

- *Power Distance (PDI)*
- *Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)*
- *Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)*
- *Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI).*

Later on with the help of his collaborators another two criteria were added: *Long-Term Orientation (LTO)* and *Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)* (Hofstede et al. 2010). A comparison, e.g. between Germany and the USA, brought the result that in the USA a much higher individualism and much less *Uncertainty Avoidance* prevailed than in Germany <<https://www.geert-hofstede.com>>.

For our further consideration I propose the following three axioms as a necessary precondition for all theoretically guided analyses:

- Historicity,
- materialism and
- dialectics (Széll 1972).

The interest of all studies within social sciences lies in my opinion in the explanation of the *specific*. How do we explain differences between different societies and cultures, not only between continents, i.e. large regions but also within these large regions, down to the smallest political, social, economic, cultural units, the village, the company ...? Karl Marx explains it like this:

“It would seem to be the proper thing to start with the real and concrete elements, with the actual preconditions, e.g., to start in the sphere of economy with population, which forms the basis and the subject of the whole social process of production. Closer consideration shows, however, that this is wrong. Population is an abstraction if, for instance, one disregards the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn remain empty terms if one does not know the factors on which they depend, e.g., wage-labour, capital, and so on. These presuppose exchange, division of labour, prices, etc. For example, capital is nothing without wage-labour, without value, money, price, etc. If one were to take population as the point of departure, it would be a very vague notion of a complex whole and through closer definition one would arrive analytically at increasingly simple concepts; from imaginary concrete terms one would move to more and more tenuous abstractions until one reached the simplest definitions. From there it would be necessary to make the journey again in the opposite direction until one arrived once more at the concept of population, which is this time not a vague notion of a whole, but a totality comprising many determinations and relations. The first course is the historical one taken by political economy at its inception. The seventeenth-century economists, for example, always took as their starting point the living organism, the population, the nation, the State, several States, etc., but analysis led them always in the end to the discovery of a few decisive abstract, general relations, such as division of labour, money, and value. When these separate factors were more or less clearly deduced and established, economic systems were evolved which from simple concepts, such as labour, division of labour, demand, exchange-value, advanced to categories like State, international exchange and world market. The latter is obviously the

correct scientific method. The concrete concept is concrete because it is a synthesis of many definitions, thus representing the unity of diverse aspects. It appears therefore in reasoning as a summing-up, a result, and not as the starting point, although it is the real point of origin, and thus also the point of origin of perception and imagination. The first procedure attenuates meaningful images to abstract definitions, the second leads from abstract definitions by way of reasoning to the reproduction of the concrete situation.” (Marx 1973, originally 1859)

Following these reflections Marx wrote about the *oscillation* between the abstract, the general and the concrete, the specific (Marx 1976, 2011). The driving interest within the Humanities and the social sciences concerns – in contrast to the natural sciences – the explanation of the concrete, the societal and cultural specificities. But also why there are varieties and differences. A special challenge lies in the comparison between Europe and North East Asia.

Formally Europe reaches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural, however, actually Europe and Asia is a single continent: Eurasia. Over thousands of years relations between North East Asia and Europe are coined by competition, conflicts but also by cooperation. Already between the Roman and the Chinese Empires regular exchanges happened – mostly via the Silk Road (Böckelmann 1998). Especially the Venetian Marco Polo stands for this kind of exchange in the 13th century (Münkler 1998). Djingis Khan symbolizes a more violent relationship between these two world regions nearly at the same period (Wikipedia 2012a).

If I speak of East Asia, so I will first of all concentrate myself on North East Asia, because South East Asia is largely culturally quite different. North East Asia encloses besides China – including Taiwan and Hong Kong, but in principle also Singapore – Japan as well as both Koreas.

Its great distance historically characterizes especially the relationship between Europe and Korea – not only geographically, but also culturally. The Korean kingdom and its short-lived Empire were called the ‚Hermit Kingdom‘. Korea secluded itself from the rest of the world even longer than China and Japan (Eggert and Plassen 2005).

Theses

- Each culture produces its value system. These different cultures are coined through varied history.
- To understand society the consideration of their deep structures is essential. (Gurvitch 1971)
- Nevertheless the risk of *culturalism* exists, i.e. that all social, political and economic structures are reduced to cultural differences (Burger 2011).
- But there are as well anthropological constancies and with them values. At the same time nearly all cultures are the result of intercultural exchange – sometimes peacefully, often violently (Huntington 1996).
- Innovation – in each sector of society, whether within culture, arts, science, and politics – only develops via intercultural exchange.
- 1968 meant for the whole of Europe – in contrast to the USA and also Asia or Latin America – a fundamental moment of cultural, political and social change in the long run (Széll 2009).

