

# **Understanding the Development of Think Tanks in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan**

Patrick Köllner, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies and University of Hamburg

Xufeng Zhu, Tsinghua University

Pascal Abb, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies

## **Abstract**

Many new think tanks have emerged in East Asia in recent decades. The region is home to highly diverse and in some cases very vibrant environments for think-tank development. While there are some commonalities among think tanks in East Asia in terms of the models used at the time of their establishment, there is no uniform pattern of think-tank development in the region that can be traced back to the operations of developmental states. This Special Issue explores the driving forces of and the challenges to think-tank development in three specific East Asian settings: Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan. In particular, the experience with think-tank development in Mainland China raises the necessity of reconsidering prevailing conceptions that think tanks can only prosper in democracies and when they are independent of the government.

Two broad conclusions emerge from this Special Issue. First, the contributions emphasize that context matters for think-tank development and, more specifically, that national think-tank sectors are greatly influenced by the particular political context in which they exist. Second, the contributions show not only that the specific political context factors that impact the trajectories and traits of East Asian think-tank sectors vary between countries but also that they operate at different interactive levels: (a) at the level of the inter- and transnational context within which think-tank sectors develop; (b) at the level of domestic governmental systems and their openness to external policy advice and other think-tank services; and (c) at the level of individual political leaders interested in engaging with think tanks.

**Keywords:** East Asia, think tanks, context, state, bureaucracy, public policy

## **Introduction**

Think tanks are political actors that operate in many polities across the globe, as well as at the trans- and supranational levels. As “ideas organizations” and “knowledge brokers,” think tanks are involved in shaping the production of political knowledge, not least due to their participation in public and policy-related discourses and networks. Knowledge production always involves the

articulation of perspectives and is part of a competition between particular interests, including those of think-tank funders. Think tanks are arguably not objective or impartial knowledge brokers but rather contribute to the blurring of the boundaries between interest and knowledge. Certainly, as Marco Gonzalez Hernando, Hartwig Pautz and Diane Stone argue, think tanks need to be taken seriously as political actors, given that (a) such organizations have reached a critical mass in many countries; (b) they are established with the explicit mission to inform or influence, either directly or indirectly, government policy; and (c) they seek to “establish themselves as indispensable repositories of expertise, technical skill, professional experience, rational thinking and policy opinion, providing solutions for [policy makers], and content for the media.”<sup>1</sup>

The past few decades have witnessed the emergence of many new think tanks in East Asia (i.e., Northeast and Southeast Asia), which is now home to the largest number of institutes outside North America and Europe. Through still trailing the US by far, the second-largest number of think tanks in any given nation exist today in Mainland China.<sup>2</sup> Despite their proliferation in East Asia, we still know surprisingly little about the functionality and operations of think tanks in this world region. Much of the literature on think tanks has focused on the development, functions, and impact of such organizations in North America and Western Europe, with a particularly strong focus on the US. The pronounced focus in the literature on US-based think tanks, and the concomitant tendency to view the development and roles of think tanks elsewhere through the lens of the very special US experience with such organizations, limits or even distorts our understanding of how think tanks are developing, and acquiring distinct characteristics, globally. The factors that have aided think-tank development in the US, such as numerous points of access to political deliberation and policymaking as well as a tradition of philanthropy, are far less pronounced, if they exist at all, in many East Asian nations, some of which are known for their state-led development models. We thus need to examine what particular contextual conditions in East Asia have shaped the trajectories and traits of think-tank sectors in this world region.

As Erin Zimmerman argues, think tanks in East Asia are “important [but] underappreciated ideational agents [that] have acted as ‘idea brokers’ and ‘policy entrepreneurs’ by facilitating the spread of ideas between the public and the private, and the national and international sectors.”<sup>3</sup> Zimmerman also suggests that opportunities for think tanks in the region to provide policy advice have grown substantially since the early years of this century due to growing demand for such advice and the limited internal capacity of governments themselves to meet this demand.<sup>4</sup> Think tanks and their staffers in East Asia—and elsewhere, of course—may, however, not just serve as providers of policy advice in a more narrow sense but may also “proactively use their cognitive authority to influence policymakers’ decisions on what constitutes a problem” [in the first place] and to help to “produc[e] the background knowledge that underpins social action.”<sup>5</sup> In other words,

think tanks in East Asia and elsewhere contribute to the construction of reality as understood by policy makers. This is arguably one of the main reasons why such organizations in East Asia have been embraced by their counterparts elsewhere—as well as by other international actors.

Given the large number of think tanks operating within and out of this diverse world region, East Asia offers ample opportunity and contextual diversity for reassessing assumptions based particularly on the US experience with think tanks and for developing new analytical approaches and insights grounded in the divergent local experiences with such organizations. The individual contributions to this Special Issue examine the driving forces of think-tank development as well as some of the obstacles and challenges faced by such organizations in three East Asian settings:<sup>6</sup> Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan. The contributions thus cover divergent political regime contexts: an autocracy governed by one party (China) and two democracies with different systems of government (parliamentary in Japan, semi-presidential in Taiwan). A particular focus is placed on Mainland China, which has experienced a think-tank boom triggered by the party-state's recent call, backed by substantial funding, to “strengthen the construction of new types of think tanks with Chinese characteristics.”<sup>7</sup> In terms of theoretical foundations, the articles draw on insights from comparative politics, International Political Economy, and public policy analysis. A certain emphasis on process and ideas tracing reflects the authors' intent to understand the development of national think-tank sectors and/or of policies directed at them.

In the remainder of this introduction to the Special Issue, we illuminate the conceptual and other analytical issues that are germane to the entire set of contributions. In the following section, we survey extant studies on the influence of contextual factors on think-tank development across the globe, before we delve into the East Asia-focused literature to see whether a regional model of think-tank development can be discerned in this world region. The penultimate section summarizes the contributions to this Special Issue, while the final section concludes.

### **Thinking about Think Tanks: Conceptual Issues and Analytical Frameworks**

As Diane Stone notes, “think tank” is a very elastic term that has often been applied in a loose fashion to a welter of organizations and networks such as stand-alone policy research institutes, university departments, informal groupings of scholars, advocacy organizations, consulting firms, and even civil society pressure groups.<sup>8</sup> There are divergent definitions of think tanks in the academic literature, which has also noted the more recent blurring of the policy advice activities of established policy research institutes and of NGOs operating at the national and transnational levels.<sup>9</sup> In the face of the growing hybridization and the great diversity of organizations that label themselves (or get labelled) “think tank,” some scholars—especially those approaching the subject from an interpretative perspective—have eschewed formal definitions of think tanks altogether.<sup>10</sup>

Others have opted for fairly parsimonious, broad definitions. For example, Pascal Abb simply defines think tanks as “public policy research organizations,” i.e., organizations whose research is aimed at influencing policies.<sup>11</sup>

Given the inverse relationship between the intension (meaning, connotation) and extension (referents, coverage) of logically derived, empirically based concepts in the social sciences,<sup>12</sup> we believe that a parsimonious definition of think tanks is most suitable for capturing their variety while still being able to differentiate them sufficiently from organizations such as NGOs, lobby groups, or PR companies. We define think tanks as organizations whose *main mission* is to inform and influence public policy on the basis of research and analysis. We thus concur with Hartwig Pautz and earlier arguments by Stone<sup>13</sup> that particular attributes that have been used to capture the essence of think tanks, such as their nonprofit character or their “independence,” should either be dropped altogether or at least be analytically disentangled.

