

Work and Traditional Values in East Asia

Exploring Four Comparative Values Surveys in East Asia

Working Paper

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Introduction

Many East Asian nations and city-states participate in globally diffused values survey project such as the World Values Surveys (WVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), General Social Survey (GSS), or the National Election Studies (NES). Usually these studies all build on profound theoretical deliberations, methodological debates, and participatory decision-making processes. Yet, many if not all of these studies started in Western contexts, in Europe and/or the United States. As Hofstede (2007) warns, this origin may create biases when these surveys are fielded in other than their original Western contexts: "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 working paper aims to take account of these types of biases. It will more closely look into East Asian-origin values surveys such as the Asia Barometer, Asian Barometer, and the East Asian Values Survey, all starting with their first waves in the early years of this new millennium. The rationale is straightforward: do these surveys adopt concepts and indicators that prove to be more appropriate for surveying East Asian publics?

This working paper focuses on concepts and indicators in the work domain.² Several stereotypes of East Asian employees reflect key values in this domain. The East Asian worker, especially the male worker, is regarded a 'corporate warrior', a 'salary man' or an 'economic animal' (Vinken, 2006a). Serious social science literature on work in East Asia (e.g., Mathews, 2005, Mori, 2005, Miyoshi & Yoshino, 2005) shows that 'sacrifice' seems a central keyword. The East Asian 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 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 are 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.

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² This is the third working paper in a series. The first one covered religious and traditional East Asian values (Vinken, 2007a, see also Vinken2006b) and the second one was on politics and traditional East Asian values (Vinken, 2007b). Before that a working paper was compiled that dwells at length on the rationale to compare with East Asian values (Vinken, 2006a). One other working paper, dealing with family values, will follow in 2007. See also Chen et al. (2006) for the importance to review values at the domain-level.

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)? 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 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).

According to Hofstede (2001: 235-240), individualism versus collectivism is a crucial dimension as regards the domain of work.³ 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

³ See Braun and Vinken (2006) for a full overview of the dimensions of Hofstede, Schwartz and Inglehart and their meaning for work values.

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, therefore, doubtful if the Western emphases on personal or individual developmental gains of work are relevant in the East Asian context. Fitting in and conforming, making strong efforts to maintain good relationships for the benefit of the groups one works with, being aware of one's duties to the group (and risks of leaving it) seem more relevant. These emphases are also reflected in the much-cited concept of 'guanxi', a Chinese concept that appears most frequently in business studies (e.g., Buderer & Huang, 2007; Fan, 2002; Gold et al., 2002; Wu, 1999) and refers to special interpersonal connections and networking behaviours. It is, more precisely, a special kind of connection between people who share some common things, being family, coming from the same locality, university, etc., with or (more common) without the factor of choice. This 'guanxi base' is not sufficient for a relationship to produce guanxi which seems to most closely mimic the process of asking, giving and returning favours by the use of personal connections. The favour exchange can include affections, emotions, advice, information or more tangible things (gifts, etc.). This is not the place to review the guanxi concept in full detail. Here it suffices to note that guanxi is believed to be dissimilar from Western-style relationship marketing or networking, that it can take up many different forms (e.g., dependent on whether they concern family, economic or political relationships), and that guanxi is firmly rooted in cultural values as well as the socio-economic and political system typical for East Asian countries. Not surprisingly, guanxi is a central concept in many East Asian values surveys. As stated, this paper surveys the adequacy of East Asian-origin concepts for tapping values and attitudes among East Asian publics. Here the focus will be put on the relationship of work values, the importance of work, guanxi, and traditional (East Asian) values.

Outline

This working paper focuses on the interrelationships between several work and traditional values concepts in surveys that cover the East Asian region. Are there indications for the existence of specific work values and for guanxi in this region and among different social groups and national contexts? Also: are they, above and beyond these groups and contexts, related to traditional values in the region? And: is guanxi related to work values, in what way and to what extent when we check for social and national divisions as well as traditional values? These questions form the lead of this working paper. In the course of answering these questions we will reflect on the adequacy of concepts and indicators used in the surveys from the East Asian region as compared to the Western-origin one (see also the next section).

The approach to answering these questions is stepwise. In a first step we will look at work values and at guanxi as a function of basic demographics such as generation membership and education. Generation membership is crucial as it provides data on the effects of being socialized in the highly different historical periods in East Asia. As Thomsen (2006a) shows many East Asian countries since WWII have experienced many different discontinuous moments of change (besides more continuous ones, e.g., the steady upward economic trends). These moments most probably (and according to generation theory, see e.g. Ester et al., 2006a, should) have had an indelible impact on people's desires, beliefs, and values, including those in the political domain. Education is included to check for effects of divergent levels of social and cultural capital, which, in turn, impact the levels of engagement in the work domain, both in terms of values support and actual participation. When considering the relationship of the impact of guanxi on work values we will also add generation membership and education. If younger 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 effects of, in this case, guanxi.

