



Think Tanks and Foreign Policy Advice: Definition and Classification

MASTER THESIS

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.

-Anton Chekhov

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Abstract

This postgraduate thesis focuses on the definition, role, and influence of Think Tanks in foreign policy advice; it points out their practices, contribution, and achievements in international affairs. The aim is to identify the key aspects of Think Tanks and then examine their work, research, and intervention in cases of foreign policy. In order to address these subjects, this research investigates the predominant theories on the Think Tanks' nature, compares the Western and Eastern approaches towards these institutions, and emphasizes on the results of their intervention in crucial international matters. The thesis also discusses critiques concerning the actions of Think Tanks as well as their independence, motives, and identity, whilst embracing the conclusion that the think entity cannot be defined in one term, as its complex nature requires more than one aspect to be further examined as well as the people operating it. The results of the above research indicate that Think Tanks are indeed a solution towards open knowledge but are limited by the influence of policymakers. Their independence relies closely with their funding, as well as their effectiveness is strictly limited to more authoritarian regimes. Finally, when the equation includes foreign policy, examples of excellency indicate these organizations are indeed entitled innovators, receiving their own big share of criticism, nonetheless.

Key words: Think Tanks, foreign policy advice, international affairs, institutions, intervention.

Introduction

Since the early 1830s, when the term “Think Tank” first made its appearance, there have been several attempts to give a precise definition to the term, as the characteristics of its entity are too broad, making it difficult for scholars to reach a “perfect etymology”. Generally perceived as an independent macro entity contributing to policy research and consultancy. Since the first Era of their emergence (1830-1946), believed to be an independent public policy research organization, to the present era, characterized as “ambiguous organizations, "Think Tanks” are of major importance in researching and giving advice about policy issues. This subject was selected in order to fill the gaps in the definition of the term Think Tank and appeal to different viewpoints of their operation in different regions of the world.

The aim of this postgraduate thesis is to:

- i) Define the entity of the Think Tank trying to classify whether the “Think Tank” is an independent entity or an advocacy group catering to other motives.
- ii) Associate the definition of the term with Foreign Policy Advice and correlate their work to their achievements in the field of International Relations.
- iii) Classification of “Think Tanks” according to their contribution to Foreign Policy Advice.

Methodology

For this research, the content analysis research method will be used to research material from academic books, articles, newspapers, as well as official websites of European institutions and Foreign Affairs departments. After carefully examining all inputs and sources, a critical analysis will take place to fulfill the aims stated above. Moreover, a set of case studies will take

place to determine the actions and interventions of the institutions in contemporary international affairs as well as analyze their course of action.

The Emergence of Think Tanks

Information has been a key aspect of every policy form, especially in the 20th and 21st-century actors. The dominating state and governmental forces, as well as the well-founded global institutions, run an info race daily to catch up and outrun their equivalent opponents and keep the leading role on the world's turning. However, information is a raw source, which shifts and takes shape depending on how the receiver translates it. Most of it usually is unimportant, not trustworthy and in many cases might be misleading, especially if it was made and spread for this purpose. In that sense, it is obvious that state officials cannot rely upon information that might be problematic for the adaptation of policies, as it will be responsible for a series of future problematic events. The technical difficulties of processing this knowledge stream have made it clear that public officials must find a new way of feedback for their information storage in order to maintain credible and policy orientation.

The emergence of Think Tanks came in order to fulfill this necessity, characterized as groups of experts in processing the information input and exporting policy suggestions. Think Tanks are defined as non-profit, independent, and non-partisan organizations that focus on providing consultancy and expertise in the process of policy decision-making. As the previous may be their active role as institutions, Think Tanks' own policy seeks to maximize the political influence of the organization as well as receive the much-needed endorsement of the public in order to stand their operations in strong foundations.

The concept of the Think Tank seems quite new, especially considering the independence perspective, but it actually traces back centuries, as the lords and rulers of the early medieval period were in need of expert groups that would serve as hired advisors, especially in matters of finance and politics. Notably, Grand Charlemagne who was at odds with the Catholic Church at the period for both economic and political influence took part in one of the earliest recordings of hiring such supporting groups, which then continued further during the Renaissance period (Sol,2017). This kind of retrospection helps to broaden the definition of the complex entity that the Think Tank is, as well as clarify the progression of these entities.

The Beginning of Think Tanks

The starting point of the “modern” Think Tanks, came about the 19th century rising in prominence, especially in the United States of America (McGann,1995), comprised by people of similar interests in social and academic fields and were funded by donations. The leading role of these organizations at the time was the advisory of the US officials and they were considered independent public policy groups. One of the first and longest surviving groups was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace back in 1910. Having witnessed World War, I and II in a noticeably brief time after its foundation, the organization’s primal purpose was to help stop the hostilities and armed conflicts between nation-states, considering it to be the darkest side of the civilized world (CIEP,2022). A notable moment describing the organization’s importance was 1945’s advisory committee of experts who took part in the conference that created the UN charter. The participation of the Think Tank was of such importance, that proposals resulted in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CIEP,2022). In the opposite direction and about the same time, the Kiel institute of Economics was founded in 1914 in the monarchism of

Germany. The institution's first role was the consultancy of the wartime generals as the research was targeted in the collection of information regarding the enemies of war at the times of World War I and II, before getting back its moral perspective in the late '40s when the research began to center around topics such as the world free market and the tighter European Co-operation (IFW,2022). Other notable institutions of the time include the Brookings Institution (founded 1916) and the Royal Institute for International Affairs (founded 1920). An exclusive remark about the making of those Think Tanks was that instead of getting settled by governmental needs, they were the outcome of private individuals and scholars who decided to take action against false policies by introducing "the way of science" in the world of governance (Niblett, 2018).

The features of the first Think Tanks were relatively limited; a storage point of academic publishes and information that was used for research, a gathering point that was used by both officials and scholars to brainstorm about different perspectives, and a "propaganda" space, which was used for gatherings of people who wanted to learn about the Think Tank's members opinions and get original material of the institution (Niblett, 2018). Despite their "noble cause" of information feedback, the Think Tanks' outreach did not involve everyone in the public sphere at the time, as their means were limited. They mostly involved people in the government and targeted groups (Niblett, 2018).

Evolution and New Purpose

The outbreak of the First and Second World Wars significantly impacted Think Tank's identity. The name took form after the United States used it to describe a safe space for the strategic meetings of the experts (McGann,2019). The institutions at the time began to set a completely different path from the previous era. The private donations were mostly replaced by

public expenditure, as the state “hired” the institutions for their services as policy advisors. The aftermath of the wars suggested that the need for stability was necessary, one of the primary targets of the organizations at the time (e.g., the United Nations consultancy).

The Research and Development (RAND) Corporation, which was founded in 1949, is a very notable example of the Think Tanks at the time. Formed exactly after WWII with the purpose of navigating the defense policies of the US, the RAND Corporation came as an independent nonprofit organization (RAND, 2022). The organization proved of high significance, as the members’ way of thinking and acting out of the ordinary at the time provided fresh ideas in the field of airships, space navigation, and digitalization (Jardini,1998).

With the Cold War at hand, more Think Tanks emerged as the arms race and competition between the two Superpowers of the time created an even bigger necessity for policy advice. The organizations of this time were similar to the modern Think Tanks; experts in policy fields, researching places of key importance in the US vs Russia Showdown (Niblett,2018).

Shifting to the 1970s, academic society favored Think Tanks, valuing the research-centered core of these institutions. Until then, Think Tanks were considered a mere “tool” for the governmental policy direction, but now the “knowledge market” takes place. A new competition is born, between the groups of scholars, as they were previously divided by ideological approaches. This kind of competition was centered between nature and the method of research (McGann,2019). In contrast with the university-level research, the Think Tank approach did not focus on advanced and complex theories, but on simplifying the policy procedures so that it would be easier to understand (Niblett,2018). Around that time, Harold Orlans attempted to issue the first definition of the Think Tank entity, explaining that Think Tanks were “independent, non-degree-granting organizations, researching natural and social sciences, engineering,

humanities, and professions. The term “independence,” which was inconceivable at the time, paved the way for a new way of understanding research capabilities.

Yezeckel Dror introduced five characteristics of the Think Tanks, which differentiated them from the dependent institutes. The (a) critical doubt of current procedures and policy undertaking, the (b) scientific approach using facts, (c) clear scope and vision to the governmental policy, (d) improving public dialogue while excluding rushed speculations, and (e) have the work ethic and expertise of science-oriented researchers (Dror, 1984). Those characteristics, especially the last one, came to be in extreme opposition to the bureaucratic world at the time, fouled by old-fashioned ways and principles.

