What is the EASS / EASSDA

**What is the EASS?**

The East Asian Social Survey (EASS, http://www.eassda.org) is a biennial social survey project that purports to produce and disseminate academic survey data sets in East Asia. As a cross-national network of the four General Social Survey (GSS) type surveys in East Asia – the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS), the Korean General Social Survey (KGSS), and the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS) – the EASS is dedicated to the promotion of comparative studies on diverse aspects of social lives in East Asia. Launched in 2003, the EASS is one of the few internationally coordinated social survey data collection efforts, and is truly unique in its East Asian focus.

**FOCUS of the EASS**

The EASS focuses on questions and issues that are commonly relevant to East Asian societies, bringing them together into culturally and theoretically meaningful topics for comparative research. Reliable data production is the key to meet such ends. The EASS emphasizes scientific rigor and cultural comparability in its data collection.

The current institutions participating in the EASS, representing four East Asian societies (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan), are all experienced in their large-scale, GSS-type nationally representative sample surveys, and most of them are also involved in other international collaborative social survey projects, notably the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

One of the most important methodological features of the EASS is that, instead of being conducted as an independent survey, its topical modules are ordinarily integrated into the preexisting survey framework of each country (i.e., CGSS, JGSS, KGSS, and TSCS), just like the ISSP module surveys are normally conducted by their member countries. We believe that such a method greatly widens the scope of data collection and analysis both within and across the East Asian boundaries.

**BIRTH of the EASS**

Principal investigators of GSS-type surveys in East Asia convened together for the first time in Seoul in Nov. 2003 to discuss the possibility of establishing the EASS. A unanimous agreement was reached to launch the EASS, a network of survey research committed to facilitating the understanding of East Asia by means of standardized social surveys in the region. Since its inception, principal investigators have worked very closely together to mold the ideas for the EASS, resulting in the generation of working principles, modular topics and questionnaires, and finally data collection.

**EASSDA (East Asian Social Survey Data Archive)**

In the 2008 General Meeting held in Tokyo, another unanimous agreement was reached to establish the East Asian Social Survey Data Archive (EASSDA; http://www.eassda.org), EASS’s central data archive, at the Academy of East Asian Studies at the Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Korea. The mission of EASSDA is to integrate, harmonize, and archive data sets and related documentation of EASS module surveys so as to distribute and disseminate them to the social science community all over the world.

**OBJECTIVE of the EASSDA**

The EASSDA intends to provide students and scholars in the social science community with integrated EASS data sets. In doing so, the EASSDA endeavors to enable and promote as many comparative studies as possible on diverse topics and issues unique to East Asian society.

**ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research)**

2013 could be recorded as one of the most significant and successful years in the history of EASS as cumulative data sets for the EASS began to be deposited and archived, with full citations, for the first time in the ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political & Social Research; http://www.icpsr.umich.edu), the oldest and most recognized social-science data archive all around the world. Having EASS datasets archived in the ICPSR means that EASS data usage and analysis has extended significantly all over the world. Along with EASS datasets, GSS-type survey datasets in each EASS-participating country (i.e., CGSS, JGSS, and KGSS) were deposited and archived in 2013.
As of June 2017, the EASS has conducted six module surveys in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 respectively, and is now planning to produce harmonized data in the 2016 module.

The first topical module was <Family in East Asia> (2006). In this module, the EASS paid special attention to several aspects of changing families, including fertility, aging, intergenerational support exchanges. The module was developed by the collective endeavor of family specialists in the four countries during both 2004 and 2005. Finalized after repeated conferences, drafting meetings, and pretests in each country, the topics for the <Family> module included marriage, divorce, gender-roles, family lineage, intergenerational support relationships, familism, inheritance, gender preference, filial duty, family solidarity, conjugal relations and power, division of labor in the family, work-family balance, and so on. The integrated and harmonized <Family> module data has already been made readily available in the EASSDA and ICPSR websites and is now completely open to the public. Scholars who participated in the development of the module have presented a number of cross-national analysis results in a series of EASS conferences and meetings held in several different cities in East Asia (Osaka, Seoul, Taipei, Tokyo, and Beijing).

