

# Religion and Traditional Values in East Asia

## Exploring Five Comparative Values Surveys in East Asia

### Working Paper

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### Introduction

Central themes in social science perspectives on religion are secularization, changes towards alternative and more individualized religions, and changes in the 'supply-side' of religious institutions (see for an overview, e.g., Halman & Petterson, 2006; see also Halman & Draulans, 2004; 2006). Most of these perspectives originate from Western scholars. The processes of modernization and secularization, of postmodernization and pluralization of religions, of the rational choice of religious adherents responding to changing supplies of religious experiences, are assumed to be universal. Survey research with which these processes are empirically tested is not only fielded in Western, but also in non-Western nations, usually without much contemplation on the applicability, validity and reliability of theoretical notions and empirical indicators for these non-Western contexts (see Vinken, 2006a, for a review of the notions and indicators).

A rather pressing problem related to this Western bias, is that these surveys fall short to tap into religious experiences and practices in more collectivist, particularist, and polytheist societies, such as those in the East Asian region of the globe.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, they have difficulties to address the basic values, fundamental concerns, and resulting actions, for instance in the domain of religion, of larger parts of the global community. However, what also remains a black box is whether or not these so-called East Asian concepts might also be spread beyond East Asian contexts, e.g. in the Western one. Perhaps many (or perhaps at least some) Western publics tend to support or at least have a feel for more collectivist, particularist and/or polytheist concepts. All in all, comparative surveys building on a universalist Western logic are less adequate in the East Asian region. In other words, it is time to focus on East Asian-origin surveys and thoroughly assess, starting here with concepts in the domain of religion, what lessons globally comparative surveys can draw from these East Asian-origin surveys.

A recent review of East-Asian values survey concepts (Vinken, 2006b) shows that in the East Asian context and across many values domains, including the domain of religion, similar elements emerge: sacrifice for one's in-group, preservation of reciprocal relationships, and (instead of generalized trust) mutual assurance of material benefits. More precisely for the domain of religion, the assessment of syncretism (reconciling various, sometimes disparate or opposing schools of thought) and polytheism is called for (Jagodzinski & Manabe, 2003; Lopez, 1999; Onodera, 2000; Teiser, 1999). Common practice is the simultaneous adherence to different and sometimes even opposing

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<sup>2</sup> Universalist notions (e.g., a hierarchy of needs, postmaterialism, Big 5 personality traits, rational choice, etc.) claim that concepts have an absolute nature as they are seen as part of the 'basic' human (psychological) condition. Concepts are thus believed to be applicable in any cultural context. Particularist notions (e.g., Japaneness, relatedness, virtue) imply that concepts depend on the (national, social, cultural) context, are thus unique to contexts and cannot be generalized across cultures. Universalism mimics individualism, as particularism does collectivism. It is beyond the scope of this article to debate these contrasts; see Vinken, 2006b, for further details.

religions and/or to these different religions at different moments and contexts of life. Also, deities can be human, non-human, and super-human at the same time. Moreover, both personal and communal rituals are in place, often without mediation of religious officials and with a central role of sacrifices and offerings aimed at this-worldly goals, if not straightforward material benefits, not in the afterlife but here and now (Reader & Tanabe, 1998). Importantly, religion is strongly embedded in family life and also in bureaucracy. Traditional East Asian virtues in these two domains are almost inseparable from religious beliefs and practices: respecting one's family, honoring ancestors and the elderly (including senior benevolent bureaucrats) having children (more precisely: sons), becoming or at least trying hard to become (and in the course sacrificing a lot) and appear prosperous, all these virtues are central in daily practices in family, citizen-state (and employee-employer) and religious relationships.

In short, religious beliefs and practices are believed to be strongly intertwined with (if not equal to) traditional East Asian virtues that govern other domains of life. These virtues or values mimic those that play a major role in the debate on so-called 'East Asian values' since the mid-1980s (see, e.g., Hofstede & Bond, 1988, on Confucian ethics). What, in conclusion of this section, might well be learned from East Asian-origin values surveys is the assessment of the interrelationships of religion and traditional values.

### **Outline**

This article will focus on religion and traditional values. In the domain of religion it aims to explain 1) the proportion of people in East Asia that indicates they have or identify with any particular religious denomination, and 2) the frequency with which East Asian people attend church, c.q. attend and/or practice religious services. Both themes are central in the discussion on the cultural fit of religious values surveys covering non-Western nations. As regards denominational belonging or church membership the key assumption is, in line with the above mentioned syncreticism notion, that East Asian publics are likely to not affiliate to one or the other denomination. As church attendance is concerned the basic idea is that these publics are less likely to passively attend services, visit a church or any place of worship for these services, but to practice services actively, with or without official guidance and if necessary at a place of worship in their private home. It will be assessed how the East Asian-origin surveys (and for reasons of comparison some Western-origin global surveys, also field in East Asia) perceive and deal with these themes empirically.

