SSOAR

Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

Foreign policy think tanks in China and Japan: characteristics, current profile, and the case of collective self-defence

Abb, Pascal; Köllner, Patrick

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
GIGA German Institute for Global and Area Studies

Dieser Beitrag ist mit Zustimmung des Rechteinhabers aufgrund einer (DFG geförderten) Allianz- bzw. Nationallizenz frei zugänglich. / This publication is with permission of the rights owner freely accessible due to an Alliance licence and a national licence (funded by the DFG, German Research Foundation) respectively.

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Abb, P., & Köllner, P. (2015). Foreign policy think tanks in China and Japan: characteristics, current profile, and the case of collective self-defence. *International journal : Canada's journal of global policy analysis*, *70*(4), 593–612. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702015592119

Nutzungsbedingungen:
Dieser Text wird unter einer Deposit-Lizenz (Keine Weiterverbreitung - keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.
Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

Terms of use:
This document is made available under Deposit Licence (No Redistribution - no modifications). We grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, individual and limited right to using this document. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.
By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

gesis Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Diese Version ist zitierbar unter / This version is citable under:
https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-454176

International Journal

Scholarly Essay

International Journal
2015, Vol. 70(4) 593–612
© The Author(s) 2015
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0020702015592119
ijx.sagepub.com
SAGE

Foreign policy think tanks in China and Japan: Characteristics, current profile, and the case of collective self-defence

Pascal Abb
GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies, Hamburg, Germany

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

Abstract
The role of foreign policy think tanks (FPTTs) in policy-making has received substantial scholarly attention, with most studies focusing on US-based organizations. In this article, we seek to address this spatial bias by discussing the development and roles of FPTTs in two East Asian countries, China and Japan. China today hosts the second-largest think tank scene in the world, and many FPTTs have received influxes of funding and increased the academic qualifications of their staffers in recent years. Japan also hosts a sizable array of think tanks, but many of them operate on a for-profit basis and do not focus on public policy issues; Japan has very few genuine FPTTs. In both countries, FPTTs are in many ways linked to the government. While they seek to inform and influence foreign and security policy as well as public discourse on international affairs, they usually do not act as agenda setters. By examining the recent case of constitutional reinterpretation in Japan, which aimed to enable collective self-defence, we show how Japanese public intellectuals, including think tankers, helped to legitimize this controversial move and how Chinese FPTTs reacted publicly by providing media commentary in support of the official government line.

Keywords
Foreign policy, think tanks, China, Japan, bilateral relations, collective self-defence

Corresponding author:
Pascal Abb, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies, Rothenbaumchaussee 32, Hamburg 20148, Germany.
Email: pascal.abb@giga-hamburg.de

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

Thinks tanks are significant political actors operating in many polities across the globe, as well as at the trans- or supranational level. The main mission of such organizations is to inform and/or influence public policy (and in some cases corporate affairs) on the basis of research and analysis provided by in-house and affiliated staff.[1] The role of think tanks in foreign policy deliberation and decision-making processes has received substantial scholarly attention in recent decades. Many studies focus on the specific impact of foreign policy think tanks (FPTTs) on US foreign policy, which is understandable given that Washington has been the place where these organizations originally took root; that the US is home to a large number of ideologically diverse, well-resourced think tanks; and that the continuing pivotal role of the US in world affairs makes it particularly worthwhile to study the sources of input to its foreign policy.

However, as scholars comparing think tank systems internationally have noted,[2] these organizations have spread to basically every world region, albeit not to the same extent.[3] The existing spatial bias in research on think thanks—FPTTs and others—thus severely limits our understanding of such organizations as a global phenomenon. Since East Asia is now home to the largest number of institutes outside the Western world, more empirical work is required to better grasp the development and particular configurations of think tanks in this region. Such research also promises returns to the general study of think tank development and influence because the political and economic conditions that are seen as the bedrock of think tank vitality in the US—mainly independence from government structures through external financing and a free, competitive "marketplace of ideas"—are far less pronounced, if they exist at all, in other world regions, including East Asia. This paper is an attempt to cast more light on the development and roles played by FPTTs in East Asia's most economically and politically important countries: China and Japan.

China houses the most think tanks in the world outside of the United States. This fact, coupled with the political rise which China has experienced as a consequence of three decades of rapid economic growth, has also led to considerable interest in the role and influence of Chinese FPTTs.[4] China's rise has been mirrored

1. Such a definition acknowledges that think tanks come in various shapes, reflecting both internal and external factors. See Patrick Koellner, "Think tanks: The quest to define and to rank them," *GIGA Focus International Edition* no. 10 (2013): 2–3, http://www.giga-hamburg.de/de/system/files/publications/gf_international_1310.pdf (accessed 15 December 2014).
2. See James McGann and Kent Weaver, eds., *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Action* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000); Diane Stone and Andrew Denham, eds., *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
3. For a recent tally of the global distribution of think tanks, see James McGann, "2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report" (Philadelphia: Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 53.
4. *China Quarterly* devoted a thematic issue to think tanks in September 2002 which included contributions on Chinese FPTTs. For more recent overviews see Cheng Li, "China's new think tanks: Where officials, entrepreneurs, and scholars interact," *China Leadership Monitor* 29 (summer 2009), http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2009/08/summer-china-li (accessed 15 December 2014); Thomas Bondiguel and Thierry Kellner, "The Impact of China's foreign policy think tanks,"

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

by Japan's relative decline in recent years. Once seen as on the way to becoming the global "number one," Japan has been overtaken as the world's second-largest economy by its big neighbour, and is now most concerned with how to react to the challenge of a rising China. Moreover, the two countries are involved in a territorial dispute over the small Senkaku islands (Chinese: Diaoyutai). While on the surface this conflict centres on fishing grounds and suspected natural resources, it has also become a symbolically loaded issue, with China seeking to expunge decades of humiliation at the hands of the Japanese.

