heteronomy and the other on relatedness and autonomy. In the former one the family seems hierarchical and neglecting, which yields values of neglect and indifference in children. In the latter one the family model is building on psychological interdependence, order setting control and an autonomous orientation. In the last case authoritative parenting is common as opposed to the classic individualist separation-autonomy model in which permissive parenting is common and in the classic collectivist one in which authoritarian parenting is.

The new models of Kagitcibasi remind us of classic attachment theory stating that children who safely attach to their prime socializers are also more equipped to take initiative and knit new social ties beyond the family (i.e. have more agency or ability to act autonomously). The theory is from the 1950s (see its inventor John Bowlby, 1958) and has gained massive popularity since the 1970s. Not only the novelty of Kagitcibasi's model can be disputed, but also its adequacy for cross-cultural comparisons. As Oyserman et al. (2002) showed in their review of cross-cultural studies featuring individualism and collectivism, it is not belonging and feeling attached to one's family that plays a key role in discerning individualist from collectivist cultures. The US is even more collectivist than Asian countries when this item is part of the dimension. But only when this item is introduced. Family attachment in the sense of an emotional tie and framed as a choice of voluntary association is also more likely an individualist item and should not be included in a one-dimensional measure of collectivism (see also the discussion on this issue in section 4 above). Duty, obligation, and respect towards one's family conceived of as a multitude of generations of ancestors and people to come, are more likely to serve as good indicators. Suggesting that collectivism in a classic sense implies that collectivists are not only interdependent but also passive, followed by the invention of a 'new' model that contradicts this, is not doing fair science. It is a more often, not only by Kagitcibasi, used

'constructing a snowman and then shoot' strategy aimed at rejecting a self-created myth. As the individualist acts on his own behalf, the collectivist is equally active on behalf of his family or wider in-group on which he depends, and consequently one may argue, while doing so he is also active on his own behalf. There is no theory that implies collectivists are passive dependents of the will of others. There is proof that individualist think they only act voluntarily (and are likely to overlook and even deny pressures of social groups, structures, and traditions), and that collectivists are more likely to act according to ritualized routines that build on duty, obligation, and respect.

An interesting project on family life that has had its first wave of cross-cultural data gathering in the 1970s is the Value of Children project (Hoffmann & Hoffmann, 1973). Recently a volume appeared presenting the findings of the last wave of the early 21st century including those of mainland China and Korea (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2005). In summary, both in Korea and China values related to children and parenting have hardly changed despite the formidable societal developments in both countries. Korea, that is South Korea, has grown from a virtually completely rural society to a highly modernized urban society since the mid-1960s. The abominable pace of change in China is daily news today and needs little illustration here. Similar to many other advanced nations, divorce rates went up, marriage is delayed and the number of children came down (whether or not part of explicit policy). Yet, the values that having children represent are as good as untouched, thus challenging, as Kim and Park argue (2005), the notion that in poorer societies people emphasize economic and utilitarian motives (children as a helping hand, as an old-age security, etc.) – motives that were least important also in the early 1970s in Korea – and that in richer ones the emphases shifts to emotional motives. Another notion believed to be universal can be rejected, simply by comparing across cultures. In both Korea and China, although there are some distinctions (see Zheng et al., 2005), the emotional and relational value of children were and still are most important, which is believed to be in line with traditional Confucian values. Before dwelling on this a little more, it is important to note the surveys were carried out among mothers (younger and older ones) only. This is crucial for the factors found in the series of values of children presented to the mothers and for the order of importance of these factors.