In a second step the nation/city-state from which the respondents derive is included. This information may capture the effects of being socialized in a particular nation/city-state with all its particular cultural traditions, socio-economic state-of-affairs, and institutional and political regime in place, which, in turn, of course affect the way people from these nations/city-states perceive work and subsequently the way they act upon these perceptions. Adding this information on top of the previously mentioned demographic variables may add to or again reduce or replace the effects of quanxi and/or demographics, allowing for a more refined conclusion on the relative impact of both types of characteristics.

In a final step several sets of traditional values are included in the equation. The same logic applies here: perhaps traditional values may weaken the effects of quanxi, demographics or nation/city-state of origin, and if so, inform us on the extent to which quanxi is much more (or also) a matter of culture. In this case, quanxi is not so much a result of one's formative period or attained educational level or of the country's traditions, state-of-affairs and regime conditions, but much more a matter of the basic values people in East Asia adhere to. Checking this in the stepwise way presented here, sheds a first light on what one could call a culture-hypothesis (see also Vinken, 2007b as regards political values): Maybe especially culture, beyond and over other realities that discern nations and city-states in East Asia, is what makes work values and guanxi vary across East Asia. Being part of an East Asian community of specific traditional values, so this hypothesis in its extreme logical consequence would go, overrides all other facets determining perspectives on work and (special) interpersonal connections as tapped with the concept of guanxi. This working paper 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 Asia Barometer (AB) of 2003 (see Inoguchi et al., 2005), the Asian Barometer (AnB) covering the 2001-2003 period, and the East Asia Values Survey (EAVS) 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).⁴

Crucial for evaluating the analyses results is the issue of concept equivalence. It is relevant therefore to first take a closer look at the question wording. To attain comparability, work values can only be surveyed on the level of two items in this paper: pay and success (see Ester et al., 2006b, for alternatives). In AB these two aspects are the only two referring to the work domain among a list of 'lifestyle aspects or life circumstances that are important' to the respondent: "earning a high income" and "being successful at work". People could mention or not mention one or both of these aspects. In AnB, a survey predominantly focused on the political domain, work values are missing completely. In EAVS one question deals with work and people are asked to indicate what they would personally place first among the "things people usually take into account in relation to their work". The proportions of those who chose "a good income so that you do not have any worries about money" and "Doing an important job which gives you a feeling of accomplishment" respectively present the scores of the items 'pay' and 'success'. In WVS work values are more broadly tapped. A question (almost) similar to EAVS is the one asking people about the "things which would seem to you, personally, most important if you were looking for a job...". Exactly the same items are constructed here based on exactly the same statements as in EAVS. WVS stresses the personal choice two times in the question introduction, emphasized extra by separating it in

⁴ In previous papers we also compared with modules of the ISSP, International Social Survey Programme. In this case this comparison is not fruitful. The last modules of ISSP on work date from 1997 and 2005, both years that are somewhat too dissimilar from the core years of the East Asian surveys (2002).

between brackets. Also, it focuses the choice on the moments when people look for a job. In EAVS the basis of considering the statements is much more general ('take into account in relation to their work') with which the statement might, other than in WVS, also apply to the present work people do. We must also note that being successful at work (AB) is not similar to the feeling of accomplishment people may have from doing important work. Lacking alternatives, however, we will work with these items and keep the differences in mind when discussing results. In Table 1 we can see the scores on the two work values items more closely.

Table 1 about here

Pay, one central item in material work values dimension (see again Ester et al., 2006b) is rated high in South Korea, China, Singapore, and Taiwan and low in Japan. Beijing and Kunming score equally low when we look into the Chinese cities. Shanghai scores high. The EAVS pay question, however, hardly discriminates East Asian nations/cities. Success is most emphasized in South Korea, least in Japan. The EAVS and WVS items are weak in terms of discriminatory power.