China's increasing assertiveness in the East and the South China Seas and the country's growing military-force projection abilities have alarmed Japan. Under its current prime minister Shinzō Abe, Japan has pursued a more muscular security policy: Abe has promised to strengthen the alliance with the US; courted strategic partners in the wider Asia-Pacific region, including Australia and India; increased the defence budget; established a National Security Council; and abandoned a decades-long ban on the export of weapon technologies. Overall, he has sought to make Japan a more "normal country" in terms of its defence and security profile.[5] In China, these moves have been met with intense suspicion, as they are thought to be aimed at containing China and thwarting its ambitions at regional leadership.[6]

To illustrate some of the roles played by think tanks in Japan's and China's foreign policy deliberation and decision-making processes, we focus in this article on one important development in Japan's recent security policy: the Japanese Cabinet's July 2014 decision to reinterpret the constitution to allow for collective self-defence, and the reactions by Chinese think tanks to this move. Accordingly, we not only aim to show how the FPTT sectors in Japan and China compare with each other in institutional terms but also to highlight the potential and limits of think tank involvement in foreign and security policy in both countries. Finally, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of how think tanks operate in non-Western societies.

The article is structured as follows: The next section provides an overview of Japan's FPTT landscape. Here, we also sketch the process leading to the 2014 reinterpretation of the Japanese Constitution and the role of external policy advice therein. We then provide a similar overview of the Chinese system and the ways in which think tanks contribute to that nation's policy-making. Since China played no active role in the Japanese reinterpretation itself, but was very much alarmed by it, we focus in this section on public reactions by China's think tanks and how they relate to the central government's response. The last section

BICCS Asia Paper 5, no. 5, http://www.vub.ac.be/biccs/site/assets/files/apapers/Asia%20papers/20100405%20-%20Bondiguel%20Kellner.pdf (accessed 15 December 2014).

5. See Sheila Smith, *Japan's New Politics and the US-Japan Alliance* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2014).
6. See Amy King, "Where does Japan fit in China's new type of great power relations?" *The Asan Forum*, 20 March 2014, http://www.theasanforum.org/where-does-japan-fit-in-chinas-new-type-of-great-power-relations/ (accessed 7 December 2014).

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

highlights some of the similarities and differences between the FPTT sectors in these countries and addresses their role in managing Sino-Japanese relations.

Foreign policy think tanks in Japan

Overview

Both foreign and domestic observers have bemoaned the lack of a vibrant think tank scene in Japan. They point to a lack of independence among think tanks, inadequate staffing, unstable financial resources, and a perceived inability of think tanks to have an impact on public policy.[7] Such assessments stand in stark contrast to the sizable array of think tanks that do exist in Japan. A recent survey puts their overall number at close to 230, which nonetheless represents a significant decrease since the start of the new millennium, when over 330 were counted.[8] It seems, then, that Japan's stagnating economy during the past two decades has also taken a heavy toll on domestic think tanks.

Rather than focusing on influencing public policy, close to half of the existing think tanks in Japan operate as for-profit organizations, often as affiliates of large corporations, including financial institutions. The apparent lack of a public policy orientation on the part of most Japanese think tanks can be explained by a number of demand and supply factors. Just about every think tank publication in Japan emphasizes the traditional role of the national bureaucracy, clustered in Tokyo's government district, Kasumigaseki, in terms of shaping public policies. And virtually every policymaker and think tanker interviewed by one of the authors noted in a mantra-like fashion that "Kasumigaseki is Japan's biggest think tank."

For decades, Japan's elite bureaucracy has attracted some of the best and brightest university graduates. Admittedly, the reputation of the bureaucracy has deteriorated since the latter half of the 1990s, and the heyday of Japan's "developmental state" has passed. Still, Japan's national bureaucracy continues to be perceived by domestic actors as a powerful policy agent. With respect to external input into public policy, the public service has traditionally relied on ministerial advisory or policy deliberation councils, whose members could be hand-picked and whose operations could be steered by the executive. In sum, Japan's elite bureaucrats have rarely sought out genuine policy alternatives from think tanks and other policy research institutions. The same has generally been true for their long-time principals within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), with whom the bureaucracy has historically enjoyed a symbiotic relationship.

7. See, for example, Raymond J. Struyk, Makiko Ueno, and Takahiro Suzuki, *A Japanese Think Tank: Exploring Alternative Models* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 1993), xiii, 3; Ayako Mie, "Japan urged to embrace U.S.-style think tanks," *Japan Times*, 10 January 2014, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/01/10/national/japan-urged-to-embrace-u-s-style-think-tanks/ (accessed 24 April 2014).
8. Sōgō kenkyū kaihatsu kikō (NIRA), "'Shinku tanku jōhō 2013' no chōsa kekka no gaiyō" (Tokyo: NIRA), July 2013: 2.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

On the supply side, unlike the situation in the US and some other countries, there is no tradition of philanthropy in Japan, and think tanks cannot count on generous financial support from donors. Until recently, only a small share of donations has been tax-deductible. Most think tanks thus remain dependent on funding for research projects commissioned by corporations or by the state. Those that do not receive institutional support from companies, ministries, or local governments have to cope with unstable funding, which constrains their ability to employ high-calibre researchers. The general attractiveness of a career in the think tank sector is also limited by the absence of a revolving door linking think tanks and the government. For one, the seniority principle prevailing in most Japanese organizations prevents such exchanges. Moreover, the number of political appointments in the bureaucracy tends to be low, and openness to lateral entry is limited. Overall, Japan thus provides a fairly inhospitable terrain for public policy-oriented think tanks.

The strong business focus of many Japanese think tanks can be gleaned from their most important areas of research: economic issues, land development, welfare, environmental affairs, and industry. According to a series of surveys, among all research activities carried out by Japanese think tanks between 1993 and 2011, the share of projects on international affairs hovered at around five percent.[9] In 2012, only eight institutes surveyed considered international affairs their most important area of research. The few existing FPTTs in Japan can be grouped, following Diane Stone's useful typology, into government, civil society, and business-affiliated organizations.[10] Two other types mentioned by Stone, political party-affiliated and university-affiliated think tanks, have been less important. In terms of party think tanks, both the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) founded their own think tanks after 2005. However, the two organizations proved short-lived, understaffed, and poorly integrated into the parties' policy-making apparatuses. Notably, they also did not focus on foreign affairs.

