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Special Report on Top Think Tanks in Asia by Country

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Abstract

This report is based on the field research and desk research conducted by Dr. McGann in Asia. It is a standalone report and does not rely on expert or peer input employed in the Global Go To Think Tank Index. It does, however, rely heavily on the ranking guidelines developed by Dr. McGann for the Global Go To Think Tank Index. In addition the results are based on his extensive research and data collection on think tanks in the region.

Disciplines

Asian Studies | International and Area Studies | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Comments

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Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program

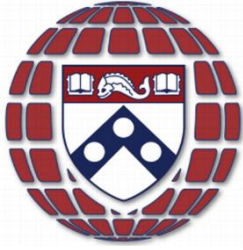
The Lauder Institute

The University of Pennsylvania

Special Report on Top Think Tanks in Asia by Country



By James G. McGann, Ph.D.



Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program

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“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”

Researching the trends and challenges facing think tanks, policymakers, and policy-oriented civil society groups...

Sustaining, strengthening, and building capacity for think tanks around the world...

Maintaining the largest, most comprehensive database of over 6,500 think tanks...

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“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”

The mission of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) is to increase the profile, capacity and performance of think tanks at the national, regional and global levels so they can better serve policy makers and the public.

The TTCSP conducts research on the relationship between think tanks, politics and public policy, produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index, develops capacity-building resources and programs, manages and supports a global network of close to 7000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives. The TTCSP often is referred to as the “think tanks think tank”.

Introduction

This report is based on the field research and desk research conducted by Dr. McGann in Asia. It is a standalone report and does not rely on expert or peer input employed in the Global Go To Think Tank Index. It does, however, rely heavily on the ranking guidelines developed by Dr. McGann for the Global Go To Think Tank Index. In addition the results are based on his extensive research and data collection on think tanks in the region.

Trends and Transitions in Asia

No other region in the world has boasted an unprecedented growth in the past two decades than Asia. Both economically and politically, such development has cast the international spotlight on this region insofar as to motivate Obama's "pivot" to Asia, or as many scholars have adopted, name this century the Asian century. In the backdrop of such immense growth, where do civil societies, policy and epistemic communities in Asia stand in relation to other regions of the world? One definitive trend that has converged in all countries in the region has been the increasing recognition of the importance of think tanks, or policy research institutes, as an integral source of policy ideas and innovation. This was in part necessitated by globalization, for no issue is truly domestic and even the most seemingly state-specific issue carries some international ramification – a reason that thoughtful policymaking is all the more important in the age in which Asian states are gaining preeminence in the international arena.

One crucial challenge among think tanks across the region is sorting out role of think tanks vis-à-vis the government. With the exception of several states, many governments in the region have, over only the last couple decades, transitioned away from restricted democratic regimes to more open and democratic forms of government. It is for this reason that in many cases, the government's hand is often an inevitable presence in the structuring, as well as operation of policy actors and epistemic communities. In examining the relationship Asian think tanks have with their respective government, one must pay particular attention to the particular political culture that surrounds such a context. Chinese think tanks, for instance, have often been noted as having traces of government's hand in almost every policy research institute – a fact, from the Western view, may be deemed as lacking "independence." However, one must bear in mind that the immense presence of the state has been deeply engrained in the political culture of China and many other Asian countries. For this reason the think tanks follow the political tradition of informal, personally connected advisory roles. Thus, one could perhaps posit that think tanks in China and in other countries, despite their distance from the government, are operating rather effectively in their specific political culture. Such a need to consider political context holds true for other states such as South East Asia where diversity both in culture,

political, economic and social development vary widely. For these reasons, a holistic analysis is all the more important.

Another point of convergence among think tanks in Asia concerns funding. This issue is captured by three fundamental questions: How to mobilize the financial resources necessary to support think tanks; How to maintain independence when government grants and contracts are the primary source of funding; How to develop new sources of funding. In the aftermath of the global economic crisis, funding has only become increasingly scarce, and even where there is money – often in the government – the bureaucracy and requirement are often stringent. It is for this reason that diversification of funding sources is one of the most important objectives of emerging think tanks. The implication of such a funding scheme is twofold: a degree of financial stability, and increased intellectual autonomy. A repeatedly raised concern among think tanks in the region is the often-myopic nature of funding received from the government. Federal funding often pertains to specific projects, and fails to foster an environment in which an ongoing accumulation of research can develop an anthology of epistemic capital. In the absence of such long term-continuity, think tanks can often suffer from the sway of regime changes, making it all the more difficult to serve their intended purpose of ideational pluralism in policy making.

