

Quality of Life in Asia 1

Takashi Inoguchi  
Seiji Fujii

# The Quality of Life in Asia

A Comparison of Quality of Life in Asia

 Springer

# The Quality of Life in Asia

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## Volume 1

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# Synoptic Outline

This book studies and compares quality of life in 29 countries/societies in Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Korea (South), Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. We utilize the AsiaBarometer Surveys conducted annually from 2003 through 2008. We focus on the notion of subjective quality of life and conceptualize it as two levels, global and domain. After we explain about the AsiaBarometer Survey Project, we explore current country profile, demographics, lifestyles, value priorities, specific life domain assessment, and overall quality of life. We then estimate the independent effects of demographics, lifestyles, value priorities, and life domain assessment on the overall quality of life within each society. As well as comparing the results between nations, we look for key generalized characteristics of life quality for the entire and subregions of Asia.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Asia: Enormous Diversity

It is not an exaggeration to say that Asia is too diverse. Incredible contrasts exist among the 29 societies that this book examines. Demographically, China's population is 1.3 billion and India's is 1.2 billion, whereas the Maldives and Brunei each have populations of roughly 400,000 people. Adult literacy rates range from 28.1% in Afghanistan to 99.5% in Kazakhstan. Life expectancy ranges from 45 years in Afghanistan to 82 years in Japan. Gross domestic product per capita ranges from US\$1,000 in Afghanistan to US\$57,200 in Singapore. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita, measured in metric tons, range from 0 in Afghanistan to 12.8 in Singapore and 12.6 in Kazakhstan. Internet users per 1,000 people range from 79 in Cambodia to 389,000 in China. The civil liberties index (Freedom House) ranges from 7 in Myanmar to 2 in Japan.

Not only in terms of these, more or less, easily measurable indicators of people's lives, but also in terms of self-assessed happiness, enormous diversity exists. Those respondents who assess themselves as very happy are highest in Brunei at 51.2%, the Maldives at 41.3%, and India at 37.4%. In contrast, those respondents who assess themselves as very unhappy are highest in Kyrgyzstan at 11.5%, Kazakhstan at 10.5%, and Nepal at 8.3%.

In terms of daily life priorities, the differences are vast. For instance, in India, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, home, diet, job, and family. In China, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, home, job, medical care, and low crime rates. In Japan, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, family, job, home, and relationships with other persons. In Bangladesh, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, medical care, low crime rates, being devout, and home. In Indonesia, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, diet, home, being devout, and job. In Afghanistan, people prioritize daily life in the order of diet, health, home, being devout, and job. In the Philippines, people prioritize daily life in the order of diet, health, home, job, and family. In Myanmar, people prioritize daily life in the order of health, diet, being devout, home, and job.

All these findings are meant to be illustrative and to argue that diversity is very strong and that Asia needs to be examined with systematic empirical thoroughness. And this is the aim and thrust of the book. Before laying out the ample empirical findings, some major results are previewed first.

1. Asia as a whole is moving upward: East and Southeast Asia faster, Central and South Asia slower.
2. People in East Asia assess their happiness more negatively than their GDP per capita and the human development index (HDI) suggest.
3. People in Southeast Asia assess their happiness more positively than their GDP per capita and the HDI suggest.
4. People in South Asia assess their happiness more positively than their GDP per capita and the HDI suggest.
5. People in Central Asia assess their happiness more negatively than their GDP per capita and the HDI suggest.
6. People in East Asia tend to prioritize materialist or quality of life (QOL)-sustaining factors (such as housing, standard of living, household income, education, and job) in their daily lifestyle.
7. People in more traditional Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Myanmar) tend to prioritize materialist or QOL-sustaining factors in their daily lifestyle.
8. People in more dynamic, more competitive Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam) tend to prioritize post-materialist or QOL-enriching factors (such as friendships, marriage, neighbors, family life, leisure, and spiritual life) in their daily lifestyle.
9. People in state-dominant Southeast Asian societies (Brunei, Singapore, and the Philippines) tend to prioritize their daily lifestyle in harmony with state-imposed constraints (such as public safety, the condition of the environment, social welfare system, and the democratic system).
10. People in traditional and competitive South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) tend to prioritize traditional or QOL-sustaining factors.
11. People in South Asia whose societies face the challenge of tropical weather systems and have dominant-state structures (Bhutan, the Maldives, and Pakistan) tend to harmonize public sphere factors.
12. People in Central Asia whose societies are more traditional (Afghanistan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) prioritize traditional or QOL-sustaining factors.
13. People in Central Asia whose state structures are dominant (Kazakhstan) tend to harmonize their lives with public sphere factors.
14. People in Central Asia whose societies have more cleavages and are more competitive tend to prioritize QOL-enriching factors (Kyrgyzstan).
15. Standard of living and marriage or being married are important determinants for overall quality of life in Asia.