University-affiliated think tanks focusing on international affairs do exist at a few universities such as Takushoku and Ritsumeikan. A recent addition has been Meiji University's Institute for Global Affairs, established in 2011 as part of the university's internationalization drive. Some well-known foreign affairs specialists, including former practitioners, are based at these institutes. However, their involvement in government advisory bodies tends to be more sporadic and their outreach activities more limited than in the case of the FPTTs discussed below. The institution to watch may be the well-resourced National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), a public policy-focused postgraduate training institution with many well-known professors on staff. GRIPS has in recent years sought to assume some think tank functions.

9. NIRA, "'Shinku tanku jōhō 2013,"' 4, 8, and earlier editions.
10. Diane Stone, "Think tanks and policy advice in countries in transition," in Toru Hashimoto, Stefan Hell, and Sang-Woo Nam, eds., *Public Policy Research and Training in Vietnam* (Tokyo: Asia Development Institute, 2005), 48.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

Government-affiliated or state-sponsored FPTTs include the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), whose predecessor was set up in 1952. The NIDS is a formal government agency affiliated with the Ministry of Defense (MOD). Its main missions are to train military and other executive personnel, to organize international exchanges with similar organizations in Asia and beyond, to conduct commissioned research on Japan's military history, and to undertake policy-relevant research on current security affairs. The NIDS includes approximately 85 research fellows. It publishes monthly briefing papers; its senior researchers provide briefings to the policy-planning staff of the MOD; and, once per year, it briefs the defence minister and the prime minister. Internationally, the NIDS might be best known for its yearbook, *East Asian Strategic Review*.[11]

The Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA) has played a related role for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Set up in 1959 by the former prime minister Shigeru Yoshida, it was modelled on Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations. Until recently, it received core institutional funding from the ministry, with corporate and individual membership dues serving as a secondary income source. It has never been a formal part of MOFA. Close links between the institute and the ministry are nonetheless maintained, not least through staff secondments and the institute's heading by former MOFA officials. During the Cold War, one major focus of the JIIA was the Soviet Union.[12] Thereafter, as in the case of most other Japanese FPTTs, attention increasingly shifted to China. Notably, the JIIA never boasted a significant cadre of experienced, public policy-oriented researchers. Rather, the institute concentrated on publishing foreign affairs journals and serving as an exchange platform with international policymakers and scholars; basically, it performed roles that the ministry's public servants could or would not play themselves.

Similar platform or "salon" functions[13] have also been served by a number of civil society-based FPTTs such as the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE). The JCIE was established in 1970—the beginning of the first think tank boom in Japan[14]—and over the years successfully ran a number of dialogue forums with individual foreign countries. In particular, the JCIE was instrumental in establishing pipelines to US policymakers and their staff. Another small FPTT, the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS), was founded in 1978 by a

11. Available online at http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian (accessed 12 December 2014).
12. See Toshihiro Nakayama, "How to enliven Japan's foreign policy think tanks," *Nippon.com*, 7 September 2012, http://www.nippon.com/en/currents/d00049/ (accessed 1 November 2013).
13. On these and other FPTT functions, see Patrick Koellner, "Think tanks: Their development, global diversity and roles in international affairs," *GIGA Focus International Edition* no. 6 (2011): 5–6, http://www.giga-hamburg.de/de/system/files/publications/gf_international_1106.pdf (accessed 15 December 2014).
14. Many think tanks founded during the first and the second boom phases, that is, around 1970 and in the late 1980s, were established by big, internationally expanding conglomerates and financial institutions such as Nomura, Mitsubishi, Daiwa, and Fujitsu. For a discussion of the various phases in Japanese think tank development, see Takahiro Suzuki, *Nihon ni "minshushugi" o kigyou suru* (Tokyo: Daiichi shinsho, 2007), 130–138.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

former president of the National Defense Academy, with encouragement from the Defense Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Keidanren, a business federation. RIPS' most important legacy has been a scholarship program for young Japanese researchers, established in the late 1980s with government support. Around 100 young scholars have benefited from this program, including many who have since become university professors and have helped to create and nurture a security studies community in Japanese academia and beyond.

Two other civil society-based FPTTs are the Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS) and the Tokyo Foundation (TF). Both organizations are particularly sound financially. The IIPS, funded by income derived from a USD$50 million endowment in addition to annual corporate membership fees, was established in 1988 by the former prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, in response to what he saw as a problem of stove piping inside the Japanese bureaucracy. Accordingly, one of the main missions of the IIPS—apart from publishing journals; conducting research with its limited pool of in-house researchers; and having like-minded academics produce policy reports on foreign and security policy, education reform, and constitutional change—has been to establish cross-organizational links. It has done so by bringing mid-level employees from ministries and large corporations to the institute for periods of 2 years, during which they are supposed to engage in research and create bonds among themselves. So far, over 10 such cohorts have stayed at the institute.

The TF was established as an operative foundation in 1997. As in the case of its sister organization, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, a charitable organization which also runs people-to-people exchange programs, the TF derives its income from the Nippon Foundation (not to be confused with the government-funded Japan Foundation). While the TF's leadership exhibits a clear conservative flavour, the same cannot be said of all of its senior program officers, some of whom spent a formative period in Washington-based think tanks. The TF runs foreign policy-related dialogue forums and publishes reports and policy briefs by in-house and affiliated researchers.

Foreign policy think tanks with close ties to the business world include the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), established in 1987 amid rising trade tensions centring on Japan, by the former foreign minister Saburō Okita, the corporate magnate Ichirō Hattori (who also contributed the then equivalent of USD$1.4 million to the institute's endowment), and the diplomat-turned-academic Ken'ichi Itō. Over the years, the JFIR—a fairly slim organization funded mainly by membership fees as well as conference or project grants—has organized a number of bilateral and multilateral dialogue forums and has also produced, in cooperation with university-based academics, extensive policy papers. Just like the JIIA, the JFIR has served as one of Japan's windows to the world.

