

The AsiaBarometer : Its Aim, Its Scope, Its Strength

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1. Introduction

The AsiaBarometer represents the largest ever, comparative survey in Asia, covering East, Southeast, South and Central Asia. The AsiaBarometer is not the only survey done in Asia. The Social Weather Stations (Guerrero, 2003) in Manila has been conducting social surveys continuously for the last two decades. Then in the wake of third wave democratization (Huntington, 1991; Inoguchi/Ahn, forthcoming) in East and Southeast Asia a number of democracy barometers were born. The Korea Democracy Barometers (Shin, 2003), the East Asia Democracy Barometers (Chu, 2003) are most well known along with various other democracy barometers (Diamond, 2003). Needless to say, the Global Democracy Barometers led by Richard Rose have been long in sight since the end of the Cold War (Rose, 2003). The oldest and global World Values Surveys led by Ronald Inglehart (1977, 1997, 2003) have been very long in existence since the 1960s.

The AsiaBarometer distinguishes itself from many others in that it focuses on daily lives of ordinary people. It is not primarily about values or democracy. It is primarily about how ordinary people live their life with their worries, angers, desires and dreams. It focuses secondarily on their relationship to family, neighborhood, workplace, social and political institutions and market place. In short, it is a survey based on the principle of bottom up rather than that of top down. Bottom up in the sense of adopting the down-to-earth perspective (Rose, 1989).

Most importantly, however, the AsiaBarometer is fundamentally different from other Asia barometers such as the Social Weather Stations barometers, the Korea Democracy Barometers and the East Asia Democracy Barometers have all originated from the Third Wave democratization of the last quarter of the last century in such countries as the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan. In a good contrast, the AsiaBarometer originates from the genuinely academic interest in the daily lives, views and sentiments

of ordinary people in Asia as registered in survey data. I was shocked to find its paucity when I was writing about the research infrastructure for social and behavioral sciences in Asia for the international Encyclopaedia for Social and Behavioral Sciences (Inoguchi 2002b). The very dynamic and divergent nature of daily lives in Asia in an era of globalization needs to be registered and subjected to systemic empirical analysis. As someone who has studied a few Asian languages including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Indonesian (along with Japanese, my native tongue, English, French, German, and Russian), it was quite natural for me to come up with the idea of the AsiaBarometer. Furthermore, the AsiaBarometer idea has been successfully tested in another form as the Asia-Europe survey on globalization and political cultures of democracy. This project conducted an 18 country survey, nine in Asia and nine in Europe in 2000 (Inoguchi, 2003). This survey has reinforced the critical need to conduct surveys in a regular form.

The AsiaBarometer distinguishes itself from many others in that it makes utmost efforts to be sensitive to cultures and languages. First, focus groups are conducted where deemed necessary. Second, the English language questionnaire and the questionnaires in local languages are thoroughly compared and discussed including those familiar with both. Third, local academics participate in questionnaire formulation and data analysis. In short, the AsiaBarometer tries to be culturally fluent as a whole.

More operationally, the AsiaBarometer is headquartered at the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo. It is funded by a number of sources: business firms, the University of Tokyo, the Ministry of Education and Science, and a few foundations. Its surveys are conducted by the Gallup International networks coordinated by the Nippon Research Center. Its predecessor, the Asia-Europe Survey, an 18 country survey, was conducted in 2000, covering nine Asian countries in East and Southeast Asia with focus on norms and values. The AsiaBarometer is a direct and extended successor to the Asia-Europe Survey with a shift in focus from norms and values in the Eurasian Continent to daily lives of ordinary people in Asia. Some results of the Asia-Europe Survey have been published in English and in Japanese although its definitive products are to get published in a couple of year's time (Blondel/Inoguchi, 2002; Inoguchi, forthcoming a; Inoguchi, forthcoming b; Inoguchi, forthcoming c). The Asia Barometer is to be conducted every year in 20 countries in East, Southeast, South and Central Asia at least for the next 10 years. It is an ambitious project. It is also a project worth

undertaking.

