Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States

Academics, advisors and advocates

James G. McGann

Routledge Research in American Politics

Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States

This volume chronicles and analyzes the development of think tanks and public policy research organizations, while exploring the impact think tanks have on politics, public policies, and governance in the United States.

Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States investigates the distinctive nature of 30 leading think tanks in America, while capturing the political and intellectual ecology of the more than 1500 think tanks in the United States. Presidents from 20 think tanks have contributed insightful essays that examine the role, value, and impact of these organizations on a national and global level. The book examines a range of key factors (partisan politics; growth of liberal and conservative advocacy groups; restrictive funding policies of donors; growth of specialized think tanks; narrow and short-term orientation of Congress and the White House; tyranny of myopic academic disciplines; and the 24/7 cable news networks) which have impacted on the ability of think tanks to provide independent analysis and advice.

This text fills a gap in the available literature and will serve as a valuable reference tool for policymakers, the media, and researchers in the fields of public policy, political science, and American politics more generally.

James G. McGann is Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, USA, where he directs the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP). He also lectures in Domestic and International Policy at Villanova University, USA.

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To my wife Emily, whose support, encouragement, and understanding have allowed me to steal time to write and speak on think tanks and policy advice over the last 23 years. I also want to dedicate this book to my mother, Mary C. McGann, who encouraged me to dream big and to get involved in politics and policy issues when I was just a teenager.

About the author

Dr James McGann is a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, where he directs the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP). He is also the President and Founding Partner of McGann Associates, a program and management consulting firm specializing in the challenges facing think tanks, policymakers, international organizations, and philanthropic institutions. Established in 1989, McGann Associates is pleased to count many of the leading policy institutions, foundations, and international organizations in the United States and abroad as its clients.

Dr McGann has served as the Senior Vice-President for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomacy, a private organization that assists the US Department of State by providing international and economic affairs programs for senior foreign diplomats, high level government officials, and Fortune 500 corporate executives. In that capacity, he developed programs focusing on aid, trade, and development issues involving diplomats from Russia, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, and Latin America who are posted in the United States. In addition, he helped develop and administer the US Foreign Policy Briefing Program for foreign ambassadors posted in Washington, DC and New York.

From 1983–9, Dr McGann served as the Public Policy Program Officer for The Pew Charitable Trusts, one of the largest private charitable foundations in America. In this capacity, he directed a 10 million dollar grants program and launched a series of multi-million dollar domestic policy and international affairs initiatives involving many of the leading think tanks and university research centers in the United States. These initiatives included the Pew Diplomatic Training Program and the Economics and National Security Program.

Dr McGann has been the Assistant Director of the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard University. He currently is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Villanova

University, where he teaches domestic and international politics and public policy courses.

Dr McGann earned his master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. His doctoral thesis examined the nature and evolution of public policy research organizations in the United States by comparing and contrasting the mission, structure, and operating principles of some of the leading think tanks (Brookings Institution, RAND Corporation, American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Urban Institute, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Institute for Policy Studies, Institute for International Economics, and Cato Institute) to determine how these factors influence their role in the policymaking process. Dr McGann also holds a master's degree from Temple University where he specialized in the administration of nonprofit organizations.

Dr McGann has served as a Senior Advisor to the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs and the Society for International Development. In addition, he is a consultant and advisor to the World Bank, United Nations, United States Agency for International Development, Soros Foundation, and foreign governments on the role of nongovernmental, public policy, and public engagement organizations in civil society. He served as a consultant to several USAID-supported organizations working in Russia and the Ukraine. This work included a long-term assignment from one of the largest USAID-supported organizations operating in the region. Dr McGann developed a strategic plan that included a blueprint for an endowment for several nongovernmental organizations in the Middle East for USAID. He is a former Associate of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, a member of the Philadelphia Committee on Foreign Relations, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of both the International Visitors Council and Forum International. He also serves as a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in England. He is a dual citizen and holds both a United States and European Union passport.