In view of the remarkable global diversity of think tanks, various scholars have attempted to identify the different types of think tanks.<sup>14</sup> However, the resulting typologies usually suffer from constructional defects in the sense that the types presented (a) are not differentiated from each other on the basis of one clearly defined criterion (inconsistency), (b) do not cover the entire universe of think tanks (non-comprehensiveness), and/or (c) are not mutually exclusive (non-exclusiveness). Moreover, some of types are labelled in a vague or ambiguous manner. One typology that is not beset by such problems and that is arguably universally applicable has been offered by Stone, who distinguishes between different types of think tanks based of their primary institutional affiliation or linkage—namely,

- civil society think tanks established as nonprofit organizations,
- policy research institutes located in or affiliated with a university,
- governmentally created or state-sponsored think tanks,
- corporate-created or business-affiliated think tanks, and
- political party think tanks and think tanks established by candidates running for political office or by former high-ranking policy makers.<sup>15</sup>

Think tanks may thus be linked to civil society (organizations), governments, universities, enterprises, and political parties, as well as to individual politicians or business magnates. As Thomas Medvetz argues in his groundbreaking work on US think tanks—which introduced field theory and a post-positivist relational and topological approach to the study of these organizations—think tanks operate at the interstices of the realms of academia, politics, media, and business. From these realms (or “fields”), think tanks draw distinct forms of capital, such as intellectual authority in the case of

academia. Medvetz has advanced our understanding of the multiple constituencies that think tanks can be part of. He shows that think-tank staffers in the US—though this may well be applicable to other think-tank landscapes—perform a dynamic balancing act, combining the hybrid roles of academic scholars, political aides, policy entrepreneurs, and media specialists.<sup>16</sup>

Divergent perspectives have been offered in the literature to account for what think tanks do. From a neo-pluralist perspective, think tanks have often been characterized, if not idealized, as “bridges between knowledge and power,”<sup>17</sup> operating in a “marketplace of ideas and policy advice.”<sup>18</sup> In order to function as “catalysts for ideas and actions,” think tanks are said to assume a number of specific functions or roles: conducting basic research, providing advice to policy makers, evaluating government programs, facilitating “issue networks” and the exchange of ideas, supplying personnel to the government, and interpreting policies and current events for the media.<sup>19</sup> In a more conceptual vein, Dieter Plehwe points to the “multidirectional transfer capacity” of think tanks in terms of consulting, formatting, and editing, which is necessary for relevance-making, i.e., for “turning academic knowledge into media, policy and other public and private formats.”<sup>20</sup>

Critical observers have emphasized the symbolic, rather than instrumental, functions that think tanks can take on, arguing that they often do little more than provide legitimacy to the existing agendas of policy makers and other elites by providing the “right” evidence and arguments.<sup>21</sup> Some critical scholars understand think tanks as civil society actors in a Gramscian sense, i.e., as organizations embroiled in the struggle for (discursive) hegemony.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, there has been a notable discursive turn in the study of think tanks for some time now, with some scholars zooming in on the role played by think tanks as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse.<sup>23</sup> Whatever perspective is chosen to explain or understand what think tanks do, they need to be taken seriously as political actors in their own right; as part of broader epistemic communities, knowledge regimes,<sup>24</sup> or policy advisory systems<sup>25</sup> at the national level and beyond; and as part of particular discourse or advocacy coalitions.<sup>26</sup>

### **Putting Think Tanks into Context: General Insights and Evidence from East Asia**

While the term think tank is ubiquitous these days, as Stone notes, “its translation into quite different socio-political environments has varied.”<sup>27</sup> Whether think tanks thrive and how they become involved in the making and shaping of policy and politics depends not only on their endogenous capacities but also on the context that they exist and operate in. Frederico Merke and Gino Pauselli note that think tanks “do not exist in a political vacuum but are part of the very fabric of society” in which they exist and operate,<sup>28</sup> while Karthik Nachiappan argues that think tanks are heavily influenced by their institutional environment. In fact, a multitude of contextual factors have been said to potentially impact the development of think tanks and their channels for policy

influence. Based on a review of the literature as well as their own survey work and interviews with think-tank directors, Elizabeth Brown and her colleagues identify four broad sets of primary exogenous factors that can impact think tank proliferation and operations—namely,

- political factors and economic factors (incl. economic growth and degree of liberalization);
- donor factors (general availability of donor funding, funding in terms of democracy assistance, donor influence on research agendas);
- civil society factors (e.g., NGO effectiveness, openness to civil society, public interest in policy issues); and
- intellectual climate (e.g., investment in higher education, institutional capacity for research, media access).<sup>29</sup>

Brown et al. conclude that, overall, political context is of the greatest importance to think tanks. This is in line with arguments put forward by Stone, who suggests that no contextual factors are more important in shaping the development of think-tank systems than the “national political cultures and institutional arrangements [which] strongly determine the type of think tank that takes root and the character of its policy involvement.”<sup>30</sup>

An important aspect in this regard is how much control governments seek to exercise over policy advice, as this affects their openness to external policy advice (and potentially also to other services that think tanks can render). As John Halligan notes, policy advice systems are “subject to preferences which prevail within a political system.” “Open pluralist systems,” as he terms them, offer more access points and are generally more susceptible to external influences, including external policy advice, than “executive-centred systems,” which tend to—or have tended to—place a greater emphasis on policy advice provided by the professional civil service.<sup>31</sup> Despite such seemingly neat distinctions between different governmental systems and their general openness to think tanks’ input, there can, of course, be a great deal of variation within particular systems, either between different policy fields (e.g., security and education), across time (e.g., reflecting the impact of shifts in the zeitgeist or, more specifically, of governance-oriented ideas such as “new public management”), or due to the different personal styles of political leaders and “how they interpret and apply the principles which operate within their systems of government.”<sup>32</sup>

