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# Think Tanks and Civil Societies

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*R. Kent Weaver and James G. McGann*

"Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed"  
—*Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville

Governments and individual policymakers throughout the world face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear in governmental decisionmaking. Policymakers need basic information about the societies they govern, about how current policies are working, possible alternatives and their likely costs and consequences.

Often the problem for policymakers is not a lack of information. Indeed, policymakers are frequently besieged by more information than they can possibly use: complaints from constituents, reports from international agencies or civil society organizations, advice from bureaucrats, lobbying by interest groups, and exposes of the problems of current government programs in the popular or elite media, etc. The problem is that much of this information is unsystematic, some is unreliable, and some is tainted by the interests of those who are disseminating it. Some may be so technical that generalist policymakers cannot understand it or use it. Some information may be politically, financially, or administratively impractical, or not in the interests of the policymakers who must make decisions. Other information may not be useful because it differs too radically from the world view or ideology of those receiving it.

Policymakers and others interested in the policymaking process, in short, need information that is reliable, accessible and useful. There are many potential sources for this information. Government agencies may provide it, as may university-based academics or research centers. International agencies are another potential source of information, especially on such basic data about "how the world works" as trade flows. But governmental demands for information that can be used in policymaking

have also increasingly created a demand for independent public policy research organizations, commonly known as "think tanks."

These public policy research organizations first appeared in the U.S. and Europe at the turn of this century when organizations such as The Brookings Institution (1916), The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1914), Kiel Institute of World Economics (1914) and Royal Institute for International Affairs (1920) were established. The term "think tank" was introduced in the United States during World War II to characterize the secure environment in which military and civilian experts were situated so that they could develop invasion plans and other military strategies. After the war, the term was applied to contract researchers such as the RAND Corporation that did a mixture of "deep thinking" and program evaluation for the military. The use of the term was expanded in the 1960's to describe other groups of experts who formulated various policy recommendations, including some quasi-academic research institutes concerned with the study of international relations and strategic questions. By the 1970's, the term "think tank" was applied to those institutions focusing on not only on foreign policy and defense strategy, but also on current political, economic and social issues.

Once found only in the advanced industrial democracies of the West, think tanks now provide information and advice for policymakers and civil society representatives in countries as diverse as India, Lebanon, Chile, Bulgaria, Germany, Senegal and Thailand. There has been a veritable explosion in recent years of think tanks since the 1970's. Today there are more than three thousand think tanks around the world, in almost every country that has more than a few million inhabitants and at least a modicum of intellectual freedom. They include a whole host of privately organized groups of experts who perform research in a variety of disciplines and inform policy makers and the general public of their research findings.

As think tanks have expanded geographically, they have had to adapt to new conditions. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America (and later Central Europe and the

former Soviet Union) think tanks face a different set of challenges that have forced them to develop innovative ways to maintain their operations. Most countries in these regions do not have strong philanthropic traditions or tax laws that encourage private philanthropy; therefore, think tanks in these countries are primarily funded by governments, political parties, or international donors. This makes these institutions particularly dependent on sources of support that are highly variable. The lack of independent support also raises questions about the long term viability of these institutions and their ability to provide truly independent research and analysis. Nevertheless, many think tanks in these regions have attained a highly visible presence and participate actively in their countries' policy debates.

The purpose of this volume is to chart and try to understand the extraordinary explosion of think tank activity around the globe. Are think tanks really a common category of organizations, or perhaps instead a mis-labeled grab-bag that misleads as much as it reveals? How are they organized and financed? How do they set their agendas? How unique are the unique challenges that confront think tanks in the developing and transitional economies? Are the new think tanks springing up in these regions similar in kind to those in the developed world, or are they fundamentally different types of organizations? How sustainable are these organizations likely to be over the long term? How effective are they in bringing expertise into the policy process? What steps should funding entities take to nurture their development and growth? These are the major questions that this volume seeks to address.

### **Think Tanks: An Ambiguous Category**

Before going any further, however, it is important to address the most fundamental of questions: what are think tanks, and how are they different from other organizations? Defining think tanks, and establishing clear boundaries as to which organizations fit

within the category, is one of the most conceptually difficult tasks in analyzing these organizations. At the broadest level, one can say that think tanks are institutions that provide public policy research, analysis and advice. But that definition casts the net very broadly. Many interest groups, university research centers, and other civil society organizations carry out policy research and advice as one of their activities, if not the central one. Many government agencies also have policy research and advice as a major function.

In order to narrow the scope of inquiry, the term has frequently been limited (especially in British and American usage) to policy research organizations that (1) are independent of government and universities, and (2) operate on a not-for-profit basis. This definition, however, has been criticized as far too narrow. Diane Stone argues that "the notion that a think tank requires independence or autonomy from the state and private interests in order to be 'free-thinking' is a peculiar Anglo-American predilection' that does not travel well into other cultures."<sup>1</sup> Certainly organizations that are almost totally dependent upon government contracts for their revenues, as are many organizations to which the think tank label is routinely applied, cannot be considered fully autonomous. In some continental European countries, notably Germany and the Netherlands, think tanks frequently have close financial and personnel ties to political parties. And in some regions of the world where sponsorship by a government ministry is a legal necessity for a think tank to exist, excluding organizations with an organizational link to government would convey the misleading impression that those regions host no think tanks at all. Similarly, in regions where resources for policy research are extremely scarce, linkages to university or contracting relationships with the private sector may be the only way to cover a research institute's core personnel and facilities costs.

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Stone, "Think Tanks in the Global Political Order," paper presented at the Private Organizations in Global Politics Seminar, Constanze, Germany, April 1998

In this study, we will pursue a middle course in defining think tanks. We begin with the core definition of think tanks as policy research organizations that have significant autonomy from government and societal interests. But we also recognize that the operational definition must differ from region to region. In the regional overview chapters that follow, the authors vary their definitions according to regional circumstances while noting where their boundary-drawing differs from the narrower Anglo-American usage.