The dominance of capitalist relations of production has brought so far in principle only an economic and partly a currency union. And capital has no home country! Therefor Social Europe leaves much to desire (Arbeitsgruppe Alternative Wirtschaftspolitik 2012; Busch et al. 2000; Kim and Széll 2011; Széll 2002, 2007). The worldwide financial and economic crisis hit a number of European countries, especially in the South, quite hard. Most of them managed to overcome the crisis over the last couple of years. Only Greece so far was not so successful, which is related mostly to its own structural problems in many areas, but also the strategy by the European institutions and the International Monetary Fund came too late and was not always adapted. Nevertheless it is an indicator of the lack of a common economic and financial policy, and finally the unaccomplished political union. Many Europeans therefore argue for more integration, whereas at the same time Euro scepticism is increasing.

What are European values?

The European half-continent is largely formed by its antiquity, as well by monotheism, which was introduced from the Near East. Actually the heritage of the antiquity was rediscovered during the period of the Renaissance via the Arab culture, because it was largely forgotten in Europe itself. Besides there remain quite a few other cultural relics from pre-antique and pre-Christian periods, e.g. the Germanic, Celtic, Slavic cultures etc.

Due to this heritage Europe is largely determined by a black-and-white thinking, through a sin complex, whereas in North East Asia a shame culture prevails (Böckelmann 1998; Singer 1990). But which Europe? Western, Northern, Central, Eastern or Southern Europe? Greater Europe with its 47 nations? The European Union with its now 28 Member States? Negotiations with six further nations are in progress, amongst them Turkey. Eurozone? At the moment 19 members only, although in principle all EU-members should join the Euro.

Since the 19th century thanks to a strong labour movement most European nations realized a welfare state – be it in a capitalist or socialist variety (Széll 2013c). In the reconstruction period after World War Two foremost in the Netherlands, in Germany and Austria a kind of ‘trustful cooperation’ between capital, labour and the State emerged, which has been designated as ‘corporatism’ (Fürstenberg 2006; Van Waarden 1992). The German model of social partnership within a ‘Social Market Economy’ serves as ideal type. (Mesch 1995; Széll 2008b) Similarly labour relations in North East Asia – in contrast to the U.S.A. – are partly based on trust and mostly not any more on class struggle, however still on power relations between management and unions, characterized by coercion and oppression (Die Europäischen Werte 2012; Széll 2011a).

Europe is proud of its diversity. So, e.g. we have Roman, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Slavic cultures and legal systems. Not only the religious denominations but also the deep structures have a great diversity and produced a large variety of cultures, value systems as well as languages (Joas and Wiegandt 2010). Europe’s borders are floating (Széll 1996). The West in the global context comprises the former European colonies – including Latin America. And Islam is part of the European culture since several centuries.