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Introduction

I started studying think tanks 23 years ago when several of my colleagues at the Pew Charitable Trusts (PTC) asked me why the foundation was spending so much money on think tanks. At the time, the PTC was spending about 11 million dollars a year on public policy research. This simple question propelled me to find out why think tanks and ideas matter, and more importantly why they deserve our support. In 1983, the world of politics and policy advice in the United States was still defined by the progressive-era notion that knowledge must be brought to bear on government decision-making. Since that time, changes such as the fall of communism in Europe, challenges to the welfare state, a revolution in information technologies and telecommunications, the rise in partisan politics, and the emergence of new threats with 9/11 have completely altered the working environment and conceptual and organization paradigms employed by independent, nonprofit research organizations, or think tanks, especially in the United States. The ever-accelerating pace of communication and the immense quantity of information we are bombarded with every day, makes it even more difficult for policymakers and the public to gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary issues. Think tanks have been increasingly required to bridge the gap between: the world of ideas and politics; raw information and relevant data; scholarly research and policy relevance; and the medium and the message.

Yet, the evolution of the environment they operate in has made it ever more difficult for think tanks to fulfill their role as critics, analysts, and advisors. *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States: Academics, advisors and advocates* is intended to document and analyze these changes while exploring the impact that the more than 1,700 think tanks have on politics, public policies, and governance in the United States. Thanks to the collaboration and input of presidents from 20 of the country's leading think tanks, this book provides a

thorough study of the political and intellectual ecology of US think tanks coupled with an insider's view on how these organizations perceive their role and impact on society. Since 1991, when I wrote my doctoral dissertation, *The Competition for Dollars, Scholars and Influence in the Public Policy Research Industry*, several changes have occurred, distorting the original promise and purpose of public policy research organizations.

Since the early twentieth century, a small group of elite think tanks have played a major role in framing policy issues and providing analysis; but in the last 20 years, there has been a veritable think tank proliferation. While the think tank "industry" was expanding, the role of many of these organizations shifted from providing objective, scholarly research, and analysis to disseminating specialized, action-oriented policy assessments that aimed to influence the decision-making process / policy decisions.

First, I examine the particular characteristics of the American political system and civil society that have made the initial creation and continued proliferation of think tanks possible. This study identifies the United States' decentralized and pluralistic government structure, among other things, as responsible for the growth of the think tank industry. Additionally, the study identifies the ways in which think tanks and their research is useful and complementary to government and policymaking even as the size of government has increased. Clearly the permeable, decentralized, and pluralistic nature of the American political culture, or what some have described as "American Exceptionalism" and "hyperpluralism," have become the driving forces behind the growth and diversity present among the 1,736 think tanks in the United States.

Next, I seek to classify American think tanks based on their organizational structures and strategies for providing advice and influencing public policy. The following categories of independent think tanks are defined in order to distinguish modern think tanks from one another: academic-diversified; academic-specialized; contract research organizations/contract consulting; advocacy; and policy enterprise. A categorization of some of the most influential think tanks is also presented based on political orientation, demonstrating the influence of think tanks across the political spectrum. Government- and political party-affiliated think tanks are discussed briefly to provide the reader with a full range of US public policy research organizations.

Following this classification, I identify a number of ways to measure the actual influence of think tanks on public policy and public opinion. Some of the indicators include the size of a think tank's resources, the

scope of its audience, and the number of policy recommendations it puts forth that are considered by policymakers. Although this book cautions that finding a causal connection between what a think tank publishes and what policy is made is almost impossible, it does suggest that think tanks play an important role, especially in the early stages of policy debate in America.

I also discuss the impact of funding on a think tank's agenda, its research strategy, and its effectiveness. Included is a chart with the recent funding and expense information for some of America's top think tanks that participated in a survey leading up to this book's publication. This survey finds that the budgets of think tanks of all political orientations and types are considerable, although some discrepancies are noted.

After providing an overview of the American think tank landscape and discussing the current challenges to the think tank industry, I suggest several ways to help think tanks ensure their usefulness and continue to contribute to policy debate. Among other changes, the book identifies the need for more long-term funding and the adoption of standards that will assure that the research produced by these institutions is independent and of the highest quality.

The second half of the book presents essays written by the presidents of the 20 leading US think tanks, which examine the role, value, and impact of these organizations. They discuss a range of environmental forces (partisan politics; growth of liberal and conservative advocacy groups; challenges of funding policy research; growth of specialized think tanks and Section 527 organizations; short-term orientation of donors and policymakers; and the rise of the 24/7 cable news networks) that have altered the market for the analysis and advice provided by think tanks. The statements provide an exposition of the varied think tank landscape that has emerged in the last 15 to 20 years and highlight many of the challenges facing this community of institutions.