16. Seniors are less likely to feel happy but more likely to have a sense of accomplishment in Asia.
17. Income is more likely to enhance the feeling of achievement but less likely to enhance the feeling of happiness in Asia.

## 1.2 Asia: Why Is Quality of Life in Asia Important to Examine?

Quality of life is defined as the physical, psychological, and sociological state of being of people. It is broader than happiness because it entails factors such as enjoyment and achievement. Quality of life is also broader than satisfaction because it entails variables such as aspiration and recollection. It is also broader than well-being because quality of life is neutral. It is broader than health because it entails being in the context of one or another factors. Why is quality of life in Asia important to examine? Because, compared to quality of life in North America and Western Europe, quality of life in Asia has not been as comprehensively and systematically examined. The demographic size and diversity of Asia make a thorough empirical examination necessary: Asia is a dynamic and diverse region that is geographically, demographically, economically, politically, and militarily important. The economic development, democratic prospect, and security situation of Asia are hugely volatile and unpredictable in nature. Quality of life is basic in all these three issues. Quality of life is such a comprehensive concept that large-scale, meticulous empirical research is required. In Asia, geographical vastness and diversity have prevented many researchers from designing and implementing large-scale scientific empirical research. This study undertakes such research in a detailed and systematic manner. In the period between 2003 and 2008, one of the coauthors, Takashi Inoguchi, had the opportunity to design and carry out large-scale research with a nationwide random-sampled method in 29 societies in Asia. The thematic focus of the research was “Daily Lives of Ordinary People in Asia.”

The many cultures and people of Asia are experiencing rapid economic growth. Annual GDP is growing rapidly in Singapore at 14.7%, Taiwan at 10.5%, China at 10.3%, Afghanistan at 8.9%, India at 8.3%, and Uzbekistan at 8.2%. Other macro-level data is available on the fact sheet of Appendix A.

Little is known about how the ordinary people of Asia live their lives. Asia was ignored in social sciences for a long time due to a lack of survey data, even though about two-thirds of the world's population lives in this region.

The objective of this book is to fill this void and investigate thematically and empirically the quality of life in 29 Asian countries and societies, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, using the AsiaBarometer Survey data from 2003 to 2008.



This book commemorates the tenth anniversary of the AsiaBarometer. The AsiaBarometer was launched in 2002 when the director Takashi Inoguchi wrote articles with the aim of building the AsiaBarometer Survey Project (Inoguchi 2002a, b, c).

### 1.3 The Notion of Quality of Life and Research Design

Researchers in the field of quality-of-life study have attempted to define the umbrella term “quality of life” in different ways since 1964 (Storrs 1975; Veenhoven 2000). One way to dichotomize the notion of life quality is from the viewpoint of either the objective or subjective (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a; Veenhoven 2000). One approach focuses on objective conditions in which people live, while the other approach considers how they feel about those conditions and other life circumstances (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a).

Following Doh Chull Shin and Inoguchi (2009a), the studies in this volume take the subjective approach of equating quality of life with subjective well-being. We assume that the word “quality” has an evaluative property that admits degrees of desirability or value. Of the various elements and conditions of life experienced and evaluated, only those to which people impute value count toward the parameter of life quality (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a).

Shin and Inoguchi (2009a), in an edited a volume, studied the quality of life in Confucian societies (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan) in a systematic approach by addressing both values and objective conditions of life. The places and environment where people live and the resources and activities that are available to them affect quality of life directly, but such objective conditions of life also affect quality indirectly through a set of values held by the same people (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a). Shin and Inoguchi and their colleagues begin each country/society chapter with a demographic profile of respondents, lifestyles, value priorities, overall quality-of-life assessments measured by happiness, enjoyment, and achievement, specific life domain satisfactions, and the regression analyses to estimate the effects of demographics, lifestyles, value priorities, and domain assessments on overall quality of life (Shin and Inoguchi 2009b).