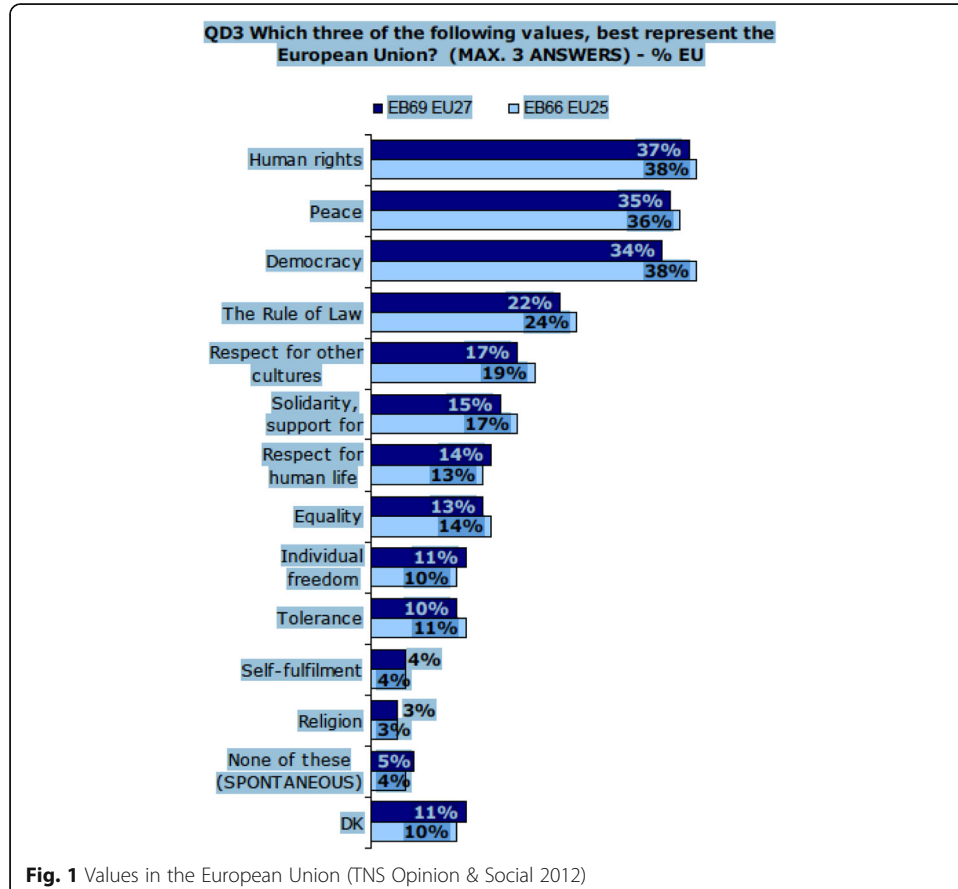
“Asked which values represent best the EU, in autumn 2010 at a Eurobarometer survey 38% of surveyed answered responded ‘human rights’ as well as ‘democracy’. 35% choose ‘peace’. The following values were ‘state of law’ (25%), ‘solidarity’ (20%),

‘respect of other cultures’ (18%) as well as ‘respect of human life’ (14%). The values ‘equality’, ‘freedom of the individual’, ‘tolerance’, ‘self-realization’ and ‘religion’ were for less than one seventh of the population of the 27 EU-member states part of the three values, which represent best the EU. “(Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2012; translation by Gy.Sz.) (Fig. 1).

But are they not universal values?

“The European Union is a community of values, so we hear nearly every day from politicians, and the values, on which the EU is based, are the European ones. But is this actually right? The geographical Europe, the Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural, was never a community of values. Large parts of Europe had no part in the development of values, on which the EU refers to. Vice-versa the values, to which the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the state of Israel adhere to, are no others than those, which we like to call »European«. ... We should therefore not to speak of European, but of Western values, when it is about the basis of our democracy and the coherence of the European Union. “(Winkler 2007; translation by Gy.Sz.)

Winkler relates the specific development in Western and Central Europe to their dominant dualism and later pluralism. Montesquieu’s principle of separation of power



remains until now the base. In the French revolution of 1789 the universal human rights were for the first time formulated and voted by the Convent. They became law:

“Article 1: Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be based only on considerations of the common good.

Article 2: The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of Man. These rights are Liberty, Property, Safety and Resistance to Oppression” (Fig. 2).

The three main values – „Freedom, Equality, Fraternity“– are carved in stone on all public buildings in France. All further revolutions are inspired by this declaration since



Fig. 2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

then. Based on this French and European tradition the *General Declaration of Human Rights* was voted by the United Nations after the terrible Second World War, of which the United Nations themselves are one its out-comings (Resolution 217 A (III) of the General Assembly on 10 December 1948).² Probably European values are best summarized in the preamble to the European Constitution from 2004:

„Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law,

Believing that Europe, reunited after bitter experiences, intends to continue along the path of civilisation, progress and prosperity, for the good of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and most deprived; that it wishes to remain a continent open to culture, learning and social progress; and that it wishes to deepen the democratic and transparent nature of its public life, and to strive for peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world,

Convinced that, while remaining proud of their own national identities and history, the peoples of Europe are determined to transcend their former divisions and, united ever more closely, to forge a common destiny,

Convinced that, thus ‘United in diversity’, Europe offers them the best chance of pursuing, with due regard for the rights of each individual and in awareness of their responsibilities towards future generations and the Earth, the great venture which makes of it a special area of human hope.“

US-American values? ³ Western values? Universal values?

