Multi-Country Surveys as a Policy Instrument in the New Globalized World of 21st Century: Reflections on 10 years of Asia Barometer

Takashi Inoguchi

University of Tokyo
University of Niigata Prefecture

1.   Introduction

The AsiaBarometer is the largest ever comparative survey in Asia, covering East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia (Inoguchi/Fujii, 2009 and forthcoming in 2012). The conducting   of national sample surveys in the entire continent of Asia for a period of six years has never been done before and would not be feasible for some time in the near future except by the AsiaBarometer.   The AsiaBarometer distinguishes itself from others in two important respects: (1) it covers the entire Asian countries of 31 excepting Timor Leste and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; (2) it focuses on daily lives of ordinary Asian peoples plus peoples of three adjacent countries, Russia, Australia, and the United States.   The AsiaBarometer is something called an Asia quality of life survey.   Asia is such a huge space of enormous diversity and dynamism---geographic, cultural, economic, political, linguistic and other terms. In geographical terms, East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldieves and Afghanistan), and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyztan, Tajikistan Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia). In cultural terms, five of the eight civilizations Huntington defines in the world thrive in Asia, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism. In political terms, many kinds of political regimes coexist. In the categories used in Democracy Index 2011 by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012), the AsiaBarometer covers four full democracies (Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the United States), 8 flawed democracies (Taiwan, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Mongolia, Malaysia, the Philippines), and 9 hybrid regimes (Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Bhutan, Pakistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal), 10 authoritarian

regimes (Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Laos, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan). In economic terms, Asia contains very high income countries like Japan, Singapore, Brunei, and very low income countries like Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Tajikistan coexist. In linguistic terms, thirty five languages are used to carry out the AsiaBarometer. The AsiaBarometer was executed every year between 2003 and 2008. Each time the AsiaBarometer was executed primarily by sub-region, i.e., East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. In 2003 some subregional representative countries were surveyed. In 2008 big powers were surveyed. In 2004 ASEAN plus Six were surveyed. In 2005 Central and South Asian countries were surveyed. In 2006 broader East Asia was surveyed. In 2007 Southeast Asia was surveyed.

2. What Has Been Accomplished

The principal objective of the AsiaBarometer is to examine the quality of life in Asia. To pursue that objective, I have used face-to-face national sample surveys throughout Asia. To locate daily lives of ordinary people in society, I have included in the questionnaire such questions pertaining to personal health, interpersonal trust and confidence in social institutions, political orientations and international relations. Inclusion of such auxiliary questions enormously helps one to understand the scope and method of the quality of life in immensely diverse societal settings of Asia. This objective has been accomplished by the AsiaBarometer. The description of the accomplishments are divided into three categories, methodological, theoretical and substantive.

Methodologically, the surveys conducted in 29 Asian countries (plus Hong Kong) and 3 Western countries for a period of 6 years allowed for as many as four different types of comparative analysis. They include comparisons within each sub-regions of Asia, between sub-regions, between Asian and Western countries, and of each Asian country over time. By focusing on daily lives of ordinary people in Asia, we have been able to execute surveys of a normal kind, i.e., nation-wide (if cost limiting, geographically prohibiting areas excepted) random sampled (or quota sampled) surveys even where authoritarian regimes, hybrid regimes and flawed democracies amount to 27 political systems in Asia. Yet we have been able to carry out surveys in all of 27 countries because our principle is to accommodate regime's deletion of a certain kinds of questions while asking them to retain the rest of the questionnaire. No one country has rejected our AsiaBarometer when we asked. We did not ask Timor Leste and North Korea to let us carry out the AsiaBarometer. This represents the strategic victory of the

AsiaBarometer when Asia has been changing itself incredibly fast and in a most complex manner. If the AsiaBarometer chooses only full democracies and some of flawed democracies for surveys, dynamics of Asia's democratization cannot be fathomed fully without fast democratizing countries like Thailand and Myanmar. As a matter of fact, we were able to analyze Thai democratization with two surveys prior to and posterior to the Thai military coup d'etat in 2006 (Mikami/Inoguchi, 2010). Also we were able to gauge the subtle but significant changes in degree of happiness and quality of life well before the eve of Myanmar's fledgling democratization (Thein, 2005).

