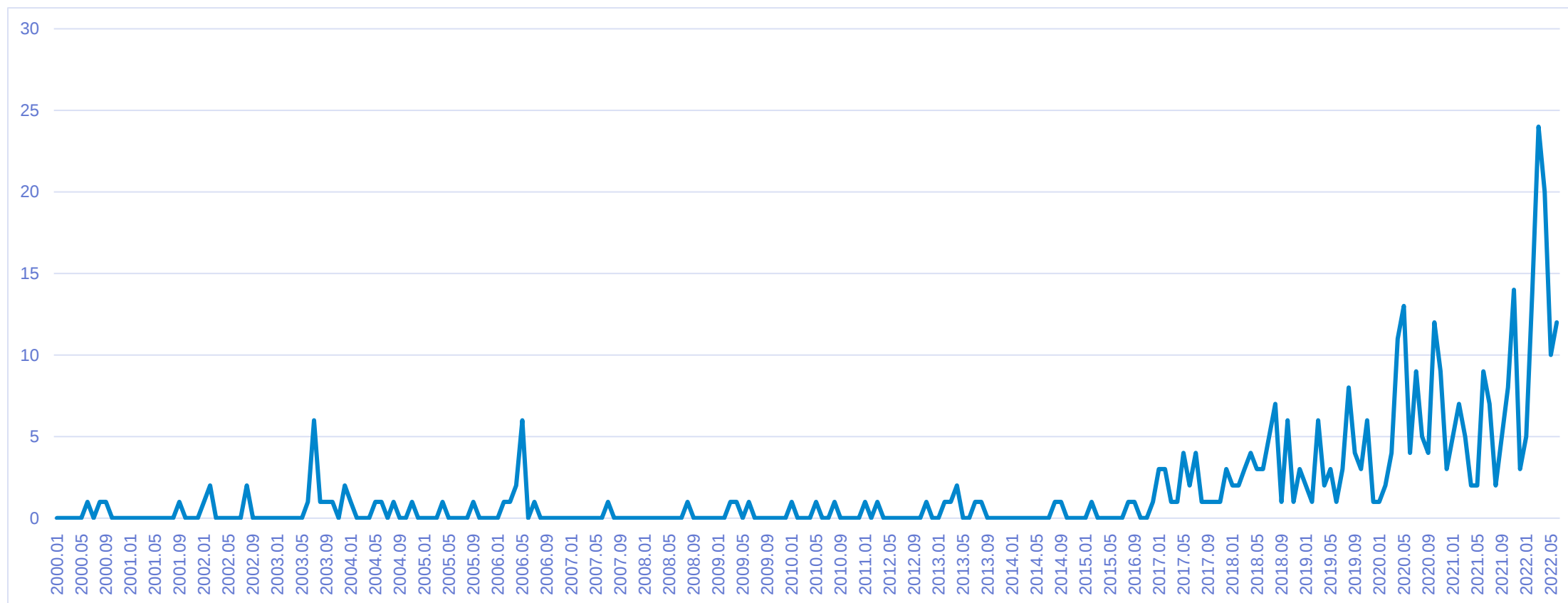


Authoritarian Disinformation and Narratives in Japan

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Heightened Interest in Disinfo in Japan