Part of the reason for those challenges lies in the recent trend of increased polarization and pressure to politically align. While it goes without saying that Washington, DC and the public policy process are inherently political and the competition of ideas is a hallmark of the American democratic experience, the current state of partisanship has reached a "fever pitch." Think tanks have been enlisted to provide the ammunition in the battle over good and evil that seems to preoccupy many politicians today. Partisan politics and the "war of ideas" have become more complex, and partisan institutions have become more common. The result is a shift toward either side of the political spectrum, a large dichotomy of liberal organizations on one side,

conservative organizations on the other, and a limited number of centrist institutions in the middle. Thus, it is increasingly difficult to find objective analysis that looks at a range of ideas, opinions, and policy options surrounding an issue.

Many feel that think tanks' primary responsibility is to provide policy advice for members of Congress and the executive branch. I believe the following chapters will illuminate some of the other roles of think tanks, such as providing a venue for debate, cutting through political discourse to identify the real problems, defining the questions that shape public policy, providing support for various policy alternatives against others, and broadening the range of policy options. As Founding Director, Edward Djerejian of the James A. Baker III Institute of Public Policy, reminds, "Rarely does an idea leap from a think tank to become public policy. More often ideas contribute to national debate and influence the political climate in indirect ways. Sometimes that influence can be substantial."[1] It is that possibility of lasting influence that drives my desire to impart the importance of understanding what a think tank is, what role it plays, and what impact it has on government and civil society.

1 Think tanks and policy advice

> Big Pluralistic America. It's the noisiest political debating society in the world: a babble of voices airing contrary opinions on how this country should be run. For this democracy, where every view is permissible and each faction seeks to persuade – Republicans, Democrats, left, right and centrist. Lobbyists, journalists, scholars, religionists. And think tanks. Dissonant, protean, cacophonous, they are yeast in the ever-fermenting discussion.[1]

Public policy research, analysis, and engagement organizations (also known as think tanks) play a vital role in political and policy arenas at the local and national level in the United States. Their function is unique, as they provide public policy research, analysis, advice, and operate independently from governments and political parties. While the primary function of these nonprofit civil society organizations is to help government understand and make informed choices about issues of domestic and international concern, they also have a number of other critical roles, including:

- mediating between the government and the public;
- building confidence in public institutions;
- serving as an informed and independent voice in policy debates;
- identifying, articulating, and evaluating policy issues, proposals, and programs;
- transforming ideas and emerging problems into policy issues;
- interpreting issues, events, and policies for the electronic and print media, thus facilitating public understanding of domestic and international policy issues;
- providing a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information between key stakeholders in the policy formulation process;

- facilitating the construction of "issue networks";
- providing a supply of informed personnel for the legislative and executive branches of government;
- challenging the conventional wisdom, standard operating procedures, and "business as usual" of bureaucrats and elected officials.

The activities involved in fulfilling these functions involve balancing research, analysis, and outreach. The range of activities that think tanks engage in include: framing policy issues; researching and writing books, articles, policy briefs, and monographs; conducting evaluations of government programs; disseminating their research findings (public testimony before Congress, media appearances, and speeches); organizing various outreach activities; creating networks and exchanges via workshops, seminars, and briefings; and supporting mid-career and senior government officials when they are out of office (being what I describe as a "government in waiting tank" or a "holding tank").

Think tanks are a diverse set of institutions that vary in size, financing, structure, and scope of activity. There are currently 1,736 think tanks or political research centers in the United States, around half of which are university-affiliated institutions and approximately one-third of which are located in Washington, DC. Those think tanks that are not affiliated with academic institutions, political parties, or interest groups are described as freestanding or independent think tanks.

The 25 to 30 top think tanks in the United States have highly diversified research agendas that cover a broad range of policy issues on both the domestic and international fronts. However, since 1980 the vast majority of new think tanks are specialized. These "specialty" or "boutique" think tanks focus their activities on a single issue (i.e. global warming) or area of public policy (i.e. national security). There is a large constellation of progressive and conservative state-based think thanks that are also part of this general trend toward specialization.