### **ROLES FOR THINK TANKS**

Just as important as establishing boundaries for the think tank concept is understanding what they do. The briefest answer is that they do several different things. One role performed by many think tanks, especially those with staffs composed primarily of Ph.D.s in the social sciences, is to carry out *basic research on policy problems and policy solutions* in a fashion similar to that done by university-based researchers. Research on policy problems may address questions like: What are the challenges that two countries face in reunifying (like East and West Germany) or splitting up (like the Czech Republic and Slovakia)? How is the deregulation of financial markets or the privatization of transport likely to affect the range and price of services that are offered? What sorts of electoral rules and representative institutions are most conducive to democracy and stability in societies that are divided along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines? How significant is the threat of nuclear proliferation among developing countries?

A second role performed at many think tanks is *providing advice on immediate policy concerns*. This can occur at several stages in the policymaking process and through a number of channels. Think tanks may organize briefings and hold seminars for policymakers and the media. They may publish issue briefs on legislation pending in the legislature, and their staff may testify in legislative hearings. Advice-giving may also take the form of opinion pieces in newspaper commentary

pages. What distinguishes this second role from the first one is that think tanks draw on an existing stock of expertise rather than performing original research. The resulting policy advice is generally provided in a briefer, more accessible and less formal format, usually in response to very time-sensitive demands.

A third role frequently performed by think tanks is *evaluation of government programs*. This research answer questions like: Which of two potential weapons systems being considered by the military is the most efficient expenditure of defense procurement dollars? Are local governments delivering services such as education and garbage collection in a relatively efficient manner compared to other municipalities of similar size? While these evaluations can take many forms, the most important is probably formal evaluation studies commissioned by the government agencies themselves.

A fourth role frequently performed by think tank staff is *interpretation of policies and current events for the media*. Unlike the opinion pieces mentioned earlier, think tank's interpretive role usually is performed on the news pages of newspapers and in "sound bites" for radio or television news broadcasts. Giving a perspective-- or a "spin"-- to news events helps to frame the way that they are viewed by both elites and the broader public.

A fifth role that think tanks may perform is to serve as facilitator of "issue networks" and the exchange of ideas. Rather than a written product, the key elements here are verbal exchanges and personal relationships. Since most politicians are not specialists, they may not have either the inclination or the desire to absorb detailed technical studies of an issue, but by interaction with experts, they may come to share that group's general perspective on a policy problem.

Finally, think tanks may serve as a *supplier of personnel to government* and as a *place for politicians and policymakers who are out of power* to recharge their batteries-- or as a simple sinecure. Because think tanks serve as repositories for policy-oriented expertise, they are often a place that new governments call upon

when they trying to fill policymaking positions from outside the bureaucracy.

## A TYPOLOGY OF THINK TANKS: PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION AND SPECIALIZATION

While think tanks may perform a number of roles in their host societies, not all think tanks do the same things to the same extent. Over the last 85 years several distinctive organizational forms of think tanks have come into being that differ substantially in terms of their operating styles, their patterns of recruitment, and their aspirations to academic standards of objectivity and completeness in research. A number of different typologies of think tanks have been offered by analysts.<sup>2</sup> We will argue here that at least in the U.S. and Western Europe, think tanks can be understood as variations on one or more of four basic "ideal types": academic (or "universities without students"), contract researchers, advocacy tanks, and party think tanks (see Figure 1).

The first two types, academic and contract research think tanks, have strong similarities: both tend to recruit staff with strong academic credentials (e.g., Ph.D.s from prestigious universities), and both tend to put a strong emphasis on the use of rigorous social science methods and strive to have their research perceived as

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<sup>2</sup> Weaver distinguishes between three types of think tanks: "universities without students," contract researchers, and advocacy tanks. R. Kent Weaver, "The Changing Work of Think Tanks," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, September 1989. James McGann uses a more complex categorization that includes Weaver's categories as well as publishing house, policy enterprise and state-based think tank. Within his "academic" category, equivalent to Weaver's "university without students," McGann distinguishes between those with diversified and specialized agendas. James G. McGann, *The Competition for Dollars, Scholars and Influence in the Public Policy Research Industry*, Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1995. Diane Stone distinguishes between "old guard" and "new partisan" institutions. Stone, *Capturing the Political Imagination*, chapter 1.



objective and credible by a broad audience. They differ largely in their funding sources, agenda-setting and outputs. Academic think tanks are typically funded by a mixture of foundations, corporations and members. Their agenda is usually set internally, and at least in part through a "bottom up" process in which the researchers themselves play an important role. But funders are increasingly playing an increasing role in agenda-setting at academic think tanks as well. Reflecting the academic training and orientation of their staffs, research outputs of academic think tanks most often take the form of academic monographs and journal articles. Contract researchers, on the other hand, are usually funded in large part by contracts with government agencies. The funding agencies typically play a very large role in setting the agenda, and outputs often take the form of reports to those agencies rather than publicly-circulated books and articles.

The other two types of think tanks also have a family resemblance to one another. Advocacy tanks, while maintaining formal independence, are linked to particular ideological groupings or interests. They tend to view their role in the policymaking process as "winning the war of ideas" rather a disinterested search for the best policies, and they are more often than not staffed by non-academics who were less interested in "basic research." They frequently draw their resources disproportionately from sources linked to those interests (e.g., corporations for conservative think tanks, labor unions for liberal ones). Staffs typically are drawn more heavily from government, political parties and interest groups than from university faculties, and are less "credentialed" in terms of social science expertise. Research products are likely to be closer to brief advocacy pieces than to academic tomes. Political party think tanks, similarly, are organized around the issues and platform of a political party and are often staffed by current or former party officials, politicians and party members. The agenda is frequently heavily influenced by the needs of the party. This brand of think tank is most prevalent in Western Europe, particularly in Germany, where institutions like the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung dominate the think tank landscape.

