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Typology of Asian Societies

Bottom-Up Perspective and
Evidence-Based Approach

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Preface

What are the key features of Asian societies? Some adjectives come up immediately: different, diverse, and difficult to characterize in one phrase. Indeed, specialists in geography, anthropology, demography, geology, climatology, agronomy, religious studies, gender studies, sociology, economics, and political science have had so many things to say on this seemingly simple question.

My interest in typologies of Asian societies comes from two sources: Quality of Life (QOL) studies and political science. QOL studies in Asia are relatively new (Inoguchi and Estes, 2017; Shrotryia and Mazumdar, 2017; Mangahas and De Jesus, 2017). They began in Hong Kong and Singapore, gradually diffusing to Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and more recently to China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) societies. The research field into QOL is characterized by an evidence-based approach largely from medical science and psychology. It is noteworthy that QOL studies tend to focus on one Asian society at a time, rather than on a number of societies in Asia. They are interested in the physical and mental aspects of life quality, like weight, height, pulse, blood pressure, heartbeat, with those areas that normally fall under the purview of internal medicine as well as in more mental and neuroscientific aspects of human life. Medical data have tended to be assembled on a country basis with QOL data treated as one or many items in such lists.

It is no less noteworthy that QOL studies have tended to be interested in one composite item of data, like high or medium or low in terms of well-being, health, and happiness. It is largely because QOL studies have tended to follow, curiously enough, the famous opening sentence of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." The search for happiness has led QOL studies to choose one answer by asking a direct question—such as "Overall, how happy are you?"—and then providing six options: very happy, somewhat happy, neither happy nor unhappy, somewhat unhappy, very unhappy, and don't know. It seems that QOL study specialists take the first part of Tolstoy's observation as a primary line of academic enquiry.

If QOL studies have a tendency to search for one composite data, then political science has a tendency to search for an often normatively tinged research strategy of

identifying an ideal type, *à la* Max Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capi-
talism or Aristotelian typology of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy or American
social science-coined bifurcated typology of dictatorship versus democracy, with
varieties of factors causing such diversification.

To make a long story short, as a political scientist, dealing with QOL in Asian
societies east of the Middle East, this book is a presentation of my research and
findings on this topic.

Shibuya, Japan   Takashi Inoguchi

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Acknowledgements

Ever since I vaguely envisaged a research project surrounding what I later called the Asia Barometer Survey in the mid-1970s, it had never occurred to me that the project would take so many years. My modest ambition was that given the already apparent success of the Eurobarometer in the 1970s, an Asia Barometer survey project should stand forth as well. It was in spring 1979 that I asked a bundle of questions to Dr. Jacques-René Rabier at *L'Institut francais d'opinion publique* in Paris. He was one of the founders of the European Community's (which later became the European Union's) Eurobarometer. His advice on questionnaire formulation and institutional building was most inspiring and helpful. I am profoundly grateful to him. But hope was hope. My hope was almost shattered thereafter because securing funds for such a project has been very difficult. The Japanese Ministry of Education's Scientific Research Grant scheme does not have much scope for an Asia-wide empirical survey and analysis project in social science. Its priorities are placed on natural science, medical science, and engineering. It was a bit like being in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* for two decades.

It was Emiko Tomiiye of the Nihon Research Center, a business and market opinion research company, who helped me identify and collect corporate donations. Together, in 2002, we approached some 20-odd business corporations for funding, returning a second time with a request for additional funds. This first group of corporate donations allowed me to carry out the first Asia-wide survey in 2003 in 10 Asian countries. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Ms Tomiiye. In the following year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked me to conduct a similar survey in Asian countries in the way I best felt possible. I followed through with this survey. Again, I express my heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Makio Miyakawa. Then, at long last, in the following year, I was successful in securing a Scientific Research Grant that allowed the project to continue for the next four years. I am genuinely grateful to the Scientific Research Grant committee. The implementation of the project was from 2005 till 2008 in terms of the grant money. The six rounds of the Asia-wide survey were based on a similar questionnaire, although between 5% and 10% of the questions were tailored according to each of the four Asian sub-regions: East,

Jamshed Khan, Nargis Kassenova, Termirlan Moldogaziev, Turtogtoh Janar, Muzaffardjon R. Khudoikulov, Steven R. Reed, Le Hong Giang, Ming Shu, Chua Beng Huat, Ming Sing, David W.F. Huang, Seiji Fujii, Jennifer Santiago Oreta, Azeem Fazwan Ahmad Farouk.