The only corporation-linked think tank that focuses substantively on foreign affairs is the Canon Institute for Global Studies, which was established in 2007 by the Canon Corporation. Given its limited personnel—only a handful of researchers

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

work on international affairs—foreign policy-relevant research focuses on Northeast Asia and the US. The institute is also involved in nurturing next-generation international affairs specialists and government officials, for example, by running simulation and role-playing exercises. Some senior institute staffers, such as Kunihiko Miyake, a former high-ranking MOFA official with strong neo-realist views and an advocate of a more muscular Japanese defence and security policy, are also fairly active as media commentators, thus contributing to the public discourse on foreign policy and international affairs.

Recent developments

Developments in recent years have affected Japanese FPTTs in different, somewhat ambivalent ways. Popular interest in foreign and security affairs has clearly increased, especially in view of the challenges posed by China's rise, growing threat perceptions vis-à-vis North Korea, and mounting tensions in the East and South China Seas. Some media-savvy think tank staffers have thus benefited from increased demands for their services and have, consequently, also gained opportunities to make their opinions heard in the contemporary public discourse on Japanese foreign and security policy. However, demand for genuine policy input from FPTTs has not substantially increased in recent years according to the politicians and thank tankers interviewed. Apparently, the DPJ's eventual coming to power in 2009 and its three years in government also did not lead to greater demand for foreign policy input from such organizations.

On the supply side, a law passed in June 2011 making it easier for non-profit organizations (including some think tanks) to qualify for favourable tax status has apparently not led to a significant increase in donations—which is perhaps not surprising given Japan's difficult economic situation. One well-known think tank, the JIIA, even faced a grave financial challenge when the new DPJ-led government decided, as a result of a new budget-screening process,[15] to phase out its institutional funding. What particularly irked the DPJ were the close links between the JIIA and the MOFA, including the tradition of having "old boys" from the ministry head the institute. Institutional funding for the JIIA was effectively phased out in 2013.

On the other hand, more project-based funding has become available on a competitive basis from the MOFA in recent years. In particular, experienced think tanks like the JIIA, the JFIR, and recently also the IIPS, have benefited. Such funding, useful as it is for the successful applicants, does little to alleviate the chronic underfinancing and understaffing of most Japanese FPTTs. According to an advisory group report presented to the then foreign minister, Kōichirō Gemba, in August 2012, the budgets of the top five FPTTs in Japan had shrunk by 40 percent between 1998 und 2008, while the budget of the top five US institutes

15. Incidentally, the DPJ based this weeding out of "unnecessary" public expenses on recommendations by a domestic think tank that had examined Canadian experiences with budget screening.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

grew by 150 percent over the same period. The same group also recommended the establishment of a new FPTT to make Japan's voice better heard on the international stage.[16] While the current LDP-led government is unlikely to heed this call, it may well be more forthcoming in terms of supplying the JIIA and other think tanks with additional funds in the future. Such support would be based, among other things, on the government's National Security Strategy, published in December 2013, which stipulates that "Japan will promote practical research on national security, and engage in deepening exchanges among the government, higher education institutions and think tanks, thereby promoting the sharing of insight and knowledge."[17]

Other noteworthy recent developments in Japan's FPTT scene include the efforts of some venerable organizations to manage generational change at their helm, and the arrival of a new publicity-oriented think tank, the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation (RJIF), founded with business support from the well-known liberal journalist Yō'ichi Funabashi.[18] Last but not least, the establishment of Japan's National Security Council in early 2014, endowed with a 70 staffer-strong secretariat, will provide opportunities for at least a few think tankers to serve some time in the executive. Still, given the overall ambivalent picture surrounding Japanese FPTTs, it seems premature to herald the "emergence of a vital [FPTT] community in Japan."[19]

Reinterpreting the constitution

When Shinzō Abe first served as prime minister for 12 months in 2006–2007—he resigned after a lost Upper House election, while also citing health reasons—he convened an "Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security." This panel was to deliberate legal issues affecting Japan's ability to actively contribute to peace and stability in Asia and beyond. At the core of the panel's discussions was the right of collective self-defence, which is permitted under the charter of the United Nations but not, according to standard interpretations, under the Japanese Constitution. In its famous Article 9, the constitution renounces Japan's sovereign right to wage war and to maintain armed forces for that purpose. Japan's military, which was (re-)established in the wake of the Korean War, has thus been supposed to defend Japan only. Japan therefore has not been able to support its alliance partner, the United States, militarily outside

16. The advisory report is available online at http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/24/8/pdfs/0807_06_02.pdf (accessed 9 February 2015). See also Nakayama, "How to enliven."
17. The National Security Strategy is available online at http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf (accessed 12 December 2014). The quotation is from pages 36 and 37.
18. Recent RJIF activities include the publication of a thoughtful report on US–Japan strategic cooperation and the establishment of a dialogue forum for former high-ranking military officials from the two countries. See http://rebuildjpn.org/en/project/ (accessed 11 December 2014).
19. Sebastian Maslow, "Thinking security: Foreign policy think tanks in Japan," *Asian Politics & Policy* 5, no. 2 (2013): 304.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

Japan. Subsequent reinterpretations of the constitution have, however, allowed for Japan's limited participation in international peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

Article 9 has always been a thorn in the side of conservative Japanese politicians, including prime ministers Nakasone and Abe, who wish to make Japan a "normal country" in terms of its security and defence profile. The advisory panel established in April 2007, consisting of hand-picked members, had not arrived at a final report by the time Abe resigned. His successor, Yasuo Fukuda, did not prioritize security affairs and chose not to act on the recommendations contained in the panel's June 2008 report.

Yet, after Abe regained power in late 2012, he reconstituted the advisory council "in light of the increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan,"[20] with the participation of some think tankers. The 13-member council included a professor from GRIPS, a diplomat-turned-head-of-think tank, and the president of the IIPS. The reconstituted panel was effectively steered by Shin'ichi Kitaoka, one of the few Japanese academics who has successfully straddled the spheres of academia, think tanks, and government, being a renowned historian, a professor at Tokyo University (and now at GRIPS), a director of research at the IIPS, an adjunct research fellow at the TF, and a former extraordinary ambassador to the UN, as well as a veteran of many governmental advisory boards on foreign and security affairs and bilateral dialogue forums.