Each of these ideal types of think tanks has distinctive advantages in their efforts to "speak truth to power," but each also has particular challenges and tensions. Academic think tanks, for example, precisely because they place a strong emphasis on scholarly objectivity and social science credentials of its staff, face a particularly strong tension between the objectives of scholarly objectivity and completeness in research, on the one hand, and policy relevance on the other. Academic authors generally favor the former, while policymakers prefer findings that are brief, clear, and free of the qualifications and fence sitting with which scholars normally cover their conclusions. "Contract researchers" clearly have a leg-up on academic think tanks in terms of policy relevance, since the policymakers often have outlined in fairly specific terms what types of questions they want answered. Their tension is likely to be primarily between the objectives of scholarly objectivity and the policy preferences of their clients, especially if they are heavily dependent on a particular client. When the funder-client of research has clear preferences, there is a risk that the funder may try to influence the results of research or refuse to release research that does not match those preferences. At a minimum, this tension may pose a threat to the perceived objectivity of that research. "Advocacy tanks," which tend to have strong value positions and often take institutional positions on particular policy issues, face a tension between maintaining consistent value positions and perceptions of objectivity and completeness: to the extent that their messages are perceived to reflect inflexible values rather than "objective" analysis, it may simply be ignored by a large part of their potential audience. Similarly, the party affiliation of think tanks limits their objectivity, credibility and independence; when their party is not in power, their access to policymakers and influence on policymakers is likely to be quite limited.

[Note to readers: The editors are currently debating whether to include think tanks with a specific policy specialization as a distinctive fifth type of think tank, with

its own distinctive modes of agenda-setting, financing and staffing, or instead to view specialization as a separate dimension that cuts across each of the four ideal types of think tanks]

These ideal types of think tanks have served as models for new organizations being established or points of departure for existing institutions that wanted to reinvent themselves. But it is also important to keep in mind several caveats about these categories. First, most think tanks do not fit neatly into one category, but share the attributes of several at least in part. The barriers are increasingly being challenged as, for example, academic think tanks try to imitate some of the marketing savvy of advocacy tanks, while advocacy tanks try to bolster their credibility with longer, more carefully researched studies.

Second, hybrids are increasingly common between think tanks and "organizational siblings" that have some similarities to think tanks but stand outside at least the narrow definition of those organizations. The right hand column of Table 1 shows the organizational siblings for each of the four types of think tanks noted above: university research centers for academic think tanks, for-profit consulting agencies and government research organizations for contract researchers, public interest groups for advocacy tanks, and party research departments for party think tanks. But many organizations strand astride the division between the narrower definition of think tanks and their organizational siblings. Many research centers, for example, have close financial and staffing linkages with universities, but maintain significant independence in their governance, financing, and agenda-setting as well. Other organizations, like Peru's Instituto Apoyo (see the chapter in this volume), are astride the divide between for-profit consultants and contract research think tanks. Hybrids of this type are particularly common in Europe, Asia, and Latin America for a variety of reasons, including the close relationship between business and government and a weaker tradition of philanthropy for social science research.

## A Brief History

A

Public policy research institutes are a 20th century phenomenon that have their origins in the advanced industrial democracies in Western Europe and the United States. Rooted in the social sciences and supported by private individual and foundations, think tanks began to appear around 1900 as a part of a larger effort to bring the expertise of scholars and managers to bear on the economic and social problems of this period.

The growth of think tanks since that time appears to be at least partially tied to a series of major political, social and economic events that shattered the conventional wisdom of the period and forced policy makers and the public to find innovative solutions to complex policy problems. In the early part of this century, the challenges of managing an advanced industrial economy and increased commitments abroad created a demand to bring science and reason to government. In the United States and Europe, the earliest wave of think tanks, including the Russell Sage Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Kiel Institute for World Economic and the Brookings Institution shared this objective of bringing expert, non-partisan, disinterested advice to governments. The period following World War II increased demand for defense experts and technocrats to help manage the defense establishment and its new security arrangements around the world. In the United States, the Rand Corporation along with a host of other research organizations provided a ready supply of what have become known as "defense intellectuals" to help develop the defense hardware and systems that were put in place after World War II. They served as the models for a new generation of "contract research" think tanks. The social turmoil of the sixties and its attendant political pressures provided the impetus for the creation of the Urban Institute, The Club of Rome, D66 Policy Research Bureau and a host of other organizations that were the architects of social and environmental programs during this period. More recently, crises of the welfare

state, a collapse of the Keynesian consensus on macro-economic management, and the rise of a world-wide conservative movement have contributed to the rapid expansion of a host of advocacy-oriented think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation, Frankfurt Institute and Adam Smith Institute which organized to advance a particular philosophy or issue.

The end of the Cold War and the political and economic reforms that it unleashed created another tidal wave of new institutions like the Gdansk Institute for Market Economics and the Center for the Study of Democracy which were created to intellectual and political muscle for the transition taking place in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. In this much denser world of think tanks, new entrants have many models to emulate or adapt, and many different choices have been made. A number of the more recently founded institutions (the Institute for International Economics (US), the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), the National Institute for Research Advancement (Japan) for example) are based on the same scholarly norms of objectivity and completeness as the "old guard" academic think tanks.

## THE CHANGING MARKETPLACE FOR IDEAS

For think tanks to fulfill their mission of improving public policy, they must operate in two distinct but overlapping markets: a market for funding and a market for policy advice. These markets sometimes overlap—when government agencies responsible for a policy sector contract with a think tank for advice on a specific policy problem, for example. But more often the funders of policy advice and the audience for that advice are distinct, as when a foundation or international development agency funds a study intended to inform the decisions made by a national government.

The marketplaces for policy research funding and policy advice have been

increasing globalized in recent years, but they also remain intensely local. On the globalization side, major funders of policy research like foundations and international development agencies increasingly operate across national boundaries, while think tanks and other policy research organizations, too, carry out their work trans-nationally. Policy fads purveyed by think tanks and other advice-giving organizations have also become almost instantly global in scope, especially when they are endorsed by major fund-giving organizations. On the side of localism, national governments retain substantial control over the overall funding regime for policy advisory organizations operating within their borders and remain an important source of funds for those organizations. And in many countries, governments regulate the boundaries of what range of opinion is allowed to enter public debate. Understanding the interaction of these simultaneous globalizing and localizing forces is critical to understanding how and why think tanks have enjoyed such enormous growth in recent years as well as the challenges that think tanks are likely to face in the future. The forces shaping the prospects for think tank development can be roughly divided into seven categories, each of which operates at both the domestic and the regional and global levels (Table 2).