Whereas the above factors mainly affect the “demand” for think-tank services and the nature of competition between such organizations in a given setting, national or otherwise, the development of think tanks in these settings also depends on “supply” factors, i.e., the resources available to them.<sup>33</sup> Access to relevant information, to qualified personnel, and to regular sources of funding—with the latter in turn impacting think tanks’ ability to offer credible career opportunities to

qualified personnel—are key in this regard. Since most think tanks operate as non-profits, they are dependent on outside funding, which for think tanks in developing countries often means donor funding rather than endowments or government funding.<sup>34</sup> A think tank’s size and growth are directly tied to the amount of available funding, while the type of funding (regular allocations from a single source, project-specific funds, permanent endowments, or small-scale donations) impacts its research capacity, organizational autonomy, and ability to engage in long-term planning. Crucially, funding also shapes a think tank’s relationship with its patron(s), which may present think tanks with veritable trade-offs between funding needs and research autonomy. Think tanks also need highly trained staff, and senior researchers often hold PhDs and have first-hand experience in government. While some larger institutes may have their own in-house training programs or the ability to recruit internationally, most think tanks will have to rely on the national university system to provide them with skilled graduates, for which there may be intense competition.<sup>35</sup>

The contributors to this Special Issue build on these general insights and zoom in on the think-tank landscapes in Mainland China, Japan, and Taiwan to explore which specific context factors have affected the traits and trajectories of these think-tank sectors, as well as the ways in which they have done so. The Special Issue thus helps fill a gap in the literature on think tanks, which has not paid sufficient attention to how the development and operations of think tanks in East Asia are related to prevailing political contexts in general and extant political institutions in particular.<sup>36</sup> Before we turn to the individual contributions to this Special Issue, we will briefly review the existing literature on the development of think tanks in East Asia, focusing on the question of whether there is a generalizable “East Asian experience,” or at least recurring patterns, that characterize think-tank development and traditions in this world region.

### *Think Tanks in East Asia*

Most of the extant literature on think tanks in East Asia has focused on the development and characteristics of think-tank systems or particular institutes in individual East Asian countries.<sup>37</sup> Occasionally, studies have also been concerned with the operations of specific forums and Track II mechanisms.<sup>38</sup> Notably, there are only a few studies that discuss the trajectories and traits of think tanks in East Asia at the regional level. A broader regional perspective is taken primarily in the studies, mostly conducted by International Relations scholars, which focus on think-tank networks in Southeast Asia, most prominently the ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), or related Track II mechanisms in the wider Asia-Pacific region.<sup>39</sup>

The scarcity of studies engaging in discussions of think tanks in East Asia as a whole or, for that matter, in intraregional comparisons of think-tank development may be due to two factors. First, on a meta level, this scarcity may reflect the institutionalized fragmentation of area studies on

East Asia. Whereas the widespread use of common languages—English and French in large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Spanish in Latin America, or Arabic in the Middle East—facilitates intraregional comparative work on these areas, scholars working on East Asia are faced with language barriers and tend to focus on phenomena, processes, and outcomes in individual countries.<sup>40</sup> While intraregional comparisons have made some headway in Southeast Asia-related social-science studies,<sup>41</sup> country studies continue to dominate.

A second, more substantive, reason why scholars may have shied away from regional examinations of think-tank development in East Asia may be that uniform think-tank traditions or general patterns of think-tank development in this world region are simply hard to discern. Still, Stone has noted some differences between the think-tank experience in North America and Western Europe and the evolutionary trajectory of think tanks in Asia as a whole. She mentions the later establishment of think tanks in the region—which is, however, hardly surprising, given that many Asian countries only achieved independence during the 1950s and 1960s—and also suggests that “the dividing line between independent, nonprofit or private institutes and the state sector is often very unclear in the Asian context.”<sup>42</sup> Most importantly, Stone argues that Asian think tanks “tend to be state centered rather than societally centered and lack the independence associated with Western bodies.”<sup>43</sup> An example for this are the publicly funded think tanks in the Republic of Korea, which, according to Sung Chull Kim, are “highly susceptible to domestic political dynamics,” as reflected, for example, in the appointment of directors. Kim suggests that these think tanks act not so much as independent public policy advocates but as “knowledge producers” that provide the government, the media, and other interested parties with research and analysis.<sup>44</sup> In a similar vein, Herman Kraft pointed some years ago to the “autonomy dilemma” of Track II diplomacy in Southeast Asia, which had, to his mind, resulted from the fact that some of the newer members of ASEAN-ISIS were government agencies that also tended to behave like government representatives, thus limiting the “potential for critical thinking and, consequently, the quality of analysis and discussion.”<sup>45</sup>

The broadest generalizations regarding the pattern of think-tank development in East Asia have been put forward by Karthik Nachiappan, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ajoy Datta. According to them, regional think-tank development has been characterized by the closeness of many think tanks to the state, and more particularly to state bureaucracies, as well as a pronounced thematic focus of many think tanks on matters of economic development. Nachiappan et al. suggest that think-tank development in the region needs to be understood against the backdrop of the operations of “developmental states” in East Asia, in which capable and socially insulated elite state bureaucracies are said to have orchestrated effective industrial, technological, and corporate development policies.<sup>46</sup>

Regardless of whether earlier characterizations of think tanks in East Asia as governmentally authorized and essentially regime-supporting are by now, at least in part, outdated,<sup>47</sup> there are good reasons to believe that the analytic leverage provided by the “development state” model is insufficient to understand and explain the trajectories and traits of think-tank sectors in East Asia. For one, whereas the state clearly played a major role in guiding the postwar economic transformation of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Mainland China,<sup>48</sup> state developmentalism has not been a universal feature across the region. Moreover, scholarly depictions of the development state model have tended to overestimate state agency and to overlook or play down the divergence of state-society relations in the countries concerned.<sup>49</sup>

In any case, experiences with state developmentalism did not produce uniform effects on the trajectories and traits of the think-tank sectors in East Asia. Whereas, for example, the national bureaucracy in Japan preferred not to rely on external policy advice, effectively constraining the development of well-resourced public-policy-oriented think tanks,<sup>50</sup> the South Korean state went in the other direction, setting up an array of large and generally well-funded governmental research institutes in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s—such as the Korea Development Institute (KDI), the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET), the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) or the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)—that were explicitly tasked with providing input to the country’s industrial, technological, foreign economic, and broader developmental policies.<sup>51</sup> Similar government-backed institutes were established with mandates to focus on policy areas such as foreign affairs and security, national unification, transport, health and social affairs, energy, and labour issues, with senior researchers or executives often assuming government positions, including cabinet-level posts. The situation differed again in Taiwan. Here, a private initiative, the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research (TIER), predated the government-affiliated Chunghwa Institute of Economic Research (CIER) by several years, while the latter was actually modelled on the Korean KDI.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the substantial differences in the use of think tanks by state agencies in exemplars of the developmental state in East Asia, we can note some commonalities among East Asian think tanks in terms of the templates used at the time of their establishment. These commonalities stand out particularly strongly when the origins of think tanks in this world region are juxtaposed with those of think tanks in North America or Western Europe. First, a number of think tanks in East Asia—focusing mainly, but sometimes not solely, on foreign and security affairs—were explicitly modelled on the “old guard” of international studies institutes such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies in the US or Chatham House in the UK. Notably, in East Asia such think tanks tended to be closely connected to governments, ministries, or sometimes powerful individual political patrons by means of institutional ties, funding flows, and/or the secondment of government

officials. As Nachiappan et al. note, those institutes that were set up in the 1960s and 1970s—and sometimes even earlier, such as the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)—held especially “strong links with the state and carried out their tasks as an arm of the bureaucracy.”<sup>53</sup> This effectively limited their scope for dissent and also shaped the functions they were to assume, such as providing platforms for dialogue with foreign visitors, issuing briefing papers, using the media to explain government positions, editing specialized journals, or engaging in Track II diplomacy.