Guanxi is measured in several ways in the East Asian surveys. In AB the hypothetical situation of hiring a less well qualified relative over a more qualified stranger is presented: "Suppose that you are the president of a company. In the company's employment examination, a relative of yours got the second highest grade, scoring only marginally less than the candidate with the highest grade. In such a case, which person would you employ?" The choice for "your relative" instead "the person with the highest grade" here is a proxy of guanxi. In EAVS one question deals with the same dilemma, yet the wording is slightly different: "Suppose that you are the president of a company. The company decides to employ one person, and then carries out an employment examination. The supervisor in charge reports to you saying: "Your relative, who took the examination got the second highest grade. But I believe that either your relative or the candidate who got the highest grade would be satisfactory. What shall we do?" We took the same answer ("your relative") as a proxy of guanxi. In AnB, Guanxi is measured in a different way. People are presented two statements and asked how well they apply to them: "I have enough friends and connections so that I can get help if I need it" and "I have some friends with influence, so don't have to worry too much if I get into a tight spot". The two statements correlate positively ($r=.341$). Yet the second question is not asked in Korea and China (the correlation therefore relates to Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan only). Table 2 reports on the scores on guanxi.

Table 2 about here

Guanxi scores vary slightly across East Asia. Japan scores relatively high in AB, but these scores do not strongly differentiate Japan from in this case China and South Korea, Using almost the same question in EAVS Japan scores moderately and Hong Kong and the Chinese city of Hangzhou score high. Much attention to this fall from the top is not warranted as again, in general, this guanxi indicator hardly discriminates nations/city states. A similarly weak item is the one in AnB with again Japan scoring higher than the others (China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan), but also again very minor differences between these nations/cities.

Table 2 also shows the different scores for the importance of work. In AB this is one of the "following social circles or groups important to you": "Place of work". In AnB the question on importance of work is not asked. In EAVS people are presented a list and asked to indicate how important each item in the list is to them, in our case, "Career and job". In WVS the item is "Work" in a list from which respondents evaluate the importance in their lives. The three work importance items do not discriminate East Asian nations very well. Put differently, in almost all nations/city states, perhaps with the exception of – surprisingly – Japan, work (place or job) is regarded important or mentioned among the important circles or groups.

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.⁵ 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'.⁶ 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'.⁷ The items of both factors do not form strongly reliable sum of scores scales. EAVS has a specific set of traditional Asian values and analyses result in a two-factor solution. The first factor is strong and is labelled 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'.⁸ The second factor consists of only two strongly loading items: 'we should respect ancestors' and 'the eldest son should look after his aging parents'.⁹ The factor is labelled respect ancestors.¹⁰ 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, the need for children, and gender roles. Two factors emerged.¹¹ 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

⁵ 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 factor analysis.

⁶ This factor (after PCA, varimax rotation) has an Eigen of 1,984, R² 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.

⁷ Eigen 1,238, R² 19,7%, Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,463. Item responses reversed into strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

⁸ This factor (after PCA, varimax rotation) with Eigen 2,740, R² 35,9%.

⁹ Eigen 1,141, R² 19,4%.

¹⁰ Respectively Cronbach's alpha of sum of scores 0,751 and correlation 'respect ancestors'-items of 0,27.

¹¹ Factor analyses (PCA, varimax rotation) show two factors with respectively Eigen 1,486 and 1,200, R² 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. See also Braun (2006) for more methodological problems with these gender role items.

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'.

Table 3 reports on the values positions of the nations and city-states.

Table 3 about here

The strongest diversity is found in the WVS piety and EAVS gender roles instruments (considering the η^2): The Chinese disagree most with both of these traditional values. While the Japanese also denounce piety they are neutral like also the Hong Kong Chinese as regards traditional gender roles. The Singaporeans (also predominantly of Chinese origin), South Koreans, and Taiwanese are traditional as regards both values. In terms of discerning power the WVS gender roles instrument is weak, as are both AnB preservation and harmony instruments.¹² All included nations take up a neutral position on these values. The EAVS respect for ancestor and all AB values instruments are relatively good. Respect for ancestors is valued most in Taiwan, Hong Kong and many other Chinese cities. In especially Japan and South Korea this value has low priority. Fame for both sons and daughters is valued more in China and South Korea than in Japan. Relatedness of sons and especially daughters is high priority in Japan followed at some distance by South Korea and China.

Two socio-demographic variables are, finally, 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 (compare Thomsen, 2006a) 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.

Guanxi

The relationship of guanxi with several types of factors is surveyed in a stepwise manner. Traditional values are added in a final step after, first, importance of work, after that demographics, then information of the country/city-state origin, and lastly traditional values. This order of steps, of course, makes it hard for the set of traditional values to contribute to the explanation of the diversity of guanxi. Yet, it is an opportune way to check the added-value of traditional values in this case. Table 4 reports.