### ***The Political/Institutional Environment***

The structure and functioning of political institutions is clearly one of the most important determinants of the level of think tank activity, and the types of think tanks, that operate in a given country. Most obviously, governments that resist the voicing of independent opinions and any form of political or policy dissent are least likely to have a flourishing independent think tank sector. It is certainly no accident that the rapid growth of think tank activity in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union coincided with the decline of military government in Latin America and the fall of communism. New democratically-elected governments were

generally more tolerant of independent political and policy voices than the authoritarian governments that they replaced.

The impact of political change was particularly severe in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where the collapse of communism left a tremendous policy vacuum. It also left an institutional and intellectual vacuum. The old order was dead, but what new order should replace it? Not just economies, but governmental structures, educational systems, and social welfare programs needed to be reconstituted. With fifty years "wasted" and the pressure of global competition leaving no margin for error, many new governments were desperate to make rapid transformations. And with the old party-linked intellectual institutions frequently discredited as well, who should provide advice on how to shape a new order? Think tanks on the western model (or models) were an obvious choice.

The collapse of communism had several important consequences in the developing economies outside of central and Eastern Europe as well. First, it meant a decline in the perceived viability of socialist or quasi-socialist alternatives to a free market economy, thus narrowing the range of restructuring alternatives that were under consideration by most governments. Second, it meant that Third World governments were less likely to receive foreign aid to prop up unpopular regimes and inefficient policies based on geo-political considerations: one of the former competing donors had itself become a major recipient of Western aid and technical assistance. Serious questions remained, however, about how to make such economies work, and how to deal with their consequences.

While the most important implications of political changes in recent years were domestic, they also had a global dimension, stimulating the development of western interest (and financial support) for institutions that would foster democratization and economic reform in these countries. The end of the Cold War also had implications for think tanks in the West. It resulted in big defense budget cuts, which placed particular pressure on defense-oriented institutions like the RAND Corporation to

retool their agenda and their staff expertise toward more domestically-oriented topics, or toward more diverse international topics, such as global warming, nuclear arms proliferation in Third World countries, and famine relief in Africa.

More subtle attributes of political institutions may also affect the prospects for think tank development in a particular country. Several analysts have, for example, argued that the early emergence and high density of think tanks in the United States is due to its system of separation of powers and fragmentation of power in Congress, which mean that there are many possible sources of policy formulation who have a chance of having their ideas adopted. Each member of Congress is concerned with building a record of legislative accomplishment and position-taking. This is quite different from most parliamentary systems, where governments are likely to rely on departments and forego other sources of policy advice, except for stealing ideas from opposition that are politically popular. In short, there is a bigger market of policy entrepreneurs.<sup>3</sup>

The structure of political parties and their financing mechanism can also affect the number, capacity and type of think tanks. In countries like Germany and the Netherlands, where there is governmental financing for political parties and party connected think tanks, this obviously creates a relatively stable source of core funding for think tanks of this type. But because government financing of party think tanks usually depends heavily on those organizations' vote share in elections, a dip in a party's vote share can also be quite disruptive for the party think tank. The structure of political parties in the United States has affected think tank activity in quite a different way. In the U.S., political parties are very weak, functioning primarily as campaign vehicles, and party platforms often vary considerably over time depending on the positions taken by the party's presidential candidates. Thus parties

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of institutional reasons for high think tank density in the United States, see Weiss, ed., *Organizations for Policy Analysis*, pp. 6-8, and Stone, *Capturing the Political Imagination*, chapter 3.



are less likely to perform research and policy formulation functions than in other countries (e.g., Germany). Think tanks help to fill this policy formulation void.

### ***The Legal Environment***

Closely related to the political environment is the legal environment. Countries vary widely in their laws that govern both philanthropy and the organization of non-profit organizations. As Makiko Ueno points out in her chapter on North Asian think tanks, laws that are not conducive to the establishment and operation of non-profit organizations are less likely to have an independent think tank sector. Where policy research organizations exist at all in such countries, they are likely to be under the sponsorship of for-profit corporations or government ministries.

### ***The Funding Environment***

Even with an expanding market for ideas and their legitimacy established, think tanks still require money to operate. Many of them, in both Western countries and the developing world, do so on a shoestring, with minuscule staffs who derive most of their income from other employment (most often as university professors and government officials). But if a think tank is to obtain more than minimal size and visibility, more money is required.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America, think tanks face the additional problem of not having either tax laws or philanthropic traditions that favor support for independent public policy research. In some countries, government contracts have been an additional source of income for think tanks, as they have been for a number of think tanks in the West (e.g., RAND Corporation and the Urban Institute).

Much of the impetus for the growth in think tanks in the developing and transitional economies has been the flow of money from the industrialized countries.

This assistance has come from multiple sources. Much has come from private foundations, like the Soros Foundation and the Ford and Tinker Foundations. Some has come from national development and assistance agencies, like the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency. And some has come from international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Some of this funding takes the form of technical assistance and regional networking opportunities, like the World Bank's Regional Economic Development Forums. But direct funding to individual institutions for both general institutional support and specific projects is also common. Throughout the world, however, donors have increasingly turned away from general support to funding only specific projects. This has meant that many institutions have essentially lost the ability to set their own agendas, being forced to work on whatever projects donors, rather than their own researchers, think are worthwhile. It has also meant that many organizations live essentially from project to project, with a failure to secure new projects in a timely fashion spelling organizational disaster.

While international funding has dramatically increased the resources available to think tanks in the developing and transitional economies, it clearly poses problems of its own. Foreign funding can raise questions about the credibility of a think tank's research and policy recommendations: if foreign donors are providing money for a think tank, might they not be dictating its conclusions as well? Reliance on foreign funding can also serve as an excuse for an authoritarian leader to shut down organizations, as has recently occurred with some East European affiliates of the Open Society Institute. And foreign funding inevitably creates a "weaning" problem: having become dependent on outside financing, can the think tank develop stable funding sources before the foreign funder or funders decide themselves to pull the plug? Think tanks that fail to secure domestic funding sources may find themselves in serious difficulty when foreign funders change their funding priorities (e.g., from think tanks to cultural exchanges or demonstration projects) or their geographic

interest (e.g., from Latin America to central and eastern Europe). But for many think tanks in the developing and transitional economies, the shortcomings of foreign financing, however serious they may be, represent the only alternative to a truly marginal existence or no existence at all.