If one speaks of ‘European’ values, so it is quite often in contrast to US-American values. Whereas in the USA the tendency goes to refer to ‘Western community of values’, respectively to universal values, where subliminally the US-American interpretation as the only valid and correct one is to be understood. In the preamble to the Declaration of Independence from 1776 we can read:

»We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.«

Probably *Marxism* in its diverse forms has had the biggest impact not only within all of Europe and the rest of the world, but especially in North-East Asia, where several countries – namely China, the most populous country in the world, i.e. every fifth human being, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos are until now ruled by communist parties. And even Japan is regarded as the only country, “where communism works”. (Kenrick 1988) Insofar Maoism can be regarded as a collateral damage of European-Asian interaction (1961-1977). In the 1960s the Cultural Revolution fired back on Europe with a large number of Maoist groups and parties. How far Maoism will survive in the 21st century remains an open question.

Interestingly we spoke during the period of Cold War of 'Western' values to differentiate them from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and demonstrate the own superiority (Széll and Kim 2015). In this phase, as before, the USA regarded the defence of human rights quite selectively: Only when it conformed to their military-economic interests, they defended them (Baran and Sweezy 1967; Hardt and Negri 2000). Otherwise dictatorships were not only tolerated but quite often installed (Chile, Brazil etc.) Insofar the late US-American sociologist Bertram Gross calls the US-American system 'friendly fascism' (1980). Also the German philosopher Robert Kurz in his 'Black Book Capitalism' (1999) a profound critique of the dominant relations of production, which cover not only Europe but the rest of the world too. However, we should mention in this context, that the book by Kurz was a response to the 'Black Book Communism' by Courtois et al. (1999).

The dominating neoliberalism seems to be the incarnation of US-American values. However, we should be careful: Friedrich August Hayek, the main protagonist, was a European, who already in the 1930s conceived the bases of neoliberalism (1948, 1952; Pies and Leschke 2003). The author, who is mostly cited today in this context, is the late Milton Friedman, professor at the University of Chicago and winner of the Prize in honour of Nobel for Economics, who propagated this approach first in the USA since the 1960s and then successfully worldwide (1982). In politics neoliberalism culminated as *Thatcherism* in the UK and as *Reagonomics* in the USA in the 1980s (Pierson 1994). It is worthwhile mentioning that first a European, i.e. British Prime Minister Margaret (Maggy) Thatcher, before the US-American president, Ronald Reagan, elevated neoliberalism as principle of economic policies.

On the other side it was the US-American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who as the first after the world economic crisis of 1929 practiced Keynesianism in the form of the 'New Deal' (Keynes 1936; Shlaes 2011). Insofar are US-American values – as mentioned above by Winkler – not clearly to be differentiated from European values. As mostly in life it is not a distinction 'either-or', but of gradual differences, which, however, may be quite marked (Herzinger 2002).

The biggest difference between Europe and the USA in regard to value systems concerns the role of religion (Norris and Ronald 2011). Although the USA foster pluralism of religion, nevertheless nearly everybody has to be a member of a religious community – similar to India – to be socially accepted and integrated, especially to make a political career. This phenomenon illustrates the limits of Enlightenment within the USA. The *Pilgrim Fathers*, who founded the US-American society in the 17th century, determine since then its value system. Therefore – the election of the black Barack Obama as 44th president – the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) remain the dominant social class. And racism and xenophobia are still rather widespread. The French lawyer and politician Alexis de Tocqueville has in my eyes already in his book 'Democracy in America', written in 1835, delivered until today the best, valid analysis of the US-American society and its value system (1984; cf. also Széll 1985). This value system provides the legitimisation for the numerous military interventions by the USA since more than a century – although most of them failed (Széll 2010b).

Religious fundamentalism explains as well the role of evangelicals and of creationism, i.e. the negation of modern sciences. The evangelicals see their task in missionizing the whole world, to save it as well as themselves. They are rather successful over the last

couple of decades, notably in Latin America and East Asia, especially in South Korea. Even the past South Korean president, Lee Myung-bak, is a very active Presbyterian. Within politics it is apparently not only about economic, political and military but at least also about cultural hegemony (Gramsci 2000).