Think Tanks began to broaden their hearings in contrast with the academic structured institutes. From governmental representatives to private sector employers, embraced a range of opinions and brightened the image of a high-quality discussion. The input of these discussions grew at a quick pace as Think Tanks were considered as another means of opinion expression. Following that perspective, the new Think Tanks’ policy suggestions now included economy guidelines, such as tax relief, free market proposals, and State tolerance (Porras-Murray,2017). Porras and Murray introduce this as “the neoliberal approach” of the institutes, as they focus on the free-market circulation and private sector, rather than the State control policy.

As revolutionary and prominent as the structure of the Think Tanks were at the time, they still had to overcome plenty of shortcomings. Dror made a clear implication that the greatest obstacle to the institution was none other than the institution itself and the main setbacks were introduced as the following (Dror,1984):

1. Feedback and Reflection. The activity log of Think Tanks was rarely revised along with performance evaluation, so the institution had no means to assess its procedures.

2. Limited Development planning, as Think Tanks limited themselves to existing recruitment and knowledge strategies without seeing the bigger picture.
3. Absence of actual policy perspectives. Although their base in scientific approaches is crucial for providing policy advice, Think Tanks were often misguided by their lack of understanding of political matters.
4. Poor communication issues, resulting in the bad knowledge distribution of their findings to the public, the policymakers, and the clients. (e.g., via the media).
5. Unclear purpose of the organization. Think Tanks' commitment usually got sidetracked by the obstacles of real-world situations, especially while operating in not very research-friendly environments.
6. Difficulty in selecting the most suitable methods, as Think Tanks lack the empirical staff to conduct the correct methodological approaches when conducting research, thus approaching their goals was usually done with precaution (Dror, Yehezkel, 1984).

Despite the major attempts on forming the exact definition of the Think Tank at the time, the term suffered from criticism such as the one explained earlier by Dror, so at the time Think Tanks remained a debatable actor for the near future.

Modern Perspectives

On the eve of the 21st century, the attempts to define the Think Tank entity became prominent, as the end of the Cold War Era marked a distinctive moment in the future of these entities. In contradiction with the necessity of defining the term, a substantial proportion of the

attempts gathered around older terminologies lectured by the likes of seventy's scholars, like Orlans and Boorstin (McGann,2019).

One of the major modern theories is the “Policy-Maker’s Perspective” presented by Robert N. Haass. According to Haass, the United States considered that there are five crucial factors that shape the Think Tanks of today with the most prevalent being the innovative proposals generated by the organizations, targeted especially for governmental representatives to help them prolong the lifespan of their policy targets. In addition to the fresh recommendations, Think Tanks are expected to provide fresh research specialists to help the governmental recruiting process in administrative positions. The combination of innovative ideas and experts is expected to be further enhanced by organizing discussions and debates (most notoriously organized by the Council of Foreign Relations). However, apart from expertise importance and elite discussion, Haass underlines the significance of the approach by the organizations to the citizens. Informing the public and producing discussion, especially in domains of health and economic activities is of growing importance during this period of globalization. Last but not least, the conduct of resolution processes between parties engaging in conflicts, especially in the form of “Track II negotiations” (N. Haass, 2002).

Taking this approach as a more detailed reference, Thomas Medvetz categorized the expertise “products” that a Think Tank member has to impersonate in order to stand firm between the organizational domains. He insists that the “goal of mastering all of them” is essential for the adjustability of the organization in any circumstance(Medvetz, 2006). The expert of a Think Tank is expected to be able and prepared to embody (a) an academician providing ideas through research; (b) an opinionmaker who identifies with matters of protocol, procedure, and policy routine; (c) the salesperson of consults and (d) the informer who will

derive information to both the governmental and the public factors. These kinds of people, or rather the “*hybrid intellectuals*” as Medvetz calls them, are the embodiment of a mediator between other organizations. According to his point of view, Think Tanks are not just trying to provide suggestions on policy-related issues, but also to strengthen their presence in the competitive world of intellectuality.

Think Tanks’ primary characteristic by definition is independence, but for some scholars, this is not a mandate. The full de-attachment from every factor influencing public policy is at least questionable, as it threatens the main purpose of the Think Tank itself, which is none other than the policy influence. Institutes have at least some political affiliation or agenda to the point, that can either help them earn useful privileges (such as money to operate) or to push forward their ideas into policy reshape (Stone, 2000). So, if the institution’s purpose is to participate in policy reforms, even a tiny compromise on its independence is to be considered unavoidable. Another logical outcome is the problems faced by Think Tanks’ struggle of independence, which are (Stone, 2002):

- (i). The funds necessary to run the institution (one of the most popular Think Tank founders is the state.
- (ii). The mission of the institute (oriented or not in the policy development)
- (iii). The meritocracy of the research community, neglecting the dialogue with policy makers.

The outcome of these problems, is none other than the inability to make use of the Think Tanks' research findings effectively in the policy development and creates a gap between the body politic and the institutions, thus blocking the "*bridge of policy and research worlds.*"

Approaching from a hugely distinct perspective, Abelson's work *Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Historical Perspective*. In his opinion, the difference of US Think Tanks to those located in other parts of their world, is their influence in the policy agenda (Abelson, 2002). According to Abelson, Think Tanks, in the US, have the ability to draw the policy-influencers to them for guidance and opinions and sees Think Tanks one of the most valuable players in both external and internal policy agenda, thus they take a major part in promoting their political agendas too.

As it is evident, there is a distinct difference between the scholars' opinions about the defining characteristics and purpose of today's Think Tanks. As seen by the Abelson's point, it is usual to be either viewed as (US and the rest of them) type of term or a definition that will define in them all in a more loose spectrum (McGann, 2019). The common ground amongst their vast variety and numbers is that they are able to provide policy makers with services that facilitate their mission to a great extent. The combination of researching and providing at the same time is a perfect match for the lack of time and knowledge that in most cases policy makers suffer from. The ability of the institutions, not only to acquire information, but break it down in further analysis and make it coherent for the governmental actors to reflect upon is certainly a great advantage that Think Tanks have provided with (McGann, 2003). In the world of policy, knowledge equals power, and the one that generates power is the most possible container of being the preferable advisor.

Getting deeper into information analysis as mentioned above, there can be an ever-greater extent to the term even concluding that Think Tanks' output is a new language which should be understandable by two listeners: the public and the state. However, the institutions not only act as their info interpreter, but also act as a median between them, serving the task of either persuading or alarm each other of a given fact (Kefim, 2021). So, in conclusion, the main principle of the Think Tanks is formulated by researching, analyzing, and then outputting a) policy advice for the policymakers and b) hoax-free knowledge for the public community.

Classification of Think Tanks

Having mentioned a little earlier about the characteristics of the organizations, now is time to move on further into understanding the value of them as well as define the regional differences that Think Tanks encounter in their sociopolitical contexts. It is true that in an unevenly growing world, fueled by disparities between the Western and the Developing states, the Think Tank environment gets heavily affected considering the location of the organization. Although Anglo-American Think Tanks have still the leading role in the research of ideas, it is not given that the institutes at place receive the proper recognition and resources to fulfill their part. For this case, a closer look is required to understand the similarities and differences at hand.

A Matter of Independence

Independence of Funds

As seen in the previous chapter, one of Think Tanks' most notorious and basic characteristics is considered to be the matter of independence. Independency here is described as the complete freedom in the notion of organization, research process, output data evaluation and (perhaps) the most important of all, knowledge distribution. Although, ideally this would be the case of all the institutions that represent the body of a Think Tank, that cannot always be the case, as seen earlier. Think Tanks usually rely upon donors in order to fund their research and project needs. When relying upon the donors funding, Think Tanks tend to lose the ability to produce the research of their choice, as they limit themselves in subjects of the funder's approval (Mendizabal, 2011). But it is not that simple. In Mendizabal's way of thinking, the donation set up is just the first step in the trespassing of independence, as the most crucial step is

on the terms of receiving. If the money comes as a “charity move,” meaning that there is no obligation to the donor, then everything is fine and settled for independent research. However, if the donation comes in a term of contract, which promotes certain fields of research and predetermines the output data usage, then it safe to assume that the whole autonomy purpose of the organization is ruled out.