The global flow of funds to think tanks has also provoked controversy in the older industrialized countries, it should be noted. Some critics have expressed concerns that the flow of foreign (especially Japanese) money to support research at U.S. think tanks may come with strings attached, or at a minimum cause institutions that accept money from foreign corporations and foundations to mute any criticism of the donor countries' trade practices.

### ***The Intellectual/ Ideological Environment***

The growth of more open societies may have been a necessary condition in creating a market for "idea brokers," but changes in the perceived importance of autonomous (i.e., non state) organizations helped those organizations gain financial support. Through the writings of Robert Putnam and others, the 1990's have been characterized by a widespread perception that democracy cannot prosper unless a society contains a dense network of organizations that promote civic engagement, dialogue, and trust among both acquaintances and strangers. Organizations ranging from such innocuous and apolitical as choral societies, bowling leagues, school Parent -Teacher Associations and church-run social service agencies to trade unions and political parties are, proponents of the civil society perspective argue, critical to promoting these qualities of social interaction. But modernity has worked in many ways to undermine civic engagement through increased mobility, two-career families, etc.

Most think tanks are hardly the sort of grass-roots mass participation vehicle idealized by civil society theorists. A few engage directly in civic education, but think

tanks are by definition elite institutions whose claim to a voice in the policymaking process is their claim to expertise rather than as a *vox populi*. But the growth in interest in civil society has nevertheless stimulated interest in think tanks as an alternative source of policy information to that provided by the state, and as a potential critic of government policy that can speak with an objective voice independent of government and the business community.<sup>4</sup>

Who listens to think tanks depends, however, to a large extent on another attribute of a country's intellectual environment: the extent to which it is highly polarized along partisan, ideological or other lines. The "old line" academic and contract research think tanks, in particular, have tried to base their influence on a claim to "neutral expertise" that crosses ideological and partisan divisions. In polarized environments, these claims are unlikely to be taken as seriously by policymakers, the press and the public. Thus any policy influence is likely to take place only within one social solitude rather than across social divisions.

### *The Labor Supply and Demand Environment*

If the supply of think tanks depends in part on the availability of financing and an interested policy audience, it also depends fundamentally on a supply of researchers who are capable of and interested in producing policy-relevant research. This in turn depends in part on the overall availability of skilled personnel and alternative opportunities that they have in the labor market. If there is an excess of qualified personnel, or economic decline has caused a decline in their incomes, it may be easier to set up a think tank relatively inexpensively. But the labor market for those with strong social science expertise has become internationalized as well: think tanks in developing and transitional economies may find that their best personnel are snatched away from them by international agencies that can pay far more they can. A

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<sup>4</sup>Telgarsky and Ueno, "Introduction," p. 2.

think tank “brain drain” is the result.

### ***The Think Tank Environment***

Over the past quarter century, hundreds of new think tanks of all types have been established. In some regions, especially the United States and western Europe, this has led to an overcrowding of the think tank universe, which has in turn promoted change in the way that think tanks operate.

Many newer think tanks have sought to find distinctive niches in order to attract funding, media attention and the attention of policymakers. Rather than attempting to “cover the waterfront” of public policy, many think tank entrepreneurs sought instead to focus on particular policy issues-- e.g., the Center for Immigration Studies (U.S.) and Center for Environmental Studies (Indonesia). In the United States and some other countries, some institutions now focus on policymaking at the sub-national level. The growth of many think tanks that place a strong emphasis on policy advocacy in contrast to the older model of the academic think tanks also led to a blurring of the boundaries between think tanks and advocacy groups such as Citizens for a Sound Economy (US) and the Center for Policy Studies (UK).

Competition among think tanks for limited resources and attention has resulted in numerous innovations, such as shorter publications designed to be more accessible to policymakers. Its main impact was to open up the range of models and choices on the agendas of emerging think tanks throughout the world. Clearly the autonomous “academic” think tank was no longer the only model that was likely to be considered by think tank entrepreneurs in other countries. In thinking through questions like where to search for funds, what sort of research staffs to hire, and what kinds of research products to produce, the new institutions (and older ones seeking to re-tool) would have a panoply of models to choose from.

## ***The Technological Environment***

Extraordinary changes in the technology of communications have also helped to transform the world of think tanks. Very widespread diffusion of improvements in telephone systems, plus the near ubiquity of electronic facsimile machines by the early 1990's made it possible to transmit documents quickly to almost anywhere in the world virtually instantly. But the growth of the Internet and its offspring the World Wide Web have made even more dramatic differences in facilitating an instant, inexpensive and almost entirely unregulated flow of information. It has become much easier to have international collaborations across vast distances, for think tanks to disseminate the results of their research, and for consumers of think tank products to access that research using the World Wide Web. International consortia of like-minded think tanks have sprung up to share ideas, and in some cases, to push for their adoption, in policy sectors like public pension reform.

The growth of cyber-communications has almost made it more difficult for authoritarian governments to restrict the inflow of information and opinion from cyberspace that they would prefer to exclude. Increasingly, the choices are to allow untrammelled access or to bar access to the Internet entirely. Of course, the unregulated nature of cyberspace also means that here is no quality control: for very little cost, a racist militia group could disseminate its views through a Web site for a sham "think tank" that might be hard for an unsophisticated viewer to distinguish from that for a cautious "university without students." In the cyber-age, the *caveat emptor* principle is more appropriate than ever before for those seeking information.

The lowered barriers to transportation and communications that accompany globalization also pose new challenges to think tanks, however. In particular, think tanks in the developing and transitional economies may face more competition from research organizations in advanced industrial countries: if an international agency or a Western government is sponsoring a study of how to restructure a developing

country's pension system, for example, it may prefer to hire a think tank or consulting firm from its home base rather than using one from the country being studied. The former are likely to be seen as more familiar and as having a longer track record and more substantive expertise (though not more country expertise) than an institution indigenous to the society being studied.