Table 4 about here

If we start with the conclusion, this can go that neither type of factors has a serious impact on guanxi adherence. In total about 2 to 3% of explained variance draws back on the factors included. Within this small share of variance the 'largest' proportion draws back on nation/city state information. Demographics hardly matter and if they do they do so in contradicting terms: e.g., in AB and EAVS, using almost the same indicator for guanxi, higher levels of education have a respectively positive and negative effect on guanxi. In AnB the effect is also positive, which is what one would expect looking at the item for guanxi in AnB: the higher levels of capital – cultural, social or otherwise – gained through higher education, the higher the likelihood that one can get help from similarly

¹² The rule of thumb is that an instrument is weak in terms of this power with $\eta^2 < 0,05$ comparable to a correlation of $< 0,25$.

resourceful friends and connections. Nation or city (state) belonging is what seems to count more (although, this still counts little in general, as stated): as compared to Japan most other nations/cities score lower in guanxi. Contrary to common belief on its origins and contemporary relevance, guanxi is less so a phenomenon valid for the Chinese context than it is to the Japanese one. Traditional values add to the explanation of this diversity (a little, i.e. 1 extra %-point of explained variance): especially harmony values (AnB) go hand in hand with guanxi. This value dimension strongly builds on behavioral mores in the interaction with family, co-workers, and neighbors: sacrifice for these others in order to obtain and preserve harmony is a dominant theme, as also seems to be the case for the concept of guanxi.

Work values

In several steps the relationships between work values on the one hand and guanxi, the importance of work, demographics, state/city origin and cultural factors on the other hand is surveyed. Table 5 reports.

Table 5 about here

Starting with the 'material' work value which concentrates on 'pay', one may find that now, taking account of other factors, nation/city of origin is a relatively powerful factor for explaining adherence to this one key material work value. Both guanxi and importance of work have very limited explanatory power, in AB, EAVS and (as far as importance of work goes) WVS. The same goes for demographics. Considering the low explanatory power after adding these factors, one could argue that in the East Asian context younger or older cohorts do not value pay very differently, nor do lower or higher educated people. A relatively large increase in explanatory power is obtained after adding nation/city of origin information, that is: especially in AB. In EAVS and WVS the power increase is still rather modest. Compared to Japan and also, in a more moderate sense, compared to China, South Koreans stress pay more often as an important work value. In EAVS we see the same with Shanghai and Taiwanese people and in WVS with Singaporeans. Yet, it is noted that these latter two results are less strong than the ones found in AB. Also only in AB we find a small additional effect of general cultural values; an effect less powerful than the one of nation/city of origin, however. Stressing the attainment of fame of sons and daughters adds positively to the focus on material work values. In EAVS and certainly also in WVS we do not find any serious additional effect of cultural values.

As regards 'success' (or feeling of accomplishment in EAVS and WVS) the pattern found with 'pay' is almost replicated. We find again very modest if not non-existent effects of guanxi and the importance of work, somewhat stronger effects of demographics (especially the higher educated stressing success; no cohort effects), strongest effects of nation/city of origin (especially for AB), and very weak additional cultural values effects. In WVS there are no additional effects beyond demographics, in EAVS the additional effects of nation/city of origin are weak and slightly enforcing the demographics effects, in AB guanxi drops to insignificance, the importance of work weakens, and educational effects rise after adding nation/city of origin data. The latter data are now most important (when looking at the rise in explanatory power) with again South Koreans followed by the Chinese who emphasize success stronger than the Japanese do. This difference cannot be explained by cultural values, at least not by the ones included in the AB survey. More on the implications of these findings in the next section: the conclusions.

Conclusions

Work values in the East Asian context are believed to fundamentally differ from the ones in Western nations. Western-origin values surveys tapping work values in East Asia hardly refer to the concepts underpinning East Asian work values. Keywords in these

seemingly special work values of East Asia are sacrifice or placing work first, fitting in and conforming to the group one works with, establishing and maintaining good relationships with this group and those outside the group who may be beneficial for the group, and at doing one's utmost to attain the group's goals or a strong feeling of duty to one's work and employer. Western-origin values surveys tend to focus on affective commitment, personal development and individual gains in work, not on the previous East Asian notions. Nor on the much-cited concept of guanxi that seems to play a major role in the work place: the existence and workings of special interpersonal connections and networking behaviours between people sharing the same backgrounds and the same interests.