In what follows I will give first the rationale and promises of the AsiaBarometer ; second, I will discuss three principles of questionnaire formulation which the AsiaBarometer wants to observe as much as possible; third, I will summarize the questions by four clusters; lastly , I will discuss briefly how the AsiaBarometer gauges three potentials of Asia: developmental, democratic and regionalizing potentials.

2. Rationale and Promises of the AsiaBarometer

Intra-regional interactions in Asia have been deepening and broadening much faster than anticipated (Inoguchi 2002a). Interdependence has progressed considerably in the economic sphere, especially in manufacturing. Reciprocal market entry has become quite active in the service sector as well. Japanese *anime* now dominate the Asian animated-film market. In 2003 *Spirited Away*, an animation film, earned an Oscar award. And Korean kimchi has emerged as the top-selling type of pickled food in many Japanese supermarkets.

A similar trend can be seen in the world of politics. Two decades ago, summit talks between Japanese and other Asian leaders occurred only once or twice a year. But by 2000 such meetings had increased 20-fold. There has been a dramatic increase in the level of interaction among Asian political leaders. Representatives of countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations now gather for as many as 300 meetings a year at various levels.

There is no denying that this broadening and tightening of regional interdependence in Asia has benefited both individual countries and the region as a whole. This is corroborated by the region's economic development and relative stability in recent years. To promote further regional growth and engender greater mutual benefits, however, there must also be closer contact in the field of scholarship. Unfortunately, Asia suffers from a decisive lack of a strategy to build a common academic infrastructure (Inoguchi, 2002b). What sort of an intellectual framework would be useful?

A handy model is the Eurobarometer, an ongoing series of large-scale surveys of public opinion within the European Union. I advocate establishing the Asian equivalent – the AsiaBarometer. It is important, however, to stress one major difference between them. The AsiaBarometer is run not by the inter governmental organization like the European

Union, but by non governmental academics. This, I am convinced, would not only result in huge advances in scholarly research in Asia but also make major contributions to indirectly bringing about economic prosperity and political stability.

2.1. Knowledge Begets Prosperity

First let us consider how a regional survey of public opinion would benefit businesses. Opinion polls generally gather information, albeit limited, about the socioeconomic background of respondents including such items as age, gender, occupation, education, income, and family. And it is possible to use them anonymously to collect information about people's values and norms, along with their outlook on a variety of basic subjects, such as life and death, work, the family, society, politics, science and technology, gender and international affairs. Knowing better under certain conditions begets trust and social capital, which in turn became a foundation of wealth accumulation (Fukuyama, 1997; Inoguchi, 2002c).

A system of regional surveys covering topics like these would make it possible for companies to assemble basic data on income levels, consumer preferences, and lifestyles with which to formulate strategies for product development, manufacturing, and marketing and to identify the scale and location of target markets. Such an informational infrastructure would surely be a boon to business companies in East and Southeast Asia, many of which have been frustrated by the sluggish domestic economy and yet remain stuck in it because they do not have a good grasp of markets elsewhere in Asia.

The results could be used for analyses that go beyond country-by-country breakdowns to consider region wide patterns based on income level, city size, occupation, generation, age group, lifestyle, level of awareness about environmental and human-rights issues, and so forth. Eventually such surveys would enable companies to look at the entire region as a single large market.

One potential stumbling block could be the difficulty of accessing the data. Opinion polls are already conducted in many Asian countries, but the ideas, facilities and services for sharing the results have yet to be developed more fully.

When we consider Asia's increasingly high income levels and mostly robust economic growth, it is remarkable how little social data is available concerning the entire Asian

region as a whole. Needless to say, there have been similar attempts but sparingly more limited including Yun-han Chu's *East Asia Barometer* and Doh Chull Shin's *Korean Barometer*, both focusing on democracy and democratization. Much the same applies to Japan where the results of costly opinion surveys are generally used just once and then discarded. There has, to be sure, been a sharp rise in the number of surveys that are administered periodically in Japan and whole results are publicly disclosed, such as the Japanese General Social Surveys, but even these are marred by the fact that virtually all of them are terminated before very long and that the facilities and services to enable shared use of the results remain to be vigorously consolidated.