Considering this, the matter of independence appears to come after extremely specific criteria, which should even be bargained for Think Tank to stand in its place. It is clear that Think Tanks should find other ways of funding in order to withstand their independence. In general principal, two ways of economic freedom are in place; The first way is maneuvering strategically between donors, in order to avoid dependence from a specific one (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021). Elaborating on this theory, having an exclusive source of funding (e.g., the state) signifies that the organization is hanging by the source’s opinion on research, thus giving them the upper hand in choosing the fields of study. The second way is in fact the separation of the donors from the actual work of the Think Tank by argument, a more common but not as effective strategy (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021). In other words, a financier is to not interfere with the working process and the targets set by the Think Tank’s doctrine, however, the fact that they will indulge in any scheme derived from their money is ambiguous. Funders of Think Tanks, much like Think Tanks themselves, have purposes and missions of their own, so they are not supposed to get off spending money on whatever the research before having a sharp vision of what they will achieve with that action.

So, can Think Tanks be truly independent? The answer is not that simple. The certain thing is, that Think Tanks have an elusive maneuver mechanism when it comes to this question, debating that “*our currency is our credibility*”(Medvetz, 2014). According to Medvetz the word

credibility is a double edge sword for organizations. On one hand, it signifies that Think Tanks seek to have a consistent base on their beliefs without compromising their integrity and mission, but on the other it may suggest that they are meant to be credible to their funders by continuously backing a certain opinion or field of knowledge. Hence, the key to maintaining the independence of the Think Tank is dependable to the necessities of the organization at hand.

Independence of Ideas

In the market of policy ideas, the political influence could simply not be absent from the total of significant changes. The fact being that most of the policy process involves either governmental or third-party state advisors that are affiliated with the political scene, one way or another and to avoid any influence is at least questionable. The majority (if not all) of Think Tanks declares its body as independent from the political sphere. However, it is easier said than done. To undermine those who question the political integrity of their actions, Think Tanks have to implement carefully devised strategies, directed both on the near and in the distant future. In example, a green Think Tank in Sweden coming by the name of Fores, which was affiliated with a political party, decided that it was best to hire advisors from all other competing parties to reshape its' political independence (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021). This case signifies the fact that Think Tanks have to struggle continuously in order to prove their independence, using a variety of means.

In a different case, as Jeziarska and Sörbom underline, some organizations find the affiliations to political groups more helpful than damaging to their image. Their apperception is that in order to create and expand knowledge, you need to have access to debates with the political representatives, in order to argue with them and highlight the scientific approach of science, rather than their political agenda. The Civic Platform from Poland is a particular case of

that doctrine, as despite the fact that it is both funded by and linked to the Civic Platform party, still declares that it is intellectually independent and even hosted unfavorable remarks about the party (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021).

Therefore, the relations between a political actor and a Think Tank emerge more like a tool rather than a black or white situation. Under the right circumstances and with clear strategic views, Think Tanks may use political influence to enlarge their engagement in the policy reform, but must be overly cautious not to endanger their ideas by political exposure and bias that exists in the public picture.

Independence of Institution

As said earlier, the institution should rigorously struggle to strengthen their independence and show their integrity in the institutional field remains intact. If their efforts end up unsuccessful, then it is hard for them to seem trustworthy as experts in influencing the policy process. In terms of Academic integrity, Think Tanks have a set of methods they can rely on (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021);

- i) Making reports on a regular basis about the procedures of the organization and informing the broader public about the outcomes in the form of conferences or television debates.
- ii) Using academic-like structure in their own programs, showcasing that their research is far more important than any external influences.
- iii) Taking distance from political affiliations, to involve themselves deeper into the academic type of research, thus making it more credible and less externally influenced and way more credible.

The idea of using these methods in order to promote their academic integrity seems pretty straightforward, considering only the matter of independent research. However, questions were made as for the quality of such research, drifted away from the political reality, as to how realistic their outcomes can be and achieve their goal, contributing to the policy advice. For some researchers, there cannot be a clearly “objective” concept in the world of policy research, as it would be difficult to be matched with any policy approach. According to Jezierska & Sörbom, this debate leads to the so called “independence paradox.”

Independence Paradox

The independence paradox is born from the relationship between the freedom of research and the influence in public policy, in the world of Think Tanks. These two characteristics that are the most important in the role of the institutions are not easily maintained in balance, making their structure unstable and open in constant reforms according to the existing criteria. There is a clear debate between scholars about which of the two makes the most for a successful Think Tank. It is believed that for newer Think Tanks, or for those with a bad history in the policy agenda, it is a must to establish their independence first and project a better image, whereas for the more established Think Tanks, the influence factor is most crucial to promote their work output and take great part in policy reforms (Jezierska & Sörbom, 2021). Think Tanks that do not have a “salvaged” image can be more elusive and maintain some closer ties to the political scene without damaging their reputation as independent. This one is very crucial, as the outside actors’ influence lowers the respect rate of the Think Tank. However, this necessity is not considered by all the peak of the organization. It is just a way of getting credibility from the necessary actors in order to engage as much as possible into the common policies.

The independence of funds, as introduced earlier, plays a less crucial part in the independence paradox, as it is the less likely to be achieved. Most (if not every single one) Think Tanks are in constant need of funding sources, in order to keep enacting their research. For that purpose, they have engaged in a form of project funding which is responsible for creating a bonding situation between the funder and the funded that has control etiquette, whether it happens on the input or the output process.

The conclusion of this paradox comes with the words of “distance” and “proximity.” In order for the organization to ensure independence in the fields mentioned earlier, the proximity should be towards a more “academic” type of research approach, which neglects control from others and keeps distance from the policy representatives and the funding sources. However, the organization’s needs for policy affection and provide for expertise derives an unusual way towards legitimacy which then concurs in influence, thus distancing itself from the academic frame and enhancing proximity towards the funders and policy makers. This continuous negotiation that takes place between independence and influence is called the independence paradox and each Think Tank should rigorously reconsider towards which factor it will engage (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021).

Growing in Developing States

The vast inclining growth of Think Tanks around the world brought a series of different organizations, which functioned in various socioeconomic realities. In the present reality, which used to be dominated by the “Anglo-American” type of Think Tanks, the Think Tanks existing outside this dominance brought about a new type of dynamic. In contrast with the Anglo-American Think Tanks’ image of independence, the vast amount of the organizations in the other

parts of the world are closely connected with either private or public entities (governmental or corporative partners) (J. McGann, 2019). This is understandable, given the fact that the notion of independence and deliberation of ideas is still a very fragile and optimistic possibility in developing countries, whereas in Anglo-American worlds is a more “dedicated” truth. In several parts of developing democracies there is a tight limit in the expression of ideas or free speech, restricting the so-called influence of the Think Tank operation to a bare minimum. It is in this sense that, the achievements and work-how’s of the organizations are greatly affected by the context of political reality in which they function at (Datta, 2023). In some underlying cases, the aim of the institution besides researching, may branch up to supporting governmental purposes or supporting social movements, overriding their objective “nature.”

Bolivia

In the case of Bolivia, for instance, the coordinated action of two Think Tanks played a leading role of both questioning the status quo and the rising of a new political leadership. The Centre for Legal Studies and Social Research (CEJIS) was responsible for the training and encouragement of the Bolivian social movements (promoting both their ethical and cultural values). It’s main purpose was to question the established system, by giving to the social uprising the necessary direction (Loayza Bueno & Datta, 2011). In parallel, the Centre for Labor and Agrarian Development studies (CEDLA), upheld the task of hindering the political expansion of neoliberal propaganda and revealed the setbacks of such policies in the working class and their unequal treatment. Their main influence was also through media exposure, as the struggle reached on to more people through their actions. Together, the two Think Tanks funded the Solidarity Coordinating Committee of Indigenous People (SCCIP), which gave voice to many Indigenous groups and united their demands. In the hands of Evo Morales, a new political figure

who sought to reform the established status quo, this committee played a major part to the social uprising and later on Think Tanks even participating in drafting the new Constitution (Loayza Bueno & Datta, 2011).