## **SURVIVING IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE FOR IDEAS**

Despite rapid growth, think tanks in the developing and transitional economies face a number of difficult challenges in the near future. Problems with securing stable funding and establishing their credibility are likely to be critical. In many parts of the world, the tradition of belief in and impartial expertise that grew out of the American Progressive tradition and spawned the first generation of U.S. think tanks is absent. Thus think tank managers will have a particularly difficult time in establishing credibility for their institutions. Changes in funder interests are another risk. And in many of these countries, there is a continuing risk of a return to authoritarian governments who do not want to tolerate independent voices when they are critical. Challenging politically insecure governments in countries with weak democratic traditions and institutions remains a risky business.

Table 3 outline the major challenges and choices that think tanks are likely to face in the near future, especially in the developing and transitional economies. It should be kept in mind, however, that the full range of choices outlined here will rarely be available to all institutions. Some constraints differ across nations and regions, based on the environmental influences outlined above. Reliance on corporate support and domestic philanthropies, for example, is unlikely to be an option in most of the developing and transitional economics.

The range of choices available to think tanks is also likely to be constrained by

prior choices made by individual institutions. Changing location from one metropolitan area to another, for example, is an option that few established think tanks are able to pursue, although they may open branches in new areas. Institutions that have established themselves on the "academic" model, for example, may meet resistance from their staffs if tank managers and boards try to establish a more clearly ideological image, or set the research agenda in a more "top-down" fashion. And even if such changes are theoretically possible, they may not be desirable: think tank influence on the policymaking process depends at least in part on the cultivation of a "brand name," that is familiar to and accepted by policymakers and opinion leaders. Major institutional changes may both disrupt that brand name and interfere with an organization's own organizational culture and working practices. Thus the broadest range of choices is likely to be available to new institutions trying to find a place in the marketplace of ideas; established institutions are more likely to consider changes at the margin rather than a complete "reinvention" Even new institutions, however, are likely to find their choices limited by broader societal constraints. Moreover, most choices involve trade-offs: costs as well as benefits.

### **Financing Choices**

The most important set of choices confronted by most think tanks is in both the advanced industrial economies and developing and transitional economies involve the development of a sustainable revenue base. The major choice for most institutions involves taking money from donors (e.g., government, private corporations, international donors) that is likely to lower their reputation for objectivity and credibility.



## Agenda Choices

Another critical choice for think tanks concerns the breadth of their research agenda. Some institutions define their research agendas very broadly, including a range of both domestic and international issues, while others confine themselves to one of the two, or to a narrower policy sector within domestic or international policy. A broad research agenda gives think tanks maximum flexibility to survive changes in the national political agenda and in the interests of funders. But it also poses some disadvantages. Lack of a specialized niche may make it difficult to attract funding and attention from funders, the media and policymakers. In smaller institutions especially, a broad research agenda may mean that staff lack a sufficient critical mass of expertise to undertake large specialized research projects. Moreover, they may not have enough in common to benefit from each others' expertise.

Many think tanks, especially newer ones, have responded by trying to develop a specialized policy niche. Not surprisingly, this trend is especially pronounced in the United States, where think tank density is highest and the need to build a differentiated product to attract notice is therefore the highest. But this choice has its own potential drawbacks. In particular, if a policy area becomes less salient to funders or policymakers, the very existence of the think tank may be threatened.

Geographic specialization in the problems of a region within a country is another option that some think tanks have chosen to establish a specific niche. Again, this is particularly common in the United States, where there are more than 100 such organizations. Concentration on the problems of state/provincial or municipal governments is likely to mean that there is less competition for the attention of policymakers and the media. But it is likely to pose challenges in other areas. Funders, especially international funders, may not be as interested in problems of sub-national governments as they are in the problems of national governments. Researchers, too may be less interested in these issues.

Another choice that many think tanks face is whether or not to try to promote an image with its various publics as a non-partisan and non-ideological think tank. A non-aligned image probably will open the doors to a larger number of policymakers and funders, as well as the media. On the other hand, establishing a clearer image may be helpful in attracting funding from adherents of a particular set of beliefs, and guarantee access to and attention from media sympathetic to those beliefs. Which choice is made-- and which is likely to be more successful-- will likely depend not just on the preferences of an institution's founders, but also on the nature of the intellectual and philanthropic environment in a particular country. Whatever the choice, however, it should be made with care, since images tend to persist in the media and in the minds of political elites even when the underlying reality of an institution has changed substantially.

## *Locational Choices*

Think tanks tend to be heavily concentrated in the capital cities of their host countries. This is not surprising. It provides ready access to policymakers, and this can be important when personal relationships are critical. It also helps with access to the national media. Even when the political and administrative capital of a country is not also its media and business capital, the national media almost always has some presence there. Funders, especially international ones, are more likely to have some presence in the nation's capital as well. And it can be beneficial to research: the higher proximity to policymakers can help think tank researchers be more aware of the political constraints on what is acceptable to policymakers. They may therefore be less likely to propose alternatives that are "best practice" in the abstract, but have no prayer of winning adoption by political elites.

Location outside the national capital may have advantages of its own, however. Regional funding sources, in countries (mostly in the West) where those exist may prefer to fund policy voices from their own region as an alternative to those in the national capital. And such research may be more likely to transcend the conventional political wisdom in the nation's capital about what is politically viable.

### ***Staffing Choices***

Along with financing, staffing is perhaps the key choice to be made by a think tank's founders and later managers. The most critical choices are whether to rely heavily on an in-house staff and what level of credentials to seek in the staff that is hired. An in-house staff has the advantage giving think tank managers maximum control over their time, whereas those hired on a contract basis may be beholden to other employers (e.g., universities, for their faculties), and place the interests of the latter over those of the think tank. This is particularly important for institutions that try to respond quickly to breaking policy and political issues. An in-house staff also helps to build "brand recognition" with the media and policymakers who associate particular researchers with the institution. The major trade-off, of course, is that an in-house research staff is generally far more costly than that hired on a contract basis. An in-house staff may also be harder to turn over in response to changing policy priorities than an external staff hired on a project basis.