A foundation for enduring regional prosperity could be built if such shortcomings in the availability of social data could be overcome in Asia as a whole. North America and Western Europe have gone ahead in this regard. The strength of many Western corporate brands is testimony to the merits of having a vast storehouse of data. An accurate grasp of consumer preferences and lifestyles in Asia as a whole will enable the pinpoint targeting of potential markets. And this should turn Japanese and other Asian firms into even more dynamic, enterprising, and creative entities. The merits of having access to reliable, annually updated facts about a vast market are immeasurable.

Suppose a manufacturer wants to develop a product integrating the functions of a mobile phone, calculator, television set, camera, voice recorder, security device, and car navigator. What sort of potential customers should it target in terms of income bracket, occupational category, and age group? And how large a market should it anticipate? These questions can be hard to answer accurately, but with the AsiaBarometer, a set of common region wide questions could be formulated to obtain the required information.

The weather forecasts aired on NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) still tend to focus entirely or largely on Japan. Will it rain in Beijing this afternoon? How hot will it be in Bangkok tomorrow? The Japanese network apparently thinks that its viewers have little interest in knowing the answers to such question. This is in sharp contrast to the weather reports on CNN, for instance, which provide forecasts for major cities all around the world. This U.S. based cable news network is sensitive to the changing needs of its business audience. For example, in 1996, when sources indicated that the U.S. government was on the verge of announcing a partial lifting of its embargo on Cuba, CNN responded the next day by adding Havana to its worldwide weather forecasts.

In an age of globalization, with the pace of business activities accelerating all around the world, the merits of conducting region wide social surveys regularly every year should not be underestimated.

2.2. Knowledge Engenders Stability

The benefits of a regular series of public opinion surveys would go beyond the promotion of economic prosperity. The knowledge obtained from such surveys would also serve as the foundation for greater regional stability. A shared regional perception of how the world is changing would facilitate adaptation to such changes, and this could minimize social upheaval and disintegration. A common perception could also gradually spawn a sense of Asian identity, promoting sentiments of belonging, of ownership, and of attachment toward the region. Furthermore, an increasingly common perception may in a long run foster minimally shared norms and values such as democracy and human rights (Putnam, 1993; Inoguchi, 2002c). Such a shared perception can play an important role in the context of globalization, which is sowing the pockets of instability in countries around the world.

While globalization has the effect of raising overall income levels, it also tends to leave certain individuals, groups, communities, nations, and regions outside the circle of prosperity and push them to the brink of collapse. The concept of global governance has been created as a way of containing these negative consequences of globalization. This refers to efforts aimed at building a global framework – in the absence of a world government – to ensure a certain degree of rule of law, transparency, and accountability so as to enable individuals to pursue their own safety, happiness, and fulfillment (Inoguchi/Bacon, forthcoming).

In order for global governance to function properly, there must be healthy arrangements for the disclosure of information. The AsiaBarometer would, up to a point, serve as a tool for gathering and disclosing information on key topics in this connection, such as the extent to which the rule of law is working to prevent crime and corruption and the objectives and policies according to which businesses, governments, and other socially significant organizations are operating. An accumulation of data gathered regularly every year on a common set of questions throughout Asia would be extremely significant.

Even governments have a hard time accurately ascertaining what citizens think of their policies both because of and despite their policies. The AsiaBarometer operated by an academic, third-party organization could be of great help to them. Some governments might be disinclined to accept the results of opinion polls conducted by a third-party organization, but in most cases it should be possible to overcome their objections by adjusting wordings of questions and other aspects of the survey methodology. Regularly gathered survey results could, moreover, help eliminate the suspicions that states are liable to harbor about other countries; in other words, the AsiaBarometer could serve as a disarming instrument. This is another advantage of having the surveys conducted by a third-party, academic organization.

2.3 Contribution to Scholarship

Finally, and most importantly, there are two major ways in which the AsiaBarometer would have significant consequences for academic research. The first would be to dramatically increase the use of data from Asia in the social sciences. There has been an overwhelming tendency to use data originating from Western countries because of the wealth and ease of use of such information; the AsiaBarometer would help correct this imbalance.