Anticommunism

An important aspect for our consideration of US-American politics after World War Two, i.e. the so-called Cold War, is anticommunism, which culminated in McCarthyism in the 1950s (Defty 2004; Evans 2009). Via the dominance of the USA in the West anti-communism became in Western Germany as well in South Korea kind of core-ideology (Abendroth 1978; Thomas 2012; Song and Werning 2012). This ideology and its practice could build on existing anti-communist organisations and structures. Even social democrats in the F.R.G. supported anticommunism including *Berufsverbote* in the period of Peace Nobel Prize winner Chancellor Willy Brandt (Széll 2010c).

North East Asia

Already Karl Marx distinguished in his analysis of the development of relations of production the *Asiatic mode of production* from the European one (Wittfogel 1931; Dutschke 1974). This part of the world has at the moment the highest economic growth and the lowest birth rates. The economic success of North East Asia is mainly based on its culture and respective values. Education since always comes first in this region. South Korea has with more than 80% per year the highest rate of university alumni in the world. Without any doubt Confucianism, which is again allowed and even encouraged in China, plays an eminent role in this context, although there is an on-going debate about its real impact (Lee 2002, 2003, 2009; Weggel 1996).

Quality of life – with the exception of Japan – is in East Asia still below average. E.g. the region has the longest working hours and the highest suicide rates. *Corporate Social Responsibility* remains underperforming (Széll 2009). Is there a connection? China takes again the place in the world economy and politics today, which it had 200 years ago – before the Europeans brought it into dependence (Snow 1994). The recent success is largely favoured by corruption and exploitation (migrant workers) and led to one of the most inegalitarian societies in the world (Schienstock et al. 1997; Széll 2010a).

Are there North East Asian values?

Is there an East Asian identity? (Buruma 1996; Pfennig 1995; Thompson 2001) Although China, Korea (Széll 2010c) and Japan (Inoue 2001; Széll 2001a) are quite different, they nevertheless share – similar to Europe – common cultural deep structures: In their case, as already mentioned namely Confucianism, Buddhism, and colonial experiences (Schmidt-Glintzer 2011; Singer 1990). For Japan we have to consider Shintoism, which was until 1945 the state religion (Lokowandt 2001). Finally we have to mention Shamanism as well, which remains present in Korea but also in parts of China including Taiwan and in Japan (Kim 2003). This world region is therefore – like Europe – impregnated by high cultures, several thousand years old – in contrast to the USA (Lee and Saaler 2003). The Chinese culture – with its influences from India – is the original culture of East Asia, which in contrast to Europe is characterized by its

the Near and Middle East as one of the political and military hotspots with permanently increasing military spending and conflicts.

However, we should not forget that real existing socialism in Eastern Europe as well as military dictatorships in Southern Europe (Greece, Portugal, Spain) dominated as well their respective value systems – partly until today.

Globalisation reconsidered

A German proverb says: “One cannot live in peace, if the evil neighbour does not want it.” Globalisation, which started in Europe in Early Modern Times, is now affecting most societies. The dominant relations of production are those of capitalism. Nonetheless we find substantial differences on all continents (Széll 2000). Europe changed in the meantime from main actor to victim. That reminds me of the poem ‘sorcerer’s apprentice’ by von Goethe (1827):

“Lord and master, hear me crying! –
Ah, he comes excited.
Sir, my need is sore.
Spirits that I’ve cited
My commands ignore.”

Due to the self-annihilation of Europe the USA became after 1945 the foremost – and after the breakdown of the Soviet Empire – now the only remaining world power. The seemingly unstoppable rise of Japan in the 1980s ended abruptly with its financial crisis since the 1990s. The main reasons were corruption and speculation (Széll 2001a). In the meantime China is catching up with the USA, and it is only a matter of time, until it will overtake the USA in every regard. So, definitely it is not yet the end of history.

The new world order, which was proclaimed by the 41st US-president George Bush Sr. in 1992, took quite another direction than planned. The OECD, the organisation, which associates the 34 richest industrial countries – which include meanwhile South Korea and other emerging economies – has been downgraded to a secondary institution. The G 7/8-nations and the UN Security Council – consisting of the USA, Russia, China, France and Great Britain – dominate in practice world politics, however, are permanently in quarrel. The emerging economies including South Korea have managed to enlarge the group to the G20. The reform of the UN Security Council is still blocked by the USA. So, the famous, Hungarian-US-American speculator and philanthropist George Soros came to the conclusion that uncontrolled, global capitalism is a greater danger for freedom than Stalinism ever was (1998).

In the meantime concerning the value system corruption became a central indicator. The following table gives an overview, which has been established by the NGO Transparency International 2015. The survey included 175 countries (Table 1).