Vietnam

In another case, that of Vietnam, the sudden appearance of new state factors and legislation needs, made the necessity of knowledge more evident than ever. Although the country was (and still is at some point) very suspicious for western-oriented approaches and methods, due to historical facts of the past, it was acknowledged that the Think Tanks had the necessary tools to expand their reach in legislative matters. The country was experiencing a transition from the point of being a devastated low-economy to the one of an on-growing member of the WTO and goods exporter, with its policymakers lacking the knowledge and experience in dealing with more complex economic matters, so the approach for a helping hand from the Think Tanks was even more usual (Datta & Mendizabal, 2018). This served both as a helping point for the legislation, as well as the growth of the policymakers in the field of decision making. A decisive factor for the Think Tank uprising in Vietnam was the media reform. Being able to express a wider range of opinions, the media exposure brought Think Tanks to the considerable view of the greater public, but at the cost of the “journalist filter.” This term here is used to describe the journalists’ lack of knowledge in complex matters of policy and thus the ability to properly transmit the information to the general audience.

In Vietnam, all Think Tanks are commonly under the governmental control, usually under the influence of their respective ministry of field. The Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) is controlled by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and is focused in

potential investments on neighboring countries. In that way, its access to policy influence has been in numerous times direct (drafting laws on cases of enterprises going bankrupt).

However, the quality of the research is questioned on numerous other cases, as for example the government tends to “push” for certain results (etc. CIEMs’ draft for Vietnam’s introduction to the World Trade Organization). Another point is the inadequate project funding on numerous occasions, as the researchers were left with little choice but to use again results from previously researched projects or even outcomes from privately donated projects. Also, the independence of Think Tanks like CIEM which are under governmental reach, were usually asked to back up the political spectrum of the state, and as the researchers were not prepared financially and “politically” to introduce their own ways, they could rarely get out of this tight spot. (Datta & Mendizabal, 2018).

In other words, having the sole role of the Think Tank maker, the government owns the game in Vietnamese policy research within glimpses of independent moves like the likes of CIEM.

Russia

In the State that once was considered as the world’s superpower only second to that of the USA, Russia’s foreign policy was and is centralized, due to the fact of both political and ideological reasons. Especially, with the rise of Vladimir Putin into the President’s chair in the early 00’s, the decision processes were “simplified” to his liking (sole decision maker) and the parties that did not share his view were detained. In other words, in order to influence or make any specific change in the policy process, access to the presidency and its close associates equals the only requirement (and achievement) for any political actor. This designated a completely

different landscape from the Think Tanks of the western orientation, which are free and able to influence decision making in their own way.

In the case of Russia, there are three major categories of Think Tanks that operate in the foreign policy area and are funded by different ways (Graef & Barbashin, 2019). The first group is based in academic structured entities which are focused on the international and foreign relations area. The second one, is the “independent Think Tanks” run by private operators and donors, which are mere flinches in the Russian foreign policy sector, due to the massive impact of the political pressure. The third (and most innovative) category are the newly created Think Tanks, the outcome of the Russian State’s desires on the ongoing political world. The main volume of these institutions, which are not funded by the state, is either non-profit organizations or corporations. For these NPO’s, the Russian Law provided with a strict control, under which the State tries to regulate their influence (since they are considered foreign policy bringers) (Graef & Barbashin, 2019). In addition to their government check, several Think Tanks have suffered with termination of their work as they were included on the blacklist of the Russian state for non-desirable organizations.

In other words, the Russian landscaped is clearly occupied either by state-funded organizations that are satellites under Russian ministries or by non-profit Think Tanks run by private sector people which are under heavy bureaucratic control.

There are four big Think Tanks that guideline the state’s foreign policy approach. The first one is the CFDP (Council for Foreign and Defense Policy), which is also considered to be the leading one in foreign policy matters. Its main purpose is to organize informative lectures and seminars. The Council’s Valdai Discussion Club also constitutes the second big Think Tank, which is also economically independent without direct support from the government (which is

however managed by other means). In what seemed like a dismissive run from the State towards the clubs' associates that incorporated views of different nature (like studying abroad), the organization ended up promoting Russian beliefs to the rest of the world, rather than informing Russian public of different views and opinions (Graef & Barbashin, 2019). In publishing matters, the organization's signature "Valdai Papers" have been being published by experts on the field of Russian and international politics. A more recent institute, the Russian International Affairs Council came under both the Foreign and Education ministries. Its main perspective is to ameliorate the State's posture in international matters and push Russian policy forward. The RIAC was created to be a diverse forum in order to gather experts and deal with more complex matters of foreign policy, although it retained a grounded ideological approach on its center. The dominating force on its community pertains the policy makers of the Russian Foreign Ministry and academics from the Russian Academy of Sciences. With its influential presence, the RIAC managed to become the main forum between the experts of foreign policy in Russia and hold ground to big events such as the policy report considering the country's growth towards 2024 (Graef & Barbashin, 2019).

In other words, Russia displays a clear example of a Think Tank vessel that dictates and "commands" its own guidelines on their research, due to the influence and strict character of the state over the researchers. The independence of Russian Think Tanks is not supported by the central government and in any opposing view from the Russian state point is simply not welcome.

China

The country of China houses the most Think Tanks that operate outside the United States region. In accordance with the country's economic growth over the last 3 decades, this has

enabled for Chinese Think Tanks to rise on the spotlight of international interest. Many of the most well-known China's Think Tanks were established as early as 1950 and even endured Mao's Cultural Revolution, which resulted in the banishment of many researchers, academics, and institutes from the country. The reforming strategies by late 1970's (after Mao's death), enabled a more safe ground for the Think Tanks to develop and sought the birth of many new institutes along with the revival of older ones (Abb & Koellner, 2015).

In the Chinese landscape the Think Tank sector is divided in three groups: governmental Think Tanks, academic Think Tanks and institutes that are connected with the Chinese Communist Party. By definition, in China, the government and the Communist Party are essentially the same and the Party's sphere of influence pertains the academic circle, it is safe to assume that all three groups share an attachment of influence in one way or another, to the ruling class (Abb & Koellner, 2015). The CCP is quite well-known for its tactics of centralizing political freedom (limiting the people's) and discarding the free press ideals (concerning the freedom of opinion) (J. McGann, 2019). In instance, China's top tier Think Tank which is considered to be the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is linked to the State Council (Abb & Koellner, 2015). Every ministry or local government inside the state has emerged with its own Think Tank group, mainly because of the international growth and needs for research. In resemblance, the academic institutes offer their experts to provide guidance for the Party and analyze China's current position in international level from the academic perspective. There are large scale international institutions in the country's big universities which also act like Think Tank equivalents when needed. As mentioned earlier, the Communist Party also reserves its "own" institutes, with the leading concerning the foreign policy being the Institute for International Strategic Studies.

Beyond these main three categories, the independent private or business funded organizations are typically non-existent in Chinese territory, due to China's centralization of intellectual research as well as the restrictions posed on non-state affiliated actors in China. Initiatives like the Charhar Society for public diplomacy have emerged as non-state organizations, but such institutes that escape the States' spectrum are hardly really independent, but usually common set-ups between the government and experts. The leading role of the state in the Think Tank operations is a durable feature and has been reaffirmed by the Communist party that its political guidance is essential for the institutes' research function. Namely, a statement took place in 2015 by the CCP on "New types of Think Tanks with Chinese characteristics", highlighting the importance of Think Tanks to the modern policy advise of the Chinese state without raising doubts for the CCP's governing system (Abb & Koellner, 2015). The above statement confirms the "animosity" of Asian governance towards western orientated Think Tanks, as independence may prove challenging for the Eastern states.

Overall, both Russia and China share a similar guiding role in the orientation of their Think Tanks, as both states exercise strict control on the outcomes and influences that their organizations can provide. Any willing institutes that dare to oppose the guidelines of the government cannot simply hope to last or prevail as they will quickly get scorned and will not get the proper support to last long enough.

Japan

In huge contrast with its "counterpart" (China), Japan has showcased a downfall on its Think Tank sector. The number of organizations has been decreasing over the last 2 decades (230 as opposed to 330 on the start of the millennium) as well as the lack of funding and intervention in Japan's public policy are major turn points for the country's research momentum. Nearly half

of the total sum of the operating organizations in the country work as hired partners of enterprises rather than non-profit researchers (Abb & Koellner, 2015). The public policy sector in Japan is closely monopolized by the minister officials, characterized by the traditional way of policymaking that has been followed by the government. The Kasumigaseki district, which hosts the host's the most minister cabinets in the country, is considered by many as Japan's most important Think Tank (Abb & Koellner, 2015). The bureaucratic sector in Japan is the destination for many academic graduates, as it constitutes a powerful policy advisor in the policy sector. There have been rarely occasions where another policy option has been sought outside ministerial boundaries. Besides the strong tradition routes of Japanese culture that strongly support this situation, there is the funding aspect that makes things more difficult for Think Tanks. Donations are not a usual thing in the country and most organizations have to rely on governmental or enterprise funds or continue their research on shaky grounds with uncertainty.