In carrying out a big project like this, diligence and perseverance are indispensable in each phase of securing funding (20 years of "Waiting for Godot"), implementing the surveys within 6 years, publishing four conference proceedings within 6 years, and publishing five monographs (taking 14 years). I was fortunate in reaching this stage of monograph publication thanks to extraordinary colleagues and friends providing me with encouragement, advice and help. Four volumes have already come out with another volume in this AsiaBarometer project awaiting publication in 2022.

These five monographs are as follows:

Shin, Doh Chull and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *The Quality of Life in Confucian Asia: From Physical Happiness to Subjective Well-Being*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.

Inoguchi, Takashi and Seiji Fujii, *The Quality of Life in Asia: A Comparison of Quality of Life in Asia*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2013.

Inoguchi, Takashi and Yasuharu Tokuda, eds., *Trust with Asian Characteristics: Interpersonal and Institutional*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2017.

Inoguchi, Takashi, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty in Asia: Individual Choice under 32 Societal Umbrellas*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2017.

Inoguchi, Takashi, *Typology of Asian Societies: Bottom-Up Perspective and Evidence-Based Approach*, Springer, forthcoming in 2021 or 2022.

A brief note on each of the five monographs is in order. Doh Chull Shin of the University of California, Irvine, introduced me in the 2010s to The International Society for Quality of Life Studies and co-edited the above monograph on how East Asians conceive happiness. I am grateful to him for opening the door to monograph publication thereafter.

Seiji Fujii of the University of Niigata Prefecture (Ph.D. in economics at the University of California, Irvine) carried out virtually all data analysis in the AsiaBarometer Survey project. My second book with Seiji Fujii is the most comprehensive in scope on quality of life in Asia. Until today this represents the only solid evidence-based quality of life analysis covering all of Asia, east of the Middle East, in 32 societies, including the United States, Australia, and Russia, Asia's neighbors. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to him.

Yasuharu Tokuda, MD, MPH, Ph.D., president of Muribushi Okinawa Medical Clinic and Training Center, Okinawa, co-edited the third book on interpersonal and institutional trust. Working with him has enriched my understanding of both types of trust. This book has exposed the weakness of posing abstract questions without providing some concrete examples or situations to frame such questions. Richard Nisbett, a psychologist at the University of Michigan, and Joseph Henrich, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard University, raise such warnings regarding questionnaire formulations.

The fourth book, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty in Asia*, examines empirically how Asians face deteriorating societal and organizational situations, that is, exit, voice and loyalty. Suppose you ask an agency in the bureaucracy for permission to do something. Their

response is to "wait for a while." What would you do? Choose from one of seven options: (1) bribe an official; (2) write a letter; (3) use connections; (4) nothing can be done; (5) wait and hope patiently; (6) act without permission; (7) or don't know. After analyzing 32 societal responses, sharp comparisons are made focusing on respondents from India, China, Japan, the United States, Russia, and Australia.

The fifth book, *Typology of Asian Societies*, argues for both a bottom-up perspective and evidence-based approach. I believe that much of the typologies of Asian societies tend to adopt a top-down perspective and ideal-type approach. By so doing, systematic empirical comparisons and bottom-up perspectives are not appreciated and given due consideration.