Think tanks often play the role of insiders and become an integral part of the policy process, such as The RAND Corporation and The Urban Institute, which provide research and analysis for key agencies within the government. They can also act as outsiders in the mold of The Economic Policy Institute and The Heritage Foundation, which attempt to incorporate their ideas into policy by conducting research and analysis that is then aggressively marketed to policy elites and the public. There is often a clash within these institutions and in the policy community between those who believe that think tanks should be "scholarly and objective" and those who feel they must be "policy-relevant," disseminating their research to policymakers in order to

have any value. This is an age-old tension between the world of ideas and the world of policy. This tension is best expressed by Plato in the *Republic* when he writes, "There can be no good government until philosophers are kings and the kings philosophers."[2] The academic-oriented school believes that think tanks should adhere to academic research standards and focus on big-picture and longer-term issues, while the policy-relevance school believes that think tanks should concentrate on the needs of policymakers and current policy issues.

2 The history of think tanks in the United States

Think tanks have long played an important role in the formulation of domestic and international policy in the United States. The origins of think tanks can be traced to America's Progressive-era traditions of corporate philanthropy, its sharp distinction between legislative and executive branches of government (which creates few barriers to entry into the policymaking process), the desire to bring knowledge to bear on governmental decision-making, and the inclination to trust the private-sector to "help government think." As think tanks have grown in number and stature, scholars, and journalists have begun to examine more closely the many factors that have led to their proliferation:

- The division of power between the three branches (legislative, executive, and judicial) and levels (state and federal) of government.
- A political system that has weak political parties that exhibit little to no party discipline.
- A highly developed philanthropic and civil culture.
- A public that maintains a healthy distrust of public officials and prefers a limited role for government.
- Citizens' proclivity to join and support interest groups rather than political parties to represent their interests and express their policy preferences.
- A political system that has many points of access.
- The public's tendency to embrace independent experts over politicians or bureaucrats.

While the history of think tanks in many countries spans, at most, only the last 30 to 40 years, the United States has been home to think tanks for more than 100 years. The impressive growth of US think tanks is clearly illustrated by Figure 2.1, which is based on the preliminary results of the 2006 Global Survey of Think Tanks. Yet, as can be

observed, the growth in number of think tanks was far from equal over the twentieth century. Most think tanks were established in waves. In fact, the tendency curve of Figure 2.1, which depicts a moving average over 5 years, clearly identifies the four major periods of think tank growths in the United States: the end of the First World War, the end of the Second World War, the early 1960s, and the 1980s. During the latter, an average of around 35 institutions were created every year, making it by far the largest growth period for United States' think tanks. Conversely, within the past decade there has been a sharp decrease in the number of think tanks established per year. The reasons for the diminishing numbers are not well known and will be investigated in a later study. However, intuition suggests that part of the answer lies in a "crowding out" effect through which new policy influence channels have been favored at the expense of think tanks, and so numerous that newcomers must struggle to find their place. Moreover, the recent economic downturn and fundraising difficulties have certainly had an adverse effect on the creation of new think tanks, for whom it is difficult to compete with more stable and well-established organizations.

Table 2.1 Budget growth from 1983–2005

Think tank	*1983 ($ in millions)*	*2005 ($ in millions)*	*Growth (%)*
Brookings Institution	13.0	41.5	219
CATO Institute	1.3	15.0	1,054
Center for Strategic and International Studies	7.5	27.1	261
Council on Foreign Relations	6.6	31.3	374
Ethics and Public Policy Center	1.3	1.9	46
Heritage Foundation	8.7	37.6	332
Hoover Institution	9.3	30.7	230
Hudson Institute	24.0	7.5	–69
Institute for Contemporary Studies	1.3	Closed	N/A
Institute for International Economics	1.3	8.0	515
Joint Center for Political Studies	2.0	5.2	160
Manhattan Institute for Policy Research	0.925	8.0	765
Reason Foundation	1.2	4.2	250
Resources for the Future	5.5	11.0	100
World Resources Institution	3.0	21.4	613

Note
The figures are taken from 1983 and 2005 survey data collected by James G. McGann and the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program. 1983 data was cross-referenced with the Foundation for Public Affairs, Public Interest Profiles, Congressional Quarterly Press for 1984.