Whereas some of the first-wave think tanks in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Indonesia thus turned to US and UK exemplars as sources of inspiration, a different process of mimetic isomorphism could be observed in the (formerly) socialist countries in East Asia—China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Mongolia—where the Soviet state-run research institutes served as the model to emulate. As Stone mentions, such research institutes were “totally state supported, firmly entrenched in the bureaucratic structure and designed to provide intellectual and analytic support to the state.”<sup>54</sup> A three-tier structure characterizes this model, with academies (of sciences and social sciences) being afforded the “greatest degree of intellectual autonomy” and direct channels to the central government, institutes affiliated with particular ministries, and finally institutes tied to the ruling party.<sup>55</sup> In the Soviet originals and their East Asian transplants, ideological constraints and censorship often limited the spectrum of political analysis and the research agenda, while opportunities for substantive policy impact resulted from the patronage of high-level political leaders.<sup>56</sup> In China, for example, think tanks’ institutional linkages to the central and provincial governments, executive agencies, the Communist Party, and the army shaped their status and channels for policy access. This feature has generally held, despite the growing marketization of the Chinese economy, the emergence of civilian and private think tanks, a dramatic rise in the supply of policy professionals with the capability to influence policy, and a generally expanding intellectual public sphere.<sup>57</sup>

Nachiappan et al. rightly note that think tanks are political products of their time and that such organizations in East Asia “clearly emerged out of and evolved in conjunction with their respective political environments.”<sup>58</sup> Yet despite these authors’ call in 2010 to bring politics back into the study of think-tank development in East Asia by placing the “origins and development [of such organizations] firmly within their political and broader institutional context,” we still lack, with a few exceptions, detailed empirical studies that have heeded this call. Such studies would need to be historically grounded and should analyze how specific political contextual factors, possibly operating in conjunction with other particular context conditions, have affected the trajectories and traits of think-tank sectors in East Asia. The contributions to this Special Issue, which we will now introduce, represent an initial collective attempt to help fill this gap.

## **The Contributions to This Special Issue**

The first two articles in this Special Issue address, from different perspectives, the recent “boom” of Chinese think tanks, i.e., the dramatic increase not only in terms of their number but also in terms of organizational types, funding, media visibility, and high-profile policy initiatives. In the first article, Jane Hayward makes the case for taking China’s think tanks seriously on their own terms and for analyzing them within their particular political context, i.e., one of a powerful party-state undergoing internationalization. She understands internationalization here as the reorganizing of China’s state institutions and social structure for the purpose of integrating with the global capitalist order. According to Hayward, the development of think tanks in China has been intricately bound up with processes underlying the internationalization of policymaking, such as the return of many overseas-educated scholars, fundamental changes in the state’s official policy discourse that reflect China’s integration with the global capitalist order, the embracing of scientific expertise by the state, and the close alliance between China’s new technocratic class and an emerging entrepreneurial class seeking to promote economic reforms.

Hayward argues that by promoting think tanks, China’s policy makers seek not only to improve policymaking processes, but also to further integrate with the transnational technocratic class. Think tanks in China play, according to her, an important role in transmitting the global ideological consensus into Chinese policymaking circles, helping to align domestic policies with its requirements while also adapting it to China’s national conditions. From the perspective of the central government, “new-type think tanks” are seen as pivotal in formulating and planning China’s globally oriented development strategies and helping to shape related global discourses in line with national interests. Hayward also shows how processes of contestation taking place both inside and outside the Chinese state apparatus are reflected in local discourses on think-tank development. Of particular concern here are China’s civil think tanks, over which the government has less control. At the core of this debate is the question of whether corporate donations should be encouraged to allow for the representation of relevant interests or whether they should be curtailed to avoid a possible domination of these think tanks by the interests of capital. To understand the situation of civil think tanks in China solely in terms of free speech, Hayward suggests, is to miss the broader context and significance of China’s evolving class politics.

The complex gestation process of China’s current central government policy to promote think tanks is analyzed in the article by Xue Lan, Zhu Xufeng and Han Wanqu. They argue that the dynamics of think-tank development in China are driven not so much by the relaxation or tightening of ideological control by the Chinese Communist Party, as has been assumed in the literature, but primarily by the official recognition of think tanks’ value by agencies and leaders of the party-state. The authors show how individual political leaders and, consequently, the ruling party have devel-

oped an increasing interest in policy research institutes and their contributions to “scientific decision-making.” Xue et al. argue that the increase in and growing complexity of various developmental and foreign-affairs-related challenges has created rising demand on the part of political decision makers for relevant policy ideas. In parallel, Chinese scholars have since the 1990s devoted substantial effort to studying think tanks and to contemplating how domestic think tanks could pursue their own distinct developmental path. In doing so, they have challenged “Western” conceptions of such organizations with their heavy emphasis on independence.

According to Xue et al., an external stimulus in the form of global think-tank rankings helped put the public spotlight on think tanks in the late noughties, leading to discussions about why Chinese think tanks did not do well in these rankings. The global financial crisis, which hit China at about the same time, also laid bare the shortage of high-quality local policy-analysis capacity. Both scholars and practitioners increasingly debated ways and means to improve the research capacity of Chinese think tanks and to broaden their global influence. A window of opportunity for a concerted think-tank policy finally arose when China’s new president, Xi Jinping, embraced a report on think tanks from the State Council’s Development Research Center in 2013. The promotion of “new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics” was now firmly on the political agenda. By late 2015, the new policy had led to the establishment of a new governance system for think tanks and the selection of 25 “pilot top think tanks,” which were endowed with substantial government top-up funding in support of their research and global networking activities. But, as Xue et al. note in their conclusions, despite, or indeed partly because of, the attention and lavish support that government-supported think tanks in China have received in recent times, they face several challenges in the form of ideological controls, the need to cater to both their ministerial principals and the party’s Central Propaganda Department, and the overreliance on government funding.