Think tank managers must also decide on the sorts of credentials that they want their staffs to have. Here the primary choice is likely to be between those that have Ph.D.s in social sciences and those who do not. Choices here will of course depend in the state of the labor market for those with policy expertise that was discussed earlier. But academics are not always preferable: they are likely to command higher credibility from policymakers and the media, but they are also more likely to want substantial control over their research agendas, to cost more, and to write detailed,

voluminous tomes that policymakers do not want to read-- and won't read.

### ***Product Choices***

Choices about what research products to offer are a final choice faced by think tank managers. Many sorts of options are possible: publishing books, publishing shorter monographs or even shorter (five to thirty pages) policy briefs, holding seminars and briefing sessions for policymakers, etc. Technological changes, notably the advent of fax machines and the World Wide Web, have widened these options even further in recent years. These choices are not mutually exclusive, and most think tanks in fact offer a range of products. The choices that individual institutions make will in part be determined by the nature of their funding and staffs. But there are important trade-offs to be made, especially between those (e.g., books) that are likely to have a longer "shelf-life," but because they are less accessible may never make it off the shelf, and those that are more likely to be read immediately by policymakers but less likely to have a lasting impact.

### **THE PLAN OF THE BOOK**

As noted at the outset, the objectives of this book are both explanatory-to understand the forces that shape the number, behavior and impact of think tanks across countries- and, in the very broadest sense, prescriptive-to help think tanks develop strategies that will help them become sustainable and more effective in conveying expertise into the policymaking process. To pursue these dual aims, it is important to have a good understanding of the forces operating at the macro level and an understanding of how those forces are felt and responded to at the institutional level. Because, as we have noted repeatedly in this introductory chapter, the forces shaping tanks vary dramatically across countries, an almost infinite array of think tank activities can exist. To fully capture this diversity is impossible. Broad

overviews that portray the "forest" of think tank activity across nations cannot provide enough detail to explain why some individual "trees"--think tanks--survive while others die.

In trying to bring both the forest and the trees into focus, we have included two types of chapters in this volume. The first type of chapter provides regional overviews for ten regions of the globe: North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, North Asia, and Southeast and Austral-Asia. In these chapters, the authors provide an overview of number of think in each country, political, legal, cultural and economic constraints on think tank activity in the region, and reasons why the level and type of think tank activity differs across the countries in the region. The chapters also provide an overview of the challenges that think tanks in their region are likely to confront in the future.

The second type of chapter focuses on the micro-level. Here we have asked the authors to provide detailed profiles of individual institutions with which they are familiar; indeed most of these chapters are written by current or former heads of the institutions they describe. We have included at least one institution for each of the ten regions in the volume, and in several cases more. The institutions have also been picked to provide variety in both operational styles (academic, contract researcher, advocacy tank) and substantive focus (generalist versus institutions specializing in economic development, security, and other issues). These chapters give a much richer portrait that is possible in the regional overviews. Here we have asked the authors to address questions about how the institutions are managed and have adapted to and attempted to influence their environment. How and why did the organization get started? How is it financed? Who sets the research agenda and hires staff? What kinds of backgrounds do the staff come from? Has the think tank developed a distinctive organizational culture, and how does this culture affect the organization's operations? What sorts of research products does the think tank

produce, and why were these chosen? What are the major challenges that the institution's leaders see as most important for future survival and success?

This introductory chapter has tried to distill many of the experiences of the chapters that follow to present a very broad picture of the constraints and choices that confront think tanks around the world. A concluding chapter at the end of the volume will present some suggestions to think tank managers and funders based on these same experiences. But it is impossible to gain an adequate understanding needed either to analyze these patterns or to draw lessons for think tank management without looking at the rich detail of institutional experiences in adapting to their environments. The following chapters explain how individual think tanks have attempted to do so.

TABLE 1. A TYPOLOGY OF THINK TANKS

Think Tank Types	Major Characteristics and products	Subtypes	Facilitating Conditions	Examples	Organizational Siblings
Academic/ University without Students	Focus on staff with strong academic credentials, muted ideology and "objective," non-partisan research; produces academic monographs and journal articles	Elite policy club; specialized academic think tank	Culture and philanthropic tradition that support idea of non-partisan experts	Brookings Institution; Institute for International Economics (U.S.)	University research centers
Contract Researcher	Focus on staff with strong academic credentials, muted ideology and "objective," non-partisan research; produces reports for government agencies	Specialized contract researcher	Government support available for policy research	RAND Corp. And Urban Institute (U.S.)	For-profit consulting firms; government research agencies
Advocacy Tank	Focus on staff with political credentials; typically focus on currently topical issues	Specialized advocacy tank; vanity and legacy think tanks	Foundation, business and group support available	Centre for Policy Studies (U.K.)	Public interest groups
Party Think Tank			Government funding available for political party research	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Germany)	Party research departments

**TABLE 2. ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON THINK TANK GROWTH, ACTIVITY AND IMPACT**

	<b>DOMESTIC INFLUENCES</b>	<b>GLOBAL/REGIONAL INFLUENCES</b>
<b>Political/ Institutional Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal restrictions on criticism of government may restrict number of think tanks and the range of opinions they represent; decline in these restrictions stimulates growth of think tank sector</li> <li>• Political institutions that increase number of political access points (e.g., separation of executive and legislative power) may increase demand or policy advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Cold War and democratization in developing countries stimulate Western interest in transitional economies and economic reform generally</li> <li>• End of Cold War poses challenges to funding and mission of security-oriented think tanks</li> </ul>
<b>Legal Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal restrictions on organization of non-profit organizations may restrict think tank activity</li> </ul>	
<b>Financial Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of philanthropic culture and tax incentives for supporting non-profit organizations restricts development of think tanks in many countries and/or forces them to rely on government contracts</li> <li>• Movement of domestic donors in many countries away from general operating support (core funding) to special project funding skews think tank agendas and limits funding flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of international funding stimulates growth of think tanks in transitional and developing economies</li> <li>• Movement of international donors away from general operating support (core funding) to special project funding skews think tank agendas and limits funding flexibility</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual/ Ideological Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing need for expert advice increases demand for and reliance on think tanks</li> <li>• Highly partisan or ideologically divided climate may make it hard for think tanks to develop credibility as purveyors of neutral expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO and civil society movements grow in strength</li> <li>• Collapse of communism restricted range of acceptable policy options</li> </ul>
<b>Labor Supply and Demand Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underpaid university faculties make it easier to attract highly-qualified staff seeking income supplements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International agencies may drain off best-trained scholars at higher salaries</li> </ul>