Use is made of several traditional explanatory variables in the domain of religion itself, such as religious beliefs, the importance of religion, and religiosity. This 'internal' set of explananda and explanatia, all from the domain of religion, is challenged first by adding socio-demographic variables and second by introducing nation/city and also traditional values indicators. The assumption is that generation membership and education contribute to the explanation of having a denomination and the frequency of church visits. Compared to older generations, younger generations are believed to have grown up in times of, among others, heightened secularization, and will, regardless of the importance they attach to religion or their religiosity, feel less attached to denominations and be less inclined to actually visit churches (see Halman & Petterson, 2006, for an intergenerational analyses across Europe). The higher educated, compared to the less educated, are also believed to be forerunners of secularization.<sup>3</sup> If younger

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<sup>3</sup> There is considerable debate on the effect of education (and other demographics) on religious variables. In the USA some discern a positive effect at the individual level: e.g., the higher the educational level, the more church attendance; an effect attributed to the high shares of social capital (which positively relates to education) needed to participate in many (protestant) religions in the USA (see, e.g., Sacerdote & Glaeser, 2001). Most empirical evidence shows a negative association (see Johnson, 1997). Recent analyses of the European Values Study (Halman & Draulans 2006) reveal a negative relationship between educational level and religiosity and a curvilinear one between educational level and religious practices (the higher educated are more involved in religious activities than the middle educational levels). A straightforward explanation for these findings is not available, but it seems that on the 'mental' level there is proof for the Weberian idea that education is incompatible with religious orientations, and that, at the same time at the social level, high levels of education (and thus social capital) align well with active religious involvement.

generation membership and/or a higher level of education are of the highest relevance, then the introduction of these characteristics should reduce if not completely replace the religious indicators. This will be checked in the analyses that follow the next section.

Another set of assumptions argues that not religious considerations or demographics make the difference, but that the nation/city in which one is socialized, with all its particular cultural traditions, socio-economic chances, and religious and political structures in place, determines religious belonging and religious behavior. In the following a stepwise approach is used: firstly, the nation/cities as such are included in the explanation, and secondly, different sets of traditional values are added. In the last case it can be assessed whether or not East Asian cultural traditions (i.e., East Asian traditional values) add to, if not replace or, yet another possibility, maybe strongly reduce the impact of being from a particular nation or city. Perhaps too the sole fact of including nation/city indicators and also, on top of that, the set of traditional values may strongly weaken the effects of religious and demographic characteristics or even make them disappear. In an extreme version of reversed orientalism when perceiving East Asian values, it is exactly this all-encompassing and all-overriding impact of traditional values that make people feel they belong to a religion, c.q. behave in a religious way. One's own personal religious considerations, demographic characteristics (even when these relate closely to historic time, as generation membership does), or even national or city(-state) origin does not really matter. What matters is endorsing East Asian traditional values, e.g. those related to filial piety, harmony and relatedness. Being part of an East Asian community of specific traditional values, so theory in its extreme logical consequence would go, overrides all other facets determining belonging and action. This article aims to seek evidence for this logic in recent survey sources from East Asia.

### **Data, indicators, and the issue of wording**

Use is made of several datasets covering different nations and major cities in East Asia. In most cases nations such as China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and/or (the city-state of) Singapore are included. In some cases several large Chinese cities, instead of one overall reference to China, are distinguished. Most of these datasets originate from East Asia, such as the AsiaBarometer (AB) of 2003, the Asian Barometer (AnB) covering the 2001-2003 period, and the East Asia Values Survey (EAVS) for 2002-2004. For reasons of comparison we have also included the last publicly available wave (2000-2002) of the predominantly Western-origin World Values Survey (WVS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), especially its module on religion (1998) here referring only to Japan.

Crucial for evaluating the analyses results is the issue of concept equivalence. It is relevant therefore to first look closer at the question wording. In AB 'denomination' is measured as follows: "Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?". In AnB this is "what is your religion?" and in the EAVS it is "Do you have any personal religious faith?" In WVS it is "Do you belong to a religious denomination?" and in ISSP it is "What is your religious preference?" (the wording in the Japanese questionnaire). The largest problem of the different wordings is the difference between nominal (e.g., most likely tapped in AnB and WVS) and subjective belonging (e.g., in AB) to any religious denomination. The addition "personal" in EAVS can also be problematic in this sense, probably confusing people who may have strong family ties (also in terms of rituals) to a specific religion, but do not feel they themselves, as individuals or personally, relate closely to this religion, as the question suggests necessary. The difference between "faith" as tapped in EAVS and religious denomination and/or preference in WVS and ISSP is in itself of course rather problematic. If people responded positively to these questions they were shown a list of religions to choose from. In the analyses presented here, those who responded positively to the denomination questions are seen as one group versus those who did not respond positively.

Similarly the wording of 'church attendance' differs across the surveys. In AB the wording is: "Apart from weddings, funerals and such ceremonies, about how often do you attend religious services or visit a place of worship these days?" In AnB the phrasing is

"About how often do you practice religious services or rituals these days" (not asked in China). The variable is missing completely in the EAVS. In WVS the wording is almost similar to the one in AB: "Apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?". In ISSP (Japan) the wording goes: "How often do you attend religious services or go to pray at temple/shrine other than 'Hatumode', wedding or funeral?".<sup>4</sup> The AnB phrasing seems closest to East Asian perceptions of religious services: these services are, as stated, not per se 'attended' (AB, WVS, and ISSP), but practiced, and they do not necessarily include praying as some of the other wordings suggest. Yet, in the AnB phrasing we are missing the exclusion of ritualized visits for weddings, funerals, etc., which makes it more encompassing, but also less comparative to the other data.