The second would be to raise the standards of social scientific research in Asia to levels comparable to those in the United States and Western Europe, since opinion polls constitute a powerful tool of empirical social science. There are four conditions that must be met for the results of such surveys to be of value to researchers (Inoguchi, 1995; 2002d; forthcoming). These are (1) a reasonable level of political freedom and democracy; (2) a sizable corps of researchers espousing shared academic values; (3) adequate infrastructure to support academic research, including specialist staff and the necessary physical facilities and equipment at universities and research institutes; and (4) a widely accepted system of evaluating academic performance that affects researcher's conduct. These conditions are in the process of being met in increasingly many Asian countries.

How, specifically, could the AsiaBarometer contribute to scholarship? Two positive consequences should emerge from periodically asking the same set of questions throughout Asia and turning the results into a database of essential information widely available to empirical researchers.

The first is that a vast range of Asian social phenomena would become objects of comparative research. Such research up to now has focused on Western countries because of the ready availability of a large pool of data necessary for empirical research in the social sciences – including basic statistics like those for population, occupation, and income; the results of public opinion surveys; and the findings of experiments in social psychology. These countries are way ahead in the scope of their databases in these areas; furthermore, the data is accessible to researchers all around the world.

Sadly, little progress has been achieved toward creating such databases in Japan and other Asian countries, and both the idea of and mechanisms for disseminating data to foreign researchers have been lacking with some notable exceptions. This represents a failure to meet our responsibilities as global citizens. It shows that our gaze has been focused just till recently on our own countries; we have been paying too little attention to trends in other societies and other regions and among humankind in general. This is why we have not developed mechanisms for sharing our data with the rest of the world. An Asian polling institution would greatly broaden the region's intellectual horizons.

The second anticipated consequence is an increase in scholarly research based on a shared awareness of issues (as expressed in the shared list of questions), resulting in a fuller body of scientific knowledge. Surveys targeted just at Japan tend to zero in redundantly often on the complexity or distinctiveness of our country's social structure, political behavior, economic system, or whatever, diminishing the possibility of coming up with propositions that can be generalized beyond just Japan. It is comparative surveys – with such countries as China, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Singapore, Pakistan, South Korea, India, Tajikistan, and Thailand – that are likely to produce propositions that can be generalized across the entire region. Many such findings have been generated for the United States and Western Europe. The polling organization could contribute by triggering a quest for a similar body of knowledge in Asia.

Japan's social scientists would benefit greatly by working together with their Asian colleagues rather than keeping to themselves. For one thing, they would see their works being cited with far greater frequency in the Social Sciences Citation Index. As a forerunner, the Ministry of Education in South Korea has decided that the Social Science Citation Index is a most important criterion for decision on hiring and promotion. Observations of social phenomena in Asia could beget new hypotheses and

enrich the world's body of scientific knowledge. Findings from an isolated Far Eastern island nation, however remarkable they may be, are unlikely to attract much international attention as long as they are seen as emanating from a peculiar "outlier."

The need for a common Asian polling organization is also evident if we consider the historical development of the social sciences in the United States and Europe. The first step in the process by which U.S. social sciences achieved their current position of overwhelming dominance dates back to World War II, when Samuel Stouffer (1945) surveyed morale among American soldiers. The second step was the creation of the Institute of Social Research (Featherman 2003) and of a consortium led by the University of Michigan to enable the sharing of survey results. With these, empirical social scientific research took root in the United States. And the third step was the establishment and development of scholarly journals (like the *American Political Science Review* and many other reputed journals) to serve as vehicles for the publication of researchers' findings and these, based on a strict system of anonymous peer review (Farr and Seidelman 1993, Oren 2003). Developing the social sciences in Asia will require a similar three-stage process.

Europe followed a pattern like that of the United States starting in the 1970s. First, the European Community launched the Eurobarometer surveys with Jean-Jacques Rubier's creative leadership. Second, the European Consortium for Political Research was set up under the leadership of University of Essex Professor Jean Blondel (now a professor emeritus at the European University Institute) (Blondel 2003). And third, the *British Journal of Political Science* was launched – edited by another University of Essex professor, Anthony King – and developed into a leading voice of political research in Europe. Slightly later, the European Consortium for Political Research started to publish its own journal, *European Journal of Political Research*, and more lately another journal, *European Journal of International Relations*.