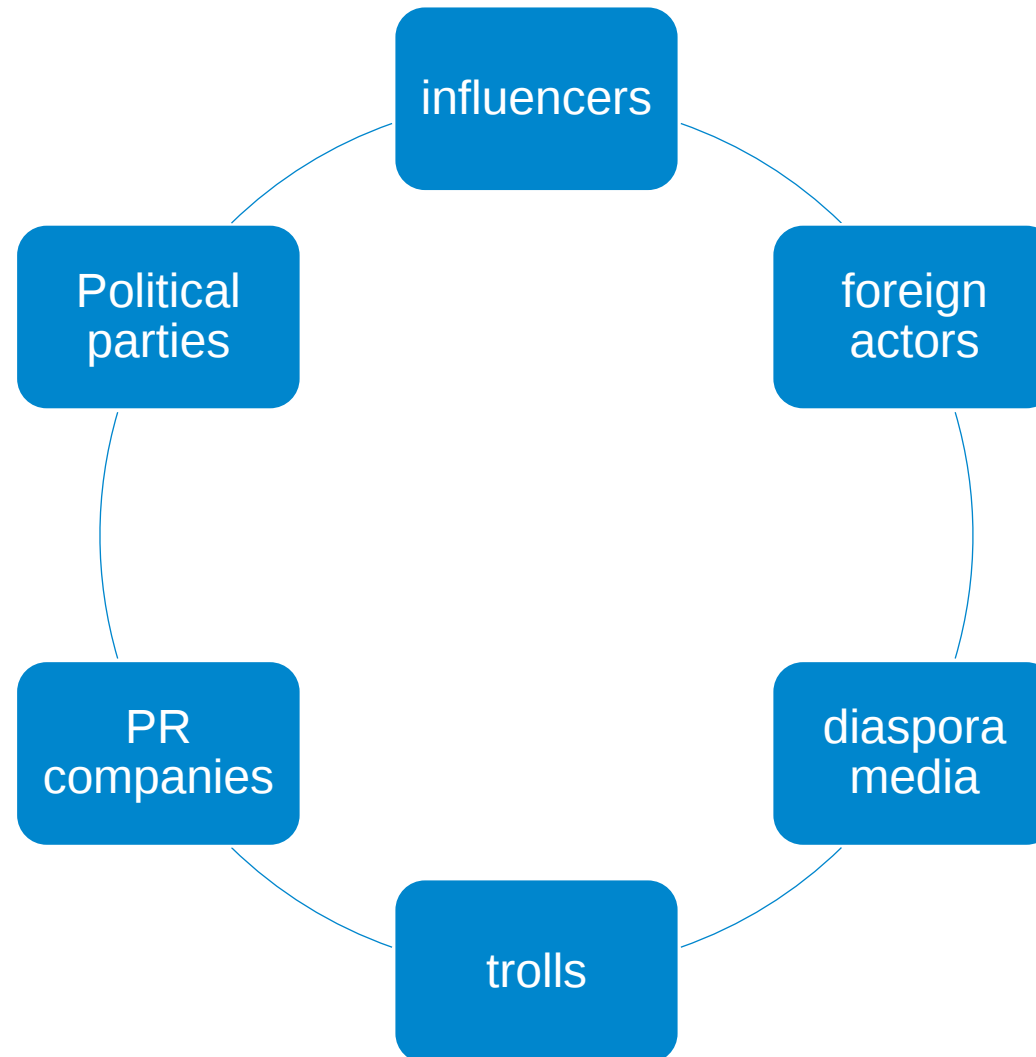


Number of Nikkei Shimbun articles containing the term “disinformation” (January 2000 to June 2022).
Source: Author calculations based on the Nikkei Shimbun’s Nikkei Telecon 21 database.

Disinformation tide in Japan

- 2016: US presidential elections;
misinformation about healthcare from Weibo
- 2019-2021: misinformation on COVID-19
- 2022: Russian disinformation about Ukraine
- 2023: Disinformation about the discharge of the treated water;
Disinformation and manipulated information about Israel-Gaza conflict

Disinformation Sources



Purposes

- Destabilizing and polarizing Japan
 - Driving a wedge between Japan and the country's security partners
esp. US, South Korea, and Taiwan
- The two objectives are inter-twined

Polarization in Japan

- Relatively weak populist tendencies
 - disliking of political discussions
 - disliking of retweeting and liking
 - relatively restrained economic gap (although in increase)
- Biggest divide is over security
 - Article 9 of the Constitution

Battle between Pro-US and Anti-US/Japan

Left/ Progressives	Right/Conservatives
Pacifists	National interest, defense
Anti-constitution amendment	Pro-constitution amendment
Seeks to avoid the fear of entrapment → Oppose expanded security role of Japan	Seeks to avoid the fear of abandonment → Seeks greater security cooperation with like-minded countries (US-Japan, QUAD, trilateral, etc.)
distrust in the Japanese government, US skepticism	Stronger trust in the Japanese government and the US
Buys anti-US information (Israel-Gaza)	Strengthens anti-Pacifist sentiment

Information manipulation

- Israel-Hamas conflict as Israel-Palestine issue
→ shows that Israel is attacking Palestine unilaterally
(avoids mentions on Hamas's initial attack and hostage-taking)
- Shows the US as responsible for the Israel-Gaza conflict
- Hard to tell how much influence there has been, but massive inflow of pictures and videos continue

Information Laundering

- Cross-references to the article among various CCP media outlets, including CRI Japanese edition, Global Times, China.net Japanese edition, and People's Daily Japanese edition
- Make it appear as if it is an influential discourse

Source: Created by the author.