In each survey several measurements for traditional (East Asian) values are in use. In AB, a survey far from focused on values as such, several items refer to desired accomplishments of (if necessary, imagined) sons and daughters: from becoming wealthy to becoming a person who cares about family. No reliable factor or sum of scores could be constructed, not for sons or for daughters.<sup>5</sup> Intercorrelations between the different desires are quite low. Two series of counts were included for sons and for daughters separately. One count refers to fame: become a great scholar, a powerful political leader, very wealthy, a person respected by the masses. The other refers to relatedness: become a loving and charitable person, become a person who cares about family, and find a good marriage partner. In AnB a two-factor values structure was successfully established on a series of items. The first factor refers to preservation with items such as 'a man will lose face if he works under a female supervisor', 'wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate', and 'when hiring someone, even if a stranger is more qualified, the opportunity should still be given to relatives and friends'.<sup>6</sup> The second factor seems to relate to harmony, with, e.g., 'for the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interest second', 'a person should not insist on his own opinion, if his co-workers disagree with him', and 'when one has a conflict with a neighbor, the best way to deal with it is to accommodate the other person'.<sup>7</sup> The items of both factors do not form strongly reliable sum of scores scales. EAVS has a specific set of traditional Asian values (explicitly brought to respondents as traditional values) and analyses result in a two-factor solution. The first factor is strong and is labelled as gender roles with items such as 'we need a son to keep our family line going', 'a wife should follow her husband', 'men should work outside and women should tend to housekeeping'.<sup>8</sup> The second factor consists of only two strongly loading items: 'we should respect ancestors' and 'the eldest son should look after his aging parents'.<sup>9</sup> The factor is labelled respect ancestors. Both factors, but especially the second one, are weak in terms of scale reliability or correlation.<sup>10</sup> In WVS the choice of values is abundant, but in order to align with the previous a focus was put on several items that tap respect for parents,

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<sup>4</sup> 'Hatumode' is the traditional New Year's day visit to temples and/or shrines to pray for happiness in the coming year.

<sup>5</sup> This could be the result of asking respondents to nominate two desires to the maximum and the resulting mentioned-not-mentioned format, which does not facilitate the use of factor analysis.

<sup>6</sup> This factor (after PCA, varimax rotation) has an Eigen of 1,984, R<sup>2</sup> 20,6%, and Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,513. Items responses are reversed: strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree and strongly agree.

<sup>7</sup> Eigen 1,238, R<sup>2</sup> 19,7%, Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,463. Item responses reversed into strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

<sup>8</sup> This factor (after PCA, varimax rotation) with Eigen 2,740, R<sup>2</sup> 35,9%.

<sup>9</sup> Eigen 1,141, R<sup>2</sup> 19,4%.

<sup>10</sup> Respectively Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,751 and correlation 'respect ancestors'-items of 0,267.

the need for children, and gender roles. Two factors emerged.<sup>11</sup> The first factor directs items such as 'a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work', 'being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay', and 'both the husband and wife should contribute to household income'. This factor is labelled gender roles. The second factor, labelled piety, includes: 'one of my main goals in life has been to make my parents proud', 'a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled', and 'regardless of what the qualities and faults of one's parents are, one must always love and respect them'. The ISSP module lacks a wide range of values, but includes items (here ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) such as 'a husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family' and 'all in all, family life suffers when a woman has a full-time job'. Both items correlate relatively strong ( $r=0,505$ ) and a sum of scores of both items, labelled gender roles, is included in the analyses.

The independent variables vary too. In the religious variable domain three major indicators are used: beliefs, importance of religion, and religiosity.

One instrument to measure beliefs is found (after factor analyses) in EAVS and ISSP.<sup>12</sup> In EAVS this includes the belief in God or Buddha, the other side, the soul, the devil, hell, heaven or paradise, and sin.<sup>13</sup> In ISSP the belief in God was extracted from a question on what best describes one's belief about God (those who believe and didn't used to and/or always have versus others), which was combined with the belief in life after death, heaven, and hell.<sup>14</sup> It is decided not to change the EAVS factor in order to match the ISSP one. This would mean that the original East Asian factor would be reduced to match a Western-origin instrument with solely Western-origin religious items.

The importance of religion in AB refers to 'religion' as the answer to the question: "Which of the following social circles or groups are important to you?" In AnB an almost similar variable, here 'religious groups', was extracted (except in China) from: "Please tell me the three (3) most important organizations or formal groups you belong to". In EAVS the variable is more classic: "By using the scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is very important and 1 is not important at all, can you tell me how important religion is to you?" WVS asks: "For each of the following, indicate how important it is in your life" and includes 'religion' in a list (in between family, friends, leisure time, etc.). The (recoded) range of possible answers goes from 1 not at all important to 4 very important. In ISSP another variable had to be used: "To me, life is meaningful only because God exists" with, here, 1 strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree. The EAVS and WVS wordings are somewhat similar (referring to religion) and the AB and AnB as well (more focused on religious groups). The ISSP is quite different in its focus on God instead of religion or religious groups.

The issue of religiosity is tapped as follows. In AB respondents were asked: "Of the following lifestyle aspects or life circumstances, please select five that are important

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<sup>11</sup> Factor analyses (PCA, varimax rotation) show two factors with respectively Eigen 1,486 and 1,200,  $R^2$  24,5% and 20,3% and (very weak) Cronbach's alpha's of sums of scores 0,340 and 0,452. Items are recoded in what is believed the traditional direction. 'Always respect parents' and 'women need children' are 0-1 format (respondent could choose these statements or alternatives). The items 'main goal make parents proud', and 'housewife just as fulfilling as working wife' are recoded in disagree strongly to agree strongly; 'working mother can have warm relationship child' and 'both men and women contribute to household income' are not recoded and therefore here still range from agree strongly to disagree strongly. The 'housewife fulfilling'-item now loaded negatively on the factor with the these two non-recoded items in this factor, meaning: the higher the score on this factor, the more one disagrees with 'housewife fulfilling'-item, and the more one disagrees with the two non-recoded items mentioned. The rationale of the recode of the 'housewife fulfilling'-item seems incorrect: it is not per se traditional to think that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as being a working wife. The housewife fulfilling-item therefore was used in its original non-recoded format.

<sup>12</sup> WVS also includes beliefs, but many are not asked in East Asia, and some only in Japan and Singapore (beliefs in God, life after death, soul, hell, and heaven). WVS-beliefs are not included in the subsequent analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Factor analyses (PCA) result in one factor, Eigen 5,49,  $R^2$  78,4%, Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,954.