East Asian-origin values surveys as presented in this paper do not seriously attempt to tap into many of these notions. As far as work values go we can conclude that also the East Asian-origin values surveys have to make more serious efforts to obtain more adequate and detailed indicators of the work values believed to be typical for their own region. These surveys also fall short of coming close to notions of sacrifice, conforming, networking, normative commitment (feeling of duty), etc. As is presented in this paper, notions comparative across these surveys are limited to emphases on pay, being successful at work or having a feeling of accomplishment. In many cases these notions are copied from Western-origin surveys. All in all, this bias is understandable as most of the values surveys do not place work in a central position, if they aim to tap general values in all key domains at all (the Asian Barometer or AnB is, e.g., a survey aimed at political values). Guanxi is measured in all East Asian values surveys, but these measurements can also be criticized especially for their lack of breath. Here guanxi is tapped by presenting the hypothetical situation of higher a less qualified relative over a higher qualified stranger (in the Asia Barometer or AB and in the East Asian Values Survey or EAVS) or by one's ability to get help from friends (in AnB). In all cases, guanxi indicators do not seem to touch upon the special relationship between parties and the reciprocal process at work with guanxi. The result is that both work values and guanxi hardly seem to differentiate East Asian nations and cities involved in the respective East Asian values surveys.

If we can draw conclusions at all, considering the objections just presented, we find that guanxi varies slightly across East Asia, with Japan (after checking for other factors) having higher scores than China where the concept originates from. Education levels seem to have a modest positive impact which, as we argued, seems self-evident as far as getting help from friends goes: the higher levels of capital – cultural, social or otherwise – the higher the likelihood one can get help from similarly resourceful friends. Harmony values go hand in hand with guanxi: sacrifice for others as a behavioral mores aimed at maintaining harmony relates positively to guanxi in the sense of having enough connections to be able to get help from friends. All in all, the total amount of explained variance for guanxi across the East Asian region is very modest. Any of the conclusions presented above are preliminary, as long as we do not have more elaborate, robust and comparable concepts in East Asian values surveys.

Work values, i.e. 'pay' and 'being successful/having a feeling of accomplishment', are not related to guanxi or the importance one attaches to work. Pay is something South Koreans and the Chinese stress more than the Japanese do and something emphasized by those wanting their sons and daughter to be famous in later life. In other words, pay or a key material work value depends on information on nation/city of origin and (less so) cultural values. Again, this conclusion is preliminary as the results are far from impressive. Success in work is again something South Koreans, followed by the Chinese stress more than the Japanese. It is more helpful to discern being successful from having a feeling of accomplishment. When studies include the latter only demographics, and then especially educational level, seem to matter; information on nation/city of origin or on cultural values are not needed. Interestingly, when a Western-origin and rather individualist notion such as the 'feeling of accomplishment' is used, only individual-level indicators matter.

One can, finally, argue that there is some but not very strong proof of a culture-hypothesis as regards work values and guanxi. Desired fame for sons and daughters

coincides with material work values and harmony values relate positively to guanxi. The hypothesis does not stand as regards being successful at work or having a sense of accomplishment. Yet, the opposite hypothesis, for now labeled the reality-hypothesis (cf. political reality hypothesis, see Vinken, 2007b, on political values surveys in East Asia), seems more valid. Once we include a proxy for the realities at work in the different nations and cities involved in the studies we are best able to address the variations in work values (most vividly for pay and being successful at work; not for having a feeling of accomplishment) and guanxi. Having a sense of accomplishment proves to be an individualist notion and can best be explained by individual-level indicators, not by drawing on a culture- or a reality-hypothesis.

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Tables

Table 1: Work values

| Work values: pay | AB 2003 | AnB 2001-2003 | EAVS 2002-2004 | WVS 2000-2002 |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| China | 0,33 | - | - | 0,32 |
| - Beijing | - | - | 0,18 | - |
| - Shanghai | - | - | 0,32 | - |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | 0,24 | - |
| - Kunming | - | - | 0,17 | - |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | 0,25 | - |
| Japan | 0,17 | - | 0,16 | 0,12 |
| Singapore | - | - | 0,28 | 0,36 |
| South Korea | 0,49 | - | 0,31 | 0,23 |
| Taiwan | - | - | 0,34 | - |
| Eta ² | 0,08 | - | 0,02 | 0,05 |
| Work values: success | AB 2003 | AnB 2001-2003 | EAVS 2002-2004 | WVS 2000-2002 |
| China | 0,28 | - | - | 0,23 |
| - Beijing | - | - | 0,35 | - |
| - Shanghai | - | - | 0,24 | - |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | 0,27 | - |
| - Kunming | - | - | 0,37 | - |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | 0,36 | - |
| Japan | 0,07 | - | 0,28 | 0,26 |
| Singapore | - | - | 0,24 | 0,22 |
| South Korea | 0,37 | - | 0,21 | 0,24 |
| Taiwan | - | - | 0,26 | - |
| Eta ² | 0,09 | - | 0,02 | 0,00 |

Sources: AB = Asia Barometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey. NB: - = no data; Pay in AB mention of 'earning a high income' as one (of five) important lifestyle aspects or life circumstances; in EAVS and WVS mention of 'a good income so that you do not have any worries about money'. Merit in AB mention of 'being successful at work' as one (of five) important lifestyle aspects or life circumstances; no work values in AnB; in EAVS and WVS mention of 'doing an important job which gives you a feeling of accomplishment'. NB: question introduction differs between EAVS and WVS.