2.4. Building on Existing Foundations in Japan

Where does Japan stand? Opinion polls have existed for around four decades, and there is a vast accumulation of data (Kojima, 1977). Political research is already at a rather high level (Inoguchi, 2002d). There is, moreover increasing awareness of the need for data sharing with other researchers, although the mechanisms to enable such sharing remain to be vigorously consolidated. Some attempts have been made to manage the

survey data, and joint-use services remain to be dramatically improved. A large bulk of data amassed over the past 40 years has been left to pile up in an ad hoc fashion without being fully used by other researchers.

One bright spot is the start in 2000 of the *Japanese Journal of Political Science* (of which I am the editor), published in English twice a year by Cambridge University Press, followed by the *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, (of which I am the editor), published in English twice a year by Oxford University Press. And various other scholarly periodicals are being created or expanded in Asia. In addition to the above journals, whose editorial offices are located at the University of Tokyo, there is also the *Journal of East Asia Studies* (launched in 2001, with Kim Byung-Kook as the editor, published from Lynne Rienner). And in 2003 the Asian Political and International Studies Association is to be established; it is slated to publish a journal of its own from editorial offices in the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore with Amitav Acharya as editor.

The time is ripening. Having been engaged in empirical political science for the past 30 years, I have often been struck by the unnaturally large disparity between the accumulated wealth of empirical research in Japanese political science and Japan's woefully minimal international presence in the discipline. This has been a source of personal vexation as a political scientist working in Japan. The establishment of an Asian polling organization would not only make a major contribution to the Asian region as a whole but also help rectify the unnatural position Japanese political science finds itself in today (Inoguchi, 2002a).

3. Principles of Questionnaire Formulation

Having provided the rationale and the promise of the AsiaBarometer, I now turn to its principles of questionnaire formation. They are summarized by the following three points:

Principle one: opinion polls cannot penetrate people's minds by being excessively obtrusive.

Principle two: opinion polls cannot focus too much on the peripheral concerns of ordinary people.

Principle three: opinion polls can be most illuminating when they are re-casted and

examined with deft use of Przeworsky/Teune's (1972) two contrasting research designs.

3.1. Minimum Unobtrusiveness

When opinion polls are so often used for marketing, journalistic, academic and policy purposes, one tends to forget one important thing: that they are intrinsically obtrusive to potential interviewees (Campbell/Stamley, 1966). A number of adaptations have been observed to cope with the need to reduce obtrusiveness and to enhance sensitivity while not compromising too much on capturing with as much precision as possible what interviewees have in mind. Here clearly, the need for cultural fluency cannot be overstressed, especially in attempts like the AsiaBarometer. Five examples are mentioned briefly to illustrate this point.

(1) When you are asked how rich or poor you are, some tend to portray themselves as poorer than they really are. If you say you are rich and if that becomes known to others, you are bound to attract jealousy or even to attract tax authorities to tax you more, or, in worst cases, to attract burglars. Hence you tend to say that you are somewhere in the middle. Yanjie Bian's work (1994) on Chinese response proclivity seems to point to the basic correctness of this concern.

(2) When you are asked how happy or unhappy you are, some tend to portray themselves as happier than they really are. If you say you are unhappy, you feel bad because you have been socialized to say happy in the United States. Hirschmann (1970) registers the subtle yet substantial difference between different linguistic cultures. Two Jews, one American and the other German, ran into each other at New York after a long separation. The former asked the latter, "How are you?" The latter replied, "I am happy, aber bin ich nicht so gluecklich." In the United States, you have been socialized to say happy since after all, America is a free country with abundant opportunities.

(3) When you are asked how strongly you are favorably disposed to the view that men are born unequal, you tend to hide yourself in the middle category since you do not want to let your view of this kind of proposition known even to your interviewee. The exceedingly high percentage of Japanese respondents to shoot at the middle response is the case in point. In contrast, I surmise that the majority of interviewees in the United States and Western Europe, being politically correct, respond unfavorably to this question.

(4) When you are asked what is your primary identity, the majority point to their national identity. For instance, 96-98% of Koreans or Thais point to their respective national identity as their primary identity (Inoguchi, 2002e). But some 30% of Japanese replied that they have never thought about it, that they do not bother thinking about it, or that they do not care to answer the question. It may be that Japanese feel more reluctant to answer a context-free question like that than many other people's (Inoguchi, 2002c).