<sup>14</sup> Factor analyses (PCA) result in one factor, Eigen 2,73,  $R^2$  68,3%, Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,834 (can be improved if God excluded to 0,899).

to you". The list of 20 items includes 'being devout' which was selected here. In AnB a measurement of religiosity is missing. In EAVS the question following the one on denomination was selected which goes: "Without reference to any of established religions, do you think a religious mind (in Japan also transcribed as 'a religious heart') is important or not important (here the important-choice is coded 1, the other 0). WVS asks: "Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are a religious person?"; the yes-answer is coded as 1, else is 0. In ISSP, finally, the question is: "Do you describe yourself as... 1 extremely religious to 7 extremely non-religious". For the analyses the order was reversed here.

Two socio-demographic variables are included in the analyses: generation membership and education. The three-fold generation membership variable refers to cohorts born before 1945, between 1945 and 1969, and in 1970 or later. In most cases this division distinguishes cohorts whose members 1) experienced the gravity of war and early post-war re-construction in their youthful or formative years (the pre-1945 cohort), 2) years of rapidly advancing socio-economic development and at the same time severe cultural upheaval as well as, by the end of the 1960s, rising affluence (all except China; the 1945-1969 cohort), or 3) years of relative stability and more broadly felt affluence (post 1970-cohort). The education variable is a three-level ranked indicator (low, middle, high) build on differently ranged variables tapping scores from non-finalized primary education to finalized university education.

Some overall conclusions on diversity in nations and cities can be presented before proceeding with the multivariate analyses (next section).

Overall, China ranks lowest and Taiwan and Singapore rank highest in terms of proportions of people who indicate to have a denomination. Within China, as the EAVS shows, Hong Kong has an exceptionally high score too. Church attendance is high in South Korea and Singapore, low in Japan and Taiwan, and lowest in China.

Fame for sons or for daughters is something least endorsed in Japan and most in China followed by South Korea. Relatedness for sons or for daughters is most important in Japan, less so in South Korea and least in China. Preservation is valued low in Japan and Taiwan, neutrally in South Korea, and high in China and Hong Kong. Harmony is a strong value in Japan and China, weaker in Taiwan and Korea and weakest in Hong Kong. Traditional gender roles are strongly supported in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore and weakly in most Chinese cities and China as such. Japan and Hong Kong have a neutral position. The weak measurement instrument for these roles of WVS places South Korea in the weakly traditional camp with China. Also in ISSP Japan is moderately traditional. Respect for ancestors is an interesting value as it leads to quite different distinctions: it is low in Japan and South Korea; the cities of Singapore, Kunming and Beijing are neutral; Hangzhou and Shanghai, and especially Hong Kong and Taiwan score high. Piety is valued most in Singapore and South Korea and least in China and Japan.

Beliefs are endorsed strongest in Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, in that order. Japan takes up a neutral position and the Chinese cities reject these beliefs, especially the cities of Beijing and Hangzhou. Hong Kong is taking up a position similar to Taiwan. The importance of religion is relatively high in Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, and low in Japan and China (especially low in Beijing, but in Hong Kong equally high as in Japan). Religiosity is high in South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan, and low in China (again, especially in Beijing). In AB Japan ranks low as well, but in EAVS Japan matches the high scores of Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The difference between 'being devout' (AB) and 'a religious mind/heart' (EAVS) is something to contemplate on. Beyond this, the fact that in AB people could choose five items they believed to be important from a list of 20, among which 'being devout' (the last or 20<sup>th</sup> item), and the fact that in EAVS all respondents were given the question on their 'religious mind/heart' has to be taken into account as well. The format, offering of options, and placing of the AB question and answer could well have led to underreporting.

## **Denomination and church attendance**

Religious beliefs, the importance of religion and religiosity are crucial for denominational belonging. In some cases country/city origin has strong impacts too. In most cases demographics are irrelevant. Table 1 shows all details.

Table 1 about here

The AB and AnB data show that religiosity or the importance of religion are major factors: the chance that people who are religious or value religion as important say they belong to a particular denomination is very high. Adding demographics does not change much in this respect. Yet, knowing someone's country or city of origin is also important. When considering the amount this knowledge adds to the explanation of one's denominational belonging, one would even conclude that this knowledge is most important (see, e.g., the rise in the share of explained variance –  $R^2$  – from 12% and 13%, respectively 6% and 9%, to 34% respectively 23%). People from China and Hong Kong are much less and people from South Korea much more likely to have a denomination (compared to the Japanese).

Strikingly, when EAVS, WVS and ISSP are considered, the impact of religious determinants is much stronger and the impact of country/city origin much weaker. A first explanation could go that these studies have more (diverse) indicators in the religious realm. They include beliefs which AB and AnB do not and they more directly ask people to indicate their religiosity (religious mind/heart, religious person, religiousness self-description in EAVS, WVS and ISSP versus a mention of 'being devout' in AB; religiosity is missing in AnB). The probability of yielding a higher impact with more indicators is higher as such, and perhaps it is also more likely when people are confronted with a direct question instead of a open choice to mention this facet. What is stable is the modest additional effect of introducing demographics. The impact of religious variables and the share of explained variance hardly change. Country/city origins do add to the equation. Again more modest scores in China as a whole and stronger ones in South Korea. Within China diversity is serious: Beijing and Hong Kong share the modest denominational scores of Japan, while the other Chinese cities are significantly more likely to belong to a denomination. With a higher score of Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea the knowledge of country/city origin is a serious, but still modest contributor in explaining people's denominational belonging in East Asia.