No surprise, that small, mainly (North-) European nations are at the top. However, the result may surprise in one point: Singapore performs even better than Germany and Japan. Does it mean that authoritarian rule is able to combat corruption efficiently? In comparison to other authoritarian regimes, it seems to be more the exception of the rule. And South Korea remains since a number of years at the modest 43rd rank,

Table 1 Transparency International, corruption index/Rank and Points

1	Denmark	92
2	New Zealand	91
3	Finland	89
4	Sweden	87
5	Norway	86
6	Switzerland	86
7	Singapore	84
8	The Netherlands	83
9	Luxemburg	82
10	Canada	81
11	Australia	80
12	Germany	79
13	Iceland	79
14	United Kingdom	78
15	Japan	76
15	Belgium	76
17	Hong Kong	74
17	Barbados	74
17	Ireland	74
17	USA	74
21	Chile	73
21	Uruguay	73
23	Austria	72
24	Bahamas	71
43	Korea (South)	55
100	China	35

whereas China decreased – from 75th rank in 2012 to number 100 – in spite of its continuous anti-corruption campaigns.

EU-North East Asia cooperation

The decolonialisation process by Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and Portugal in East Asia were important steps for a peaceful cooperation and competition – although they are not always fair. The peaceful return of Hong Kong and Macau to China was such an example. Since numerous years a more or less successful cooperation exists between the EU and East Asia, so e.g. at the summit in 2010. Another example is the ASEAN-EU Business Summit 2012. And Free Trade Agreements – in spite of all their deficiencies – are a supplementary step. The Shanghai Organisation for Cooperation comprises Russia as an Asian and not as a European nation. The APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) excludes Europe.

The European integration serves for many regions in the world in spite of its crisis as a model (Latin America, Mercosur, African Union, Arab Union; Kim 2009). So, since many years a currency union in North East Asia is proposed following the example of the Euro. Unfortunately this project is stopped due to the territorial and other conflicts.

Nevertheless China started a new successful initiative in creating the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a counterpart to the Western hegemony within the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Conclusions

Is it possible to learn from each other? Because scientists are convinced of it, they meet each other during conferences, workshops etc. and promote exchange via cooperation. Through common experiences parallels can be established. But they also have to acknowledge fundamental differences: between aggressors and victims e.g.

The lack of resources was for Europe as well for North East Asia one of the main challenges for their respective modernisations. Already after the first so-called oil-crisis in 1973 the French created the slogan: *We don't have petrol, but we have ideas!* In the same vein the German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, declared that the future of the F.R.G. will be the export of *knowledge, software/org ware* instead of products. This is not completely true, as Germany realizes its trade surplus – the biggest in the world together with China – still mainly due to the second. And actually those countries with a relatively high percentage of industrial production performed best to overcome the ongoing global economic and financial crisis. This holds true for Germany as well as for North East Asia.

Since the end of the Korean War in South Korea – as in the rest of the world – US-American values prevail. Since 30 years shareholder-capitalism, better to say shareholder-dictatorship, dominates the markets (Soros 1998). Against it Europe tries to oppose its stakeholder-democracy (Sünker et al. 2003; Széll 2013a). For that project we need innovations – not only technological and economic, but notably social and cultural ones. However, the future of a society within capitalism is decided within the economy. In this realm specific European values emerged and have been implemented during the past decades, which discern Europe largely from the USA: industrial democracy, codetermination, the social market economy, social partnership, the welfare state etc. (Széll 2006). The debate about economic democracy as well as the welfare state were even central topics during the presidential elections in South Korea in December 2012. Insofar reciprocal influences are given.

In the USA the 'Pacific Era' is propagated since many years. For many US-Americans the 'old continent' is dead, although the financial crises and nearly all imperialist wars since 1945 started by the USA and were lost.

Social and ecological modernisations are the targets for the survival of humanity. The most important capital for the future is education (Széll 1972, 2013b; Széll et al. 2008). That unites Europe and East Asia. Investments therein, however, are affected by *brain drain*, notably by the USA. Besides Europe and East Asia it is India, which delivers the largest contingents for this mental exploitation.

On the other side there is talk about the decline in values in modern societies: US-American modern mass culture emphasizes hedonism, materialism, drug consumption – although these phenomena can already be found in other civilizations as well, e.g. in the antiquity and also the 19th century. Refined culture, arts and music are values, where humans are most happy – even more than with sex.