The second topical module was <Globalization and Culture in East Asia> (2008). The <Culture> module contained numerous topics including culture consumption, cultural perception, Confucian virtue, social identification, preference for culture and arts, social distance, attitude towards foreign workers and international-marriage, ethnocentrism, social network, and so forth. The data from the four countries was harmonized, archived, and released globally by the end of 2010.

The third module was named <Health in East Asia> (2010). The EASS was intentionally linked to the <Environment> module of the 2010 ISSP in order to maximize the synergy of fielding two modules at the same time (Note that most EASS members are also ISSP members). Fielding for the module was finished in all four countries and the data was harmonized, archived, and released globally by the end of 2012. Included in the <Health> module are health status (self-rated health, hopelessness, symptoms, chronic illness, etc.), health-related behaviors (smoking, drinking, physical exercise, health checkup, etc.), care-giving and taking, health and social security insurance, alternative medicine, social support and trust, environment, epidemiology, family care need and care management, mental breakdown, and so forth. The data sets collected in each participating country are normally processed and prepared to match the structure of the Standard Setup before they are delivered to the EASSDA for integration, harmonization, and archiving. The first step is the production of the ‘Standard Setup,’ which includes, most importantly, the desired structure of the integrated file, variable names, variable labels, code numbers, value labels, definition of missing values, and the like. The starting point of the production of the ‘Standard Setup’ is the questionnaires of the respective EASS modules and the set of Standard Background Variables (SBV) defined by the EASS. Below are some examples of the documentation for previous modules.

The fifth module was ‘Work Life in East Asia’ and the <Work> module includes topics like work orientation, work-family balance, global economic crisis, social disparity and mobility, and entrepreneurship. EASS members talked about this module as early as Nov. 2011 at the Taipei General Meeting and finalized it in 2013 at the Beijing General Meeting.

Currently, the first EASS module <Family>, is being replicated so that scholars can understand the continuity and changes of familial attitudes in these countries. The harmonized data is expected to be released in the spring of 2018.
GREETINGS FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Greeting from the Principal Investigator of the TSCS

We have conducted the TSCS project for more than 28 years. We first became a member of the International Social Survey Programme in 2001 and then founded the East Asian Social Survey in 2003 together with three other teams. As a member of these two international survey programs, we anticipate that we can improve our surveys through exchanging experiences with survey specialists in other societies.

We would like to take the chance to thank the KGSS for serving as the base of the EASS Data Archive, and are confident that the collaboration will be successful and will benefit the development of survey research and social sciences in East Asia. A conference on health and medical care was held at the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica in August 2012. Five of the seven papers presented in the conference were based on the EASS data. We will make more efforts toward promoting cross-cultural studies in Taiwan.

Greeting from the Principal Investigator of the KGSS

It is remarkable that the EASS has continued for more than 10 years since the first EASS in 2006. It is not a small achievement at least for the KGSS as there have been both funding difficulties and a transition in leadership. From 2016, the EASS in Korea was co-sponsored by Sungkyunkwan University and Seoul National University (Co-PI, Seok-ho Kim). Despite the fact that the KGSS could not conduct the 2014 EASS module on “Work Life in East Asia,” Weidong Wang (China), Noriko Iwai (Japan), Yang-chih Fu (Taiwan) generously understood the situation and fully supported the KGSS in overcoming that difficult period of time. I am thankful for their friendship and willingness to work together to sustain the EASS for the global social science community that uses the data to know more about East Asian countries.

As I write this, there are more than 1,700 requests from all over the world for the EASS data. I thank all the users of the EASS. We genuinely hope the social science community enjoys using the data from the EASS as much as we enjoy collaborating for the EASS. We will continue our efforts to make the EASS a good source of quality data for understanding the cultural continuities and changes in China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea.

Greeting from the Principal Investigator of the JGSS

Back in 1986 when I was studying at Stanford University, my supervisor sighed about the lack of open data sources in Japan. More than 10 years later, the JGSS project was launched at the initiative of Japanese researchers who benefited from GSS data while studying abroad in the 1980s. We advocated the necessity of conducting General Social Surveys regularly in Japan and making the survey data available publicly, so that researchers who are unable to participate in nationwide surveys can access the data for research and educational purposes. We have carried out nine nationwide surveys involving thousands of people, and published more than ten collections of research papers, academic books, and statistical textbooks so far.