All in all, religious variables are strongly determining denominational belonging, especially one's religiosity. Generational belonging or education is relatively unimportant. Knowing one's country/city of origin is important when we have little direct information on religious characteristics such as religiosity, and seems of modest importance when we do have such information.

How about church attendance, a more direct measurement of religious behavior? Table 2 provides the details.

Table 2 about here

The argument that religiosity is a crucial factor bears out here as well. Religious characteristics, and especially religiosity, contribute much to the frequency of attending c.q. practicing services at places of worship. Again, generational belonging and education have a modest impact, and also country/city of origin has a serious, but sometimes again a modest power (compared to the religious characteristics). An striking result in AB is that the impact of religious factors decreases somewhat when introducing country/city of origin, more than it did when introducing demographics, indicating that the country/city type of information is quite important. Chinese, as can be seen, are much less inclined to visit places of worship and the South Koreans are more inclined to do so (compared to the Japanese). Striking in AnB is that impact of the country/city of origin information is quite strong. It is the only case in which it is stronger than the information on religious

characteristics. Still, this could also be a result of the small amount of (varied) data of these latter characteristics. In WVS and ISSP we have more data and here the share of explained variance taken by religious characteristics is quite impressive. Yet, one has to conclude that country/city of origin is most likely to be crucial: also in WVS the impact of one of the religious variables (see 'importance of religion') diminishes when introducing country/city information (the impact of 'religiosity' however increases). Another remarkable fact is that in WVS South Korea now with China also scores lower in terms of church attendance (compared to Japan). This might well be due to the difference in wording. In AnB, where South Korea scores higher, reference is made to 'practicing religious services and rituals', while in WVS this is 'attending religious services' apart from special events. It is more likely that the AnB-data fit the East Asian practice and thus that the rather impressive impact of country/city of origin information in this study (and in AB) is not something to be underestimated.

Again, overlooking these data, we can conclude that religious variables are most important, closely followed by country/city of origin. Generational belonging and education are relatively irrelevant.

### **Traditional (East Asian) values**

Each study has its own set of traditional (East Asian) values. There is some overlap between the several studies, but all in all each team behind each study seems to think of something else when tapping traditional (East Asian) values. In this section, the impact of religious characteristics, demographics and country/city belonging on these values is analyzed. Table 3 reports.

Table 3 about here

The role of religious characteristics is very modest to non-existing in the realm of traditional values. This is rather surprising. Many studies boast about the sometimes indiscriminate relationship between East Asian religion and East Asian traditional values. When concentrating on religious beliefs, the importance of religion or religiosity and the set of traditional values included in these survey studies, we must conclude that there is no relationship at all, or, in the best cases (EAVS and ISSP), a very weak relationship. The effects of demographics and of country/city of origin are mixed.

The desires of accomplishment for sons of daughters in AB are not influenced by religion or by demographics (the significant education effects still lead to a close to zero share of explained variance; and in some cases disappears when introducing country/city of origin information). The only factor of importance is the country/city of origin. Both China and South Korea are more likely to stress fame and less likely to stress relatedness as desired accomplishments for sons and daughters. The emphasis on relatedness for daughters is not that different from the one in Japan (take, e.g., account of the small share of explained variance). This might indicate that this desire is broadly shared in all of these three countries. A separate univariate analysis crossing this desire with the three nations corroborates this.

In AnB preservation and harmony do not relate to religious characteristics. Demographics have a modest, but relative to the other features serious impact: younger generations are less likely to stress these values as do the higher educated. Country/city of origin is most relevant for preservation, something more likely to be valued in South Korea and Hong Kong than in Japan. After introducing this country/city information the impact of generation membership grows somewhat.

EAVS shows again that the relationships between religion and traditional values are weak. Especially as regards respect for ancestors, a classic traditional East Asian value, no serious relationship could be established (the significant impact of religious beliefs still yields a zero score of explained variance). This value is much more influenced by country/city of origin. In many Chinese cities and in Singapore this value is much more endorsed than in South Korea or Japan. As regards gender roles the importance of



religion and beliefs have some impact, but a more modest one than country/city of origin and even demographics have. After introducing country/city of origin the impact of religious factors decreases and the one of demographics increases. Chinese people (except Hangzhou citizens who mimic the Japanese in this case), younger generations and the higher educated reject traditional gender roles more often than do the Japanese, older generations, and lower educated. Singapore and South Korea citizens are more likely to support traditional gender roles (compared to the Japanese).

In WVS we do not find any impact of religion or demographics as regards traditional gender roles. The effect of nation/city of origin is also negligible (check the low explained variance). These nihil effects are most likely resulting from the weakness of the measurement instrument for traditional gender roles of WVS compared to one in EAVS.

In ISSP traditional gender roles is similarly influenced by religious factors as they were in EAVS (with even an almost same share of explained variance). Also similar is the contribution of demographics (as well as the total share of explained variance after this addition) with younger generations and the higher educated being less likely to endorse these values.

Finally, piety in WVS is a value predominantly influenced by the country/city diversity: China and South Korea are much more likely to support piety. The importance of religion plays a role, but when adding country of origin information this factor loses much of its ground and at the same time demographics rise in importance (the young and educated support this value least).

All in all, as traditional (East Asian) values go, information on country/city of origin is most relevant. Value diversity across nations, city-states and/or cities is impressive. As regards the desired accomplishments of sons (fame and relatedness) and daughters (fame), preservation, respect for ancestors, traditional gender roles, and piety: in almost all cases the Chinese and Koreans support these values more than do people from other East Asian nations/nation-states. (The exception is a less traditional view on gender roles by the Chinese compared to others. Also: traditional respect for ancestors is less supported in South Korea.) Less informative are religious characteristics. No serious relationship with traditional values comes to the fore, which is surprising considering the claims that religious beliefs and other religious values overlap strongly with general traditional values. In some cases demographics, that is generational belonging and education, are relevant: the young and higher educated are less supportive for preservation and traditional gender roles. Harmony and relatedness as a desired accomplishment for daughters seem unaffected by the religious, demographic or nation-/city-level variables. They might well candidate as traditional values that are universal across these variables.