Kim and Park (2005) argue that traditionally mothers were assigned the sole responsibility of the psychological and physical well-being of their children. The father entered the play when the child was about three years of age and investments in education and the socialization of obedience to rules became necessary. The mother in the Confucian concept of raising children is expected to sacrifice herself (compare this notion of sacrifice mentioned at the section on work) and display unselfish complete devotion (see also the work section on always doing one's utmost). In practice, a mother should remain very close to the child, minimize boundaries between herself and the child, and become one with her child. In effect, children are indulged, rules are hardly enforced and each wish is gratified. The closeness should encourage the child to incorporate the mother's values and beliefs. Dependence on the mother, in every aspect and for any type of need, extends well into the years of adolescence. It is in this context perhaps not a surprise that the emotional value of children is the prime value. This value relates closely to the role expectation of mothers – the ones who were interviewed – who are regarded to be fulfilled only when they have children for whom they can sacrifice their individuality and merge with at the emotional and relational level. The prime emphasis on the emotional is therefore not a matter of individualism, but more likely a matter of collectivism. Central is creating dependence and loyalty, the duty to sacrifice and show devotion on behalf of a new family member (this same sacrifice and devotion is also compulsory for younger women in the family, including daughters-in-law, when taking care of elderly, that is dependent members of the family), and merging of the self with others in the family (instead of emphasizing separation, learning to stand on one's own feet, etc.).

Another factor was regarded second most important by the mothers in Korea and in China: the relational value of children. This factor was the strongest one of the three factors extracted among the mothers' responses in both Korea (Kim and Park, 2005: 225) and China (Zheng et al., 2005:

265). When looking at reasons for wanting a child (the reasons for not wanting a child are also reported, but not discussed in more detail here), the items include 'more contact/communication with kin', 'standing/reputation among your kin', 'makes family more important' (in China), and even 'more reason to succeed in work'. In both countries not only emotional relatedness, but also family harmony well beyond the nuclear family (between the spouses and their children) is emphasized. A clearer indication of traditional collectivist values still in place is hardly possible. Yet, Kim and Park (2005) stress that in Korea some elements of family life have changed: paternalism is de-emphasized, more opportunities to handle financial family affairs, for instance, are being transferred to women (even more responsibilities, one could also argue; a transfer of responsibilities to men is not reported), boy preference has decreased, and social security efforts are made (efforts to which Zheng et al., 2005, also point for China) that may balance filial anxiety. Despite of all these changes, Kim and Park (2005: 234) say this "may suggest that Korea is following the Western model… However, even with the recent dramatic social change, the importance and value placed on family has not changed in the past 100 years".

Manabe et al. (2002, compare Manabe & Jagodzinski, 2002) have searched for family values in Japan using the international module of ISSP. Here we also find a certain immunity of family values, standing separate from, in this case, other values such as religious and moral values. Comparing Japan and Germany it is found that religious values affect family values in Germany, but not so in Japan. The Japanese are in one way more prone to the traditional family model: they are more often married, less often divorced, and more often regard a marital status desirable. Perceived in another way, compared to Germans, they are less likely to agree that it is a husbands job to earn money, and a wife's one to look after the home and family, something more religious citizens endorse in Germany. The same goes for the idea that family life will suffer is a woman has a full-time job. These items are, of course, highly disputable, in an East Asian context. Traditionally speaking, men have great responsibilities for family life, for instance interpreted as the handling of family affairs, including protecting the family property (such as the home), on behalf of the wider family. The contrast of males earning money and females looking after the home and family is non-sensical and does miss the point the item-constructors probably wish to make, a point that is building on a Western notion of the family and gender roles: women staying at home to take care of the household chores and her children and husband. The same can be said about family life suffering from a woman going to work. This again implies that family life is the responsibility of women. It is very likely that Japanese respondents will puzzle about what exactly is meant here with the term 'family life'. On average they score an almost perfect undecided answer, not agreeing and not disagreeing (Manabe et al., 2002: 8). The relationship with religion, which is hard to attain when respondents mostly are undecided to begin with, is questionable as well. For the sake of comparison a division of denominations in Germany and Japan is constructed, after which it is found that those who adhere to one or the other religion in Germany tend to be more traditional as gender roles go. In Japan this is not found. Manabe himself counterargues (Manabe and Jagodzinski, 2002) that in Japan religious denominations are not exclusive (as discussed above), let alone that moral rules and advice are automatically included in religious practice (as Jagodzinski can prove for the German case). Focusing on Japanese module-items in ISSP, they can show that those who 'feel attracted' to Shinto, Buddhism or Christianity only but weakly have a somewhat more strict moral, but hardly differ on gender roles (see problems above with these items). The results are not strong (and the analyses not conclusive), but yet it might be plausible that family values are not strongly related to other basic values, such as religious values in the East Asian context. It might well be that family values have such an overarching importance, that they simply do not relate to variations in values on other domains. People from different walks of life to some extent all share the notion (and burden, as we saw above) of the importance of the family in their lives. Sharing this is not a matter of religious or moral liking, it is a basic principle of duties, obligations and respect to one's in-group of family members, deceased, alive or yet to be born.