Apparently, the government found the final report, submitted by the advisory group in May 2014, somewhat heavy going in terms of legalistic jargon and, much to the dismay of some of the core panel members, it also considered a few of the recommendations politically unfeasible—most notably the call for a substantial revision of the PKO law to enable Japan's participation in "robust" PKOs. The government nevertheless seized on some of the report's core statements, including those making the case for a reinterpretation of the constitution. The report argued that Article 9 effectively permits collective self-defence as long as "(1) there is an imminent unlawful infringement against Japan, (2) there is no other appropriate means available to repel this infringement; and (3) the use of force is limited to the minimum extent necessary."[21]

The report, crafted by a group of like-minded public intellectuals, effectively helped legitimize the LDP and its coalition partner Kōmeitō's subsequent reinterpretation of the constitution. In July 2014, the Cabinet declared that collective self-defence was permissible if there was an armed attack "against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan" and if that attack also posed a "clear danger" to Japan's own security.[22] The new interpretation is now being translated into various bills, including a revision of the Self-Defense Forces Law.

20. "Report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security," 15 May 2014, 53, http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/anzenhosyou2/dai7/houkoku_en.pdf (accessed 12 December 2014).
21. "Report of the Advisory Panel," 29.
22. "Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect Its People," 1 July 2014, 8, http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/decisions/2014/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/07/03/anpohosei_eng.pdf (accessed 12 December 2014).

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

This case of constitutional reinterpretation highlights the possibilities as well as the limits of think tank engagement in Japanese foreign and security policy. Following established practice, the government chose to set up an expert panel rather than pursue think tank input directly. The panel consisted of hand-picked, like-minded members, and did not aim for bipartisanship. The think tankers who took part were mostly conservative public intellectuals, either well-known academics in their own right or distinguished, former high-ranking officials. Arguably, the homogeneous composition of the advisory panel made the group more effective in producing a fairly coherent report that was ultimately useful to the government.

On a broader level the case examined suggests that, given the right external and internal circumstances, including political leaders committed to policy change, and cohesion among the group members, external advisory policy boards can help facilitate the deliberation and formulation of foreign and security policy in Japan. Especially in political contexts in which various ministries and related interest groups pursue their specific agendas and interests, that is, where problems of "sectionalism" and "stovepiping" exist, such boards involving think tankers and other public intellectuals without clear vested interests may help political leaders to set government direction, bridging organizational divides in the process.

Foreign policy think tanks in China

Overview

China boasts a vast and diverse landscape of FPTTs which has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years.[23] Most authors focus on the question of policy influence, which is readily explained by China's rapidly growing importance in international politics. However, many of the best known think tanks in China predate the country's rise by decades, having been established in the 1950s and 1960s based on Soviet models. Relatively little is known about the way in which they operated in these early years, but the monopolization of foreign policy-making by a tiny clique of top leaders renders it doubtful whether they had any genuine impact. During the Cultural Revolution, think tanks across China mostly shared the fate of universities, with the institutes being closed down and many of the experts exiled to the countryside.

The resurgence of the think tank sector has been closely tied to the adoption of reform policy in the late 1970s. China's long-time leader Deng Xiaoping himself valued technocratic advice to improve policy outcomes, and personally

23. In addition to the literature cited above, see Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese foreign policy research institutes and the practice of influence," and Zhao Quansheng, "The limited impact of think tanks on policy making in China," both in Gil Rozman, ed., *China's Foreign Policy: Who Makes It, and How Is It Made?* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013). See also Xuanli Liao, *Chinese Foreign Policy Think Tanks and China's Policy towards Japan* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006) for a specific focus on the role of FPTTs in Sino-Japanese relations.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

spearheaded the initiative to establish a massive new top-level think tank in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), which also features an extensive international studies research program.[24] Most of the other "first wave" FPTTs were revived in a similar manner in the 1970s and 1980s, and joined by newly established institutes as almost every state agency involved in foreign policy sought to build its own reservoir of expertise. Today, China is home to what is thought to be the world's second-largest think tank sector,[25] and the field of international studies features prominently in it.

It would be impossible to name all of the respective institutes here, so we will instead focus on distinct organizational groups and name a few of the most prominent examples for each, again applying Diane Stone's typology. Among Chinese FPTTs, government, university, and party-affiliated institutes make up practically the entire field. Since the state and the ruling Communist Party are tightly fused, and universities are also subjected to political control, all of these subgroups share a major feature insofar as they are attached to the state/party power nexus, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees.

The biggest and, by some accounts, most influential institutes in the field are attached to specific state agencies and organs. The aforementioned CASS is China's highest-level think tank, as its direct attachment to the State Council means that it is of ministerial rank. Various ministries engaged in foreign policy also maintain their own institutes, such as the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) under the Ministry of State Security, and the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce.

The same is also true for many local governments, particularly those whose regions are heavily dependent on international trade. Shanghai features the largest foreign policy research establishment outside of Beijing, with the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) often being singled out for its international network and academic avant-gardism. This proliferation of think tanks is mainly due to the prevalent phenomenon of stovepiping in China's policy apparatus, whereby subordinate units will communicate their findings to their superiors but not share them with their peers. Although horizontal communication has increased, agencies are still intent on maintaining exclusive access to their own think tanks and their output.[26]

Next are university research departments in the fields of international relations (IR) or area studies, which often perform think tank services as a result of explicit directions by the leadership. Experts from the nation's top universities, like Beida, Renmin, and Qinghua, are regularly invited to provide lectures for the Politburo, and famous individual scholars like Wang Jisi and Yan Xuetong are known for

24. See Merle Goldman, *China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 217–220.
25. McGann, "2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report," 54.
26. Glaser, "Chinese foreign policy research institutes."

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

their ability to drive debates about China's role in the world from the academic sector.[27] The aforementioned universities all boast large IR research establishments like the School for International Studies at Beijing University, but some smaller centres focusing on especially important issues—like the Center for American Studies at Fudan University—have also performed think tank functions.