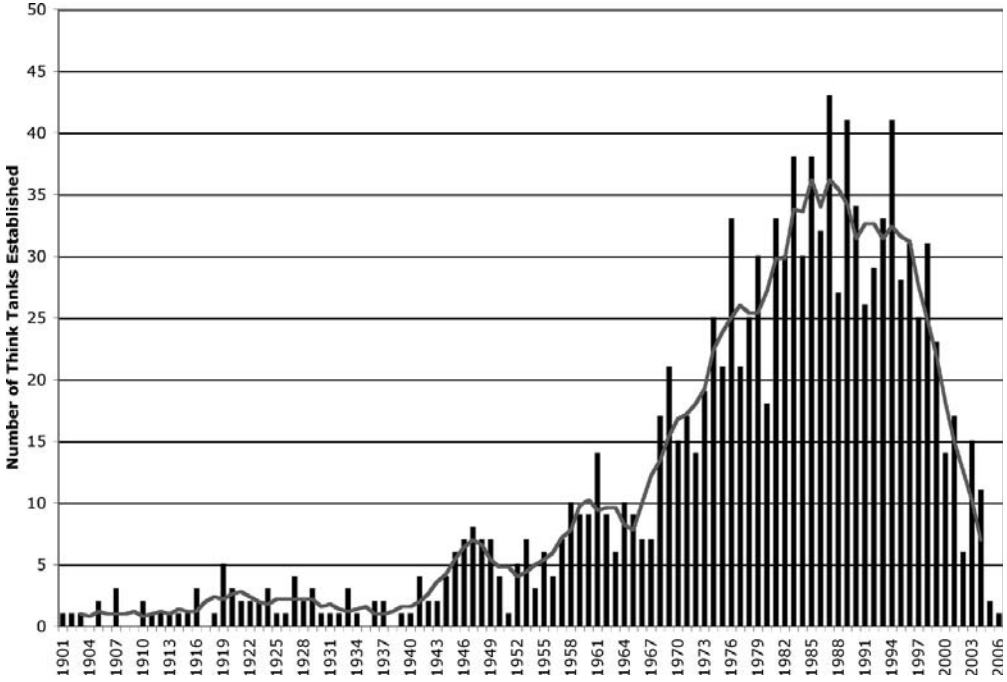

Figure 2.1 Number of new think tanks established per year

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the 2006 Global Think Tank Survey. The final data may diverge slightly from this data.

3 Think tanks defined

Think tanks or public policy research, analysis, and engagement institutions are organizations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues in an effort to enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues. Think tanks may be affiliated with political parties, governments, interest groups, or private corporations or constituted as independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These institutions often act as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities, serving the public interest as an independent voice that translates applied and basic research into a language and form that is understandable, reliable, and accessible for policymakers and the public.

Structured as permanent bodies, in contrast with *ad hoc* commissions or research panels, think tanks devote a substantial portion of their financial and human resources to commissioning and publishing research and policy analysis in the social sciences: political science, economics, public administration, and international affairs. The major outputs of these organizations are books, monographs, reports, policy briefs, conferences, seminars, briefings and informal discussions with policymakers, government officials, and key stakeholders.

Classification

Attempts to define and/or categorize think tanks, raises a debate over the meaning of such basic terms as "public policy research," "think tank," and "advocacy." The subtitle of this book is intended to capture the struggle that exists among think tanks concerning their role in the policy-making process: Are they academics, advisors, or advocates? Can a think tank be effective if it is not an advisor or advocate? This debate reflects the inherent tension between the world of ideas and

world of politics or the clash of the academic and policy cultures. The categories provided below are designed to help bring these differences into focus so that a more informed debate can occur.

Think tanks in the United States can take one of three forms:

1 a traditional Think Tank, which concentrates its resources exclusively on scholarly policy research (Hoover Institution and Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars);
2 a Think-and-Do Tank, which conducts research, policy analysis, and public outreach (Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Economic Policy Institute, American Enterprise Institute, and Heritage Foundation); and
3 Do Tanks, which focus all of their energies on the repacking and disseminating of other think tanks' ideas and policy proposals (Demos, Capital Research Center, and Free Congress Foundation).