In addition to these listed academics, I owe an enormous debt to those who have worked for the project across the four universities I have had affiliations with: the University of Tokyo, Chuo University, the University of Niigata Prefecture, and J. F. Oberlin University, Tokyo. The timing of the Scientific Research Grant came 1 month before my retirement from the University of Tokyo, where I had spent 20 years of waiting. Over the course of the project, I changed university affiliation twice, transitions that posed great challenges to the running of the project. My gratitude is profound to those who helped my project run seamlessly across these changes. The hard work and commitment of others to my project made me more diligent and perseverant in executing the project through its many publications of which this book may be the last.

Scientific Research Grants (#17002002, 2005–2008; #21243010, 2009–2012; 19H00583, 2019–2023) were received at the University of Tokyo, Chuo University, the University of Niigata Prefecture, and J. F. Oberlin University, Tokyo, and were implemented at the last three universities.

I gratefully acknowledge the following publishers and journals for graciously granting permission:

Asia Barometer English Master Questionnaire 2006.

Inoguchi, T., Tanaka, A., Sonoda, S., & Dadabaev, T. (Eds.). (2009). *Human Beliefs and Values in East and Southeast Asia in Transition: 13 Country Profiles on the Basis of the AsiaBarometer Surveys of 2006 and 2007*. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, pp. 265–284.

Table 2.1 List of multilateral treaties covered in the dataset.

Inoguchi, Takashi and Lien Thi Quynh Le (2021) *Digitized Statecraft in Multilateral Treaty Participation: Global Quasi-Legislative Behavior of 193 Sovereign States*, Singapore: Springer Nature, p. 16.

Praise for "*Typology of Asian Societies*"

"I enjoyed reading this book profoundly. He shows it is the outcome as long as a long and slow process of maturing deep ideas and thinking, a least for the last three decades. I fully share the aim announced in the title: Bottom-Up Perspective an Evidence-Based Approach to a Typology of Asian Societies.

Challenging the classical top-down approach taken by Hegel, Marx, Weber et al to define Asia, was a must. But now Inoguchi does it brilliantly, showing the richness and diversity, with no redundancy, on this five confirmed types (Octopus-Cave Society, God-of-Small Things, Society Colonized from Within, Seeming Fractured and Fragmented Divisions of Society, Micro-Monitoring Society, illustrated by 29 nations, while a sixth (Fractured and Fragmented Society) will be waiting to real case testing."

—Miguel E. Basáñez, *Director, Tufts University, The Fletcher School*

"Written by a highly regarded productive Asian quality-of-life scholar, this book presents an innovative approach to the systematic categorization of Asian societies based on the author's pioneering AsianBarometer Surveys. It is a major contribution to our research field."

—Alex C. Michalos, C.M., Ph.D., D. Lett., F.R.S.C. *Professor Emeritus, Political Science University of Northern British Columbia (*Residence: 1506 Kilborn Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1H 6M2, Tel 613 218 1384)

"*Typology of Asian Societies: Bottom-Up Perspective and Evidence-Based Approach,* provides a wealth of information on human beliefs, values and lifestyles in 32 Asian societies, and fulfills the promise of the book's title. Prof. Takashi Inoguchi, an innovative award-winning political scientist, founded the AsiaBarometer in the 1970s, which was the basis for several of his books co-authored with teams of international leaders in survey research. In the 2010s, he worked with colleagues in The International Society for Quality of Life Studies to publish several more books, including this one. Drawing on face-to-face surveys with nationwide random samples, Takashi Inoguchi takes a bottom-up perspective with an evidence-based approach to compare

what publics in these diverse societies value most. He offers a new and comprehensive typology of Asian societies that will guide future research for years to come."

—Holli A. Semetko, *Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Media & International Affairs, Professor of Political Science, Emory University*

"From one of the leading forerunners of cross-country survey projects on East Asia, this is a great book that sheds important light on the life of Asian people, in a meticulous fashion, with bountiful data."

—Zhengxu Wang, Ph.D. *Distinguished Professor, Department of Political Science, Fudan University*

"The new book of Prof. Takashi Inoguchi is a methodological theoretical proposal that seeks to identify the similarities and differences between Asian societies. It is organized in ten chapters and presents two Appendix.