The motto of the JGSS Research Center at Osaka University of Commerce is “openness,” “continuity,” “internationality,” and “innovation.” This motto reflects the background behind the establishment of the JGSS project and the efforts we have made. With this motto it was natural for the JGSS project to join the EASS project. We sincerely hope that many scholars in the world utilize EASS data and conduct comparative studies on diverse aspects of lives in East Asia.

Greeting from the Principal Investigator of the CGSS

Since its birth in 2003, the CGSS has been committed to the goals of conducting high-quality household surveys with a nationally representative sample and building a public data archive in China. Meanwhile, we are privileged in being able to collaborate via the EASS and will continue to contribute to this cross-society scholarly program in East Asia.

On behalf of the CGSS, I extend my warmest greetings to the KGSS team for their invaluable service to the EASS Data Archive. This archive will help sociologists and other social scientists around the globe to pursue a data-based scientific analysis of social and cultural life of East Asia, a region of increasing strategic importance to the world in the twenty-first century.

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Introduction and History of the CGSS

The CGSS was born in 2003. After three annual surveys, in 2006 it began incorporating EASS modules in its biennial surveys. The researchers at CGSS have been very pleased with the collaboration among the four East Asian societies—China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan—and have learned a great deal from their EASS friends. In the first three EASS modules (2006 <family>, 2008 <culture>, 2010 <health>), CGSS colleagues did not contribute as much as they should have due to the lack of scholarly expertise, though including China in these modules has been of tremendous importance to the comparative value of the EASS data archive. In the 2012 module on network social capital, however, the CGSS took the lead and wanted to make the highest contribution possible. For this module, a dozen nationally-known experts on social networks and social capital teamed up to produce a module draft of scholarly and comparative significance.

For a research platform and a public data archive of less than ten years, the CGSS has gained ample scholarly fruits in its first wave (2003-2008). The first wave was characterized by a close collaboration between the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the National Survey Research Center of the Renmin University of China. Colleagues from both institutions recognized the long-term value of a CGSS project, combining their separate resources and personnel in conducting five surveys together (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008). Methodologically, we gained valuable experiences in national sampling, comparative advantages and disadvantages of different systems of survey implementation (through scholarly networks, government organizations, and marketing survey companies), questionnaire design, and quality control measures and exercises. These experiences have been reported and analyzed in a widely circulated Chinese-language book, Social Survey Research in Practice: Chinese Experiences and Analyses (Oxford [HK]), or the Chinese mainland version Social Survey Methods and Techniques: Chinese Experiences (Beijing: Social Science Academic Press), co-edited by Yanjie Bian, Lulu Li, and He Cai. Substantively, we have published numerous journal articles on various issues based the CGSS surveys, which have been reflected in a research monograph and three edited books. Finally, the CGSS became a public data archive in 2007, and so far 2003, 2005, and 2006 CGSS datasets have been available online. Since its inauguration of the website, we received 50 data downloading requests a day, with 87% domestic and 13% international.

In 2010 the CGSS entered its second wave, of which our expectation became even higher. We have redrawn the sample, maintained the sample size of 10,000 households, standardized our background variables, and established an international advisory committee to oversee the quality of the CGSS. One persistent feature of future CGSS surveys will be to incorporate both EASS and ISSP modules in its biennial surveys. To our EASS colleagues, we are truly looking forward to the mutually rewarding years ahead.

Introduction and History of the JGSS

The JGSS research project started in the fall of 1998, and had been designated as a “Key institute on the frontiers of academic projects” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter MEXT) through 2 phases for 10 years. The Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS) Research Center at Osaka University of Commerce was accredited by the Minister of MEXT as a Joint Usage/Research Center in October 2008, and renewed in April 2013. The designation of “Joint Usage/Research Center” is given to research institutions attached to universities that are recognized as being able to make a meaningful contribution to academic development by sharing their resources with external researchers. At the JGSS Research Center, we invite social scientists to submit research issues they have in mind, screen the research issues submitted, and conduct social surveys to collect the data necessary to explore and investigate such issues.