A quite different think-tank landscape, consisting of a number of large government-funded institutes and a myriad of more loosely structured and less well-resourced civil society organizations, has evolved in Taiwan. As Pascal Abb and Alan Yang argue in their contribution to this Special Issue, the country’s think-tank sector has been shaped by Taiwan’s evolution as a political entity. In the context of a political culture that stressed technocratic experience and given the particular attention placed on national security as well as economic development issues, both the government and the corporate actors sponsored larger think tanks well before the onset of democratization in the late 1980s. The establishment of a stable multiparty democracy, involving internally factionalized parties, and the proliferation of civil society groups then opened up the field to a much larger number of actors who were willing and able to fund policy research and cultivate expertise. As a result,

there are a wide array of funding opportunities for policy research today. Additionally, a substantial number of politically interested academics have become involved in think-tank activities.

Taiwan's contemporary think-tank sector is remarkably diverse, and Abb and Yang argue that this is a direct consequence of the gradual diffusion of political power from a centralist one-party state to a more complex web of stakeholders. A very particular factor impacting the development of Taiwan's think-tank sector has been the steady loss of the country's international recognition, which started in the early 1970s. Abb and Yang note that developing alternative ties—e.g., by participating in Track II mechanisms—as well as obtaining solid information, especially on US strategic thinking, became a crucial task for which think tanks were well-suited. The crucial importance of think tanks for Taiwan's diplomatic efforts has resulted in substantial government support for selected organizations. Moreover, recent governments in Taiwan have been cognizant of the fact that think tanks and experts who are willing to speak their mind are important not just for informing domestic policymaking, but also for conveying their country's viewpoints to external partners and for exercising soft power on the international stage. While the latter aim applies to both the mainland's and the island's think-tank sectors, Taiwanese think tanks exhibit much more pluralism and also substantially higher agency than their mainland counterparts.

Finally, Sebastian Maslow, in his article on the role of think tanks in Japan's "post-developmental state," shows how changes in a country's policymaking setting can lead to a greater openness to working with think tanks and their leaders. Using the framework of "knowledge regimes," Maslow traces the evolution of Japan's policymaking system from a bureaucratically dominated one with little interest in think-tank inputs to a somewhat more open and inclusive environment. According to Maslow, this more open policymaking system has resulted from changes in the executive apparatus and the electoral system as well as from political leaders' increased interest in engaging with policy entrepreneurs to push particular policy agendas. Changes in the parameters of Japan's policymaking regime have thus affected the country's knowledge regime, which has in recent years seen the emergence of new, ideologically diverse think tanks. What has also increased, however, in the face of Japan's economic stagnation and especially in the wake of the global financial crisis, is the competition for think-tank funding.

Maslow notes that recent attempts to develop new policies in response to a rising China and ongoing economic difficulties have seen the formation of advisory panels that link experts from different institutions with top-level Japanese political decision makers. While these opportunities have been made available mostly to a few prominent scholars and are suspected of mainly serving to buttress predetermined political objectives, they indicate that individual political leaders have been increasingly willing to make use of scholars, think-tank leaders, and other ideas brokers to challenge the role of the state bureaucracy and assert their own agendas. Through a detailed examination of

Prime Minister Abe's initiatives to push for a more active Japanese security posture and for participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade negotiations, Maslow illustrates the involvement of think-tank leaders in contemporary Japanese policymaking and related public discourses.

## **Conclusions**

The contributions to this Special Issue testify not only to the diversity of think-tank sectors in East Asia but also to the regional applicability of Stone's linkage-based typology of think tanks. While governmentally created or state-sponsored organizations dominate the think-tank sector in authoritarian China, some of the think tanks created, or financially supported, by the state in Mainland China (and also in Taiwan) are nested within universities or belong to larger academies, indicating either a degree of hybridization or simply a change in institutional affiliation over time. And while there are only a few civil-society-based think tanks in Mainland China, such think tanks play a much more prominent role in Taiwan, as well as in Japan and South Korea,<sup>59</sup> where they have gained traction in recent years. In fact, Northeast Asia's democracies exhibit the most diverse think-tank sectors; they feature not only many governmentally created or state-sponsored think tanks but also numerous corporate-created or business-affiliated organizations. Finally, think tanks linked to individual politicians who are either running for or have held office are particularly evident in Taiwan and also present in Hong Kong.<sup>60</sup>

In a more analytical vein, two broad conclusions emerge from this Special Issue. First, the individual contributions emphasize that context matters for think-tank development and, more specifically, that think-tank systems are greatly influenced by the particular political context in which they exist. Second, the contributions show not only that the political contextual factors that impact the trajectories and traits of East Asian think-tank landscapes vary between countries but also that they operate at different interactive levels: (a) at the level of the inter- and transnational context within which think-tank sectors develop; (b) at the level of domestic governmental systems and their openness to external policy advice and other think-tank services; and (c) at the level of individual political leaders interested in engaging with think tanks or using them to push their agendas. In view of the potential complexity of these interactions, generalizations about the impact of political context on think-tank development are certainly fraught with danger.

With respect to the often neglected inter- and transnational context of think-tank sector development, the two contributions on China point to a number of factors that have affected the trajectories of think tanks there. These factors include the steady integration of China into the global capitalist system since 1978 and the country's growing global status and ambitions, which have resulted not only in fundamental changes in the state's official policy discourses but also in growing demand by policy makers for timely policy advice and a desire to "tell Chinese stories and spread

Chinese voices” at the global level through public diplomacy. Notably, the global financial crisis in the first decade of this century constituted a critical juncture, speeding up China’s rise in global affairs and resulting in growing expectations vis-à-vis domestic think tanks. However, the crisis also alerted Chinese political leaders to the limited capabilities of think tanks, thus providing an important backdrop to the concerted policy of think-tank promotion which got underway a few years later. Last but not least, the return of overseas-educated scholars and the perspectives they have brought with them have contributed to the development of the think-tank sector in China.

In the case of Taiwan, the most important international context factor impacting think-tank development has been the country’s loss of diplomatic recognition, which has turned think tanks into ever more valuable assets for the government in terms of establishing alternative networks, intelligence gathering, and informal diplomacy, as well as for helping to project soft power at the regional and global levels. Finally, in the case of Japan, it is notable that the establishment of numerous new think tanks in the 1980s and 1990s, which arguably constituted the “golden age” of think-tank development in the country, occurred in the midst of growing trade and other frictions with the US. Moreover, the return of some Japanese scholars who had gained first-hand experience in US think tanks stimulated debates on how to further develop the think-tank sector on the archipelago.<sup>61</sup> While the diffusion of relevant ideas and institutional blueprints from the US did not result in a wholesale revolution in Japan’s think-tank sector, it played a crucial role in the establishment of what is today one of Japan’s biggest think tanks, the Tokyo Foundation,<sup>62</sup> and has also informed the operations of one of the country’s newer high-profile think tanks, the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation (RJIF; renamed the Asia Pacific Initiative in 2017).<sup>63</sup>