Table 2: Guanxi and the importance of work

| Guanxi | AB 2003 | AnB 2001-2003 | EAVS 2002-2004 | WVS 2000-2002 |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| China | 0,28 | 2,68 | - | - |
| - Beijing | - | - | 0,17 | - |
| - Shanghai | - | - | 0,19 | - |
| - Hong Kong | - | 2,76 | 0,32 | - |
| - Kunming | - | - | 0,20 | - |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | 0,28 | - |
| Japan | 0,43 | 2,85 | 0,22 | - |
| Singapore | - | - | 0,20 | - |
| South Korea | 0,30 | 2,72 | 0,20 | - |
| Taiwan | - | 2,64 | 0,23 | - |
| Eta ² | 0,02 | 0,01 | 0,01 | - |
| Importance work | AB 2003 | AnB 2001-2003 | EAVS 2002-2004 | WVS 2000-2002 |
| China | 0,66 | - | - | 3,41 |
| - Beijing | - | - | 5,94 | - |
| - Shanghai | - | - | 6,15 | - |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | 5,60 | - |
| - Kunming | - | - | 6,08 | - |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | 6,14 | - |
| Japan | 0,44 | - | 5,83 | 3,36 |
| Singapore | - | - | 5,87 | 3,51 |
| South Korea | 0,64 | - | 6,46 | 3,53 |
| Taiwan | - | - | 5,97 | - |
| Eta ² | 0,04 | - | 0,03 | 0,01 |

Sources: AB = Asia Barometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey. NB: - = no data. Guanxi in AB and EAVS mention of 'relative' hired even when second highest grades of employment examination (in stead of the one with the highest grades); in AnB means 'I have enough friends and connections so that I can get help if I need it' (recoded into) of 1) Doesn't apply at all, 2) Doesn't apply much, 3) Applies pretty well, 4) Applies very well. No Guanxi-items in WVS. Importance work in AB mention 'Place of work' as social circles or groups important to you; no importance work items in AnB; in EAVS means 'Career and job' 1) Not important at all to 7) Very important (to you; open scale); In WVS means 'Work' (recoded into) of 1) Not at all important, 2) Not very important, 3) Rather important, 4) Very important (in your life).

Table 3: Traditional (East Asian) values

| | AB 2003 | | | | AnB 2001-2003 | | EAVS 2002-2004 | | WVS 2000-2002 | |
|------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|---------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------|
| | fame son | fame daughter | relatedness son | relatedness daughter | preservation | harmony | gender roles | respect ancestors | gender roles | piety |
| China | 0,82 | 0,52 | 0,73 | 1,11 | 0,11 | 0,08 | - | - | -0,18 | -0,44 |
| - Beijing | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0,40 | 0,03 | - | - |
| - Shanghai | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0,48 | 0,19 | - | - |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | - | - | 0,19 | -0,20 | -0,04 | 0,30 | - | - |
| - Kunming | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0,29 | -0,03 | - | - |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0,29 | 0,13 | - | - |
| Japan | 0,35 | 0,15 | 1,28 | 1,56 | -0,29 | 0,11 | 0,07 | -0,42 | 0,05 | -0,67 |
| Singapore | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0,49 | -0,07 | 0,24 | 0,41 |
| South Korea | 0,70 | 0,34 | 0,92 | 1,40 | 0,03 | -0,08 | 0,59 | -0,47 | -0,20 | 0,22 |
| Taiwan | - | - | - | - | -0,14 | -0,05 | 0,50 | 0,29 | - | - |
| Eta ² | 0,10 | 0,09 | 0,11 | 0,07 | 0,02 | 0,01 | 0,16 | 0,07 | 0,04 | 0,19 |