Specifically, the Center implements nationwide social survey biennially and supports joint researchers in analyzing data and reporting their research findings, as well as provides opportunities of data analysis among researchers all over the world by depositing its data to both domestic and foreign data archives. Through these activities, JGSS Research Center aims to promote joint research by both Japanese and foreign researchers, to grasp reality and trend of Japanese society, and to clarify position of Japanese society in the world.
Introduction and History of the KGSS

The Korean General Social Survey (KGSS) is an academic social survey of Korean household members conducted annually by the Survey Research Center (SRC) at Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Korea. The KGSS adopts the latest GSS of the NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago as a model survey. Similar to the GSS and GSS-type surveys all over the world, the KGSS integrates the core questions and internationally coordinated topical modules, such as the ISSP and the EASS, into a single survey framework. The KGSS was created in 2003 and has continued to produce and disseminate high quality survey data sets every year since 2003. Over the past 14 years, the KGSS has interviewed 18,605 respondents and has collected 3,164 variables. The KGSS was funded by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) from 2003 to 2014 and the Academy of East Asian Studies at the Sungkyunkwan University from 2003 to present. Consistent with the requirements and practices of the ISSP, EASS, and GSS-type surveys all over the world, the sample for the KGSS is a nationally representative sample drawn by full probability sampling procedures. Structured face-to-face in-depth interviews are administered by thousands of trained student interviewers (N=2,311) to the selected sample. In the wave of globalization in the area of academic social surveys, the KGSS has enjoyed the strong support of scholars and institutions from both inside and outside academia all around the world.

Introduction and History of the TSCS

Taiwan has witnessed profound social changes since the lifting of martial law in the 1980s. The Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS) tracks the long-term trends of these changes and provides insight into them through national representative survey data on various topics. Since the first nation-wide survey completed in 1985, this long-term, cross-sectional survey project has followed 5-year cycles that rotate selective modules in order to capture the time-series of social changes. As of 2013, the TSCS has accumulated 52 surveys. Many of these surveys carry repetitive modules that have run through up to four cycles of survey operations, which enable researchers to further understand social change from longitudinal perspectives. With approximately 10,900 face-to-face interviews completed over the past 28 years, the TSCS has become the largest survey series among all of the General Social Surveys in the world.

The TSCS has been based at the Academia Sinica, jointly operated by the Institute of Sociology and the Center for Survey Research, RCHSS. All survey data have been archived in both institutes and are available for free and instant download from their respective websites to the general public. Through this generous policy of data release, scholars and students have been able to employ the data for their research and have made significant contributions to the scholarly world. As of the end of 2013, TSCS data had been the basis for at least 451 conference papers, 377 journal articles, 141 book chapters, 265 master’s theses, and 36 doctoral dissertations.

In addition to following the data release policy and an open-door policy that asks for survey modules and items from domestic scholars, the TSCS team also cooperates with the international community in designing international comparative surveys. In 1996, the TSCS participated in a three-society, comparative survey project with China and South Korea. Since 2002, the TSCS has been an active member in both of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the East Asian Social Survey (EASS). In the wave of the globalization of social surveys, not only will the TSCS continue to cover its major national research agenda, but it will also aim to present and demonstrate the characteristics of Taiwanese social changes by incorporating both ISSP and EASS modules into the surveys. Such a combination of local, regional, and global research interests should preserve the grand tradition of the TSCS while it expands into the international community.
First-time EASSDA users are expected to create EASS accounts and log in. To obtain an EASSDA account, each user is required to provide personal information and create an ID and password. EASSDA membership is available only to individuals. Individual members include students, scholars, and researchers. To become a member, please fill out the User Registration Form.

After logging in, the user is encouraged to fill out the Data Request Form. The EASSDA will review the submitted data request form and inform the user on how to access the EASS data. Users should agree to the User Agreement after submitting the Data Request Form. Users can receive data from the EASSDA by direct download only.

### Data Access

Access to the studies’ descriptions, method reports, questionnaires, and other related documentation is free and does not require registration. However, in order to download the data sets, users are expected to go through data access procedures shown below.

- **Login**
  - First-time EASSDA users are encouraged to create an EASS account and log into one’s own account. To obtain an EASSDA account, each user is required to provide personal information and create an ID and password.
  - EASSDA membership is available only to individuals. Individual members include students, scholars, and researchers. To become a member, please fill out the Registration Form.

- **Data Request Form**
  - After logging in, users are expected to fill out the Data Request Form. The EASSDA will review the submitted data requests ASAP and inform the user on how to gain access to EASS data.