At the same time religious fundamentalism is re-emerging, based on traditional values or better their modern re-interpretation – being Christian, Muslim or Jewish. So, which role plays religion in this context as a value system? Religions are considered

as immaterial value systems. This is certainly a short circuit: Religions served always to legitimate rule and power. The world religions were also always at the same time large businesses and in many societies they remain the largest owners of properties. In modern capitalism new religions and sects improved their marketing and commercialized their business professionally. Especially in South Korea some of the most successful sects emerged (e.g. the Moon sects).

European values for Korea and North East Asia in a 'global' 21st century means therefore in my opinion a reorientation away from mainly US-American cultural hegemony (Gramsci 2000), towards more Enlightenment and humanism. Can European social integration be a model for social peace? (Busch et al. 2000; Széll et al. 2009) Could it serve to overcome the division of Korea? (Koschyk 2005; Leibfried 2012).

Fortunately values are changing (Klages 1993; Klages et al. 1992; Korean National Commission for UNESCO 2003; Meulemann 1996). And each value system is also a struggle about memory (Leggewie and Lang 2011). The Canadian psychologist Richard Nisbett dreams of a synthesis of Western and Eastern cultures (2005): Aristotle and Confucius; Bach und Pandori? (Fig. 4).

Probably Europe's biggest contribution for humanity was the Enlightenment, but is in danger (Széll 2001a). Therefore the late Neil Postman argued for a Second Enlightenment (1999).

“Friedrich Engels once said: “Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism.” What does “regression into barbarism” mean to our lofty European civilization? Until now, we have all probably read and repeated