Sources: AB = Asia Barometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey. NB: - = no data; For AB means of maximum of two mentions of selected items (range 0-2): fame son-daughter items are 'Become a great scholar', 'Become a powerful political leader', 'Become very wealthy', and 'Become a person respected by the masses'; relatedness son-daughter 'Become a loving and charitable person', 'Become a person who cares about family', and 'Find a good marriage partner'; For AnB factor scores: preservation items (in decreasing order of importance/factor loadings) 'A man will lose face if he works under a female supervisor', 'Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate', 'When hiring someone, even if a stranger is more qualified, the opportunity should still be given to relatives and friends', 'Even if parent's demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask'; harmony items (idem) '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', 'When one has a conflict with a neighbor, the best way to deal with it is to accommodate the other person', and 'If there is a quarrel, we should ask an elder to resolve the dispute'. For EAVS factors scores: gender roles items are (idem) 'We need a son to keep our family line going', 'Wife should follow her husband', 'Man should work outside and woman should tend to housekeeping', 'Not to marry someone whom your parents object to', and 'We should follow older people'; respect ancestors items are (idem) 'We should respect ancestors' and 'The eldest son should look after his aging parents'. For WVS factors scores: gender roles items are (idem): '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', 'Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income'; piety items are (idem): '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'. All AnB and EAVS factors scores based on responses 1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Somewhat agree, and 4) Strongly agree; Idem for first item in WVS piety, others are mentions (0-1 format with 1 is mention). For WVS gender roles scores are based on responses 1) Strongly agree, 2) Somewhat agree, 3) Somewhat disagree, and 4) Strongly disagree.

Table 4: Guanxi explained

| Beta's | AB 2003 | AnB 2001-2003 | EAVS 2002-2004 |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Importance work | -,020 ns | - | -,051 *** |
| R ² | ,000 | - | ,002 |
| Importance work | -,022 | - | -,054 *** |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | ,041 * | ,056 *** |
| Cohort 1970+ | -,040 ns | ,048 ** | ,079 *** |
| Education | ,054 * | ,080 *** | -,065 *** |
| R ² | ,003 * | ,010 *** | ,007 *** |
| Importance work | ,006 ns | - | -,048 *** |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | ,064 *** | ,052 ** |
| Cohort 1970+ | -,031 ns | ,077 *** | ,074 *** |
| Education | ,035 ns | ,055 *** | -,054 *** |
| China | -,136 *** | -,166 *** | - |
| - Beijing | - | - | -,040 * |
| - Shanghai | - | - | -,023 ns |
| - Hong Kong | - | -,048 ** | ,055 ** |
| - Kunming | - | - | -,022 ns |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | ,053 ** |
| Singapore | - | - | -,024 ns |
| South Korea | -,116 *** | -,130 *** | -,015 ns |
| Taiwan | - | -,129 *** | -,004 ns |
| R ² | ,018 *** | ,024 *** | ,017 *** |
| Importance work | ,004 ns | - | -,048 *** |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | ,074 *** | ,059 *** |
| Cohort 1970+ | -,030 ns | ,094 *** | ,086 *** |
| Education | ,033 ns | ,075 *** | -,044 ** |
| China | -,148 *** | -,167 *** | - |
| - Beijing | - | - | -,028 ns |
| - Shanghai | - | - | -,006 ns |
| - Hong Kong | - | -,043 ** | ,061 ** |
| - Kunming | - | - | -,013 ns |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | ,063 *** |
| Singapore | - | - | -,034 ns |
| South Korea | -,122 *** | -,130 *** | -,031 ns |
| Taiwan | - | -,125 *** | -,010 ns |
| Son Fame | ,013 ns | - | - |
| Daughter Fame | -,007 ns | - | - |
| Son Relatedness | -,036 ns | -- | - |
| Daughter Relatedness | -,002 ns | - | - |
| Preservation | - | ,034 ** | - |
| Harmony | - | ,096 *** | - |
| Respect Ancestors | - | - | -,017 ns |
| Gender Roles | - | - | ,076 *** |
| R ² | ,018 ns | ,033 *** | ,021 *** |

Sources: AB = Asia Barometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey. NB: Multiple linear regression with, if not stated otherwise, Japan and cohort pre-1945 as reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R² = Adjusted R² (checked for significance of F change); *** = p < .001; ** = p < .01; * = p < .05.