Theoretically, these comparisons made it possible to test a variety of theories, including those of modernization, globalization, the clash of civilizations and the Asian values hypotheses. Building on individual responses on quality of life questions, Inoguchi/Fujii (forthcoming in 2012) has proposed a few society types to the 29 Asian societies in terms of materialism, post-materialism and public sphere dominance. These society types are fruitfully compared to those regime types like that provided by The Economist Intelligence Unit. Again building on the daily life exposure to the tide of globalization, Inoguchi/Uenohara/Ide(2010) are able to prove that globalization enhances political activism rather than reduces it. As far as political activism in daily life is taken as an aspect of democratic participation, our result tell us that globalization enhances democracy. In a similar vein, focusing on the liberalizations aspect of globalization, Inoguchi/Marsh (2009) argues that what citizens regard as key role players of reducing unemployment and other related economic problems is the state, not the global market or multinational companies or international organizations. Turning to the clash of civilizations, Inoguchi/Collet (forthcoming) analyzes public opinion and argues that the clash of civilizations may have reduced its plausibility by the increasing tide of globalization. Rather the clash of values within each society not necessarily between societies is more pronounced (Inoguchi, 2009). Again using quality of life survey data of the Asia-Europe Survey, the predecessor of the AsiaBarometer, the Asian values hypotheses are refuted by Blondel/Inoguchi (2006).

Substantively, the AsiaBarometer has focused on the perceived quality of life among Asians. Most notable findings buttressed by survey data of the AsiaBarometer on the quality of life data include the following three (Inoguchi/Fujii 2011 & forthcoming in 2012). 1) High economic achievers and highly democratic citizens of Japanese, South Koreans and Taiwanese are least happy in Asia and in the world whereas the lowest income getting societies of South Asia are happiest in Asia, suggesting that the roles of

religion and of small communities play in reaching what John Stuart Mills calls the "happiness by the way"; 2) Individual quality of life patterns of prioritizing yield five societal patterns in Asia, with their priorities exhibiting certain mixes of materialism (survival), post-materialism (social relations), public sphere (state dominance.) Here materialism means survival-driven lifestyle, post-materialism mean social relations-driven lifestyle and public sphere dominance means the lifestyle strongly constrained by the state's imposition and regulation (Inoguchi/Fujii, forthcoming in 2012). 3) Deeply rooted in the quality of life aspects of social relations, interpersonal trust and confidence in social institutions are complex phenomena to gauge and assess, prompting me to argue after empirical examinations of trust and confidence that broad historically shaped and accumulated political cultures do a long way in the patterns of reporting of trust and confidence such as belief in human nature such as those preached in Confucianism and Hinduism, individual utilitarian calculus such as that bred under British colonialism, and compliance with social system under communist regimes (Inoguchi, 2004).

2. Underutilized Areas for Survey Materials

First, now under preparation is the policy priority expressed by citizens in 29 countries as to which policy area one should give first priority to, especially pension and defense. The hypothesis named "geriatric peace" by Mark Haas (2009) is being tested. By geriatric peace is meant that as the aged population increases and as the aged population enhances their political voice, their preference is placed on government budget on pension rather than that on defense. The geriatric peace hypothesis testing points to the need to develop more meaningful indicators tapping the socioeconomic characteristics of income, education and occupation and the cultural characteristics of languages and religions. In most Asian countries except for South Asia the longer term demographic trend has already been examined (Inoguchi, 2010). Inoguchi and Fujii (forthcoming) empirically test the geriatric peace hypothesis country by country in Asia. The overall result seems to point to the correctness of the hypothesis. However, their preferences are translated and legislated into government action needs another dose of full research. The distributive dimension of life qualities needs to be analyzed systematically, in order to address the increasingly controversial issue of equality and justice.

Second, one methodological problematique about trust is that without specifying a target of trust can one get a somewhat difficult to use indicator of trust (Hardin, 2005).

Inoguchi (2011), analyzing Chinese and Japanese responses to interpersonal trust, sees what Chinese seem to have in mind when asked about interpersonal trust and what Japanese seem to have in mind when asked about interpersonal trust with the question, "Do you think that people can be trusted or one cannot be too careful about other persons?" Chinese seem to have in mind primarily their family, thus receiving a higher figure of governance whereas Japanese seem to have in mind primarily unfamiliar persons outside the family, thus producing a lower figure of governance. Legatum Prosperity Index (Legatum Institute, 2011) tells us that Chinese have a higher figure in governance like Americans and West Europeans whereas Japanese have a lower figure in this respect primarily because of the higher or lower figure accorded to this question.