The inter- and transnational context in which think-tank sectors develop can also be connected to the national governmental systems with which these sectors are confronted. The contributors to this Special Issue point in this regard to the increasingly transnational nature of Chinese policymaking and to the growing complexity of China’s foreign relations, which have increased demand for advice on affected “domestic” policy areas as well as on international governance issues. With regard to the impact of governmental systems on the development of national think-tank sectors, the China-related contributions to this Special Issue caution us not to jump to quick conclusions concerning causal connections between a country’s political regime type and the overall size and growth of its think-tank sector. The current think-tank boom in China and the substantial number of well-resourced think tanks that existed before this boom suggest that nondemocratic systems may also, at times, provide “fertile conditions for [think tank] proliferation and abundance.”<sup>64</sup> While this says nothing about the sustainability of think-tank development in China or, indeed, the particular conditions under which think tanks operate there, the findings do support Mendizabal’s argument that “one must try to avoid the very easy assumption that

democracy leads to more and stronger think tanks.” Whereas democracy can contribute “to a more sustainable think tank community (with fewer risks and dangers for think tanks and think tankers),” it is not the cause of think tanks’ existence.<sup>65</sup> The experiences of pre-democratization South Korea and Taiwan also indicate that democratic governance is not a necessary condition for substantial think-tank development, whereas the travails of the think-tank sector in Indonesia<sup>66</sup> signal that it is not a sufficient condition either.

Regarding the impact of the nature of governmental systems on think-tank development, two basic and important questions are whether an evidence-based policymaking culture exists within the government in question and whether internal sources of policy advice, provided by permanent civil service officials and/or by political appointees in advisory roles, dominate in policymaking processes. With respect to the role of bureaucracies in national policymaking systems and their impact on think tanks, the article on Japan in this Special Issue, as well as studies on think-tank development in India,<sup>67</sup> indicate that where permanent civil services—especially those imbued with a sense of elitism—jealously guard policymaking processes, think tanks will find it difficult to impact agenda setting and policy deliberation.

Still, even in such settings think tanks can be involved in the implementation of policies or assume functions that bureaucracies cannot or do not want to formally take charge of, such as providing platforms for exchanges with high-level visitors or engaging in Track II diplomacy. Future research should thus dive deeper into the roles—and the mix thereof—played by think tanks in East Asia and elsewhere. We cannot simply assume that the core role of think tanks always and everywhere consists of recommending and evaluating policies. Beyond the production, repackaging, and synthesizing of policy knowledge, think tanks may also, or indeed mainly, focus on other roles such as providing opportunities for interactions among scholars, policy makers, and other practitioners (“salon” function); legitimizing the emerging and extant policy positions of the government (“intellectual cheerleader” function); providing content for the media (“pundit” function); or training practitioners and young academics (“capacity-building” function).<sup>68</sup> More in-depth research is required to provide empirically saturated assessments of the mix of the particular roles that think tanks adopt in individual settings in East Asia and beyond.

Finally, in terms of the impact of individual political leaders on think-tank development, the contributions to this Special Issue note a few important episodes where the agency of political leaders mattered significantly. Xi Jinping’s personal initiative and involvement was clearly crucial for bringing about the current think-tank-promotion policy of the Chinese government, whereas the earlier engagement of Zhao Ziyang with reform-minded think tanks resulted after Tiananmen not only in Chinese think tanks having to take a very low profile for some time but arguably also in wariness on the part of party-state leaders about domestic think tanks’ potential to help stir unrest

and thus the need to keep them under ideological control. While in the cases of Taiwan and Japan individual political leaders had perhaps a lesser impact on the development of the respective think-tank sectors as a whole, they were crucial to the establishment of a number of, in some instances fairly high-profile, additions to the think-tank landscapes in question. Examples in Taiwan include the National Policy Foundation (established by then Kuomintang chairman Lien Chan in 2000) and the Thinking Taiwan Foundation (established by DPP chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen in 2012). In Japan they include veteran organizations such as the Institute of International Policy Studies (established in 1988 by former prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro) and the Japan Institute of International Affairs (established in 1959 by former prime minister Yoshida Shigeru).

More generally, the openness of individual political leaders to engaging with think tanks or, indeed, their interest in using them to push particular political agendas can help improve the fortunes of individual think tanks or of entire think-tank sectors. Notably, the demand for think-tank services on the part of political leaders not only depends on the proclivities and interests of individuals in power at a certain point in the time but can also shift over time in conjunction with changing international and domestic circumstances. Overall, the contributions to this Special Issue show that East Asia is home to highly diverse and in some cases very vibrant environments for think-tank development, reflecting the impact of distinct, multilevel political and other contextual factors. The guest editors hope that this Special Issue will stimulate further conceptually informed, context-sensitive research on think-tank development in East Asia as well as in other world regions.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Marco Gonzalez Hernando, Hartwig Pautz and Diane Stone, “Think Tanks in ‘Hard Times’: The Global Financial Crisis and Economic Advice,” forthcoming in *Policy and Society* 37, no. 2 (2018).

<sup>2</sup> See James G. McGann, “2016 Global Go To Think Tanks Index Report,” 26 January 2017, [http://repository.upenn.edu/think\\_tanks/12/](http://repository.upenn.edu/think_tanks/12/). The report counted 1,262 think tanks in Asia as of late 2015 compared to 1,931 in North America (including 1,835 in the US) and 1,770 in Europe; 770 think tanks were counted in East Asia, of which 435 think tanks were identified in China alone. While these seemingly exact numbers should be treated with caution due to the report’s

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methodological limitations, they give a rough idea of the geographical spread of think tanks around the globe.

<sup>3</sup> Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 16, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Zimmerman, *Think Tanks*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Björn Jerden, “Security Expertise and International Hierarchy: The Case of the ‘Asia-Pacific Epistemic Community’,” *Review of International Affairs* 43, no. 3 (2017): 494-515, here p. 503. The quote refers to epistemic communities but the point also applies to think tanks.

<sup>6</sup> This Special Issue evolved from a workshop on think tanks in Asia, which was held in Beijing in April 2016. The workshop was jointly organized by the GIGA Institute of Asian Studies of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies and the School of Public Policy and Management of Tsinghua University and funded by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the GIGA’s Research Platform Asia and Tsinghua University. Workshop contributions covered think-tank development at the national, local, and institute level in Mainland China as well as in Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam. Additional papers on think-tank development in Mainland China and in Taiwan were solicited after the workshop. Due to space and other constraints, only a few select papers emerging from the workshop can be presented in this Special Issue. The guest editors are aware of the resulting constrictions on any claims in this Special Issue concerning all of East Asia.

<sup>7</sup> *Xinhua*, “Xi calls for new type of think tanks,” 27 October 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-10/27/c\\_133746282.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-10/27/c_133746282.htm). See also Cheng Li, *The Power of Ideas: The Rising Influence of Thinkers and Think Tanks in China* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2017), 4-7, and the article by Xue et al. in this Special Issue.

<sup>8</sup> Diane Stone, *Knowledge Actors and Transnational Governance* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 66.