Beyond state structures, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) also maintains its own research institutions, with most of the foreign policy-related programs clustered in the Institute for International Strategic Studies of the Central Party School. Similarly, the People's Liberation Army has built up a research program focusing on strategic studies and security policy, drawing on its educational facilities like National Defense University and the Academy of Military Sciences.[28]

Finally, the other two of Stone's groups—private civil society think tanks and corporate or business-affiliated institutes—are practically absent from China's FPTT landscape, owing to a political desire to monopolize these crucial intellectual resources, general restrictions on the activity of non-governmental organizationss, and the struggle to compete with the vast state-run think tank sector. In the field of economics, private initiatives have resulted in the establishment of the Tianze (Unirule) Institute, the Boyuan Foundation, and the Dajun Center, but so far no equivalent civil society-based foreign policy think tank exists. There are some intermediary cases—one prominent new organization focusing on public diplomacy, the Charhar Society, has played up its status as a "non-governmental" think tank, presumably in order to add credibility to its message. However, institutes like this one are not genuinely independent, but mostly the result of joint initiatives between the state and intellectuals, with both working in tandem to achieve a mutual goal, in this case, improving China's international image.[29]

Accordingly, state control of the foreign policy think tank sector is not just a relic of China's socialist past but an enduring feature that reflects the will of successive leadership generations, most recently reaffirmed by China's president Xi Jinping. Acknowledging their role in "scientific and democratic decision-making, modernizing China's governing system, and strengthening Chinese soft power," and promising further support for their development, Xi also stressed in late 2014 that they would continue to be led by the CCP and had to adhere to its political guiding function.[30]

The CCP's central committee elaborated on the same themes in a January 2015 statement on "New types of think tanks with Chinese characteristics," which underscored how important policy input by think tanks and experts has become

27. Alastair Johnston, "The State of International Relations Research in China: Considerations for the Ford Foundation" (Beijing: Ford Foundation, 2003).
28. Bates Gill and James Mulvenon, "Chinese military-related think tanks and research institutions," *The China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 617–624.
29. Pascal Abb, "China's foreign policy think tanks: Institutional evolution and changing roles," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24 (2015): 93.
30. "Xi calls for new type of think tanks," *People's Daily*, 27 October 2014, http://en.people.cn/n/2014/1027/c90785-8800606.html (accessed 8 December 2014).

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

to China's governance system.[31] The document envisions a vibrant think tank sector as a way of bringing emerging issues to the attention of decision makers and presenting a range of possible solutions, thereby improving government responsiveness, effectiveness, and legitimacy without risking extensive public debates that could ultimately challenge the CCP's authority. Another key aim is to develop a small number of institutes into "high-end" think tanks with the international status and ability to influence global policy debates. Foreign policy think tanks are especially well suited to and valuable for this task because of their inherent international orientation, and will likely remain a key component of Beijing's external communication efforts.

Recent developments

When it comes to institutional development, the strong reliance of Chinese think tanks on the state sector and their increasing, multidimensional relevance for the system has allowed them to share the benefits of China's rise. As the demand for their services has grown, so have the resources—financial and otherwise—with which they are endowed. Consider, for example, the background of employees at major institutes: virtually every researcher now holds a PhD or is in the process of obtaining one, and many have obtained advanced degrees from Western or Japanese universities. This environment represents a significant shift compared with the 1980s and early 1990s, when think tanks were still predominantly staffed by practitioners, and particularly by former officials from the foreign ministry. This sea change has also reached the senior leadership of many institutes, where career academics have gradually been taking over.

Besides their ability to pay competitive salaries for highly educated staff, the increasing budget of China's FPTTs is also apparent from other perks. Institutes such as CIIS and SIIS now reside in modern, purpose-built facilities that would not seem out of place on Massachusetts Avenue. On the other hand, many CASS institutes continue to languish in cramped quarters, which is arguably indicative of a loss in status and continuing neglect by Chinese authorities.[32] Regular foreign travel, which used to be restricted to senior personnel due to its high cost, is now the norm for most employees, and travel grants are also issued to foreign specialists who wish to participate in conferences organized in China. These provisions have led to a boom in international networking and have increased the ability of Chinese FPTTs to monitor and even influence debates in major partner countries, to

31. General Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, "Opinion concerning strengthening the construction of new types of think tanks with Chinese characteristics," Xinhua Online, 21 January 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zgjx/2015-01/21/c_133934292.htm (accessed 19 June 2015). An English-language translation of the document is available online at https://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2015/01/20/ccp-general-office-and-state-council-general-office-opinions-concerning-strengthening-the-construction-of-new-types-of-think-tanks-with-chinese-characteristics/ (accessed 17 February 2015).
32. Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner, "Regulating intellectual life in China: The case of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences," *The China Quarterly* 189 (2007): 83–99.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

communicate Chinese views of the international environment to policy elites abroad, and to tune into the latest research trends. The 2015 statement on "think tanks with Chinese characteristics" similarly encourages think tanks to strengthen international exchanges and even import foreign talent. Leadership messaging on this subject has been mixed, however, as in 2014, CASS was admonished for being "infiltrated by foreign forces" and having "ideological problems."[33] Under these circumstances, it remains to be seen whether the official status and government control of Chinese FPTTs will ultimately be a bane or boon in their quest for greater international influence.

Many of these institutes have also put the newly available resources to good use in boosting their output, both in the fields of academia and, more recently, in commentaries in Chinese newspapers and online media.[34] This outcome is especially relevant, since it represents both a shift from their earlier role of providing internal policy advice while maintaining a low public profile, as well as making it much easier for outsiders to trace Chinese policy debates. Public expert statements often fulfill a specific political purpose and can therefore not be assumed to be completely in line with advice provided behind the scenes (see also below). Notably, Chinese leaders have explicitly included "public opinion guidance" and "disseminating mainstream ideology and guidance" as key tasks of think tanks in their directives.[35] However, judging from many personal conversations with Chinese experts, they are usually very frank and straightforward, and their writings reflect genuine beliefs rather than just the state's propagandistic needs. While messages are government influenced and of course subject to China's general censorship regime, they should be understood as indicative of a consensus between officials and experts, rather than as evidence of the use of the latter as mere mouthpieces.