Think Tank Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competition from other think tanks may compel think tanks to become more "market-oriented" in the topics they study and more "user friendly" in the products they produce</li><li>• Competition from other think tanks may lead institutions to develop a specific substantive focus in order to develop a specific market niche</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dense global development of think tanks increases transmission of knowledge about successful think tank management practice and broad range of alternative models</li></ul>
Technological Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved communications technologies have made it easier to operate "virtual think tanks" and disseminate findings quickly and cheaply</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved transport and communications technologies may increase competition from research purveyors in the advanced industrial countries</li><li>• Improved communications technologies make policy networks among think tanks more feasible across national boundaries</li></ul>

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**TABLE 3. KEY CHOICES AND TRADE-OFFS FOR THINK TANK MANAGERS**

	Opportunities and Advantages	Disadvantages and Constraints
<b>FINANCING CHOICES</b>		
Seek donations from international agencies and national development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be one of the few sources of substantial and potentially stable funding in some countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to think tank being vulnerable to changes in funding priorities by external funders</li> <li>• May lead to perceptions that the think tank is a tool of foreign interests</li> </ul>
Seek government contracts as a funding source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be one of the few sources of substantial and potentially stable funding in some countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May compromise think tank's real or perceived autonomy as a source of policy advice</li> </ul>
Seek corporate contracts as a funding source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be one of the few sources of funding in some countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May compromise think tank's image as an objective source of policy advice</li> <li>• Unlikely to be widely available in most developing and transitional economies</li> </ul>
Affiliate with a university as a research center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University affiliation may allow coverage of core costs such as rent, access to technology and basic staff salaries, giving think tanks added financial stability</li> <li>• University affiliation may provide access to highly-qualified research staff</li> <li>• University affiliation may give think tank added credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University's other missions (notably education/training) may "crowd out" policy research</li> <li>• Academic norms of objectivity and completeness may clash with need for policy relevance</li> <li>• Potential loss of control over staffing, resource allocation, and other decisions</li> </ul>
<b>AGENDA CHOICES</b>		
Have broad research focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution has substantial flexibility to survive changes in national policy agenda and interests of funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of substantive expertise "niche" may make it difficult to attract funding/contracts</li> <li>• Research agenda may outstrip resources of think tank to implement it</li> <li>• Research staff may not have enough in common to develop intellectual synergies</li> </ul>

Narrow research focus to a specific policy area (e.g., environment, national security)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to develop institutional "brand" and "niche market" among policymakers, funders, and the media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May lead to loss of funding and attention from policymakers and the media if the policy area becomes less salient</li> </ul>
Focus on state/provincial or municipal policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of alternative sources of policy expertise available to policymakers at these levels may increase think tank influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top researchers may be less interested in, and funders may be less willing to finance, research at these levels of government.</li> </ul>
<b>IMAGE CHOICES</b>		
Promote a clear ideological and/or partisan image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May attract financing from sympathetic funders or provide stable funding from party</li> <li>May attract attention from sympathetic media</li> <li>May help to gain access to sympathetic policymakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May lead funders who are suspicious of ideological orientation to avoid funding</li> <li>May cause think tank to lose credibility with media and policymakers</li> <li>May lead think tank to lose all access when sympathetic or allied parties are out of power</li> </ul>
<b>LOCATIONAL CHOICES</b>		
Locate in nation's capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to increase access to policymakers and national policymaking experts</li> <li>Likely to increase visibility in the national media</li> <li>Likely to increase researchers' awareness of political constraints on acceptability of alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May inhibit thinking that transcends conventional wisdom</li> <li>May insulate and alienate think tank from key regional and local issues and constituencies</li> </ul>
Locate outside nation's capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May allow think tank to attract funding from sources in its home locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to lower visibility with national media and access to national policymakers</li> </ul>

### STAFFING CHOICES

Build an in-house research staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides maximum control over staff time</li> <li>• Facilitates sustained analysis and research program</li> <li>• Increases ability to respond quickly to policy issues in the short term</li> <li>• May lead to intellectual synergies from staff interactions</li> <li>• Increases policymaker and media "brand recognition" of the institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates high fixed costs for the institution</li> <li>• Over the long term, may lead to a poor fit between staff expertise and public policy agenda as the latter changes</li> </ul>
Rely on adjunct staff hired on a project basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowers fixed costs</li> <li>• Increases ability to respond to changes in policy agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff may give primary attention to priorities of other employers (e.g., university)</li> <li>• Inhibits efforts to promote an institutional "brand" and continuity of interactions with policymakers and media</li> </ul>
Rely on staff with strong academic credentials (e.g., Ph.D.s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to increase credibility of think tank products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lead to inadequate attention being paid to brevity and "user friendliness" in research products</li> </ul>

### PRODUCT CHOICES

Publish academically-focused books and papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic studies may increase credibility with policy community and media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic studies may be too long and too complex to be "user friendly" for policymakers and media</li> </ul>
Publish short policy briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief formats may be read by busy policymakers and journalists who do not have the time to read longer research studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief, less permanent format may have short shelf life unless it is made continuously accessible (e.g., via World Wide Web)</li> </ul>
Hold briefing seminars for policymakers and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events are relatively inexpensive to hold</li> <li>• May lead to ongoing relationships between think tank staff and media and/or policymakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not result in a permanent product</li> </ul>

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Use Internet and fax to disseminate research products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low cost</li><li>• Easy to revise and update</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Products not easily accessible to those who do not have access to or do not use Internet or fax</li><li>• Inhibits ability to sell research products</li></ul>
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