However, they vary in affiliation, organizational structure and culture, and political and philosophical orientation.

Type of affiliation

In many countries, think tanks have traditionally been formally affiliated with and/or funded entirely by the government, political parties, or corporations. Conversely, in the United States, the tendency is toward independent, non-partisan, nongovernmental think tanks. They thus enjoy intellectual, financial, and legal independence. Their ability to develop and promulgate positions free from governmental or corporate influence and interference is what makes these NGOs critical civil society actors and affords them greater credibility with the public. While there is a proclivity for independent think tanks in the United States, the majority of the think tanks throughout the rest of the world are affiliated with political parties, governments, or corporations. However, the number of independent think tanks worldwide is now growing as the benefits of truly independent public policy research and analysis are realized and as other civil society organizations grow in number and influence.

The independence, or lack thereof, of the think tank has a decisive role in determining its objectivity and ultimately its credibility. Party-affiliated think tanks are almost nonexistent in the United States, while they are the dominant model in Europe. Nevertheless, the United States does have think tanks that are affiliated with Congress, government

agencies, universities, and corporations. Of these groups, this book considers only university-affiliated and independent, nonprofit US think tanks.

Organizational characteristics of independent think tanks

Independent think tanks are autonomous organizations that are supported by the public through private contributions. Independent think tanks may receive government grants, but the vast majority does not. Independent think tanks include four specific types of organizations:

1 academic-diversified and academic-specialized;
2 contract research organization;
3 advocacy; and
4 policy enterprise.

Academic-diversified

Academic-diversified think tanks tend to conduct research and analysis on a wide range of policy issues, including, but not limited to: economics, foreign policy, and the environment. In addition, they typically:

- engender the credibility, support, and influence of the academic community and are afforded the respect paid to scholars and scholarly research;
- resemble academic institutions but are "universities without students";
- staffed by academics;
- characterized by an academic culture and organizational structure;
- follow established academic disciplines;
- conduct research on longer time horizons;
- embrace scientific-based analysis;
- have the same outputs and rewards as academic institutions such as tenure or what amounts to tenure;
- produce book-length studies, journal articles, and monographs rather than reports and policy briefs;
- follow a collegial, consensus-based model of management.

Examples include The Brookings Institution, The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). A researcher at The Brookings Institution stated, "We conduct research for policymakers that is only read by students and professors.

We are not slaves to the legislative agenda of Congress or the White House."

Academic-specialized

Academic-specialized think tanks have many of the same features of academic-diversified think tanks; however, they differ by degrees of specialization. The former have more specialized and narrow research agendas and client bases, and generally focus on a single discipline such as economics or sub-discipline such as international economics.

These institutions also tend to focus on a single issue or area of public policy, such as international trade, law and economics, immigration, or welfare reform. While they are quite similar to academic-diversified think tanks, they:

- differ by degrees of specialization;
- have a specialized research agenda, funders, and client base;
- have a single issue, narrow research agenda.

Examples include The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), The Economic Strategy Institute, and The Institute for International Economics.

Contract research organizations/contract consulting

Contract Research Organizations, also known as Contract Consulting Institutions, perform the majority of their research and analysis for government agencies. They typically:

- are independent, nonprofit organizations that have a voluntary board of directors;
- have a policy-orientation and close working relationship with government agencies;
- rely on government contracts;
- serve as policy/program consultants;
- offer quantitative analysis;
- tend to produce policy analysis rather than research;
- allow researchers a limited degree of freedom to set project/research agendas, agendas often set by contracting agency;
- produce work that is largely but not exclusively for contracting government agencies and cannot be disseminated without the approval of that agency;

- produce research and findings which are the property of the contracting agencies, not of the organizations or the researchers;
- reflect the research methodologies of contracting organizations;
- are often multi-disciplinary;
- have a consulting firm's culture and organizational structure;
- have reward systems, production schedules, and products that are determined by the contract.

Examples include RAND, an acronym for research and development (R&D), which was started as a defense think tank and now has a highly diversified set of government contracts, and The Urban Institute, which was established to help design and manage the Great Society social program.