(5) When you are asked how much confidence you have in the government leader, whether he/she is prime minister or president, some tend to reply very positively. American and British tended to reply to the question very positively till sometime in the 1960s. The standard answer was that their political culture is a truly democratic civic culture a la Almond and Verba (1962). I have a less sanguine view of the American and British political cultures in that they contained these cultural streaks that are best characterized as more authoritarian, more conformist, more strongly socialized to be patriotic at least before the 1970s than Almond/Verba(1962) wanted to make us believe. This characterization may be more consistent with Huntington's characterization of America's polity as an essentially Tudor polity (Huntington, 1981).

3.2. Minimum Oddness

It is too easily forgotten to social scientists who play with high sounding norms and abstract concepts that the daily lives of ordinary people are central to them and that politics and economics, let alone international affairs, are peripheral. Bombarding interviewees with barrages of questions the vocabulary of which tend to be odd, strange, abstract, alien, incomprehensible, eerie, or weird at least to bumi putra, the Sons of the soil, does not help survey designers to obtain what they want to tap. This type of concern is terribly important when interviewees are not necessarily exposed to social science-related questions, which is the case by 99%. This concern has led the AsiaBarometer to focus more on the daily lives and concerns of ordinary people and then from these to shift to ask more peripheral questions like democracy and government performance. No less important is the way in which interviewing is made. Whereas in the United States it is common for interviewers to ask interviewees by telephone, it is not common in the rest of the world. Face-to-face interviews are essential. In Russia, it is normal for interviewees to answer their responses at a place where interviewees assemble probably because to be interviewed at home needs to bring an interviewer inside the apartment, an act that is often regarded as potentially

inviting a potential criminal to home. In Malaysia, it is common to respond to questions outside the door of the house but inside the outer door over which there is no roof. Under this circumstance it is simply odd to respond to questions one after another for more than an hour, the meaning of which is too remote to the daily lives of ordinary people. The need to be sensitive to differences in survey culture cannot be over stressed.

3.3. Most Similar/Most Dissimilar Systems Comparisons

By posing most similar/most dissimilar systems comparisons, I do not mean that the AsiaBarometer has adopted this or that design along the line of the methodological advice of Przeworsky/Teune (1972). The AsiaBarometer is designed to cover the entire region of Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. It is a huge region of diversity. It covers a vast area from Tokyo to Tashkent, from Jakarta to Islamabad, from Beijing to Colombo. As a regional barometer, the AsiaBarometer will be the largest in geographical coverage and least homogeneous in terms of key regional features such as lingua franca, colonial heritage, per capita income level, regime characteristics or social capital. Within each of the four sub-regions, many sub-regional characteristics might be more similar while retaining a huge diversity within one society such as China or India. The point I am trying to make is that being conscious of similarity/dissimilarity at or across national, sub-regional or regional levels, one can tap more interesting features such as the growing regionalism within each sub-region (Acharya, 2002; Ravenhill, 2002; Solingen, 1997) or globalization's fragmenting effects within each national unit (Held et al, 2002) in terms of per capita income level or lifestyle or something else.

To sum it all, the AsiaBarometer tries to be as interviewee-friendly and culturally sensitive as possible and to give analysts more scope and space for cross-level and cross-national examinations.

4. Four Distinctive Clusters of Questions

4.1. Daily Lives of Ordinary People

Recording daily lives of ordinary people is placed centrally in the questionnaire (Rose, 1989). The idea behind is that without trying hard to comprehend even a modicum of their daily lives, it would be less productive than otherwise to register the array of social scientists' concerns about their norms, values, identities, their relationship to the society and political action and beliefs tend to be treated rather superficially. Therefore