Shin and Inoguchi (2009a), in their edited volume, conceptualize the quality of life as a multidimensional, multilevel phenomenon. In assessing quality of life, people consider all the things that matter to them and judge the overall quality of their lives as a whole, while at the same time, people choose particular aspects or domains of their lives and judge each of those domains separately (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a). Therefore, the AsiaBarometer asked two sets of questions. The first set of three questions taps the overall quality of life in terms of happiness, enjoyment, and accomplishment. The second set uses a variety of questions to tap levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with 16 life domains on a five-point verbal scale. These two sets of questions serve as our indicators of two levels of quality of life, global and domain specific.

Inoguchi and Seiji Fujii (2009) studied the quality of life in Japan and found that, when satisfaction levels for 16 specific life domains are grouped into three life spheres, namely, materialist, post-materialist, and public, none of the domains in the public life sphere statistically nor significantly affect the overall quality of life, while some of the domains in the post-materialist life sphere and a few of those in the materialist life sphere determine the level of overall quality of life in Japan. We intend to extend the analysis about Japan to 29 Asian countries and societies using the AsiaBarometer Survey pooled data from 2003 to 2008. We focus on the relationship between overall quality of life measured by happiness, enjoyment, and achievement and satisfaction levels for the 16 specific life domains.

To find determinants for quality of life, we test three sets of predictors, namely, objective conditions of life, lifestyles, and value priorities (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a). We hypothesize that the quality of life people experience depends on their value preferences and priorities. Under this modeling, we propose that quality of life and the objective conditions of life are separate concepts. People evaluate their life experiences based on their own judgments. Their evaluations also depend on how they compare themselves with other people. Subjective well-being cannot be inferred accurately by objective indicators of life circumstances. Subjective feelings can be measured accurately only by asking people directly to what extent they find their life conditions pleasant or unpleasant, and/or fulfilling or disappointing (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a).

We also postulate that the production of more material goods and services does not necessarily enhance the quality of citizens' lives. Although up to a certain point greater production of such material resources generally does have a favorable impact on people's lives, beyond that point, more production can actually detract from the overall quality of life by causing congestion, pollution, and dehumanization. Thus, enhancing citizen well-being depends less on investment in economic growth and more on policies that promote good governance, liberty, democracy, trust, and public safety (Shin and Inoguchi 2009a).

## 1.4 Organization

Chapter 2 introduces the AsiaBarometer Survey Project. We explain the details about the project including its aim, scope, rationale, principles of questionnaire formulation, future prospects, and the way the AsiaBarometer Survey contributes to scholarship and development of the region of Asia.

Chapter 3 goes over overall evaluations of well-being in Asia. It compares the extent to which people experience feelings of happiness, enjoyment, and achievement in the 29 countries/societies.

Chapter 4 focuses on how people feel about specific life domains. It compares the extent to which they are satisfied or dissatisfied with 16 specific life domains, and it identifies the particular domains and spheres of domains that they find most and least satisfying. The life domains surveyed are housing, friendships, marriage,

standard of living, household income, health, education, job, neighbors, public safety, the condition of the environment, social welfare system, democratic system, family life, leisure, and spiritual life.

Chapter 5 focuses on lifestyles. Specifically, it highlights the various ways in which people live their lives in terms of spending time and money and interacting with other people at home and abroad. It also examines the extent to which respondents access public utilities and digital devices.

Chapter 6 analyzes how people prioritize their values. It identifies distinct value orientations through an examination of which resources and activities respondents value above all others and examines how value orientations differ significantly among the 29 Asian societies.

Chapter 7 estimates independent effects of demographics, lifestyles, value priorities, and domain assessments on the overall quality of life—happiness, enjoyment, and achievement. We run regressions for each society and for all of Asia using the pooled data.