Advocacy think tanks

Advocacy is often seen as one of the following:

1 arguing for specific position-based results as opposed to open-ended analysis;
2 using scientific methodology primarily to influence policy in ideologically preferred directions; or
3 focusing on marketing ideas rather than research.

Since scientific methodology generally provides think tanks with presupposed legitimacy, advocacy is often perceived to be in conflict with standards of objectivity. Consequently, credibility can be compromised if a think tank is viewed as advocacy-oriented, and thus it is necessary for think tanks to balance interaction in the policy system with scientific methodology.

However, advocacy can cause a think tank to gain specific legitimacy among devotees of the tank's ideological orientation. These approaches may be necessary to raise funds, but they can have distorting effect on an organization's research agenda and mission. Some of their more common characteristics are:

- a mission defined by an ideological, moral, or partisan worldview;
- active promotion of a point of view;
- a central goal of advancing a cause, constituency, ideology, or party;
- research and analysis that has a sharp partisan edge;
- driven by an issue, philosophy, or constituency;
- organized to promote their ideas;

- rejection of both academic and technocratic approaches to policy analysis;
- rewarded based on their ability to advance their cause;
- ideological or political litmus test is used to evaluate staff rather than their publication records or academic credentials;
- output determined based upon how it will play with constituency or will advance a particular philosophy;
- a culture and organizational structure that resembles an advocacy organization.

Examples include The Cato Institute, Institute for Policy Studies, and Citizens for a Sound Economy.

Policy enterprise organizations

Policy enterprise organizations are groups that take an entrepreneurial approach to policy analysis and advice. Therefore, they are organized like a business whose purpose is to understand their market and develop and distribute their products to that market. I consciously separate this group from advocacy think tanks in order to draw attention to the management and marketing orientation of these organizations. These organizations view policymakers as consumers who have specific needs and preferences. Consequently, the policy enterprise is specially organized to produce, package, and promote policy ideas and proposals to this market or a segment of it. They typically:

- are organized with the effectiveness and the efficiency of a corporation;
- apply principles of management, marketing, and sales to public policy research;
- argue that the orientation of think tanks is wrong insofar as it is too academic and fails to recognize the needs of policymakers;
- digest and formulate research into a form that meets the needs of busy bureaucrats, politicians, and policymakers;
- produce short studies that focus on current legislation or policy concerns;
- publications have a journalistic quality;
- follow a tight production schedule for outputs/products;
- have a culture and organizational culture that resembles a marketing organization;
- reward those who can operate on a tight timeline and can produce action-oriented policy briefs.

Examples include The Heritage Foundation and The Center for American Progress. Table 3.1 provides examples of affiliated think tanks, the dates in which they were established, and the major organizational models in America.

Organizational characteristics of affiliated think tanks

Affiliated think tanks are public policy research organizations that are administratively, financially, and/or legally connected to an organization. Within the "affiliated" category, fall four specific types of organizations:

1 party-affiliated
2 government sponsored
3 private, for-profit
4 university-based.

Party-affiliated think tanks

Party-affiliated think tanks are formally affiliated with a political party. Political parties often have teams of researchers and analysts whose job it is to come up with ideas, policies, and programs that can be translated into a party's political agenda during a campaign or when the party is in power. These think tanks are often well connected to the party leadership. They typically:

- are responsible for developing the ideas, policies, and programs that become the platform of a political party;
- are more commonly found in Europe, where all the major political parties have a think tank that serves the interest of the party;

Table 3.1 Independent public policy think tanks' organizational structure and culture

Organization	*Date established*	*Organizational type*
Brookings Institution	1916	Academic/diversified
National Bureau of Economic Research	1920	Academic/specialized
Rand Corporation	1948	Consulting/contracting
Institute for Policy Studies	1963	Advocacy
Heritage Foundation	1973	Policy enterprise

- have research agendas which are often constrained by the interests and philosophy of the party and its leadership.

The only real example of a party-affiliated think tank in the United States is The Progressive Policy Institute (PPI). Founded in 1989, PPI serves as the research arm of the Democratic Leadership Council, a centrist democratic group that provided the intellectual and policy framework for the Clinton campaign and later the "Clinton Agenda." Leading Democrats such as Bill Clinton and Al Gore have been active in the Institute since its inception.