Hofstede (2001: 225-231; see also Hofstede, 1996b), finally, shows a multitude of relationships between individualism and collectivism in the family domain. In individualist cultures the family is there to support the individual (not vice versa) who is the smallest unit (not the family as such). Children learn to seek independence, distinguish their 'I', say their opinion in direct confrontation, tell what is on their minds without hiding their feelings, choose their own friends, and like other family members demand privacy and a place of their own. Independence, self-respect, cultivation of self-esteem are sought after. In collectivist cultures these traits are less important, loyalty and ritual obligations are more important, as is friendship and marriage to someone who one not only loves, but who also has certain observable characteristics such as wealth and chaste. Marriage is not only a bond between two individuals, but also a contract between families.

6 Conclusion

There are many reasons to include East Asian values concepts and indicators in cross-culturally comparative values survey research. Classic Western notions of intrinsic versus extrinsic work values or of only affective and continuance commitment to work do not suffice in the East Asian context. Neither do political values concepts of generalized individual rights and trust, voluntary associational life and a separate civil society, which in Western societies seem the crucial tools for attaining political rights and for political participation, but which in East Asian societies are clearly less relevant. Also strongly out of place are notions related to monotheist beliefs, the very idea of choosing between either this or that religious denomination, the dominance of religious doctrine over other religious practices, authority figures leading religious services, passive indulgence of religion in separate places of worship only, placing material benefits under immaterial ones, the emphasis on transcendence or the other-worldly-ness of religion, religion as an individual choice or religious affiliation as a voluntary association, separating religious life from wider family life and even citizen/state relationships. Finally, rather unuseful family life concepts in the context of East Asia are those that regard the family as an entity of only spouses and their own children, that go into conjugal and solely emotional bonds and forms of support, that, again, think of attachment as an individual choice or voluntary association, that regard emotional ties superior to other ones (economic, utilitarian or relational), that draw on maintenance of individual distance in relationships, and that imply that looking after 'the family' is a women's issue that includes taking care of the chores and her own children and husband.

This long list of inadequate values concepts and notions that dominate Western-origin values surveys and are at use in the East Asian region to this very day, should function as an overt call to improve cross-cultural survey research. As the conceptual or construct equivalence of the long list is highly debatable in the context of East Asia, the very issue of comparability of these comparative surveys is at stake.23 This issue has serious consequences both for science and society. Scientifically, many existing values surveys simply fail to tap the real concerns of the scientific community. The basic problem of finding the most frugal and also most encompassing set of values dimension with which to compare cultures on each of the domains debated here is, for instance, still to be addressed. The dimensions derived from the existing values surveys will prove plainly inadequate to explain individual outcomes, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours in the East Asian context; explanations that are the very motive to do comparative values surveys in the first place. Moreover, the existing comparative values surveys implicitly stimulate the process of 'othering' non-Western cultures. Instruments that are regarded inadequate by those surveyed will bare the danger of yielding divergent or systematically biased responses, stimulating the false conclusion that these respondents have different values from the ones to whom these instruments are relevant.

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23 On other types of equivalence see the volume by Harkness et al. (2003).

The danger is that we think 'they' are really different from 'us'. Related to this issue is that up until today it is impossible to decide whether or not specific values are indeed universal or particular. Only after including appropriate measures in both the Western and non-Western context, there would be ways to decide this. We by now know that numerous Western concepts that are believed to be universal are in fact not. Yet, the inclusion of non-Western concepts and notions in comparative values surveys and tapping these also among Western publics might reveal that these publics also have a feel, for instance, for group sacrifice at work, assurance when establishing new relationships, bricolage of a diversity of religious beliefs, or relational values aimed at a wider circle of family members. We simply do not know this, because these issues are simply not conceived of by those compiling today's comparative values surveys. To date we have to rely on persuasion and scattered evidence predominantly from case studies or bilateral and small-scale quantitative studies that East Asian cultures are indeed particular, different from other cultures. What is particular and what is truly universal is a question that is far from answered. It will remain unanswered if the cultural fit of comparative values surveys is not enhanced in the near future.