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- <sup>9</sup> See Diane Stone, “Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes,” *Public Administration* 85, no. 2 (2007): 259-278.
- <sup>10</sup> See e.g. Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
- <sup>11</sup> Pascal Abb, “China’s Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Institutional Evolution and Changing Roles,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 93 (2015): 533.
- <sup>12</sup> See Andreas Schedler, “Concept Formation,” in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, eds. Bertrand Badie et al. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), 371-382.
- <sup>13</sup> Hartwig Pautz, “Revisiting the Think-Tank Phenomenon,” *Public Policy and Administration* 26, no. 4 (2011): 419-435; Diane Stone, “Introduction: Think Tanks, Policy Advice and Governance,” in *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas*, eds. Andrew Denham and Diane Stone (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 4-5.
- <sup>14</sup> See e.g. Kent Weaver, “The Changing World of Think Tanks,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 22, no. 3 (1989): 563-578; Stella Ladi, “Think Tanks,” in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, eds. Bertrand Badie et al. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), 2608-2611.
- <sup>15</sup> Diane Stone, “Think Tanks and Policy Advice in Countries in Transition,” in *Public Policy Research and Training in Vietnam*, eds. Toru Hashimoto, Stefan Hell and Sang-Woo Nam (Tokyo: Asia Development Institute, 2005), 48.
- <sup>16</sup> Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America*.
- <sup>17</sup> See e.g. Murray Weidenbaum, “Measuring the Influence of Think Tanks,” *Society* 47, no. 2 (2011): 134-137. The bridge metaphor has been contested on ontological grounds by scholars who see research and policy as essentially interdependent or even symbiotic. See e.g. Stella Ladi, “Think-Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change,” in *Social Science and Policy Challenges*, ed. Georgios Papanagnou (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2011), 211-212.
- <sup>18</sup> The idea of a “marketplace of ideas” has also been contested as contemporary think tanks may also operate in virtual “battlefields of ideas.” See Stone, *Knowledge Actors*, 69.

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- <sup>19</sup> See most recently, James G. McGann, “Think Tanks, Politics and the Policymaking Process: Catalysts for Ideas and Action,” in *Handbook of Policy Formulation*, eds. Michael Howlett and Ishani Mukherjee (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2017), 381-382.
- <sup>20</sup> Dieter Plehwe, “Think Tank Networks and the Knowledge-Interest Nexus: The Case of Climate Change,” *Critical Policy Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 107.
- <sup>21</sup> See e.g. Ladi, “Think-Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism,” 206. For an in-depth discussion of the instrumental and symbolic uses and functions of (expert) knowledge, see Christina Boswell, *The Political Uses of Expert Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- <sup>22</sup> For example, Radhika Desai, “Second-hand Dealers in Ideas: Think-tanks and Thatcherite Hegemony,” *New Left Review*, no. 203 (1994): 27-64; Hartwig Pautz, *Think-Tanks, Social Democracy and Social Policy* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- <sup>23</sup> See e.g. Ladi, “Think-Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism,” Plehwe, “Think Tank Networks,” and with respect to think tanks in East Asia Zimmerman, *Think Tanks*, chapter 2; Thomas Kern and Alexander Ruser, “The Role of Think Tanks in the South Korean Discourse on East Asia,” in *Korea 2010: Politics, Economy and Society*, eds. Rüdiger Frank et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 113-134.
- <sup>24</sup> On think tanks (and think tankers) as part of epistemic communities and knowledge regimes see Jerden, “Security Expertise and International Hierarchy,” and John L. Campbell and Ove K. Pedersen, *The National Origins of Policy Ideas: Knowledge Regimes in the United States, France, Germany, and Denmark* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), chapter 1.
- <sup>25</sup> For some notable recent work on policy advisory systems see Jonathan Craft and Michael Howlett, “Policy Formation, Governance Shifts and Policy Influence: Location and Content in Policy Advisory Systems,” *Journal of Public Policy* 32, no. 2 (2012), 79-98; Jonathan Craft and Matt Wilder, “Catching a Second Wave: Context and Compatibility in Advisory System Dynamics,” *Policy Studies Journal* 45, no. 1 (2017): 215-239.

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- <sup>26</sup> On discourse and advocacy coalitions see the path-breaking articles by Maarten Hajer, “Discourse Coalitions and the Institutionalisation of Practice. The Case of Acid Rain in Britain,” in *The Argumentative Turn in Policy and Planning*, eds. John Forester and Frank Fischer (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 43-76, and Paul A. Sabatier, “Knowledge, Policy-Oriented Learning, and Policy Change: An Advocacy Coalition Framework,” *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization* 8, no. 4 (1987): 649–692.
- <sup>27</sup> Stone, *Knowledge Actors*, 71.
- <sup>28</sup> Federico Merke and Gino Pauselli, “In the Shadow of the State: Think Tanks and Foreign Policy in Latin America,” *International Journal* 70, no. 4 (2015): 617; Karthik Nachiappan, “Think Tanks and the Knowledge-Policy Nexus in China,” *Policy and Society* 32, no. 3 (2013): 255-265, here p. 263.
- <sup>29</sup> See Elizabeth Brown et al., “Linking Think Tank Performance, Decisions, and Context” (Results for Development Institute and University of Washington, July 2014), <http://www.resultsfordevelopment.org/sites/resultsfordevelopment.org/files/Linking%20Think%20Tank%20Performance%20and%20Context.pdf>.
- <sup>30</sup> Stone, “Introduction,” 9.
- <sup>31</sup> John Halligan, “Policy Advice,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration*, vol. 3, ed. Jay M. Shafritz (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 1686-1688, here p. 1687.
- <sup>32</sup> Halligan, “Policy Advice,” 1687. For discussions of the trends affecting the provision of policy advice in Anglophone OECD countries in the past few decades, see John Halligan “Policy Advice and the Public Service,” in *Governance in a Changing Environment*, eds. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie (Montreal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 138-172; Jonathan Craft and John Halligan, “Assessing 30 Years of Westminster Policy Advisory System Experience,” *Policy Sciences* 50, no. 1 (2017), 47-62.

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<sup>33</sup> We use the terms “demand” and “supply” solely for heuristic purposes and not because we believe that a market model is in itself sufficient for explaining or understanding the development of national think-tank sectors.

<sup>34</sup> See Brown et al., “Linking Think Tank Performance,” 7.

<sup>35</sup> As Mathur argues, endeavours to understand the development of think tanks beyond North America and Western Europe need to take into account the diversity of social-science research contexts in other world regions. See Kuldeep Mathur, “Policy Research Organisations in South Asia,” Working Paper No. 13 (New Delhi: Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, JNU, 2009), [http://www.jnu.ac.in/CSLG/workingPaper/13-Policy%20\(Kuldeep\).pdf](http://www.jnu.ac.in/CSLG/workingPaper/13-Policy%20(Kuldeep).pdf).

<sup>36</sup> See Nachiappan, “Think Tanks,” 255.