Having to face such trials, the majority of the Think Tanks have focused towards enterprise matters, leaving international affairs to a mere 5% of their total interest in research (Abb & Koellner, 2015). Only a few academic institutes occupy themselves on international affairs, namely the Takushoku, Ritsumeikan and Meiji institute which host knowledgeable experts of the field. Their impact on government policy is very occasional and does reach a certain peak.

In what concerns the State-affiliated foreign policy Think Tanks. The National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) is of a well-known character, contributing to learning programs for military personnel as well as handle research regarding defense and security matters. (Abb & Koellner, 2015). Its reports include the members of staff from the Minister of Defense and extend to the prime minister and the minister of defense once each year (NIDS, 2023). Another

particularly important organization, the Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA), under the guideline and funding of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been focusing on close neighboring actors, namely China. In contrast with the NIDS, the JIIA occupies the role of the “publisher” and not the “trainer”, focusing on editing journals and hosting opinion exchanges as a forum (JIIA, 2023).

In regard to the business-affiliated institutes, the Japan Forum on International Relations was created amidst the growth of Japanese trade. The institute takes pride in having managed to create a network of gatherings between trade representatives and having published detailed papers regarding the trade policies (JFIR,” 2021). In the foreign affairs sector, the Canon Institute for Global Studies has been the sole representative regarding the business-affiliated institutes (Abb & Koellner, 2015). It is a field of research centers in neighboring states as well as the USA and is also occupied with training programs for future IR experts and state-officials.

As it is clear, in contrast with neighbor China’s strict centering line towards the organizations, Japan seems like more western-oriented in what refers to the foreign policy environment. In contrast with the one-party leadership of China, Japan’s multiparty system seem to work as a leverage that leads to greater policy freedom. Moreover, in contrast with China’s policies, Japanese legislation has facilitated the non-profit institution to enjoy a special tax status. The only challenging opponent in Japan’s policy is its economy. Due to its challenging situation, there have been instances where the government had to cut institutional funding in order to balance the financial losses. In regards to the non-profit organizations, although they enjoy the favorable taxation status mentioned earlier, the percentage of their donors does not seem to have increased, since more pressing economic matters are at hand (Abb & Koellner, 2015).

In conclusion, although the Japanese Think Tanks are more elaborate towards free research and can openly select their field of study, both tradition-oriented matters as well as underfunding of the institutes have constituted big obstacles towards their success.

Greece

Despite being the crossroad of the old world, Greece arrived late at the think tank territory, maybe because of internal conflicts after the Second world war and the Cold war Era, as well as an eight yearlong dictatorship, which left the country desperate in solving more pressing matters.

One of the well-known Greek Think Tanks, was founded by the ex- prime minister Andreas Papandreou, which was called Institute of Strategic and Developing Research (ISTAME)(ΜΟΣΧΟΒΑΣ, 2020). The idea behind it was to create a place for policy researchers who would provide a number of ideas for Papandreou's' Party and help reach the level of other European parties. As the work of the think tank was mainly to promote the work of its founder, ISTAME did not manage to get the appreciation it deserved for promoting other suspects (such as freedom of the individual and rise of technological factors for the well-being of citizens) and ended up closing in bankruptcy. (*Greece Social Briefing*, 2018).

From the other hand, the most renowned and one of the longest surviving Greek think, is the Greek Foundations for European and Foreign Research (ELIAMEP), dating back into 1988.(ELIAMEP, 2023) As the title suggests, the main purpose of ELIAMEP is to provide updated knowledge and solutions on European and Foreign matters, such as migration, security and climate change(ELIAMEP, 2023). ELIAMEP is globally renowned for its great number of publishes and work in both European and International Level(ELIAMEP, 2023). The institution

is engaged in more than 35 projects as well as organizing more than 1500 research events (Σπαγαδώρου, 2018).

Furthermore, the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE), was founded in 1959, as a research center for the economic situation in Greece. The organization has undertaken one of the most important aspects of the Greek economy, the national productivity board, which it analyzes in an annual report with detailed indexes, referring to all engaging elements of economy.(KEPE, 2023). KEPE works with and is closely under the guidance of the Ministry of Development and Investment, so it is an excellent example of a modern think tank in policy advice.

Another important Think Tank, the International Centre for Black Sea Studies(ICBSS), was established in 1998 in order to provide cooperation between the states located round the Black Sea, given their lethal past as adversaries(ICBSS, 2023c) ICBSS holds an annual conference, in which researchers are gathered to brainstorm in Black Sea region affairs, as well as an annual lecture which provides other guests to speak their mind up for such topics(*Bridge Mag*, n.d.). In 2008, the International Black Sea Symposium was also founded as a forum of EU, Black Sea region, US and Central Asia experts in order to establish a wider network of cooperation (ICBSS, 2023d). The organizations' structure is consisted of a Board of Directors who derive from the 12 State Members of an ICBSS Family Institution, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), as well as the Secretary General of BSEC, the ICBSS Director General, the Alternate Director General and three persons of great international significance (ICBSS, 2023a). Other ICBSS family institutions include; the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), helping with the judicial aid in enforcing the decisions of the ICBSS member states; the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), an international fiscal

institute that aids the Black Sea territory mutual support through trade and project financing; and the BSEC Business Council, an advocate organization set to help improve the investments and growth of Black Sea locals(ICBSS, 2023b).

Activist Centered-Think Tanks

As discussed earlier, one of Think Tanks' most important purposes is the free and free access of research and information to the public. To achieve a close collaboration and understanding between the masses and the institutions, some Think Tanks engage further with social movements in order to get into their shoes and make their role even more important for the public. There are many ways in which such organizations can collaborate with the masses. The main two elements which define the nature of the collaboration are i) the proximity between the Think Tank and the social equivalent and ii) the kind of actions that both actors decide to set in motion. The most common types of collaboration are:

i) Institutes that join movements comprised of non-governmental organizations, other institutes, activists and academics, that have a certain goal and work in various ways (officially agreed or not) (Datta & Baertl, 2020).

ii) Federations or unions which found their own policy group inside the union's branch to seek further knowledge and guidance in the policy field(Datta & Baertl, 2020).

iii) Researcher and Think Tank members that act on a personal level, joining the actions of a social movement without the guidance of their organization, simply relying on their own beliefs and ideas about the movement's purpose(Datta & Baertl, 2020).

iv) There are also cases where former staff of policy institutions become activists or members of a social movement and work towards its goals (Datta & Baertl, 2020).

v) Think Tanks cooperating with leaders or representatives of social groups and movements.

vi) Institutes that practice their research by letting other individuals take part on it from social groups and communities.

vii) Ex- Think Tanks and public policy networks that now operate in social movement and activities as an entity.

In accordance, the above types of collaboration are directed by the two elements that were mentioned earlier. There have been cases of remarkably close collaboration, for example, in Guatemala, the Association for Research and Social Studies worked face to face on many occasions with the leading figures of a social movement, providing a framework and assistance in their demands, purposes and a viable way to obtain them. The Think Tank even engaged directly in their protests, by editing protest signs and routing the demonstration properly. In this instance, the directness of communication was considered of foremost importance, in the scope of understanding between the Think Tank and the demonstrators, which was facilitated by face-to-face meetings, direct calls etc.

In other instances, the institutes took up a supportive role in social movements activity, by merely helping in organizing events and discussions, without having a key role in the actual engagements or constitute a leading figure. It was only in certain moments that they may break their supporting role and engage in the movements more directly, like communicating themselves with public officials. In other occasions, Think Tanks did not wish to openly connect themselves with a social movement, so they would use more underground tactics to support a movement's act, like sharing their actions on the internet news or share information and reports without hooking on publicly on the agenda of the movement. The idea behind this distant

approach is the fact that the institutes risk their image being identified as the same with the movement or their group they support, whereas Think Tanks do support it for their policy principles. However, the risk in not engaging directly with the social movements actions, comes also with the greater risk of not having an actual impact on the movements' goals and policy at all (Datta & Baertl, 2020). It really comes down to motives and goals when a Think Tank is to decide whether or not it should collaborate with a social movement.