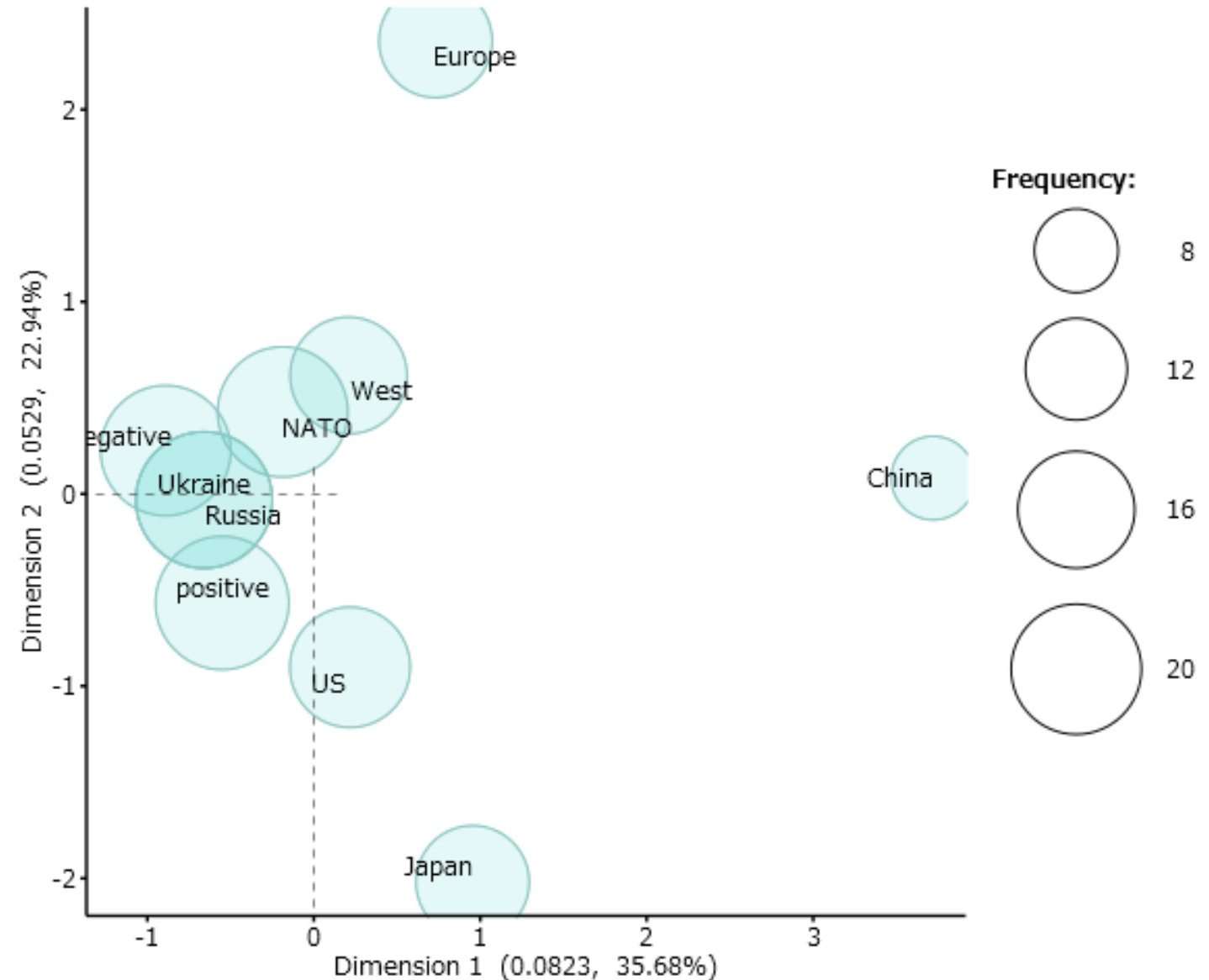
Original Sources of Contents Reprinted by Record China (June 2017 – Dec 2019)

Source	Num of articles	Relations with CCP
人民網日本語版 (People's Daily Japan edition)	6,696	CCP media
環球網 (Global Times)	138	CCP media
The World Video	109	Diaspora media under the CCP influence
Bridge International Media	88	Diaspora media under the CCP influence
日本僑報社 (The Duan Press)	40	Diaspora media under the CCP influence
Fly Media	32	Diaspora media under the CCP influence
月刊中国ニュース (Chinanews)	10	Diaspora media under the CCP influence
人民日報海外版日本月刊 (People's Daily Japan Monthly)	2	CCP media
日本新華僑報 (jnocnews)	1	Diaspora media under the CCP influence

Liberal Intellectuals being Influenced

- Correspondence Analysis of Articles of Whataboutism related to Russia's aggression in Ukraine
- Slightly more negative views on the West and NATO
- Weak awareness about China's role in the war

Source: Maiko Ichihara, "How to tackle disinformation in Japan: Lessons from the Russia-Ukraine war," in Democracy in Asia (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2022), p.39.



Anti-China and Anti-Pacifist sentiment as a problem

- Anti-China sentiment
 - average people should not be targeted of hate
- Labeling against each other
 - Pacifists increasingly considered as pro-China
- Most vivist over Okinawa

Governmental Efforts

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the National Police Agency each have their own initiatives.
 - The Ministry of Defense established a Global Strategic Intelligence Officer in April 2022.
- The current backlash in the US should give us a lesson about the danger of having state actors in countermeasures.

Private Actors' Efforts

- Research has expanded, but not enough
- Weak inter-disciplinary research
- Too close alignment with the government

Necessities for Inter-Disciplinary, and Cross-Border Cooperation

- Rapid info-sharing about disinformation among researchers necessary
- Cross-border information-sharing helps mitigate the attempts to drive a wedge between security partners
- Trust-building between the left and the right is necessary domestically