it would be much more rewarding and productive to base social scientists' interest on daily lives of ordinary people. It is not that daily lives determine the norms, beliefs and action of ordinary people. To ordinary people, the society and public policy, the economy and politics are things normally far far away from their central concerns. True, their daily lives are overshadowed by economic conditions, social configurations, political institutions and public policy. But they do not constitute the core of their life. Asking questions one after another about their peripheral concerns, i.e., those affairs they are not much interested in, is not the best way to understand them. Daily lives of ordinary people must be understood as they are first. This point must be stressed in Asia for two reasons: first, Asia is full of diversity; second, Asia changes fast. There is no other region in the world that is more diverse and fast-changing. Asking about daily lives of ordinary people first plays another role. These questions would make it presumably easier for them to answer those questions about matters more peripheral to them. Daily lives of ordinary people are important furthermore to be asked and answered in comparative settings. Even where social surveys are conducted frequently in a national setting, they tend to have no comparative scope. In many Asian societies, social surveys have been conducted rather frequently for the last quarter of a century. But survey research infrastructure within and across countries have been unabashedly underdeveloped in much of Asia. Despite the mushrooming surveys in Asia such as the Social Weather Stations head quartered in the Philippines (Guerrero, 2003), the Korea Barometers head quartered in South Korea (Shin, 2003), the East Asia Barometers head quartered in Taiwan (Chu, 2003), and this AsiaBarometer head quartered in Japan, covering various parts of Asia, archiving and consortium building across and beyond Asia has not been well-developed. Registering periodically the daily lives of ordinary people in Asia over years, I hope, would trigger the development of social survey and more broadly empirically oriented social science infrastructure in Asia (Featherman, 2003; Inoguchi, 2002b).

4.2. Perceptions and Assessments of their Lives

How ordinary people perceive their own lives is very important in itself and in terms of its ramifications to public policy, role of central government, confidence in institutions etc. How they place their standard of living on the rich-poor continuum, how happy they are with their life, how satisfied they are with their life, what is their life style (Inglehart, 1977, 1997), what are their daily worries, what are their desires and ambitions, what are their deprivations and frustrations---these questions are central to

ordinary people as well as others. Their answers to these questions constitute the core of their lives. Building on the daily lives of ordinary people comes the perception and assessment of ordinary people's concerns and relations to the larger social entities such as patriotism and confidence in government performance (Inoguchi, forthcoming b; forthcoming b; forthcoming c). Since social surveys have been developed mostly in the United States and Western Europe in the latter half of the last century (Featherman, 2001), these perceptions and assessments of ordinary people about their lives and their relationships to the larger social entities have tended to be examined in relation to conducting democratic politics such as voting and elections (Miller et al, 196X; Butler/Stokes, 1966; Watanuki/Miyake, 1979; Miyake, 1985; Kabashima, 1998) . But democratic or otherwise, this cluster of questions is primordial in seeing how they relate to the larger society. These are not just to explain the types of voting behavior and election outcomes.

4.3. Relationships of their Lives to the Larger Social Entities

How do ordinary people relate themselves to the larger society? This is what political scientists and sociologists are most eager to ask questions about. After all, it is not sufficient to relate, for instance, individual economic satisfaction with government support. At least their confidence in government must be placed in the equation linking individual economic satisfaction with government support (Hibbs, 1993). The crux of the matter is how they relate to the larger society. In a similar vein, it is not sufficient to relate individual economic deprivation to anti-Americanism. One needs to bring in how national, ethnic and religious identity is configured in the equation linking economic deprivation and anti-Americanism. In another similar vein, it is not sufficient to relate individual religiosity to preference for non-democracy. One needs to take into account economic deprivation and psychological apprehension in the equation linking religiosity and non-democratic preference.

4.4. Norms, Beliefs, Value Preferences, and Actions

Norms, beliefs, value preferences and actions are those pet items of political scientists and sociologists. Social surveys are a most convenient research instrument to use to examine these items. Hence the accumulation of millions of work on these items examined in the context of democratic politics (Katznelson/Miller, 2002). These items are easiest to ask in a democratic society, but not necessarily in a non-democratic society. Asking about confidence in government is tricky in many societies. In Malaysia and Singapore, for instance, confidence in government is the highest whereas in South

