



清华大学
公共管理学院

G I G A

German  Institute of Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

Joint GIGA –Tsinghua Workshop

**Think tanks in Asia:
Different contexts, common destinies?**

Jointly hosted by

School of Public Policy and Management

Tsinghua University

&

Institute of Asian Studies

German Institute of Global and Area Studies

April 22-23, 2016

Tsinghua University

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era in which governments around the globe are facing increasingly complex challenges in fields ranging from environmental and financial governance to non-traditional and information security, they have increasingly turned to outside technocratic advice in order to develop effective policy responses. This demand has been met by, and led to a global proliferation of, think tanks - institutes whose mission is to inform and, ideally, influence public policy on the basis of research and analysis provided by in-house and affiliated staff. In pursuing this task, think tanks nowadays involve themselves in all stages of the policy process, from the identification of problems to the drafting of possible solutions and lobbying for their adoption. These interactions have been well documented for think tanks in the United States and - albeit to a lesser extent - some Western European nations.

However, as scholars pursuing a more comparative approach have noted, the development of think tanks is a genuinely global phenomenon that has spread to basically every world region, albeit to different extents. Think tanks thus operate in a vast variety of political systems, developmental stages, and social environments. This creates significant opportunities for further comparative research to better understand the determinants of think tank development and impact, especially when focusing on regions that have not received as much attention as they might deserve.

East Asia is now home to the largest number of institutes outside of the Western world, and China is particularly noteworthy for featuring the world's second-largest think tank sector by recent domestic and international estimates. This dynamic is neither a coincidence nor a short-term trend, as the central government recently committed to build "new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics" in order to "further promote scientific and democratic decision making, promote China's administrative system, and strengthen China's soft power". Nations like Japan, Korea or Singapore have also built globally connected think tank systems, often as a result of government or corporate sponsorship, leading to a developmental trajectory that is distinct from the Western experience of civil society initiatives and party affiliation.

Yet, English-language research on institutes in China and other Asian countries remains relatively sparse. In order to close this gap, the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and Tsinghua University's School of Public Policy and Management are convening an academic workshop in Beijing on April 22nd and 23rd. The workshop will be hosted by Tsinghua University and is generously supported by a grant from Germany's Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES).

Featuring scholars from or based in China, Japan, India, South Korea, Germany, Australia, the UK, Chile and Hong Kong, the workshop encourages participants and other interested parties to develop a comparative perspective on think tank development in Asia, focusing not only on what sets these national systems apart from the Western experience, but also commonalities and differences with each other. This setting also allows participants to share experiences and strategies across country lines, expand their personal networks, and develop a deeper understanding for opportunities and challenges facing policy research communities in other countries. Selected contributions to the workshop will be gathered for future joint publication projects, with the aim of placing them in an international, SSCI-listed Asian Studies journal.

The workshop will open with a roundtable discussion on April 22nd that will

primarily focus on recent efforts to develop think tanks in China, featuring input from local and international academic experts and practitioners. On April 23rd, a series of academic panels will further investigate these trends, compare them to the situation in other Asian countries, and discuss interactions and inspirations between different national think tank systems. All academic panels are open to the general public, whereas the roundtable discussion is open to selected guests. Prospective attendants are invited to contact the conference organizers in order to confirm their participation and to reserve their seats.

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2. SCHEDULE

※Roundtable Discussion※

April 22nd, 2016

Tsinghua University, School of Public Policy and Management, Room 302

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|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15:30-15:40 | Opening of the roundtable discussion
Moderation: Zhu Xufeng |
| 15:40-17:00 | Roundtable discussion on "New-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics"
Speakers:
Xue Lan, Tsinghua University
Yang Mu, IPP, South China University of Technology
Jing Linbo, CASS Social Sciences Evaluation Center
Ray Yep, City University Hong Kong
Christoph Pohlmann, FES
Pascal Abb, GIGA
And one Chinese participant TBC. |
| 17:00-17:30 | Free discussion |
| 18:00 | Dinner |

※Academic Workshop※

April 23rd, 2016

Tsinghua University, School of Public Policy and Management, Room 302

- 9:00-9:05 **Welcome address**
Xue Lan, Tsinghua University
- 9:05-9:10 **Administrative details introduction**
Pascal Abb, GIGA
- First Panel** **◆ Think Tank Practice in China**
Chair: Patrick Köllner, GIGA
Discussant: Pascal Abb, GIGA
- 9:10-10:30 **"Policy-Consulting by the Institute of Contemporary China Studies"**
Hu Angang, Tsinghua University
- "Embracing the Idea of New-Style Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics"**
Xue Lan and Zhu Xufeng, Tsinghua University
- "Meeting the Challenge of Resolving Policy Disputes in China: A Proposal for Deliberative Think Tanks"**
Li Ya, Beijing Institute of Technology
- Discussion & Questions**
- 10:30-10:45 **Coffee break**
- Second Panel** **◆ Think Tank Interactions between China and the World**
Chair: Sebastian Maslow(TBC), Tohoku University
Discussant: Emmanuel Yi Pastreich, East Asia Institute
- 10:45-12:05 **"Building 'New Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics' - Germany as a Possible Inspiration?"**
Wu Jiang, Beijing Foreign Studies University
- "Chinese Think Tanks and the Practice of Public Diplomacy"**
Pascal Abb, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
- "Chinese Provincial-Level Think Tanks' Role in Foreign Policy Making"**
Xin Hua, Shanghai International Studies University
- Discussion & Questions**
- 12:05– 13:30 **Lunch break**

Lunch boxes provided for all the participants

Third Panel

◆ **Country Studies from East Asia**

Chair: Ray Yep (TBC), City University of Hong Kong

Discussant: Patrick Köllner, GIGA

13:30 - 14:50

"The Journey of Indian Think Tanks: a Perspective"

Annapoorna Ravichander and Arushi Sen, CSTEP

"Assessing Japan's Knowledge Regime: the Role of Think Tanks in Japan's Foreign and Economic Policy Process"

Sebastian Maslow, Tohoku University

"Think Tanks in Post-New Order Indonesia: Building a Policy Research Community after Three Decades of Decay"

Ben Hillman, Australia National University

Discussion & Questions

14:50-15:10

Coffee break

Fourth Panel

◆ **Think Tanks between Knowledge and Power in East Asia**

Chair: Pascal Abb, GIGA

Discussant: Ben Hillman, Australia National University

15:10-16:50

"Quasi-Democracy and Hybrid Form of Think Tank Development in Hong Kong"

Ray Yep, City University of Hong Kong

"Government Involvement and Knowledge Production: A Case Study of University Think Tanks in Shanghai"

Lin Huihuang, South China University of Technology

"Think Tanks in Asia: How Politics Shapes Different National Think Tank Histories "

Ajoy Datta, Overseas Development Institute;

Enrique Mendizabal, On Think Tanks

"New Paradigms for Think Tanks in East Asia: A Consideration of Contemporary Needs and Opportunities"

Emmanuel Yi Pastreich, East Asia Institute

16:50-17:50

Concluding Remarks, Summary and Outlook on the Planned Publication(s)

Modirators: Patrick Köllner & Zhu Xufeng

18:00

Dinner

Notes:

1. During the workshop, each paper has 15 minutes at most for the presentation, which will be strictly enforced by the chairs.
2. In each panel, there will be 15 minutes discussant's input that should be roughly equally apportioned between papers, 20 minutes questions from the floor.
3. For participants who are going to share their papers during the workshop, please send the full paper before April 8th.