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## Chapter 2

# The AsiaBarometer Survey Project

### 2.1 Its Aim and Trust

#### 2.1.1 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 the third wave of democratization (Huntington 1991) in East and Southeast Asia, a number of democracy barometers were born. The Korea Democracy Barometer (Shin 2003) and the East Asia Democracy Barometer (Chu 2003) are the most well known of the various democracy barometers (Diamond and Morelino 2004). Needless to say, the Global Democracy Barometer, led by Richard Rose, has been in existence since the end of the Cold War (Rose and Munro 2003). The two oldest, the European Values Study, led by Jan Ker Khofs and Rund Alphons de Moor (Halman et al. 2007), and the World Values Survey, led by Ronald Inglehart et al. (1998), were launched in the 1960s and continue until today.

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 all their worries, anger, desires, and dreams. It focuses secondarily on their relationship to family, neighborhood, workplace, social and political institutions, and marketplace. 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 a down-to-earth perspective (Rose 1989).

Most importantly, however, the AsiaBarometer is fundamentally different from other Asia barometers, such as the Social Weather Stations barometer, the Korea Democracy Barometer, and the East Asia Democracy Barometer, which all originated from the third wave of democratization in the last quarter of the last century in countries, such as the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. In a good contrast, the AsiaBarometer originates from a genuine academic interest in the daily lives,

views, and sentiments of ordinary people in Asia as registered in survey data. One of the coauthors, Takashi Inoguchi, was shocked to find a paucity of information in this area when he wrote 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. In a meeting with the founder of the Eurobarometer, Jean-Jacques Rabier, at the Institut français d'opinion publique in Paris, Inoguchi was inspired by how much regular surveys reveal about how human beings think and act; Inoguchi wanted to seize the opportunity to conduct such a survey in Asia. Also, as someone who has studied several Asian languages, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Indonesian (as well as English, French, German, and Russian, not to mention his native tongue of Japanese), the AsiaBarometer was the natural next step in the formulation of research projects for Inoguchi. Furthermore, the AsiaBarometer idea had 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 countries in East and Southeast Asia and nine countries in Europe, in 2000 (Inoguchi 2003a). The ASES (Asia-Europe Survey) project produced such volumes as Blondel and Inoguchi (2006), Inoguchi and Blondel (Inoguchi and Blondel 2008), and Inoguchi and Marsh (2007). This survey reinforced the critical need to conduct surveys on a regular format.

The AsiaBarometer distinguishes itself from many others in that it makes the utmost efforts to be sensitive to cultures and languages. The first step is to conduct focus groups where deemed necessary. The next step is to thoroughly compare and discuss the English language questionnaire and the questionnaires in local languages, which always include those familiar with both languages. The third step is to have local academics participate in questionnaire formulation and data analysis. In short, the AsiaBarometer tries to be as culturally and linguistically fluent as possible.

The operation of the AsiaBarometer was headquartered at the Institute of Oriental Culture at University of Tokyo before 2003. It is funded by a number of sources: business firms, the University of Tokyo, the Ministry of Education and Science, and a few foundations. Coordinated by the Nippon Research Center, the Gallup International networks conduct the AsiaBarometer Surveys. The predecessor of the AsiaBarometer, the Asia-Europe Survey, focused 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. The AsiaBarometer was conducted on an annual basis between 2003 and 2008 in 32 countries in East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia. It was an ambitious project. It was also a project worth undertaking.

### ***2.1.2 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 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 Academy award. And Korean kimuchi has emerged as the top-selling type of pickled food in many Japanese supermarkets. More systematic, intra-regional trade among Japan, China, and South Korea expanded dramatically with the 1991 lifting of the Western and Japanese embargo against China for its Tiananmen massacre.

Ten years after 1991, intra-regional trade had surpassed overall trade by 50%. In comparison, Western Europe had needed more than 30 years after the Treaty of Rome in 1957 for intra-regional trade to surpass overall trade by 50%.

In the world of politics, a similar trend is detectable. 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. Among Asian political leaders, the level of interaction has dramatically increased. Representatives of countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) now gather for as many as 300 meetings a year at various levels. Although Japan, China, and South Korea are economically interdependent, politically they are intermittently at odds. Only a few years ago they never met regularly, especially in the setting of all three. It was necessary to use a room with three entrances and to have a triangular meeting table to inaugurate a formal meeting among the three states in 2005. Now it has been formally institutionalized to meet regularly without such awkward arrangements and setting.