The governments in the region have place a strong emphasis on the think tank development as a strategy for helping policy makers meet a range of complex policy issues facing their respective countries. The number and diversity of think tanks is expanding in the region which are now serving government and the public. There are now policy oriented think tanks that are based at universities, corporations, civic organizations which serve as a bridge between the world of ideas and policy and between governments and the public. Singapore is excellent example of the progress made in building a diverse group of world class think tanks. These think tanks are supported and complimented by an excellent school of public policy (Lee Kwan School of Public Policy) and international affairs (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies). The centers created have become recognized as centers of excellence around the world. Singapore was able to achieve these dramatic results in a relatively short period of time by making a strategic investments in people, ideas, and institutions. The strategic choices made by Singapore have enabled it to become a regional and global policy hub for policy innovation.

Lastly, the area that showcases much possibility, as well as challenges, is human capital. In light of the common recognition that think tanks serve a crucial role in policy making, one could posit that an environment for bright young researchers to enter this field is on the rise. However, funding here remains an issue at large. Furthermore, in regions such as South East Asia, in which great diversity coupled with their relatively recent introduction to democracy reveals an epistemic community whose human capital is yet to grow in terms of access to resources as well as the actual practice of managing policy research institutes. It is particularly for this reason that a region-wide collaboration among think tanks can be an immensely

enriching tool in developing both the human capital, and more importantly, the best practices for think tank research, management and resource mobilization.

Top Think Tanks For Selected Countries In Asia

Australia

1. Australian Institute for International Affairs (AIIA)
2. Grattan Institute
3. Lowy Institute of International Policy
4. Centre for Independent Studies (CIS)
5. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC), Australian National University
6. Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
7. Australia Institute (TAI)
8. Refugee Advocacy Network (RAN)
9. Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)
10. Centre for Policy Development Sustainable Economy Program (CPD)
11. Centre for International Security Studies (CISS), University of Sydney
12. Globalization and Development Centre (GDC), Bond University
13. Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE)
14. Australia Institute
15. Australian APEC Study Centre
16. Australian Fabian Society
17. Brisbane Institute
18. Institute for Private Enterprise
19. Institute of Public Affairs
20. Sydney Institute

China

1. China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
2. China Institute of International Studies
3. Shanghai Institute for International Studies
4. Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
5. Development Research Center of the State Council
6. Carnegie China Center, Tsinghua University
7. Center for China and Globalization
8. Brookings Center, Tsinghua University

9. Cathay Institute for Public Affairs
10. Unirule Institute for Economics
11. Center for International and Strategic Studies
12. Institute for National Policy Research
13. China Center for International Economic Exchanges
14. Shanghai Academy for Social Sciences
15. Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies (RDCY)
16. Civic Exchange
17. China Research Academy for Environmental Sciences
18. Chinese Academy For Environmental Planning
19. China Finance Forum CF40
20. Charhar Institute
21. China Institute for Reform and Development
22. Party School of the Central Committee of CPC
23. Center for China Studies at Tsinghua University
24. Center for China Development Model Research, Fudan University
25. Academy of Macroeconomic Research
26. Hong Kong Policy Research Institute (PRI)
27. Hong Kong Centre for Economic Research
28. Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
29. Institute for Strategic Studies - National Defense University
30. China Development Institute (CDI)
31. Asia-Africa Development Research Institute
32. Xinhua News Agency Research Institute
33. Institute of International Law, Wuhan University
34. China Rural Development Institute
35. Economics and Technology Research Institute

India

1. Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
2. Observer Research Foundation (ORF)
3. Delhi Policy Group (DPG)
4. Development Alternatives (DA)
5. Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations
6. Center for Study of Science Technology and Policy (CSTEP)
7. Brookings Institution India (BII)
8. Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA)
9. Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)
10. Centre for Policy Research (CPR)

11. Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
12. Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe)
13. Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
14. Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS)
15. Centre for Civil Society (CSS)
16. Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)
17. Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR)
18. Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)
19. Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS)
20. Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
21. National Council of Applied Economic Research
22. Fields of View
23. National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)
24. Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy
25. Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS)
26. Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)
27. Takshashila Institution
28. United Service Institution of India (USI)
29. Institute for Human Development (IHD)
30. Institute of Development Studies

Japan

1. Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)
2. Asia Forum Japan (AFJ)
3. National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)
4. Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO)
5. Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)
6. Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS)
7. Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)
8. Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI)
9. National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA)
10. Japan Institute for International Development
11. Tokyo Foundation
12. Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS)
13. National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER)
14. Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ)
15. Center for Science of Environment, Resources and Energy
16. Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies (ISEP)

17. Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
18. Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE)
19. Global Development Research Center (GDRC)
20. Health and Global Policy Institute (HGPI) (Japan)
21. Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute (JICA-RI)
22. Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute (GISPRI)
23. Institute for Future Engineering (IFENG), FKA Institute for Future Technology
24. Kansai Institute of Information Systems (KIIS)
25. Center for Global Communications (GLOCOM)
26. National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST)
27. Nomura Research Institute (NRI)
28. Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc. (MIRI)
29. Institute for International Strategy and Information Analysis
30. Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives (ZERI)

Economic and Social Research Institute

Republic of Korea

1. Korea Development Institute (KDI)
2. Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)
3. Center for Free Enterprise
4. East Asia Institute (EAI)
5. Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS)
6. Asan Institute for Policy Studies
7. Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA)
8. Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI)
9. Sejong Institute
10. Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET)
11. Science and Technology Policy Institute
12. Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA)
13. Institute for Far Eastern Studies
14. The Global Green Growth Institute
15. Institute for Global Economics

Singapore

1. Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)
2. Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS)
3. Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)

4. Asia Competitiveness Institute
5. International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR)
6. Centre on Asia and Globalisation
7. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
8. Institute of Water Policy (IWP)
9. Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS)
10. Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)
11. Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre)
12. East Asian Institute
13. Political Risks Assessment Group
14. Energy Studies Institute (ESI)

Taiwan

1. Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD)
2. Taiwan Institute of Economic Research (TIER)
3. Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (CIER)
4. Institute for International Relations
5. Institute for Social and Environmental Transitions (ISET)
6. Prospect Foundation
7. Taiwan Think Tank
8. Institute for National Policy Research
9. Thinking Taiwan
10. National Policy Foundation
11. Cross-Strait Interflow Prospect Foundation
12. Institute for National Policy Research

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James G. McGann, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer at the Lauder Institute of the Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also the director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania. He conducts research on the trends and challenges facing think tanks and policymakers around the world and provides advice and technical assistance to think tanks, governments and public and private donors on how to improve the quality and impact of policy research. He is also a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a think tank based in Philadelphia. Prior to coming to the University of Pennsylvania

Dr. McGann was an assistant professor of Political Science at Villanova University where he taught international relations, international organizations and international law. His current research interest include: assessing global trends in security and international affairs research; the role of think tanks in

shaping US domestic and foreign policy; think tanks and policy advice in the BRICS and G20 countries and transnational threats and global public policy. He is the creator and author of the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index which 6, think tanks in every region of the world.

Dr. McGann has served as a consultant and advisor to the World Bank; the United Nations; the United States Agency for International Development; the Soros, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Hewlett, and Gates foundations; the Carnegie Corporation; and foreign governments on the role of non-governmental, public policy, and public engagement organizations in the US and developing and transitional countries. He has served as the senior vice president for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomats, the public policy program officer for the Pew Charitable Trusts, the assistant director of the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He also served as a senior advisor to the Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs and the Society for International Development.

Among Dr. McGann's publications are "Competition for Dollars, Scholars, and Influence in the Public Policy Research Industry" (University Press of America 1995); "The International Survey of Think Tanks" (Foreign Policy Research Institute 1999); "Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalyst for Ideas and Action", co-edited with Kent B. Weaver (Transaction Publishers 2000); "Comparative Think Tanks, Politics, and Public Policy" (Edward Elgar 2005); "Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the U.S.: Academics, Advisors, and Advocates" (Routledge 2007); "Global Trends and Transitions: 2007 Survey of Think Tanks" (Foreign Policy Research Institute 2008); "The 2007 Global Go to Think Tanks" (Foreign Policy Research Institute 2008); "Think Tank Index" (Foreign Policy Magazine 2009); "The 2008 Global Go to Think Tank Index" (IRP, University of Pennsylvania 2009); "Democratization and Market Reform: Think Tanks As Catalysts" (Routledge 2009), "Catalysts for Economic Growth and Development: The Role of Think Tanks in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa" (CIPE 2009), "The 2009 Global Go to Think Tank Index" (University of Pennsylvania 2010), "Global Think Tanks, Policy Networks and Governance" (Routledge 2010), "The 2010 Global Go to Think Tank Index" (University of Pennsylvania 2011), "The 2011 Global Go to Think Tank Index" (University of Pennsylvania 2012), "Think Tanks and Global Policy Networks, chapter in edited volume, *International Organization and Global Governance*, (Routledge September 2013), "The 2012 Global Go to Think Tank Index" (University of Pennsylvania 2013), "Think Tanks and Social Development Policy: A Global Comparative Study" (Forthcoming, University of Pennsylvania Press 2013); "The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks and US Domestic and Foreign Policy" (Forthcoming 2013); "Think Tanks, Policy Advice and the Foreign Policy Challenges Facing Emerging Powers (Forthcoming late 2014).



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