### **The additional explanatory power of traditional values**

Given the preceding one might expect traditional (East Asian) values to contribute only modestly to denominational belonging and church attendance. The religious world and the realm of traditional values seem separated. Table 4 shows whether or not this is the case for denominational belonging.

Table 4 about here

One can be short about the impact of traditional values: they hardly contribute to the explanation of denominational belonging. The share of explained variance rises slightly, if at all (see WVS and ISSP), and the effects of the variables already in the equation hardly change (in general the effects of demographics rise slightly, and some of the nation/city origin indicator change slightly as well). The few relevant effects relate to fame as a desired accomplishment of sons (the more this is emphasized, the more likely one is to have a denomination), preservation and harmony (idem; note also the disappearance of the effect of Hong Kong after introduction of these values), and traditional gender roles

(idem). Although these results are modest, it is striking to note that in the surveys from East Asian origin at least some effects are found, while in the Western origin ones (WVS and ISSP) there are no noticeable results at all.

Let us consider church attendance and the contributions to its explanation by traditional (East Asian) values. Table 5 presents the figures.

Table 5 about here

Similarly, traditional (East Asian) values have almost no importance to explain church attendance. The desired accomplishments for sons or daughters, harmony and piety have no effect. A very small effect, somewhat reducing the effects of demographics and country/city of origin variables, has preservation: the more preservation is valued, the higher church attendance. Also, in WVS, the higher the support for traditional gender roles, the higher this attendance. In this latter case, however, the overall model of explanation now including traditional values does not improve as compared to the model without these values. So, it can be concluded again, that only in an East Asian origin survey some traditional values contribute something to the frequency of church attendance – more precisely to the ‘frequency of the practice of services and rituals’, as this modest result refers to the AnB-data.

All in all, the additional explanatory power of traditional (East Asian) values is very modest, if not absent. If they contribute at all, they derive from East Asian surveys.

## **Conclusions**

The analyses allow for preliminary conclusions on religious belonging, religious practices and the interrelationships of religion and traditional values among East Asian publics. Preliminary because, as will also be argued below, the analyses and specifically the indicators available also in the East Asian-origin surveys may require further improvements before drawing more final conclusions.

Religious variables, especially one’s religiosity, determine denominational belonging in East Asia, more than generational belonging, education or country/city of origin do. The latter information seems important only when we know little about people’s religious orientations (in these cases especially the Chinese report low and South Koreans high levels of belonging). Religious variables are also most important for church attendance c.q. attending and/or practicing religious services, here closely followed, however, by information on one’s nation/city of origin (adding this information decreased the impact of religious variables, such as religiosity, or took up first position when information on religious orientations was weak). Again, generational belonging and education are relatively irrelevant. Religious orientations seem unrelated to traditional East Asian values and these latter values also do not seem to contribute to denominational belonging or attending/practicing religious activities. Traditional East Asian values vary by nation/city of origin, yet these values do not seriously diminish let alone replace the effects of national/urban diversity on denominational belonging and attending/practicing religious services. The traditional values indicators developed and used in the originally East Asian surveys, however, have some very modest impact, especially indicators tapping preservation (specifically referring to keeping face, fate determining prosperity, and preferring relatives over strangers) relate positively to both denominational belonging and attending/practicing religious services. All in all, the modest, sometimes even absent impact of traditional East Asian values contradicts the notion that religion and traditional values in East Asia are strongly intertwined. It also indicates that the information on nation/city of origin encompasses more than cultural diversity. When the latter would be the most prominent, the impact of the information on nation/city of origin would have declined. As there is hardly such a trade-off, one could argue that the nation/city of origin information is not per se a proxy for cultural diversity,

but much more for other types of diversity, such as socio-economic, institutional and/or political diversity.

These conclusion, including the weak impact of cultural diversity, are preliminary. The analyses with the documented indicators in the five surveys in East Asia represent a highly necessary attempt to first fully describe interrelationships in these surveys. This description yields all kinds of new ways for subsequent analyses, for instance analyses in which a detailed path of interdependencies is laid out and/or analyses that take on the task of explaining religious beliefs and values by the other variables in the model. The exploration of indicators presented here furthermore raises questions about conceptual equivalence and the need for congruence. Both as regards religion as a matter of belonging and practice and as regards religious and traditional values the five surveys sometimes strongly diverge. For instance as regards the latter case, the case of East Asian traditional values, there is serious disparity about what values stand out as the key fundamental values covering the vast publics in the East Asian region. One way to deal with this issue – a way going beyond relatively easy objections that East Asia is too vast and too diverse to begin with – is to synchronize the variety of indicators available in the surveys at hand. It is not only necessary for Western-origin globally comparative surveys to learn from East Asian ones, but also for the latter ones to learn from each other. This is the only way to answer the pressing question on whether or not secularization, pluralization and rationalization of religious practices and experiences are universal across cultures and, vice versa, whether or not collectivist, particularist, syncreticist and polytheist practices and experiences are indeed only confined to the East Asian context.