One of the main prospects of such collaborations is information that an organization can obtain by the living experience of the public that participate in a social movement. In the policy sector, there have been many individuals' experiences that have allowed Think Tanks to enrich their research with actual living events. Moreover, closer public engagement with the organizations can enable the Think Tank to actually participate effectively in the policy outcomes. In that way, Think Tanks also have the opportunity to gain access to more publicity, as well as media coverage for their deeds. Also, such engagements give the organization the ideal occasion to put their research to the test and check the outcomes of the fruition of their hard work. Another key factor is that some Think Tanks are willing to cooperate with social movements whose ideals and purposes are on the same or a similar track with their own. It is strongly believed that groups tend to align when their interests are similar, and their goals are the same down the line. Think Tanks are organizations with their own agendas, setting and goals that they wish to obtain at the end. Finally, in order for their research to be valid in terms of policy influence, social movement partnerships prove their research worthy, at least in the eyes of the policymaking actors.

As it can be seen from the above, organizations have several reasons to engage with social movements in order to assist their research or even legitimize their public policy

interventions. Whatever the reason, it is clear that working with public groups can help the institutes proceed with more based outcomes that may have an actual implication on their field of study, as well as work towards their recognition with actual interest groups which are already respected to a certain degree.

Discussion

Taking the above into account, it is clear that the independence factor is the most decisive element of a Think Tank, though it may not remain absolute under real circumstances. As previous work already suggests, institutions have to balance between their: academic and research freedom against their financial support as well as their influence in policy making, so that they can have both the funds for research and their integrity intact. In addition to this important variable, the institutions centered in developing states have to face each states guidelines according to ideological and policy restrictions that are altered from the Anglo-American Western doctrine of Think Tanks. States that follow a more government-centered policy approach almost neglect the independence viewpoint of Think Tanks, dictating that policy research and procedures must be under the influence of the State, whereas other who want to establish a more western-type approach are in lack of donors and financial support. There are several occasions, in which Think Tanks emerge to engage more actively with the masses and promote public interaction, known as advocate groups or activist centered Think Tanks. These instances provide for more flexible approaches of social movements by researchers as units or as part of organizations, which are able to take a deeper dive into the action and produce research and reporting that actually reflects with the people's situation and current needs. The institutions of this instance are, however, under the dangerous line of being coincided with the very social

movements they engage with in the first place, so there is a thin line of caution to be apprehended.

Foreign Policy and Think Tanks

Now that both the classification and the funding ways of Think Tanks have been analyzed, their impact on the foreign policy field is next to be determined. In their beginning, Think Tanks were no more than governmental counselors, with the mere task of advising their state leaders against the “enemy.” However, after decades of evolution and change in the policy scene, these institutions have changed their presence into a much greater key element in foreign policy advice. But what is foreign policy and why is its analysis so important for the welfare of states? What are the aims of foreign policy? What are some good examples of which Think Tanks emerged with foreign policy advice to their respective states, in order to help their judgement?

Foreign Policy

In order to understand the impact of foreign policy Think Tanks, first it is essential to make clear the definition of the foreign policy itself. According to J.F. Morfin and J. Paquin on their book “Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox”, the definition of foreign policy is: “ a set of actions or rules governing the actions of an independent political authority deployed in the international environment” (Morin & Paquin, 2018). In other words, foreign policy is exercised solely by actors whose power over their respective states is absolute. There is a debate among researchers in the field about the nature of foreign policy itself. Some of them consider public policy by the book as a set of actions that are implemented in the international field between the

sovereign states. A different opinion disregards this idea, dictating that foreign policy is a deeper notion that has to do with a states' stance towards the world, the ideas and interests towards other nations and its ideology. Finally, some instances place the foreign policy in the middle of these two opinions, stating that foreign policy is far more complex to simply represent one of the above, as it takes place in an overly complex system of diplomatic, military, and resourceful field.

In order to interpret the foreign policy events and coordinate the policymakers, the foreign policy advice stepped inside the field of international relations. Its aim is primarily to comprehend and transcribe the interplay between the international figures and their surroundings by first analyzing the key actors themselves. A key factor in analyzing a foreign policy is by assessing it using previous ones as a starting point. This comparative approach by James Rosenau is crucial, in order for a rundown of the policy to take place and it remains a key element of public policy analysis.

There are a number of goals that foreign policy and policymakers strive to achieve. It all revolves around the interests and ideological background of the policymakers. Such goals could be either increase of the sovereign states' economic power or its sovereign power in comparison to other states, as well as the strengthening of the states' nationalism. According to Stephen Krasner: "all groups in society would support the preservation of territorial and political integrity," therefore the act of foreign policy is to safeguard the nation from any trespasses (Krasner,1978). Nonetheless, this approach is clearly illogical, as the different interests surrounding foreign policy, both from political and policy makers, can often be contradictory, so there could be no general rule dictating the support of the society's groups. This has been the cause for many foreign policy researchers to elaborate in their way of foreign policy analysis and

deny the fact that a certain goal is respected by everyone towards foreign policy. On the contrary, they prefer to study each interest group's goals separately and either take their word for it, or compare them based on their behavior onwards (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

Think Tanks on Foreign Policy

As discussed in the first chapter, Think Tanks' role centers around researching and providing information in order to influence to the best possible degree the policy reform. As far as foreign policy is concerned, the purpose is no different. What burdens more the institutes in the international field are the extent of the state-actors that they have to face in order for their advice to come through. When their interests differ in increased states, it is even harder for Think Tanks to achieve a mutual interest on their agenda of propositions. Further on, some cases in which Think Tanks' influence manage to thrive and altered foreign policy will be discussed in order to assess their impact.

The ICISS and The Responsibility to Protect

In early 2000, the Canadian government took the leading role on starting the initiative known as the "International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty" (ICISS), just after the recent events that had taken place in the Kosovo war. Its main purpose was to emphasize and spread the idea of humanitarian intervention during armed conflicts between warring states and violations of human rights during the hostilities. The organization came to face a demanding situation, given the fact that interventions at the time were mostly considered non-acceptable actions that threatened the sovereignty of the state at which they were aimed. This very situation was the headline of the institutes' report, which at the end came to advise on dilemma between the intervention versus sovereignty issue. One of the many key points that the

institute pointed out was the need for closer cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations, like the Red Cross, in order to escape further escalation in humanitarian crisis.

In what considers the organization structure and funding, it can be described as “virtual Think Tank” as the institute comprised of combination of financial support, coming from the Canadian Government as well as those of Switzerland and the UK the Carnegie Corporation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and other major foundations.(International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2007). In this occasion, the Think Tank had the one-off purpose of releasing the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, however it is one of the clearest examples in affecting the international policy. This was an example of a great assembly of different actors, both governmental and institutional, rather than a single institution’s get-go.

The New America Organization and the Drone Wars Report

The New America Think Tank represents a modern institution which is characterized by hybrid funding. In other words, the institute is funded by both private donors and governmental expenditure as well as other philanthropic institutions. The organization has released on its website a database of great importance, in which it analyzes the current military tactics of warfare considering the use of drones (*World of Drones*, 2015.). It includes an extended report in detail about the actors that are armed or under the process of being armed with drones as well as the tactics that each one follows when deciding to launch a drone attack. This database has been the manual for a lot of researchers, academics and military officers in order to comprehend the modern warfare arrival and organize their own counter tactics to face it(De Boer, 2015).

The Human Rights Watch

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an independent, non-profit international organization which aims on defending human rights as well as investigating cases of mistreatment and

exposing information about these facts to the greater public (“Human Rights Watch,” 2015). The organization is a splendid example of an active participant in the foreign policy and international intervention, as its role throughout the years have been to exert pressure in state actors, policy makers and individual actors in the international field to denounce acts of cruelty against human beings and respect the value of human life in contrast to acts of violence. In contrast with the previous organizations, the core “value” of the Human Rights watch is that governmental funding is not acceptable by any state, as a means for transparency concerning the organization (Human Rights Watch, 2015b). The organization is funded only by private individuals and other organizations and carefully reviews the donations in order to safeguard its independence from any other influence.