Third, linguistically multinational surveys pose a serious question of linguistic sameness. The AsiaBarometer uses English language as the language for the master questionnaire. From the English questionnaire the questionnaires of 35 languages are constructed. Part of difficulties that arise is due to the peculiarity of English language. A good example is: One cannot be too careful to deal with people. This sentence represents double negatives. How can one assure your translation of this sentence into Tamil or Burmese is correct and similarly nuanced? Another example is the different range of choice when one needs to choose one of the five options, very positive, positive, neutral, negative or very negative. Overall do you trust other persons? When many Japanese respondents tend to choose neutral or at least neither very positive nor very negative especially when the context of a question is not sufficiently specified, which is normally the case. This phenomenon makes the task of assuring cross-national linguistic sameness more difficult. To this question I do not see any pragmatic but disciplined answer.

3. Future Prospects

The AsiaBarometer has produced a lot of work, many books, many journal articles.

Most immediately forthcoming is the massive volume entitled *The Mirror That Reflects the Minds of Asian People* (Inoguchi, forthcoming in 2012, in Japanese). One volume of approximately 1500 printed pages, this book brings many articles published in reputed journals on quality of life and is analyzed subjects such as , trust, health, political orientations, international relations. The AsiaBarometer announced its commencement in 2003 with the focus on daily lives of ordinary people covering East, Southeast, South and Central Asia from the very beginning. More focused specialized books using AsiaBarometer data include Inoguchi and Fujii (2010), Inoguchi and Fujii

(forthcoming in 2012), Shin and Inoguchi (2010), Uslaner (2011), Tambyah, Tam and Kau(2011). Reflecting on the AsiaBarometer's products, three agendas need to be addressed. One concerns data analysis while the other concerns the need to consolidate infrastructure for such empirical social science oriented large scale data processing, analysis and storage.

First, the globalized world is not that flat as Friedman (2000) makes us to believe (Inoguchi/Marsh, 2011). More localized, more contextualized and more nuanced data are what we really need.

Second, infrastructure building is slow but steady. Unlike the European Union funded or sponsored polling institutions and academic institutions, Asian institutions do not link each other very much. One positive sign that is encouraging in this regard is the steady increase in the frequency of academic institutions collaborating each other. The AsiaBarometer is a very good example of such practice. Whenever the AsiaBarometer decides to execute surveys in country X, it is normal that locally residing academics are sought after to analyze AsiaBarometer data and write a country profile and analyze relevant subjects. The recently conducted poll to AsiaBarometer users world wide has revealed that the AsiaBarometer should be executed regularly, say every year, and more widely, say including the Middle East and North Africa. This is a tall order given the lowest figure of Asia in terms of organizing regional international institutions which are accorded to exercise its will once decision is legitimately made in institutions.

Third, the sampling methodology of national sampling and global sampling needs to be discussed and executed (Gilani, 2011). By national sampling is meant a normal way of handling surveys using the national unit as given and comparing the national averages or its subgroups. They are called cross-national surveys. By global sampling is meant the global population is divided into numerous sampling blocs proportionate to the population size of each bloc. Thus if one carries out a survey in the ASEAN member countries, their population size vis-a-vis the entire global population determines the number of sampled respondents. Instead of using the same amount of money for Brunei (population size is approximately 300,000) and Indonesia (population size is close to 300 millions), for instance, the global sampling can execute surveys with less costs and with similar scientific credentials.

To encourage the hope for the future in the above discussed two points, I would like to

propose to establish an international journal of social research. When United States edited journals are "autocentric" in the sense that its own competitive dynamics semi-autonomatically often rejects submissions from outside, when European's solidarity of organizing polls with their pooled resources is admirable, one may ponder about publishing a journal of social research attuned to grasp and analyze more localized, more contextualized and more nuanced social behavior.

*I am grateful to Doh Chall Shin for his immensely helpful comments on an earlier draft.

Reference

Inoguchi, Takashi (2011) "What's the Key to Understanding of the "Inscrutability" of Japanese and Chinese? An Empirical Analysis of Social Capital," presented at Senshu University, Tokyo, December 3, 2011.