- **Download**
  - Users are encouraged to agree to the User Agreement after submitting the Data Request Form. They can receive data from the EASSDA by means of a direct download only.

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(1) 2006 <Family> Data
The EASSDA released the data for EASS’s 1st (2006) module, “Families in East Asia,” on Jan. 1, 2009. The integrated and harmonized data files are readily available after submitting the “Data Request Form” on the website.

(2) 2008 <Culture> Data
Data for the EASS’s 2nd module, “Culture and Globalization in East Asia,” was released Jan. 1, 2011 and the harmonized file is available on the website.

(3) 2010 <Health> Data
The EASS’s 3rd module, “Health in East Asia,” was fielded in each of the four countries and the data was released globally Jan. 1, 2013.

(4) 2012 <Network Social Capital> Data
Questionnaires for the EASS’s 4th module, “Network Social Capital in East Asia,” were finalized in the 2011 General Meeting in Taipei, Nov. 2011. Fielding for the module was completed in 2012 and the data sets were archived and released by Jan. 1st, 2015.

(5) 2014 <Work> Module
The modular topic for the EASS’s 5th module was decided to be ‘Work Life in East Asia at the 2011 General Meeting (Taipei, Nov., 2011). Korea could not conduct the 2014 module.

(6) 2016 <Family> Module
The 2016 EASS module’s harmonization is in progress.
• Dec. 2003. Representatives of JGSS, KGSS, TSCS Convened for the (EASS Preparation Meeting) at Sungkyunkwan Univ., Seoul, to Talk about Launching the EASS

• May 2004. KGSS Proposed to Organize a Session, “General Social Surveys in East Asia,” at the IIS (International Institute of Sociology) in Beijing

• June 2004. EASS Drafting Meeting (Family module) in Beijing

• Nov. 2004. EASS Inaugural General Meeting and Academic Conference in Seoul

• June 2005. EASS Drafting Meeting (Family module) in Seoul

• Oct. 2005. EASS General Meeting in Osaka

• Nov. 2006. EASS General Meeting in Taipei

• May 2007. EASS Drafting Meeting (Culture module) in Taipei

• July 2007. EASS General Meeting in Hong Kong

• Nov. 2007. EASS Drafting Meeting (Culture module) in Osaka

• Mar. 2008. Conference on “Data Archives and Their Prospects in East Asia” and EASS Drafting Meeting (Health module) in Tokyo

• June 2008. JGSS Symposium (Development on EASS: Result on 2006 Family Module) and EASS Drafting Meeting (Health module) in Osaka

• Nov. 2008. KGSS–EASS Conference (Family and Social Life in East Asia) and EASS General Meeting in Seoul

• May 2009. EASS Drafting Meeting (Health module) in Beijing

• Nov. 2009. EASS General Meeting and TSCS Seminar in Taipei

• May 2010. EASS Drafting Meeting (Network module) in Seoul

• July 2010. EASS Organized Integrative Session in ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gothenburg, Sweden

• Nov. 2010. EASS General Meeting in Osaka

• May 2011. EASS Drafting Meeting in Osaka

• Sept. 2011. Joint Panel of EASS and Kyoto Univ., Global Center of Excellent Program in ISA RC06 Seminar in Kyoto

• Sept. 2011. EASS Proposed and Organized a Panel in WAPOR Conference in Amsterdam

• Nov. 2011. EASS General Meeting (Network module) in Taipei

• June 2012. JGSS Symposium and EASS Drafting Meeting in Osaka

• Nov. 2012. EASS General Meeting in Xian

• May 2013. EASS Drafting Meeting (Work Life module) and Conference in Seoul

• July 2013. INSNA Conference in Xian

• Oct. 2013. EASS General/Drafting Meeting (Work Life module) in Beijing

• July 2014. EASS General/Drafting Meeting (Work Life module) in Yokohama

• July 2014. EASS Organized Integrative Session in ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama

• Sep. 2015. EASS General Meeting and EASS Symposium in Taipei

• Apr. 2016. EASS General/Drafting Meeting (Family module) in Beijing

• Nov. 2016. EASS Drafting Meeting (Culture module) and International Conference in Seoul

• June. 2017. EASS Drafting Meeting (Culture module) in Osaka
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<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>Names</th>
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