Apart from their public writings, Chinese think tanks also still submit reports on current events to their administrative superiors via internal communication channels. Since this process is opaque not only to outside observers but also to most researchers themselves, the policy impact of individual pieces is hard to gauge, except for rare cases where high-level decision makers personally recommend specific reports.[36] Most experts, however, agree that the sheer quantity of information to which the leadership is exposed has influenced the practice of Chinese foreign policy.[37] For one, the redundancy brought about by stovepiping has benefits in that many experts from institutes with distinct outlooks will weigh in on an issue,

33. Adrian Wan, "Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is 'infiltrated by foreign forces': Anti-graft official," *South China Morning Post*, 15 June 2014, http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1533020/chinese-academy-social-sciences-infiltrated-foreign-forces-anti-graft (accessed 19 May 2015).
34. For example, the total journal-article output of 11 prominent Chinese FPTTs rose by about 70 percent between 2002 and 2012, while their appearances in newspapers increased almost tenfold. Abb, "China's foreign policy think tanks."
35. General Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, "Opinion concerning think tanks."
36. Glaser, "Chinese foreign policy research institutes."
37. David Shambaugh, "China's international relations think tanks: evolving structure and process," *The China Quarterly* 171(2002): 575–596; Li, "China's new think tanks."

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

presenting additional policy options and thereby creating more diverse debates. Second, Chinese leaders have increasingly found it necessary to develop policy positions on emerging issues since, in the contemporary world, China will often be put on the spot to take a national position (the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit serves as a case in point). On these questions, there are few political prejudices, and experts who have conducted cutting-edge research will have more opportunities to shape a debate right from the beginning. Third, academic expertise and credibility have become a crucial resource in Chinese policy debates, similar to the role that experts already play in the Western "marketplaces of ideas." Distinguished scholars based at think tanks or universities have found it much easier to attract attention to their views, and a select few have even been given personal access to officials as a result.

Chinese think tank reactions to Japan's constitutional reinterpretation

Given the current tense relationship between China and Japan and the increasing relevance of security issues to regional politics, it is not surprising that the Japanese government's reinterpretation of Article 9 of the constitution had repercussions abroad. Abe's announcement drew an immediate and sharp rebuke from China's foreign ministry, which accused the Japanese government of "stirring up trouble in both the fields of history and security policy," and wondered whether Japan had "left the path of peaceful development and sought to overturn the postwar order."[38] China's think tanks also did not waste any time in reacting to this new development. Throughout July 2014, the pages of newspapers were filled with dozens of commentaries from all of the major institutes, eager to get their own analysis of its effects out. From these, we selected a sample of 10 documents, covering the voices of several different authors from each of the four biggest Chinese FPTTs – CASS, CICIR, CIIS, and SIIS.

When comparing these documents with each other and with China's official stance on the issue summarized above, it is immediately apparent that they strongly resemble one another in content and tone: not only do they uniformly condemn the move, but they also stress precisely the same points as the ministry. For example, all but two connect the issue to Abe's provocative handling of history and warn of a resurgent Japanese militarism. All but one of the authors also conclude that this new policy will raise regional tensions and ultimately undermine Japan's own development, echoing the foreign ministry spokesperson's remarks verbatim. Another common argument found in both the official response and most commentaries is that Japan is playing up the so-called "China threat" theory as a justification for its policy change, and is in fact pursuing an encirclement policy toward China.[39] Finally, many authors also addressed the domestic political angle of the

38. "Remarks by MOFA spokesperson Hong Lei," 1 July 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/fyrbt_602243/jzhsl_602247/t1170302.shtml (accessed 8 December 2014).
39. See Liu Junhong, "anbei qiangtui jiti ziweiquan yizai hewei zhongguo," *Ziguangge*, 15 August 2014, http://zggzz.zgg.gov.cn/zxyq/201408/rcyzhsh/GHJHJ/201408/t20140815_463490.html

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

reinterpretation, pointing out that this manoeuvre had sidelined the Japanese parliament and faced significant opposition from Japanese intellectuals, newspapers, and ordinary citizens, the latter of which took to the streets in protest.

It is clear that the public activity of China's FPTTs was tightly constrained by the official response, and mostly took the form of expounding and elaborating on it. The think tanks provided background information about the policy's immediate effects, the complex workings of regional alliance mechanisms, and the role of the US in effecting the change. Absent, however, were policy suggestions on how the Chinese side should react to these developments, which are usually a staple of Western think tank commentaries.

The second major issue addressed by think tank commentators concerned the intentions behind the shift, focusing specifically on the motivations of Abe and the LDP's conservative wing. Again, they were unanimous in identifying the root cause in Japan's eclipse by a rising China, a trend which "rightists" or "hawks" sought to both exploit and ultimately reverse by unlocking the country's potential as a military power in a bid to re-establish regional leadership.[40] Chinese experts were also careful to point out differences between Abe's policies and the majority views of Japanese citizens, which they praised as holding on to Japan's postwar pacifist traditions.[41] These messages were not only intended to portray the Cabinet decision as illegitimate but also calibrated to discourage a demonization of Japan as a state, which has in recent years been a frequent target of nationalist writings and protests in China. In identifying Abe and his circle as the lone culprits, they provided the government yet another service in deflecting popular pressure for a hardline response and stressing the desirability of a future return to cooperation, which is also of crucial importance to China's own development.

While this example is instructive for the work of China's FPTTs, there are some special circumstances that need to be taken into account when generalizing from it. First, Sino-Japanese relations, and especially their historical dimension, is a highly politically sensitive issue in China, and related debates will always be tightly controlled and scripted. Even in the absence of control, Abe's handling of historical issues has been very negatively received by the expert community and, as a result, academic debates on Japan have tended to narrow around fears of a resurgent Japanese militarism.[42] Second, Japan is China's second most important bilateral relationship, lending itself to a monopolization of decision making at the

(accessed 26 November 2014); Jia Xiudong, "riben cheng de bu shi baohusan, ershi yexin," *Renmin Ribao Overseas Edition*, 14 July 2014, http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2014-07/14/content_1452436.htm (accessed 24 November 2014).