A societal consequence of continuing with the surveys as they are is that the true concerns of the public are likely to remain unaddressed and that the responsiveness of policies and politics to these concerns is seriously weakened. By the existing comparative values surveys the populace of East Asia is publicly known only as diverging from value concepts presented to it as the universal measures of things, as the ultimate of desirables, as the preferred state of affairs of all those in advanced societies. Their concepts tapping into their concerns, desirables and preferred state of affairs remain in the dark. Considering this it is hardly surprising that some Western observers, as noted in the section above, triumphically declare that the greatest task ahead for East Asians is to prepare to embrace the inevitable victory of liberal individualistic values.24 It is rather easy for these observers to not see any serious counter-evidence giving the dominance of inadequate comparative values surveys.

Inclusion of new items based on East Asian values concepts, however illustratively and preliminarily discussed in this paper, is more than necessary. East Asian *work values* items on the one hand seem to refer to sacrifice, devotion, making an effort, trying hard, persevering, and never giving up and on the other hand to fitting in, to conforming, to preserving relationships, to working for community/group/network benefits, to loyalty, and to respect and obedience to seniors in the group who are expected to guide and protect their subordinates and to explicitly address their needs for security and material well-being. In the *political values* domain the East Asian emphases seem to be on strong and explicitly reciprocal ruler-ruled relationships in which sacrifice, perseverance, and self-discipline for the benefit, including material well-being, of one's in-group (family members, fellow-graduates, company members, etc.) is not an externally enforced duty or some abstract obligation, but perceived of and accepted as a matter of virtue and wisdom. Likewise, the relationships with outsiders are based on self-discipline, withholding exposure of one's personal goals and one's own considerations, and a careful assessment of the incentives these outsiders may bring the in-group. Assurance of these incentives instead of generalized trust is the relevant issue. Similarly, the close social, personal, and, yes, even emotional ties between formal citizen representative organizations, the corporate world, and the state are build on mutually rendered services, again including material ones. Treating 'all equally' presupposes a 'generalized other' and thus runs against in-group logic; treating some, i.e. one's in-group, better than others does not. Vice versa, the rights of specific groups precede generalized individual rights. In the domain of *religious*

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24 An issue only partly touched upon in this paper is the issue of generational change. There is little and contradicting evidence on this matter, let alone evidence that builds on Asian-origin concepts. Some state, without providing thorough cohort analyses, that younger generations in East Asia might be less inclined to support traditional East Asian values. Others believe (!) that cultural emphases have hardly changed despite emerging new generations. This issue deserves a separate thorough analysis and will not be discussed here in all detail. For more detail and some hypotheses on this issue, see Vinken, 2004.

values East Asian items should tap into the issues of syncretism and polytheism, of simultaneously adhering to different and sometimes even opposing religions and/or adhering to these different religions at different moments and contexts of life, of deities that at the same time can be human, non-human, and super-human, of the importance of both personal and communal rituals, of the central role of sacrifices and offerings and of material and this-worldly goals in religious beliefs and practices, and, related to this this-worldly-ness, of the embeddedness of religion in family life and bureaucracy. Virtues in these two domains are inseparable from religious beliefs: respecting one's family, honouring ancestors and the elderly (including senior benevolent bureaucrats), having children (sons), becoming or at least appearing prosperous are central in daily practices and relate to basic values in the domains of religion, family life and the state (and company life) all at the same time. East Asian *family values*, finally, include items that first and for all take account of filial piety, filial bonds, and filial anxieties. This in regard to a wider concept of the circle of family members (of the past, present, and future) and thus of family duties and obligations (beyond the nuclear family). Again, sacrifice, devotion, respect, awareness of duties, creation of close, dependable and loyal relationships, and securing emotional, relational, and material returns are key issues.