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the literature cited in the contributions to this Special Issue, see Daisy Cooper, “Thinking in a Tank: A Comparative Study on the Role and Impact of Policy Institutes in Selected Asian Polities,” PhD thesis, The University of Hong Kong, 2014, <http://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/10722/211116/1/FullText.pdf>, and the chapters on Japan, Northeast Asia, Singapore, and Malaysia in *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action*, eds. James G. McGann and R. Kent Weaver (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000) and in *Think Tank Traditions*, eds. Stone and Denham. Chinese think tanks have received particular attention in recent years. See, for example, Xufeng Zhu, *The Rise of Think Tanks in China* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Li, *The Power of Ideas*; Silvia Menegazzi, *Rethinking Think Tanks in Contemporary China* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. Alan H. Yang, Ian Tsung-Yen Chen, and Hwei-Luan Poong, “Reconfiguring Social Capital in the Making of Track II Diplomacy: A Case Study of the Taipei-Seoul Forum,” *Issues & Studies* 51, no. 4 (2015): 143-172.

<sup>39</sup> See Stone, *Knowledge Actors*, chapter 6, and Zimmerman, *Think Tanks*, chapters 4 to 7 and the literature cited therein.

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- <sup>40</sup> Patrick Köllner, Ariel Ahram, and Rudra Sil, “Comparative Area Studies: What It Is, What It Can Do,” in *Comparative Area Studies: Methodological Rationales and Cross-Regional Applications*, eds. Ariel Ahram et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 16.
- <sup>41</sup> See the Special Issue of this journal on “Context, Concepts, and Comparison in Southeast Asian Studies,” *Pacific Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2014).
- <sup>42</sup> Diane Stone, “Dynamics of Think Tank Development in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea,” in *Think Tanks and Civil Societies*, eds. McGann and Weaver, 383-410, here p. 383.
- <sup>43</sup> Stone, “Dynamics of Think Tank Development,” 383.
- <sup>44</sup> Kim Sung Chull, “Politics, Knowledge and Inter-Korean Affairs: Korean Public Think Tanks Not as Policy Advocates but as Knowledge Producers,” *Issues and Studies* 50, no. 1 (2014): 123-151.
- <sup>45</sup> Herman Joseph S. Kraft, “The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia,” *Security Dialogue* 31, 3 (2000): 346. For a similar argument see Stone, “Dynamics of Think Tank Development,” 385.
- <sup>46</sup> See Karthik Nachiappan, Enrique Mendizabal and Ajoy Datta, “Think Tanks in East and South-east Asia: Bringing Politics Back into the Picture,” London: Overseas Development Institute, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6377.pdf>. Earlier, Stone also drew a link between the “interventionist developmental state” in most Southeast Asian states and the character of think tanks in the (sub)region, with such organizations being “supportive or uncritical of incumbent regimes.” Stone, “Dynamics of Think Tank Development,” 385.
- <sup>47</sup> See Zimmerman, *Think Tanks*, 2.
- <sup>48</sup> See Richard F. Doner, Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater, “Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *International Organization* 59, no. 2 (2005): 327-361.

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- <sup>49</sup> See Geoffrey R. D. Underhill and Xiaoke Zhang, “The Changing State-Market Condominium in East Asia: Rethinking the Political Underpinnings of Development,” *New Political Economy* 10, no. 1 (2015): 1-24.
- <sup>50</sup> Pascal Abb and Patrick Koellner, “Foreign Policy Think Tanks in China and Japan: Characteristics, Current Profile, and the Case of Collective Self-Defense,” *International Journal* 70, no. 4 (2015): 596.
- <sup>51</sup> See Jongryn Mo and Jeong Yeon Lee, “Think Tanks and Good Governance: The Case of the Korea Development Institute,” *International Studies Review* 15, no. 2 (2014): 93-110.
- <sup>52</sup> See the article on Taiwan in this Special Issue.
- <sup>53</sup> Nachiappan et al. “Think Tanks in East and Southeast Asia,” section 5, no pagination.
- <sup>54</sup> Stone, “Think Tanks,” 52.
- <sup>55</sup> Stone, “Think Tanks,” 52, 54.
- <sup>56</sup> Stone, “Think Tanks,” 54.
- <sup>57</sup> See Nachiappan, “Think Tanks.”
- <sup>58</sup> Nachiappan et al., “Think Tanks in East and Southeast Asia,” section 4, no pagination.
- <sup>59</sup> On think-tank development in South Korea, see most recently Kim, “Politics, Knowledge and Inter-Korean Affairs,” Mo and Lee, “Think Tanks and Good Governance,” and Sook Jong Lee, “Translating Research into Policies: The Experience of South Korea’s East Asia Institute,” in *Democracy Think Tanks in Action* (Washington: National Endowment for Democracy, 2013), 87-97.
- <sup>60</sup> See Ray Yep and Chow Yat Tung, “Quasi-Democracy and the Underdevelopment of Think Tanks in Hong Kong,” unpublished paper, 2017.
- <sup>61</sup> For a prominent example see Raymond J. Struyk, Makiko Ueno, and Takahiro Suzuki, eds., *A Japanese Think Tank: Exploring Alternative Models* (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1993).
- <sup>62</sup> See Suzuki Takahiro, *Nihon ni “minshushugi” o kigyō suru* [Establishing ‘democracy’ in Japan] (Tokyo: Daiichi shinsho, 2007), which also discusses of the evolution of Japan’s think-tank land-

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scape. See also, by the same author, “Nihon ni naze (beikokugata) shinku tanku ga ikudatta nakatta no ka?,” [Why have no (US-style) think tanks developed in Japan?], (*Kikan*) *Seisaku/keiei kenkyū*, no. 2 (2011): 30-51.

<sup>63</sup> Author interview with senior RJIF staffers, 20 November 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Stone, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>65</sup> Enrique Mendizabal, “How does the context affect think tanks?,” On Think Tanks, 3 July 2013, <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/how-does-the-context-affect-think-tanks/>.

<sup>66</sup> See Ben Hillman, “Think Tanks in Middle-Income Asia: Building a Policy Research Community in Post-New Order Indonesia,” unpublished paper, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> See Kuldeep Mathur, “India,” in *Guidance for Governance*, eds. R. Kent Weaver and Paul B. Stares (Tokyo and New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2001), 207-230, and Amitabh Matto and Rory Medcalf, “Think-Tanks and Universities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*, eds. David M. Malone, C. Raja Mohan and Srinath Raghavan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 271-284.

<sup>68</sup> A useful starting point for empirical analyses of the roles of think tanks in East Asia and beyond may be the extant work that has sought to disentangle the different roles played by international affairs think tanks. See Patrick Köllner, “Think Tanks: Their Development, Global Diversity and Roles in International Affairs,” *GIGA Focus International Edition*, no. 6 (2011), 5-6, and the literature cited therein.