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## Tables

**Table 1: Denomination**

Exp(B)	AB 2003	AnB 2001-2003	EAVS 2002-2004	WVS 2000-2002	ISSP 1998
beliefs	-	-	2,596***	-	,713**
importance religion	-	26,856***	1,710***	4,507***	1,106
religiosity	20,406***	-	3,803***	3,170***	2,127***
R <sup>2</sup>	,12	,06	,61	,50	,35
beliefs	-	-	2,625***	-	,830
importance religion	-	27,618***	1,699***	4,367***	1,009
religiosity	19,549***	-	4,007***	3,313***	1,987***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	,794**	1,063	,358***	,440***
cohort 1970+	,748**	,559***	,880	,327***	,264***
education	1,130	,767***	,703***	1,792***	,648*
R <sup>2</sup>	,13	,09	,62	,53	,40
beliefs	-	-	2,395***	-	-
importance religion	-	24,779***	1,618***	3,659***	-
religiosity	19,664***	-	4,333***	5,043***	-
cohort 1945-1970	rc	,649***	,939	,470***	-
cohort 1970+	,617***	,426***	,715**	,445***	-
education	,881	,748***	,744***	,987	-
china	,296***	-	-	,078***	-
-beijing	-	-	,902	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	1,998***	-	-
-hong kong	-	,749*	1,237	-	-
-kunming	-	-	2,241***	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	2,062***	-	-
singapore	-	-	6,153***	-	-
south korea	4,443***	1,603***	3,226***	1,550***	-
taiwan	-	6,823***	8,576***	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,34	,23	,66	,61	-

Sources: AB = AsiaBarometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey; ISSP = International Social Survey Programme (Religion\_II Module; refers to Japan only).

NB: Logistic regression with, if not stated otherwise, japan and cohort pre-1945 reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R<sup>2</sup> = Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>; \*\*\* = p <.001; \*\* = p<.01; \* = p<.05. For AB 2003 'importance religion' (v1111 important social circles or group=religion) excluded due to 100% overlap with those with a denomination.

**Table 2: Church attendance**

Beta's	AB 2003	AnB 2001-2003	EAVS 2002-2004	WVS 2000-2002	ISSP 1998
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-,08*
importance religion	,36***	,15***	-	,44***	,27**
religiosity	,13***	-	-	,27***	,43***
R <sup>2</sup>	,19	,02	-	,39	,33
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-,05
importance religion	,35***	,16***	-	,41***	,25***
religiosity	,12***	-	-	,28***	,39***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	-,05*	-	-,13***	-,09*
cohort 1970+	-,09***	-,11***	-	-,14***	-,08*
education	,09***	-,13***	-	,15***	-,01
R <sup>2</sup>	,20***	,06***	-	,42***	,33
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-
importance religion	,29***	,15***	-	,34***	-
religiosity	,11***	-	-	,28***	-
cohort 1945-1970	rc	-,12***	-	-,02	-
cohort 1970+	-,09***	-,19***	-	-,03	-
education	,01	-,08***	-	-,00	-
china	-,33***	-	-	-,40***	-
-beijing	-	-	-	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	-	-	-
-hong kong	-	,26***	-	-	-
-kunming	-	-	-	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	-	-	-
singapore	-	-	-	-	-
south korea	,12***	,40***	-	-,09***	-
taiwan	-	,21***	-	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,35***	,20***	-	,52***	-

Sources: AB = AsiaBarometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey; ISSP = International Social Survey Programme (Religion\_II Module; refers to Japan only).

NB: Multiple linear regression with, if not stated otherwise, japan and cohort pre-1945 reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R<sup>2</sup> = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (checked for significance of F change); \*\*\* = p <.001; \*\* = p <.01; \* = p <.05.

**Table 3: Traditional (East Asian) values**

Beta's	AB 2003				AnB 2001-2003		EAVS 2002-2004		WVS 2000-2002		ISSP 1998
	fame son	fame daughter	relatedness son	relatedness daughter	preservation	harmony	gender roles	respect ancestors	gender roles	piety	gender roles
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-	-	,10***	,07***	-	-	-,08
importance religion	,06*	,02	-,01	,01	-,05**	,01	,20***	-,03	-,06*	,27***	,25***
religiosity	-,03	-,02	,00	,00	-	-	,01	-,01	-,04	-,01	,14***
R <sup>2</sup>	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,08	,00	,00	,07	,09
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-	-	,12***	,08***	-	-	,04
importance religion	,06*	,02	-,01	,01	-,04	,01	,18***	-,04*	-,06*	,28***	,21***
religiosity	-,03	,00	,01	,01	-	-	,02	-,01	-,04	-,02	,08
cohort 1945-1970	rc	rc	rc	rc	-,11***	-,12***	-,10***	-,08***	,03	-,05	-,16***
cohort 1970+	,03	,00	,01	,01	-,12***	-,18***	-,17***	-,04*	-,02	-,10**	-,13**
education	-,04*	-,12***	-,00	,07**	-,19***	-,06***	-,13***	-,08***	,02	-,03	-,12**
R <sup>2</sup>	,00	,01***	,00	,00**	,06***	,03***	,13***	,01***	,00	,08**	,13***
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-	-	,03*	,07***	-	-	-
importance religion	,04	,02	-,01	,00	-,03	,01	,09***	,01	-,05	,10***	-
religiosity	-,02	-,02	-,00	-,00	-	-	-,02	,03	-,05	,03	-
cohort 1945-1970	rc	rc	rc	rc	-,14***	-,11***	-,12***	-,11***	,09	-,18***	-
cohort 1970+	-,00	-,02	,03	,02	-,15***	-,17***	-,18***	-,08***	,05	-,24***	-
education	,00	-,07**	-,06**	,02	-,17***	-,08***	-,13***	-,04**	-,02	-,09***	-
china	,35***	,32***	-,38***	-,30***	-	-	-	-	-,16***	,16***	-
-beijing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,12***	,18***	-	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,16***	,22***	-	-	-
-hong kong	-	-	-	-	,15***	-,10***	-,05*	,24***	-	-	-
-kunming	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,08***	,12***	-	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,01	,19***	-	-	-
singapore	-	-	-	-	-	-	,13***	,10***	-	-	-
south korea	,25***	,17***	-,23***	-,11***	,16***	-,05**	,18***	-,03	-,13***	,49***	-
taiwan	-	-	-	-	,07***	-,05*	,11***	,19***	-	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,10***	,09***	,11***	,02***	,08***	,03***	,22***	,08***	,02***	,20***	-

Sources: AB = AsiaBarometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey; ISSP = International Social Survey Programme (Religion\_II Module; refers to Japan only).