Korea, Taiwan and Japan, confidence in government is the lowest in East and Southeast Asia according to the Asia-Europe Survey conducted in 2000 (Inoguchi, forthcoming b). In the former societies, it is not easy for interviewees to respond to a question negatively as they have been socialized for long not to express views and preferences on politics. They might be suspicious that their responses might as well be relayed to security apparati of a society. Koreans, Taiwanese and Japanese exhibit symptoms of disaffected democracies, most grumpy about democracy of all democracies in the world (Inoguchi, forthcoming b; Pharr/Putnam, 1999). Even in a democratic society like the United States and the United Kingdom, what seems to be occasionally exceeding conformism and patriotism has been registered in surveys conducted in the 1950s and 1960s (Almond/Verba, 1962). By conformism I mean conformism to the belief that the United States is a great established democracy as contrasted in a democracy in the making (Burnham, 1986). By patriotism I mean the swift and solid rally around the flag once war looms large. Having a continuum of democracy in Asia from non-democracy to established democracies, caution cannot be overstressed in comparing responses across societies.

5. Gauging Developmental, Democratic and Regionalizing Potentials

It would be most appropriate to give thoughts on the futures of Asia as the AsiaBarometer is to measure many things in people's minds and hearts. It is my conviction that conducting the AsiaBarometer every year in all parts of Asia would enable us to gauge Asia's potentials of economic development, democratization, and regional integration. In this last section I will give my thoughts to each of the three potentials of Asia in the next half a century.

Economic development in Asia has a vast future. Only in various parts of Asia, most importantly in coastal East, Southeast, and South Asia has economic development begot its self-sustained momentum. Tangible fruits of self-sustained economic development affect merely some ten percent of the total population of Asia. Two giants, China and India, have a long way to go before they can declare that they have reached their self-sustained and mature developmental stage. Vast population and vast space pose a formidable challenge to any engineer of economic development of China and India. Even what looks like more manageable continental Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Myanmar, for instance, need huge investments before one can talk about self-sustained and mature economic development. Some optimists like Andre Gunder Frank(1998) optimistically talk about the coming historic shift of global economic weight to the

Orient notwithstanding, Asia's economic developmental potentials are huge and thus challenging. Where is a most visible turning point in terms of an economic developmental take off stage? In my view, one's desire to purchase a refrigerator in the near future and one's recent acquisition of a refrigerator seem to be a most accurate and convenient indicator of things to come. Food purchasing tends to take a lot of time. No less tangible changes can be detected by the steady increase in the sale of disposable diapers. Use of cloth diapers takes away too much precious time from a mother, a second and indispensable household earner.

Democratization in Asia has a long way to go. Two largest and longest non-Western democracies, Japan and India aside, many remain to be more deeply democratized even in the democratic corridor of coastal East and Southeast Asia. Continental East and Southeast Asia and most of South and Central Asia need far more time before they are democratized. Take China as an example. One can wait patiently believing that once per capita national income goes beyond a certain threshold, democracy is bound to come. Alternatively the Gorbachev syndrome may work. During a transition period the failure to make its policy transparent and accountable to the public like in the case of SARS disease in 2003 would make this process faster. A likely collapse of an accumulating bubble of the Chinese economy in the aftermath of the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 would make it much faster. At any rate, in my view one tangible indicator of democratization in the initial stage is the reverse of two contrasting options to the question, "Generally, do you think people can be trusted or do you think that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? (1) Most people can be trusted; (2) Can't be too careful in dealing with people." More operationally clear is whether a certain question is approved or not to be asked to interviewees by the government. Even before formal democratization takes place, de facto democratization will start creeping in once the government approves the question on confidence in institutions, for instance.

Regionalizing potentials are more difficult to grasp with the questionnaire. Questions on identities, primary and secondary and tertiary, would enable one to be more precise on such potentials once questions about sub-regional identities, such as East Asian, are to be included. Take a look at Japan, Korea and China. Japan has a long way to go before they forge regional identity. Those Japanese who think their Asianness is next important to national identity are some 60% in contrast to the case of Koreans, 96%. Chinese secondary identity seems to go more parochial such as Fukienese and

Siquanese rather than going more regional such as Asian. They seem to stick to the formula of Chinese versus the rest at each level. But if free trade agreements are to be concluded among the three, the picture might as well change fast. Koreans and Chinese are audacious in this regard while Japanese remain cautions in moving in that direction. No less complex pictures may be drawn as to Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia.

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