Inoguchi, Takashi (2009) "Demographic Change and Asian Dynamics: Social and Political Implications," *Asian Economic Policy Review*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp. 142-157.

Inoguchi, Takashi, ed. (forthcoming in 2012) *The Mirror That Reflects the Minds of Asian People*, Tokyo: Nishimura shoten.

Inoguchi, Takashi (forthcoming) "Citizens' Perception of Governments and Assessment of Government Performance in Asia," Papers prepared for presentation at the workshop on Political Parties and Democracy, August 15-16, 2012, Canberra: Australian National University.

Inoguchi, Takashi, Hideaki Uenohara and Hiroko Ide(2008)"Does Globalization Reduce or Enhance Democracy? A micro Analysis Based on an 18 country Cross-national Asia-Europe Survey", *Behaviormetrika*, Vol.35, No.1, January, 2008. Pp73-96

Inoguchi, Takashi and Ian Marsh, ed. (2010) *Globalization, Public Opinion and the State*, London: Routledge.

Inoguchi, Takashi and Seiji Fujii(forthcoming in 2012) *The Quality of Life In Asia: A Comparison Of The quality Of Life in 29 Asian Countries and Societies*; Springer

Inoguchi, Takashi and Seiji Fujii (forthcoming) *Geriatric Peace in Asia.*

Blondel and Inoguchi , ed. (2006) *Political Cultures in Asia and Europe,* London: Routhledge.

Collet, Christian ad Takashi Inoguchi (forthcoming in2012) "Japanese and Chinese Public Opinion: Can Soft Power Makes a Difference? " presented at the Japan Association of International Relations, November 11-13, 2011, Tsukuba, Ibaraki.

Collet, Christian and Takashi Inoguchi (forthcoming) "Is Globalization Undermining the Clash of Civilizations? A Test of Huntington among the Publics of Greater Asia and the Pacific," in *Japanese Journal of Political Science*.

Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) *Democracy Index 2011*, London: Economist Intelligence Unit.

Friedman, Thomas (2000) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Unentangling Globalization*, New York: Anchor.

Gilani, Ijaz Shafiq (2011)*Theory and Practice of Global Surveys.* Islamabad: Gilani Research Foundation.

Goldsmith, Benjamin and Matthew Linley (forthcoming in 2012)"Engaged or Not? Perceptions of Australian Influence among Asian Publics," in *Japanese Journal of Political Science*.

Hardin, Russell (2005) *Trust*, Cambridge: Polity.

Linley, Matthew, James Reilly and Benjamin E. Goldsmith (forthcoming)"What's Afraid of the Dragon? Asian Mass Publics' Perception of China's Influence," *Japanese Journal of Political Science*.

Mikami, Satoru and Takashi Inoguchi (2010a)"Diagonizing the Micro Foundation of

Democracy in Asia: Evidence from the AsiaBaromter Survey, 2003-2008: Yingwah Chu and Siu-long Wong, eds., *East Asia's New Democracies: Deepening Reversal, Non-liberal Alternatives*, London: Routledge, pp.246-252.

Mikami, Satoru and Takashi Inoguchi (2010b) "Legitimacy and Effectiveness in Thailand, 2003-2007: Perceived Quality of Governance and Its Consequences on Political Beliefs," *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 279-302.

Russell Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann eds., "Clash of Values across Civilizations," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2007.9, pp240-258.

Shin, Doh Chull (2011) *Confucianism and Democratization in East Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shin, Doh Chull and Takashi Inoguchi, eds(2010) *The Quality of Life in Confucian Asia,* Amsterdam: Springer.

Tambiya, Siok Kuan, Tan Soo Jiuan and Kau Ah Keng (2009) *The Well-being of Singaporean: Values, Lifestyles, Satisfaction and Quality of Life,* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company.

Thein, Myat (2005) "Myanmar: Contemporary Life," in Takashi Inoguchi, et al, eds., *Values and Life Style in Urban Asia: A Cross-Cultural Analysis and Sourcebook Based on the AsiaBarometer Survey of 2003*, Tokyo: Akashi shoten, pp. 135-160.

Uslaner, Eric (2011) *Corruption, Inequality and the Rule of Law: The Bulging Pocket Makes the Easy Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.