Table 5: Work values explained

| Beta's | AB 2003 | | EAVS 2002-2004 | | WVS 2000-2002 | |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|
| | pay | success | pay | success | pay | success |
| Guanxi | ,005 ns | -,051 * | ,049 *** | -,043 *** | - | - |
| R ² | ,000 ns | ,002 | ,002 | ,002 | - | - |
| Guanxi | ,007 ns | -,048 * | ,051 *** | -,041 ** | - | - |
| Importance work | ,087 *** | ,125 *** | ,045 *** | ,036 ** | -,001 ns | -,026 ns |
| R ² | ,007 *** | ,017 *** | ,004 | ,003 ** | ,000 | ,000 |
| Guanxi | ,012 *** | -,049 * | ,045 *** | -,033 ** | - | - |
| Importance work | ,085 *** | ,113 *** | ,043 *** | ,023 * | -,009 ns | -,025 ns |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | rc | ,081 *** | -,018 ns | ,108 *** | -,035 ns |
| Cohort 1970+ | ,097 *** | ,107 *** | ,071 *** | ,030 ns | ,125 *** | ,060 * |
| Education | -,039 ns | ,094 *** | -,085 *** | ,204 *** | -,149 *** | ,187 *** |
| R ² | ,015 *** | ,041 *** | ,013 *** | ,051 *** | ,024 *** | ,046 *** |
| Guanxi | ,037 ns | -,016 ns | ,047 *** | -,038 ** | | |
| Importance work | ,045 * | ,059 ** | ,033 ** | ,031 ** | -,013 ns | -,019 ns |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | rc | ,066 *** | -,017 ns | ,039 ns | -,030 ns |
| Cohort 1970+ | ,080 *** | ,087 *** | ,055 ** | ,028 ns | ,026 ns | ,069 * |
| Education | -,036 ns | ,116 *** | -,070 *** | ,206 *** | -,094 *** | ,210 *** |
| China | ,138 *** | ,234 *** | - | - | ,141 *** | ,019 ns |
| - Beijing | - | - | ,023 ns | ,037 * | | |
| - Shanghai | - | - | ,118 *** | -,008 ns | | |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | ,043 * | ,040 * | | |
| - Kunming | - | - | ,016 ns | ,053 ** | | |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | ,050 ** | ,047 ** | | |
| Singapore | - | - | ,090 *** | -,017 ns | ,224 *** | -,032 ns |
| South Korea | ,296 *** | ,311 *** | ,107 *** | -,046 ** | ,116 *** | -,076 ns |
| Taiwan | | | ,111 *** | ,017 ns | | |
| R ² | ,080 *** | ,118 *** | ,028 *** | ,060 *** | ,043 *** | ,050 *** |
| Guanxi | ,033 ns | -,020 ns | ,044 *** | -,037 ** | | |
| Importance work | ,039 * | ,056 ** | ,033 ** | ,031 ** | -,013 ns | -,018 ns |
| Cohort 1945-1970 | rc | rc | ,066 *** | -,017 ns | ,040 ns | -,034 ns |
| Cohort 1970+ | ,081 *** | ,089 *** | ,059 *** | ,026 ns | ,029 ns | ,060 * |
| Education | -,036 ns | ,110 *** | -,066 *** | ,204 *** | -,092 *** | ,204 *** |
| China | ,087 *** | ,207 *** | - | - | ,141 *** | ,020 ns |
| - Beijing | - | - | ,034 ns | ,034 ns | | |
| - Shanghai | - | - | ,132 *** | -,012 ns | | |
| - Hong Kong | - | - | ,053 ** | ,037 * | | |
| - Kunming | - | - | ,024 ns | ,051 ** | | |
| - Hangzhou | - | - | ,059 *** | ,045 ** | | |
| Singapore | - | - | ,088 *** | -,016 ns | ,212 *** | ,000 ns |
| South Korea | ,262 *** | ,298 *** | ,098 *** | -,043 * | ,110 *** | -,057 * |
| Taiwan | - | - | ,113 *** | ,018 ns | | |
| Son Fame | ,064 ** | ,038 ns | - | - | | |
| Daughter Fame | ,057 * | -,024 ns | - | - | | |
| Son Relatedness | -,066 ** | -,076 *** | - | - | | |
| Daughter Relatedness | ,030 ns | -,015 ns | - | - | | |
| Preservation | - | - | - | - | | |
| Harmony | - | - | - | - | | |
| Respect Ancestors | - | - | -,037 ** | ,007 ns | | |
| Gender Roles | - | - | ,040 ** | -,014 ns | ,019 ns | -,041 * |
| Piety | - | - | - | - | ,019 ns | -,051 ** |
| R ² | ,094 *** | ,125 *** | ,030 *** | ,060 ns | ,043 ns | ,054 ** |

Sources: AB = Asia Barometer; AnB = Asian Barometer; EAVS = East Asia Values Survey; WVS = World Values Survey. Multiple linear regression with, if not stated otherwise, Japan and cohort pre-1945 as reference categories; - = no data; rc = reference category; R² = Adjusted R² (checked for significance of F change); *** = p < .001; ** = p < .01; * = p < .05.