40. See, for example, Wu Jinan, "riben anquan zhengce quanbian de liyou shi xujia de," *Xinmin Wanbao*, 15 August 2014, http://xmwb.xinmin.cn/resfile/2014-08-15/B04/B04.pdf (accessed 25 November 2014).
41. See Lian Degui, "riben xianfa cheng le huaping," *Jiefang Ribao*, 5 July 2014, http://newspaper.jfdaily.com/jfrb/html/2014-07/05/content_1175992.htm (accessed 26 November 2014); Wu Jinan, "riben anquan."
42. King, "Where does Japan fit?"

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

top and fewer opportunities for think tanks to exercise influence. Third, the vast majority of Chinese citizens already hold strong (negative) views about Japan and its current government due to Abe's treatment of historical issues,[43] which also makes it harder for experts to exercise influence over public opinion.

These caveats notwithstanding, the example very much showcases an emerging task of Chinese FPTTs: they are increasingly engaged in a public role, providing background information on current events not only to policy elites but also the interested public. Their duties serve both as a way of circumventing the often inefficient internal advice channels and also an opportunity to shape public opinion in a way that is conducive to China's own strategic aims, for whose pursuit popular nationalism is as much of a hindrance as an asset.[44]

The latter function—a variant of "manufacturing consent"—is, of course, a direct consequence of the think tanks' tight integration with government structures, and reflects the current arrangement between the leadership and its experts: essentially, their joint project is to manage China's rise and to see their state restored to a position of regional leadership, while also tackling the problems that this shift is causing with other states. Under these circumstances, it is not likely that any Chinese FPTT or its staffers will publicly criticize the government and lobby for policy changes, as Western institutes often do. Rather, the think tanks will continue to work in close coordination with government authorities, and strive to maintain China's CCP-led political order by providing it with expertise and public support.

Conclusions

Foreign policy think tanks in Japan and China share many aims and ambitions. Both seek to inform and, ideally, also affect public discourses as well as decision making on foreign and security policies—be it by issuing policy briefs, by providing commentaries in the media, or by serving as platforms for the exchange of views with representatives from other states. Foreign policy think tanks in both countries aim to convey relevant standpoints and perspectives to international audiences and, ultimately, also to contribute to their respective countries' involvement and standing in international affairs. They have been embraced by their peers in North America and elsewhere, who seek insights into current foreign and security policy thinking in these two countries.

Similarities between many FPTTs in China and Japan also include their strong ties to individual ministries and government agencies—though at least some Japanese think tanks seek to transcend such links and the resulting obligations. Given the problem of bureaucratic stovepiping in both countries, think tanks can help to inform or even facilitate policy-making by providing additional perspectives

43. See Pew Research, "Global Attitudes Report. Chapter 4: How Asians View Each Other," 14 July 2014, http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-4-how-asians-view-each-other/ (accessed 9 December 2014).
44. See Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 219–222.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

and, at least in the Japanese case, by participating in governmental advisory boards, which in turn can be used by political leaders to bridge organizational divides and to set policy directions.

However, while many FPTTs in China have received increased funding and consequently improved the academic qualifications of their staffers in recent years, many Japanese FPTTs continue to struggle in terms of funding and personnel. Also mirroring China's rise in international politics and economic affairs and Japan's relative decline in these spheres, China's FPTTs have become more visible and vocal on the global stage while their Japanese counterparts, few in number and also often understaffed, are having a more difficult time getting their messages across.

Notably, FPTTs in both Japan and China have yet to serve as genuine agenda setters for their two countries' foreign and policy security policy. Far more often they play a reactive role, for example, by helping to legitimize existing policy preferences and positions. This does not mean that FPTTs merely serve as mouthpieces of political leaders in both countries—in many cases think tank scholars in China and Japan share the world views of their political leaders and thus act out of conviction. The recent involvement of think tankers in the Japanese government's advisory panel, which helped to legitimize the Cabinet's reinterpretation of the constitution to allow for collective self-defence, serves as a case in point. While Chinese FPTTs' reactions to the reinterpretation were predictably harsh and remained close to the official foreign ministry line, they were also nuanced in that they distinguished between the intentions of Japan's political leaders and the views of many ordinary Japanese. This reflects their establishment status and resulting desire to keep Sino-Japanese relations on an even keel.

Given that many of the existing FPTTs in Japan and China have in the past played useful roles in terms of operating bilateral dialogue forums, they are also well positioned to contribute to current and future Sino-Japanese exchanges among politicians and opinion leaders. Venues like the annual Beijing-Tokyo Forum bring think tankers, officials, and business leaders from both states together and can serve as a conduit for exchanges even in times when relations between top leaders are acrimonious.[45] These days such exchanges are all the more valuable and timely as many veterans knowledgeable about the other country have left the scene in recent years, leading to a palpable drying up of "human pipelines" between China and Japan. While one should not expect miracles from such bilateral "track two" or "1.5" dialogues, constrained as they are by the currently prevailing mistrust on both sides, it stands to reason that without such activities, the danger of unintended collisions between East Asia's two giants might well be greater.

45. "10th Beijing-Tokyo Forum held in Japan," *China Military Online*, 29 September 2014, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2014-09/29/content_6160355.htm (accessed 16 December 2014).

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Author Biographies

Pascal Abb received his PhD in political science from the University of Hamburg and is currently a research fellow at the Institute of Asian Studies, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, and a visiting scholar at the Institute of International Relations at National Chengchi University in Taipei. His research focuses on China's foreign policy toward its regional environment and the role of think tanks in China's political system.

Patrick Koellner is the director of the Institute of Asian Studies, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, and a professor of political science at the University of Hamburg. His research revolves around political organizations and institutions in East Asia and Australasia.

Downloaded from ijx.sagepub.com at Leibniz Inst Globale und Regionale Studien on November 20, 2015