One of the organization’s biggest achievements concerning foreign policy was the initiative of the “International Campaign to Ban Landmines,” as a founding member. This initiative, starting with just a handful of NGOs, started in 1992 in order to call for a ban in use of anti-personnel mines that resulted in killing of innocent victims. The highlight of the movement, the Mine Ban Treaty which came into force in 1999, was the quickliest ever international treaty in history to be set in motion (Human Rights Watch, 1999). By co-publishing and introducing the first Landmine Monitor report in 1999 to the first Meeting of the States Parties in the Mine Ban Treaty, the HRW contributed to establish an information database about every country of the world and analyze the situation not only of signatory states, but non-signatories’ as well (International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1999). The impact of the organization’s efforts even resulted in them receiving the Nobel Peace prize in 1997 and really constitutes a landmark on how Think Tanks have managed to influence foreign policy making.

Another outline for the organization's work in foreign policy cases was the leading part on the treaty banning cluster munitions. The triggering event for treaty, was the 2006 Lebanon War, in which it was estimated that 40% of the cluster bombs launched by Israel remained unexploded and thus dangerous for innocent, especially children (Williams, 2008). Since the HRW had been committed to researching the cluster munitions problem as early as 1991's Gulf War and onwards to the already mentioned Kosovo war, it was the best resourced institute about the weapon's issues. The previous documentation on issues, including deaths of innocents, added momentum to the campaign of Cluster Muniton Coalition and HRW's contribution on the annual Cluster Muniton Monitor report played a major role in informing policymakers and the greater public about the dangers posed on human rights by cluster bombs, attractive more state parties to take part on the convention over the years (Mines Action Canada, 2009).

Criticism and Matters of Transparency

When trying to address and challenge a matter of international importance, every actor automatically gets his own share of criticism, in regards of either the meaning of his actions or the transparency of his policies. The above-mentioned Think Tanks are no different, having their own share of criticism. Notably, the Responsibility to Protect doctrine has been criticized of being too "Western oriented", promoting the states with more power in hand over the military weak ones and creating a matter of transparency as well by introducing favoritism (Smith, 2020).

In a completely different context, the New American organization became the main interest for national media for a huge transparency scandal taking place on the late 2017. One of the organization funders, the Google company, was displeased with the negative comments received by one of the New America's employees regarding the first's antitrust violations and

made sure to make the point across to the Institute, resulting in the firing of the employee. Many serious questions were created from the subject and worries about the influence that other funders might also have on the organization's report procedures, marking that the New America's research independency might already be severely compromised (Cohen M., 2018). This controversy really brought to light that scholarly research is not de facto separated by its founders. According to Douglas Rushkoff, an American media critic and professor who published a book sponsored by the New America organization, "All of the NGOs are beholden to their sponsors, and it's good to understand" (Reese, 2017). According to his point of view, everyone has to rely on their donors in order to keep running their projects and New America was no different. The one is paying for the process end up having a strong opinion in decisions. However, in that case, the organization that was exposed only loses people's and policymaker's trust and reveals that Think Tanks can either find proper sponsors that silently follow their research, or be the followers of their funders' guidelines (Reese, 2017).

This is one of the many cases in which Think Tanks have been in question regarding their funding and outside influence. The NGO Monitor, a right-wing non-governmental organization created to monitor on NGOs' activities, has reportedly criticized the Human Rights Watch, for not providing a complete report concerning its financial support, stating that "the HRW website only lists some organizations that provide partnership and support."(NGO Monitor, 2022). According to the NGO Monitor, the Human Rights Watch hold an ideological bias against the Israel state, and has used this bias as a way to gain donors from their opponents on the Saudi side, by raising fundraiser events (NGO Monitor, 2022). The organization has denounced several occasions on which the HRW has provided one-sided reports and condemnations on Israeli

policies and activities and even reported cases of favoritism between Israeli and Palestinian victims of war (NGO Monitor, 2013).

NGO Monitor is not the only critic concerning the HRW's actions. Robert Naiman, a policy director for the Just Foreign Policy Think Tank, has released an article on Huffington post, stating that the supposedly HRW independent organization has strong ties with the USA ideological agenda and has hold back on reports concerning many human rights violations in the Honduras's coup d'état occasion, where innocent killings, assaults and attacks on press people where documented, where not reported by the HRW (Naiman, 2009). This led the academic world openly challenge the HRW agenda as "Obama oriented", with almost 100 academics from different parts of the world and experts having expressed their dissatisfaction with a letter to the HRW, demanding from the organization to identify and share the violations.(Naiman, 2009).

In an indistinguishable situation with more strict measures against the organization, the government of Venezuela expelled two members of the Human Rights Watch in 2008, accused of committing immoral criticism against the country's presidency. According to the State's presidency at the time led by Hugo Chavez, the supposedly "independent" HRW institute was working under the guidelines of the George Bush's administration to severe and get rid of his presence in the Venezuelan politics (Reuters, 2008). "These groups, dressed up as human rights defenders, are financed by the United States", where the words of the Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro at the time, to describe that the HRW was a part of a bigger plan and had not its own independent policies.(Reuters, 2008). By the scope of Kenzie Eliassen, editor in The New Statesman magazine, the HRW 230 pages report condemning the polices of Venezuela presidency, was created with more bias rather than actual proof(Eliazen, 2008).

Discussion

The above institutions had a major impact in the respective cases they chose to intervene, either as researchers or as policy influencers and more active participants in the foreign policy shape. Even though they emerged during certain periods which were in need for specific results, these Think Tanks really pushed further to communicate and generate their own ideas on the principles that they embraced and even manage to take the lead on pressing matters of international peace (etc. Human Rights Watch). Although some of the organizations discussed, as the ICISS for example, were more of a supranational institution, involving both governmental and other institutional characters, its structure and purpose were on the same line as any Think Tanks is supposed to. As analyzed earlier, the foreign policy table is rounded by actors with different interests and set of goals, that Think Tanks have to cope with and exercise their own part of research and advice. One of the most crucial elements that Think Tanks have to overcome is the territorial boundaries of each state, which on a number of occasions are being used as a leverage to avoid policies against a states' interests.

However, one must not ignore the cases of criticism of the very institutions that are supposed to help with foreign policy advice. The "academic" nature of foreign policy Think Tanks is only one of the key elements which drive them to issue reports on their outcomes, as ideological purposes and funding influence are not the same for every institution. Under ideal circumstances, every organization should be transparent and have no subside motives about its research, but in real conditions this seems impossible. On these occasions, the essence of other external monitoring NGOs comes handfull, to provide non-biased reports for the Think Tanks' handiwork and leave information open for access to the public.

Conclusion

The research capabilities and the policy advice perspective of the entities that are classified as Think Tanks has been studied thorough and the organizations have been suggested as key actors for conductive the most objective and deep research and provide the best outcome for the policymakers and the influencers of public policy and even project influence themselves when engaging directly with a social actor or movement. Namely, in the first section of the thesis that analyzed the emergence of the Think Tanks, from simple information processors of the past to the hybrid intellectuals of the present, whose banner is independence and mediate between the state and the public. In that sense, both the states and the rest of the international actors understand that the Think Tanks are key players to their communication with the broader public and support many of their undertakings financially. Although there have been many attempts to issue a definition for the Think Tank entity, there is not one that is well perceived by all scholars. They are complex entities who need to search for fuds, goals, and merit in the science field in order to get recognized as prestigious researchers that influence policy decisions.

As emerging entities, Think Tanks presented a solution that combined both research and time efficiency that facilitated the work of policy makers, making their value even greater in the policy making scene. The introduction of open discussions, debates and public openness in the research sector reflected more accurate results for the exports of the policy interactions. They emerge to fill a necessity of intercommunicating between the public and state opinion. So, in order to fulfill the role, Think Tanks are in need of experts that are able to fill in with fresh ideas by embracing information from the state and the public as well as following the policy procedures to be able to deliver the “product” of consults. So, in order to fulfill the policy suggestion needs, Think Tanks need expert researchers who can effectively provide solutions.

In the second chapter, the subject of classification of the Think Tanks was analyzed and how the organizations have to strive between distance and proximity in the policy field. Independence, the most important characteristic of Think Tanks, is influenced by a set of variables. The first one they need to overcome, the funding independence, is perhaps the most difficult one, as it settles the connection between the institution and the donor, meaning that if a Think Tank is in desperate need for funds, it is far more manipulative in the hands of a donor who wishes to influence its research fields and findings. Two ways of troubleshooting were presented, the first one being the constant research of various donors, in order to avoid being dependent on a specific one that can influence the Think Tanks' matters. The second way is presented to be the constant argument between the organizations and the donors, in a kind of bargain situation, which is much more common but less effective, due to the pressure that money holders can apply.