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 the 2000s. To promote further regional growth and engender greater mutual benefits, however, closer contact in the field of scholarship is a must. Unfortunately, Asia suffers from an absence of strategy to build a common academic infrastructure (Inoguchi 2002b). What sort of an intellectual framework would be useful?

A useful model is the Eurobarometer. It is time-tested large-scale surveys of public opinion within the European Union. We advocate establishing the Asian equivalent—the AsiaBarometer. It is important, however, to stress one major difference between them. The AsiaBarometer is run not by an intergovernmental organization like the European Union but by nongovernmental academics. This, we are convinced, would result not only in huge advances in scholarly research in Asia but also in making contributions to indirectly fostering economic prosperity and political stability.

### 2.1.2.1 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 becomes a foundation of wealth accumulation (Fukuyama 1997; Inoguchi 2002c).

A system of regional surveys that cover topics like these would make it possible for companies to assemble basic data on income levels, consumer preferences, and lifestyles. Equipped with this knowledge, companies could then formulate strategies for product development, manufacturing, and marketing and could also identify the scale and location of target markets. Such an information infrastructure would definitely be a boon to business companies in East and Southeast Asia, many of which have been frustrated by sluggish domestic economies, yet remain stuck 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 for the Asian region as a whole. Needless to say, there have been similar attempts, but more conceptually limited, including Yun-han Chu's *East Asia Barometer* and Doh Chull Shin's *Korean Barometer*, both focusing somewhat narrowly 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 (Osaka University of Commerce and University of Tokyo 2002). Of late, general social surveys have been cooperatively coordinated among Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Yet even these are marred by the fact 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 are 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. In 2010, ASEAN declared its intentions to enhance its connectivity by 2015. ASEAN has espoused from its inception the principle of noninterference in internal affairs. But rising developmental momentum and the

tide of globalization have been so strong that intra-regional connectivity needs to be enhanced to help the region acquire additional efficiency and strength.

Suppose a manufacturer wants to develop a product that integrates 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 are difficult 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 such information. This is in sharp contrast to the weather reports on CNN, for instance, which provides forecasts for major cities all around the world. This US-based cable news network is sensitive to the changing needs of its business audience. For example, in 1996, when sources indicated that the US 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.

### 2.1.2.2 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 the long run foster minimally shared norms and values, such as democracy and human rights (Putnam 1993; Inoguchi 2002c). Such shared perception can play an important role in the context of globalization, which is sowing the seeds of instability in countries around the world. Antiterrorist monitoring and networking have been developed in the East and Southeast Asian regions after the terrorist event on September 11, 2001, and the Bali bombing in 2005.

Although 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 to build 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 and Bacon 2003). Income gaps, among other kinds of gaps, between rich and poor within China are well known. Another gap is between regular and irregular workers. The latter migrated to cities without being able to transfer their residence permits, thus leaving them vulnerable as a social group that is segregated and discriminated against in China. But their predicament is not reflected in national economic statistics. Survey-aided research would assist immensely in this regard.

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 to gather and disclose information on key topics, 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 difficult 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. Suppose you ask a question about confidence in social institutions in countries that are characterized as military dictatorship and one such social institution is the military, then this might be problematic for the government. But, in most cases, it should be possible to overcome the government's objections by adjusting the wording of questions and other aspects of the survey methodology. The experience of the AsiaBarometer Survey in the 2000s tells us that the number of cases in which the deletion of a question deemed inappropriate by local authorities is required has decreased visibly over the years. It appears that governments have realized that academic third-party organizations may not be necessarily a "bad guy." Rather they appear to have gained an appreciation for being well informed about their citizenry's daily lives and perceptions of social relations, social institutions, and the government. Regularly gathered survey results could, moreover, help eliminate the suspicions that states tend 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 an academic third-party organization.

### **2.1.2.3 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 that originates in 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, as opinion polls constitute a powerful tool of empirical social science. Four conditions must

be met for the results of such surveys to be of value to researchers (Inoguchi 1995, 2002d). 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 specialized 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 increasingly being met in many Asian countries.

How, specifically, does 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 until 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 dramatically 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 until recently on our own countries; we have been paying too little attention to trends in other societies, 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 targeting Japan tend to zero in redundantly on the complexity or distinctiveness of Japan'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 instructed that the Social Sciences Citation Index be the most important criterion for decisions on