NB: Multiple linear regression with, if not stated otherwise, japan and cohort pre-1945 reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R<sup>2</sup> = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (checked for significance of F change); \*\*\* = p < .001; \*\* = p < .01; \* = p < .05.

**Table 4: Denomination and traditional (East Aian) values**

Exp(B)	AB 2003	AnB 2001-2003	EAVS 2002-2004	WVS 2000-2002	ISSP 1998
beliefs	-	-	2,442***	-	,838
importance religion	-	22,302***	1,599***	3,634***	1,024
religiosity	19,664***	-	4,349***	6,277***	1,961***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	,590***	,939	,384***	,432***
cohort 1970+	,617***	,380***	,693**	,422***	,264***
education	,881	,858***	,758***	1,034	,667*
china	,296***	-	-	,073***	-
-beijing	-	-	,996	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	2,051***	-	-
-hong kong	-	,836*	1,323	-	-
-kunming	-	-	2,344***	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	2,341***	-	-
singapore	-	-	6,753***	-	-
south korea	4,443***	1,631***	3,432***	1,624**	-
taiwan	-	7,481***	9,023***	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,34	,23	,65	,65	,40
beliefs	-	-	2,425***	-	,838
importance religion	-	22,803***	1,593***	3,609***	1,025
religiosity	19,843***	-	4,346***	6,309***	1,962***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	,618***	,977	,400***	,431***
cohort 1970+	,615***	,409***	,736*	,453	,264***
education	,874	,884*	,773***	1,051	,666*
china	,295***	-	-	,071***	-
-beijing	-	-	1,041	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	2,174***	-	-
-hong kong	-	,841	1,328	-	-
-kunming	-	-	2,416***	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	2,451***	-	-
singapore	-	-	6,489***	-	-
south korea	4,295***	1,622***	3,232***	1,453*	-
taiwan	-	7,603***	8,531***	-	-
fame son	1,379**	-	-	-	-
fame daughter	,786	-	-	-	-
relatedness son	1,089	-	-	-	-
relatedness daughter	1,246	-	-	-	-
preservation	-	1,069*	-	-	-
harmony	-	1,138***	-	-	-
gender roles	-	-	1,143**	1,069	,998
respect ancestors	-	-	1,034	-	-
piety	-	-	-	1,132	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,35	,24	,66	,65	,40

Sources: AB = AsiaBarometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey; ISSP = International Social Survey Programme (Religion\_II Module; refers to Japan only).

NB: Logistic regression with, if not stated otherwise, japan and cohort pre-1945 reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R<sup>2</sup> = Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>; \*\*\* = p < .001; \*\* = p < .01; \* = p < .05.

**Table 5: Church attendance and traditional (East Aian) values**

Beta's	AB 2003	AnB 2001-2003	EAVS 2002-2004	WVS 2000-2002	ISSP 1998
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-,05
importance religion	,29***	,15***	-	,34***	,25***
religiosity	,11***	-	-	,29***	,38***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	-,14***	-	-,04	-,10*
cohort 1970+	-,09***	-,22***	-	-,04*	-,09*
education	,01	-,05**	-	-,00	-,02
china	-,33***	-	-	-,39***	-
-beijing	-	-	-	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	-	-	-
-hong kong	-	,27***	-	-	-
-kunming	-	-	-	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	-	-	-
singapore	-	-	-	-	-
south korea	,12***	,44***	-	-,08***	-
taiwan	-	,23***	-	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,35***	,20***	-	,56***	,33
beliefs	-	-	-	-	-,05
importance religion	,29***	,15***	-	,35***	,25***
religiosity	,11***	-	-	,30***	,38***
cohort 1945-1970	rc	-,13***	-	-,04*	-,10*
cohort 1970+	-,09***	-,20***	-	-,05*	-,09*
education	,01	-,04*	-	-,00	-,02
china	-,32***	-	-	-,39***	-
-beijing	-	-	-	-	-
-shanghai	-	-	-	-	-
-hong kong	-	,26***	-	-	-
-kunming	-	-	-	-	-
-hangzhou	-	-	-	-	-
singapore	-	-	-	-	-
south korea	,13***	,43***	-	-,07**	-
taiwan	-	,23***	-	-	-
fame son	-,00	-	-	-	-
fame daughter	-,02	-	-	-	-
relatedness son	,01	-	-	-	-
relatedness daughter	,03	-	-	-	-
preservation	-	,06**	-	-	-
harmony	-	,02	-	-	-
gender roles	-	-	-	,03*	,00
respect ancestors	-	-	-	-	-
piety	-	-	-	-,01	-
R <sup>2</sup>	,35	,21**	-	,56	,33

Sources: AB = AsiaBarometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey; ISSP = International Social Survey Programme (Religion\_II Module; refers to Japan only).

NB: Multiple linear regression with, if not stated otherwise, japan and cohort pre-1945 reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R<sup>2</sup> = Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (checked for significance of F change); \*\*\* = p < .001; \*\* = p < .01; \* = p < .05.