Across the domains some items repeatedly emerge. Sacrifice for one's in-group, preservation of reciprocal relationships, and assurance of material benefits seem basic traits that cross the work, political, religious and family values domains in East Asia. Other and more items may be included in this short list, but for the moment at least these three basic elements seem highly relevant when addressing values in the East Asian region.

It is time to take account of non-Western values concepts and indicators in cross-culturally comparative values survey research. It is time, as already cited at the section on political values in the preceding paragraph, to focus on where ideas might be enriched by engaging with the ideas, notions, and concepts of non-Western traditions, in this case East Asian traditions. Following this paper a number of steps should be taken to advance this case. The *first* step is to further analyse the East-Asian-origin values surveys, such as the Asia Barometer, Asian Barometer or East Asian Values Survey. One approach would be to thoroughly seek for alternative values dimensions in these surveys and to correlate these dimensions with individual outcomes, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. For each domain such as work, politics, religion, and family life, it can be assessed if and to what extent the effect-sizes of these dimensions are acceptable when taking account of the scale reliability, scale content and sample composition. Variations in reliability, content, and sample composition can influence the effect-sizes of the dimensions: if scales on which the dimensions build are more reliable, effects might be stronger; if specific items are included (e.g., sacrifice, duty, relatedness, etc.), effects might be also be stronger; and if samples include a broad range of respondents (instead of older middle-class urbanites only, e.g.), the same may apply as regards effect-sizes. The conclusions from these analyses may go that particular scales with certain items and among specific populations are good (or less good) candidates for inclusion in future surveys that (also) cover the East Asian region. A *second* step is to organize a series of seminars that include several survey experts from both Western and East Asian nations. The experts are expected to bring in and debate different sets of values concepts and indicators at the concrete item and scale level; items and scales that might serve as candidates for inclusion in future comparative values surveys. Each seminar in the series of seminars is best focused on one of the four separate domains: a seminar may cover work values, another political values, etc. Each seminar concludes with a proposal of a frugal set of candidate items. It could be considered to also promote a fundamental debate on research methodologies in each of these seminars: when the values identified in each domain are perceived of as highly contextual, i.e., depending on the social context of the individual and/or strongly varying when an individual is with in-group or out-group members (in the family, at work, in a neighbourhood association, etc.), then it would be worth considering alternative methodologies. A fundamental debate would be welcomed on supplementing individual methods of

data gathering (the classic home address survey questionnaire interview, with or without intervention of a stranger/outsider, c.q. interviewer) by more 'collectivist' methods, such as focus group interviews, peer-interviewing, on-site interviewing, etc. One final seminar may be devoted to gathering all proposals, both on items and methodologies, from the separate domain-seminars and integrating these into one systemic proposal.[25] A *third* step would be necessary to pilot the sets of items from the secondary analyses and seminar series in a few East Asian and Western nations. The pilots could also be used to experiment with alternative methodologies. The analyses of the resulting pilot data could be focused on providing profound input for existing large scale comparative values surveys covering both Western and non-Western nations. The *fourth* and final step is inclusion of the proposed input in the upcoming waves of (one of) these large-scale comparative surveys.

The steps proposed here require long-term efforts and commitments from a relatively high number of people and research institutes. It thus also necessitates a strong focus on managing the cultural diversity, the dynamics, and the interests and anticipated benefits of the groups of people involved in this process. Hopefully, this paper may serve as a tool and frame of reference stimulating a successful march through the steps proposed here. The march will be long, but if led well, embedded in a community of experts, and carried by the vigour of melding several schools of thought, this march will no doubt be worthwhile.

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[25] Interestingly, Hofstede (2007) notes that even in these expert input processes one has to be aware of cultural factors and group dynamics. He argues that even when carefully including experts from different cultures in the process of item building, translation and back translation, interviewing, and pretesting, some experts will appear more equal than others. In cultures with a high sense of paying respect to older experts, or even to those (Westerners?) who took the initiative, there will be a tendency to follow these experts, leading again to a (Western?) bias in the end result.

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