Another independence factor that was analyzed was the one of ideas. Think Tanks have to work with people that are closely connected to political or governing parties and need to keep their ideas and values intact from such influences. The use of political influence should not be confused with that of the line of the political parties but rather be used as a tool for public outreach. Moreover, the structure of the Think Tank needs to support its independence by promoting transparent procedures internally and using methods of research that resemble the level of universities, to exclude concerns of external influences.

By considering these independence factors, the outcome came by according to the independence paradox theory by Jezierska & Sörbom that confronts the reality of the institutions with a different approach, stating that Think Tanks tangled between the distance or proximity of academia and donors /policy makers (Jezierska & Sörbom, 2021). This theory explained that the

more Think Tanks crave to become independent, the more they also lose their influence, because they distance themselves from funders and policy makers, so each time they have to choose the side of the coin they need the most and then realign again. From that, it is safe to assume that independence is a complex issue that does not always favor Think Tanks, especially when it involves influencing the policy makers.

Furthermore, a number of cases were introduced in states where Think Tanks operated in numerous ways. In the case of Bolivia, the instance of a Think Tank that tried to organize and inform people against an oppressive regime, showed that social movements are also in need of policy advice and can benefit from the organization's knowledge and research. In Vietnam, the need for Think Tanks came by the quick policy changes and state reforms, where Think Tanks could provide both as advisors and as informers of the greater public. In a different aspect of Russia, it was shown that the Think Tanks that have the chance of influencing the policy reforms, are actually restricted by the Russian government and state and produce outcomes only to their favor. The one is that choose to operate without being attached to the Russian state, are operating under severe legislations and in a "hostile" environment. As Graef and Barbashin showed, there were even cases of institutes turning points towards favoritism of Russian beliefs, because of the research oppression they had to face. A similar case was also identified in China, where also most institutes are connected to the State Party, which also is known for its restricting attitude towards Think Tanks that are not aligned with the Party. Both these cases signify the importance of independence mentioned earlier and show that think tanks under the severe influence of states lose their legitimacy as policy advisors and become mere tools of research in sectors only helpful for their influencers.

Finally, in the case of Japan, a clearly downgraded situation was revealed due to the lack of funds especially for research in public and international policy and instead the majority of the institutes are focused on enterprise matters. The deep roots of Japanese tradition that are linked to the policy making process in Japan revealed that another barrier in the mission of Think Tanks can also be the trust of traditionally oriented public. By examining the above cases, the result that can be considered about the Eastern oriented Think Tanks, is that they lack in a lot of operative support, freedom, and trust in comparison with the Anglo-American institutes. In that sense, the outcome of comparison leads to the assumption that Anglo-American Think Tanks are actually independent unlike their Eastern counterparts and are more effective in their policy solutions.

As a unique category the Activist Centered Think Tanks were also introduced, whose nature is far more public engaging than those of the former mentions. By interacting in a direct manner with the public, these types of Think Tanks can obtain information and conduct research to the point, managing to influence people with direct contact, debates, and active communication. In that sense, Think Tanks gain validation for their research, meaning their efforts are actually recognized on the spot from real people who experience real problems and not by speculative theories. However, the risk of being seen as an advocacy group is really intense in these types of Think Tanks, as they tend to get grouped along with the social movements they cooperate with, by public opinion.

From the above comes the logical inference, that a Think Tank should i) be as independent as the space of operation allows it to be, in order to provide with transparent results without biased data and ii) its proximity to social movements and direct interactions should not over excess to the point of jeopardizing their institutional integrity. It comes without saying that a

proper relationship with the donors should also be established, as the institution cannot manage to carry out research without the necessary funds.

In the last chapter, the term foreign policy was introduced, as a set of actions that dictate how an independent authority acts in the international spectrum. As analyzed, foreign policy designates the state's attitude towards other states by taking into account interests, relevance of power and resources. For this purpose, foreign policy advises came in place, as a way of decoding the actions of foreign policy and devising a way of approach for events that occur between states. In that sense, foreign policy is a fertile opportunity for policy advise groups, such as Think Tanks, to emerge and handle these complex issues and manage to participate in the policy influence.

A number of cases were examined to configure the results of Think Tanks' interventions in foreign matters. The situational example of ICISS was an interesting example of organizations that are created for certain emergencies, like the outcome of wars and their aftereffects. Also, it signified that different states may co-operate in order to create a Think Tank, given their shared purposes, ideals, and interests. The Responsibility to Protect norm, which was the outcome of ICISS's actions, is a bright instance of policy influence on an international scale, being adopted by the UN's Security Council and becoming a normative approach in cases of human rights' violations and is a bright example of success that Think Tanks can achieve as foreign policy advisors.

In the next case of the New America Organization, the hybrid funding term was introduced, implying that such organizations may also be given support by private individuals with scope in foreign matters. The NAO presented a different view of Think Tanks, in which they function as databases for training, research and informative purposes to other individuals or

organizations. Thus, it was signified that Think Tanks' role may take not always be active in the reform process, but also passively engaging by information give on future policymakers.

For the last case, the Human Rights Watch was examined, being different on its nature as an independent, non-profit INGO which denies any external influence by states, both politically and financially. Also, in contrast with the previous cases, HRW shows a highly active presence in the policy procedures in terms of investigations, peer-pressure on state-actors and organizations. The organization has showcased a series of achievements in international policy history, leading to the conclusion that a Think Tank can have a prolonging role in foreign policy advice, preserving an intemporal utility in the research policy field.

Further on, the other side of the coin was also briefly discussed in the chapter, concerning the criticism against the endeavors of these organizations. As described, the organizations face censure in some cases, where they are believed to be promoting interests of their donors or states with more influential power than others, and not their goals for general welfare. Be it from the enterprise or the political industry, the cases of institutions being criticized for favoritism on specific interest groups are not to be taken lightly. Such occasions enhance the opinion that independence is an optimistic view far driven from reality and support the voices speculating that "nobody bites the hand that feeds him." To avoid such criticisms, Think Tanks must have set clear goals with transparent procedures and produce reports that are all open and accessible to public evaluation.

Finally, the outcome of this chapter indicates that Think Tanks are indeed a particularly useful group of research units that have the potential of influencing the foreign policy process, but to the degree of their capabilities and to the scale of their supportive state-actors. In matters of independence, it seems impossible for such organizations to be fully independent from any

external factor. As it was described by the independence paradox theory, the policy influence is in proportion to the relation with the policy makers. Therefore, this factor is in dispute and should be closely observed in future research regarding the subject. In regard to public engagement, it was determined that Think Tanks emphasize public participation in the procedures by actively setting up debates, hearings, and some of them engaging with social movements and their demands. As per this, it emphasizes that the outcomes of Think Tanks' research actually represent the public sentiments and provides point material for further policy meditation.

To sum up, it should be noted that rapid changes on the foreign spectrum at the present time are in need of resourceful organizations that can use critical thought in analyzing and exporting policy material. Although there is no exact definition for their entity, Think Tanks are more than able to provide for these outcomes by also getting the public approval. However, these organizations need to be cautious of their external influences and not jeopardize their image as unbiased researchers, as they will be losing more than just their credibility. Think Tanks are the universities of the future and are already surprising the policy makers with their achievements.

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Appendix

Important Think Tanks in Foreign Policy

NAME	LOCATION	WEBSITE
Chatman House	London (UK)	https://www.chathamhouse.org/
African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes	Durban (South Africa)	https://www.accord.org.za/
Amnesty International	London (UK)	https://www.amnesty.org/
Bruegel	Brussels (Belgium)	https://www.bruegel.org/
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Washington, DC (USA)	https://carnegieendowment.org/
Center for European Policy Studies	Brussels (Belgium)	https://www.ceps.eu/
Japan Institute of International Affairs	Tokyo (Japan)	https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/
Observer Research Foundation	New Delhi (India)	https://www.orfonline.org/
RAND Corporation	London (UK)	https://www.rand.org/
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	Stockholm (Sweden)	https://www.sipri.org/
The Human Rights Watch	New York (USA)	https://www.hrw.org/
Wilson Center	Washington, DC (USA)	https://www.wilsoncenter.org/

Note. This is a list of Think Tanks that consists of twelve organizations that make a meaningful impact in Foreign Policy affairs. Although it is impossible to list all the meaningful organizations in one thesis, the following ones deserve to be mentioned for their role both on local and international level for further knowledge and education.