This book seeks to reveal the similarities and differences of Asian societies in terms of key dimensions, examining the power to explain the variation of each dimension and thus typifying each society. Its objective is to generate a typology of Asian societies, based on two original ideas: the type of indicators that are selected to cover the domains, aspects and styles of daily human life (Inoguchi and Fujii, 2013; Shin and Inoguchi, 2008), regardless of social differences in terms of political regimes, economic systems, and historical and cultural background; and the factorial analysis carried out separately for each social sample as well as the rotation that is carried out in a uniform way between societies.

The author explains that to examine the quality of life in Asian societies, it is necessary to adopt a bottom-up approach, however traditional studies that have used such an approach have portrayed individuals and societies in detail and have not necessarily connected the two in a systematic way. Other studies have taken an evidence-based approach, with two weaknesses: responses from local sample populations were used without specifying population size, and massive data was collected.

The AsiaBarometer Survey deploys a framework that ensures both an evidence-based approach and a bottom-up perspective. Evidence-based means that the target population is randomly selected at the national level and response data is collected from face-to-face interviews in the first step. The AsiaBarometer Survey prioritizes discovering the types of Asian societies based on three dimensions: survival, social relations, and dominance of the public sector, differentiating six types of societies. The survival dimension is made up of elements such as housing, standard of living, family income, health, education, and work. The dimension of social relations is composed of elements such as friendships, marriage, neighbors, family life, leisure, and spiritual life. Finally, the public policy dimension is made up of elements such as public security, environmental condition, social welfare system, and democratic system (Inoguchi and Fujii, 2013, pp. 33–36).

Given that human beings are satisfied or dissatisfied with what they define as their daily activities or what the author calls satisfaction with aspects, domains, and styles of daily life, 16 items were used in this study: housing, friendships, marriage, level

of life, family income, health, education, work, neighbors, public security, environmental condition, social welfare system, democratic system, family life, spiritual life, and leisure. This classification arises from quite comprehensive elements in the activities of daily life of ordinary people and are mostly universally observed, regardless of the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of societies.

The author points out that two methodological problems have concerned him throughout his work, one is the question of the survey as conversation, or questions formulated with clear and concise words and questions formulated in a familiar context and using familiar words; and the second is the level of analysis, of adding individual responses to social responses.

Some of the question designers have tended to forget an important aspect of surveys and polls, that is, they are conversations between the question designers and the respondents. Unless the questions are well understood by potential respondents, many of them do not respond or fail to respond. The problem becomes more complex when some simple words are included in the question, such as happiness or quality of life, which are at the same time words of common use and abstract concepts. In this case the author has chosen the use of concrete words instead of abstract words, and instead of decontextualizing words, he used minimally contextualized words.

The author proposed the factorial analysis of each one of the matrices of the 29 Asian societies. The level of analysis problem occurs in relation to the level of sampling and the level of aggregation or synthesis. First, when addressing the problem of choosing respondents, that is, national sampling or global or regional sampling, he chooses national sampling, since he was interested in knowing the similarities and differences between 29 Asian societies. Second, deal with the level of aggregation or synthesis.

Likewise, instead of placing each of the responses of the 29 Asian societies together as one, the author proposes a strategy of factorially analyzing each of the responses of the 29 Asian societies separately, observing that the relationships between the 16 items of satisfaction with daily life varies from one society to another. Holistic and comprehensive understanding rather than analytical and differential understanding is likely to highlight the similarities and differences between the 29 Asian societies more effectively.

In the AsiaBarometer survey, 37 languages were used in 32 types of questionnaires to generate the response data on quality of life. It was carried out in 32 societies: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Nepal, Korea Korea (DPRK), Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Korea (ROK), Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, USA, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The author concludes that satisfaction with the dimensions, aspects and lifestyles is the key to understanding the aggregate configuration of social satisfaction that emerges as a result of factor analysis and its results are called types of society. Likewise, it is observed that in the variables on individual satisfaction with aspects, domains, and styles of daily life there are great differences between the 29 Asian societies, which indicates immense diversities.