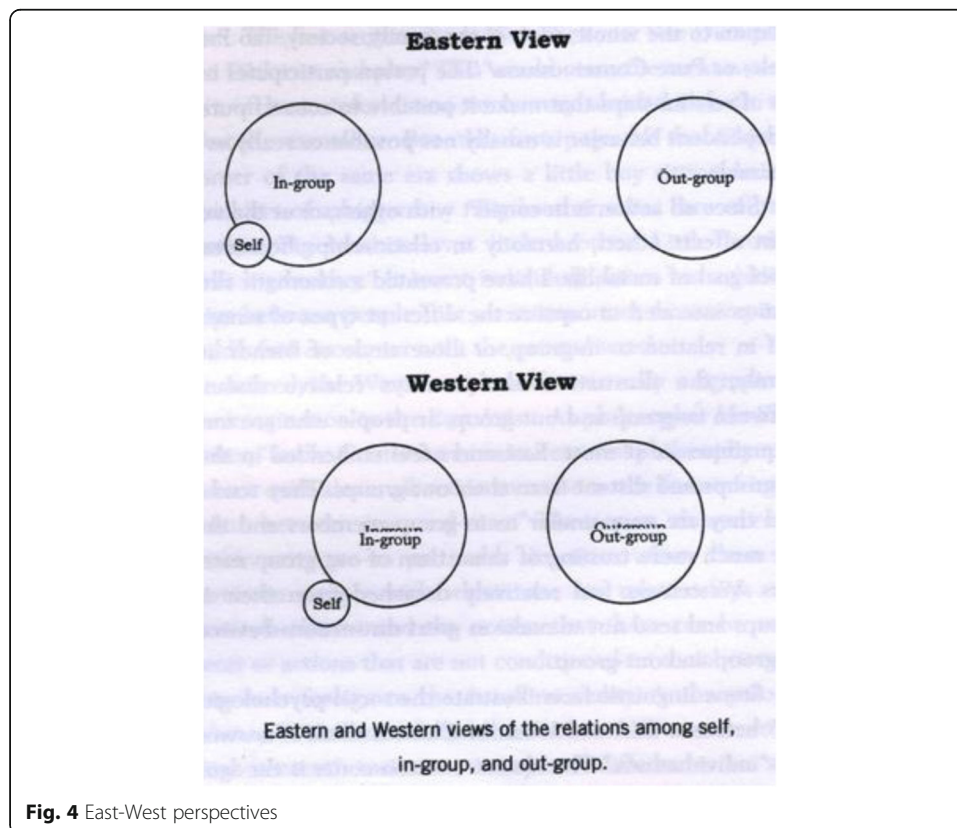


Fig. 4 East-West perspectives

these words thoughtlessly, without suspecting their fearsome seriousness. A look around us at this moment shows what the regression of bourgeois society into barbarism means. This world war is a regression into barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the annihilation of civilization. At first, this happens sporadically for the duration of a modern war, but then when the period of unlimited wars begins it progresses toward its inevitable consequences. Today, we face the choice exactly as Friedrich Engels foresaw it a generation ago: either the triumph of imperialism or the collapse of all civilization as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration – a great cemetery. Or the victory of socialism, that means the conscious active struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism and its method of war. This is a dilemma of world history, an either/or; the scales are wavering before the decision of the class-conscious proletariat. The future of civilization and humanity depends on whether or not the proletariat resolves manfully to throw its revolutionary broadsword into the scales. In this war imperialism has won. Its bloody sword of genocide has brutally tilted the scale toward the abyss of misery. The only compensation for all the misery and all the shame would be if we learn from the war how the proletariat can seize mastery of its own destiny and escape the role of the lackey to the ruling classes.“ (Luxemburg 1915, Chapter One)

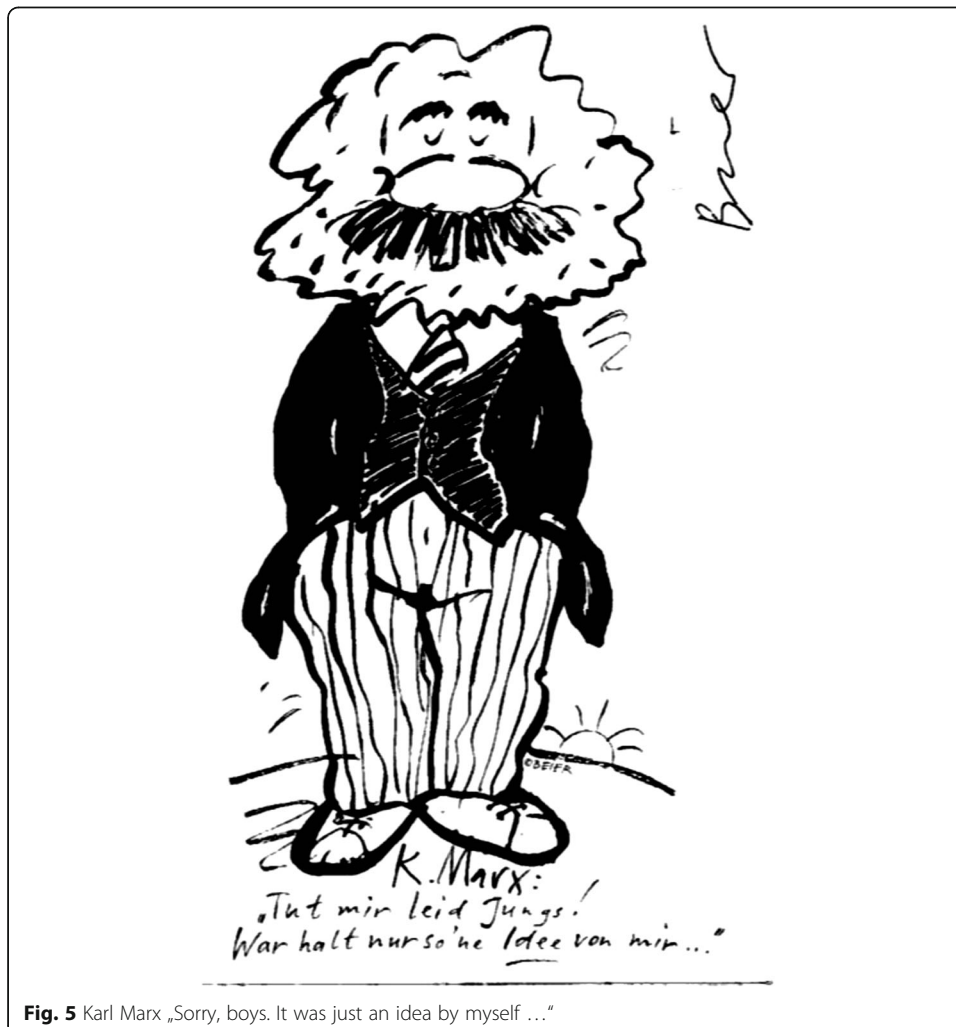


Fig. 5 Karl Marx „Sorry, boys. It was just an idea by myself ...“

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