Government sponsored think tanks

Government think tanks are a part of the formal governmental apparatus. These think tanks are internal policy research groups that provide the executive and legislative branches of government with information, analysis, and research on a range of topics. Their research is usually related to current legislation or policy issues. Think tanks in the executive branch serve a single master – the president, or "the administration" – whereas for the legislative branches they serve the varied interests and agendas of all the members of the legislative branch. Typically they are:

- organized to serve government;
- support the day-to-day policymaking apparatus;
- constrained by the government's interest and agenda.

An example of a government-sponsored think tank is The Congressional Research Service. Founded in 1914, CRS represents a government-sponsored think tank in that it is a direct arm of government (part of the Library of Congress), and provides independent, nonpartisan research services to Congress and other agencies.

Private, for-profit think tanks

Private, for-profit think tanks provide policy analysis, program evaluation, and research for a fee. The fundamental difference between these organizations and nonprofit think tanks, like RAND, is that nonprofit think tanks are governed by an independent board and are publicly supported institutions. Specifically, they are required by law to have a broad base of private contributions in order to maintain their tax-exempt status with the USs government. They are typically:

- organized and staffed like nonprofit think tanks and often provide many of the same services, but on a fee-for-service basis;
- many of the leading accounting firms in the United States provide consulting services to the government under contract to help manage and evaluate major programs and policies.

An example of a private, for-profit think tank is The Stanford Research Institute. Founded in 1946, it conducts research and analysis for a fee, and is a for-profit consulting firm that specializes in research, analysis, and program evaluation.

University-based think tanks

University-based think tanks are formally affiliated with a university or college and usually appear as centers or institutes concentrating in the social sciences. They typically:

- are attached to one of the academic departments, although some are independent units within the university that draw their personnel from one or more departments;
- are most commonly found in departments of political science, international affairs, economics, history, and public policy;
- have outputs which tend to be less concerned with analyzing policy problems than pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake;
- struggle with the primary but conflicting demands of teaching and tenure, which tend to distract from the type of policy analysis that most decision makers require.

An example of a university-based think tank is The Asia Pacific Research Center (APRC), founded in 1977 at Stanford University. The APRC focuses on producing research of "lasting significance" on economic, political, technological, strategic, and social issues. The Center is organized within Stanford University's Institute for International Studies (IIS). Its research agenda is directed toward an academic audience, but has potential residual downstream benefits for policymakers.

Table 3.2 provides examples of affiliated think tanks, the dates in which they were established, and the major organizational models in America.

The hybrids

The United States has the most diverse array of independent think tanks in the world. A number of institutions are hybrids that combine one or

Table 3.2 Affiliated public policy think tanks' organizational structure and culture

Organization	*Date established*	*Organizational type*
Progressive Policy Institute	1989	Political party
Congressional Research Service	1914	Government
Stanford Research Institute	1946	Private for-profit
Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University	1977	University-based

more of the above organizational types. Two that are worth noting are vanity tanks and state-based think tanks. Vanity, or legacy-based, think tanks were created by wealthy individuals, aspiring office holders, or former elected officials who wish to advance their political and ideological beliefs after leaving office. State-based think tanks require a lengthier explanation and will be discussed further in a subsequent chapter.

Organization and staffing

In the United States, the norm for a large think tank is to be headed by a president or CEO, either of which is the public face of the organization and in this capacity is the chief spokesperson, fundraiser, and strategist for the organization. To be successful this individual must have an extraordinary range of talents, as well as solid academic credentials, management and public relations experience, and political acumen. The president reports directly to a Board of Trustee or Board of Directors. Given the amount of time most think tank presidents spend outside the organization making speeches and raising funds, they often turn the day-to-day management of research projects, external relations, personnel, and operations to other senior staff. He or she is supported by one or more vice presidents and/or research directors.

The Board of Directors is comprised, for the most part, of leading figures from the fields of business, finance and academia, former members of the White House and Congress, and in some cases members of other think tanks. These board members serve on a voluntary basis and are responsible for appointing the president, approving the budget, developing long-range plans, and ensuring that programs conform to the mission of the organization and that the independence of the institution is maintained. Furthermore, one of the most important jobs of the Board of Directors is that of fundraising – a task ever more

Table 3.3 Comparative characteristics of independent and affiliated think tanks

Type of think tank	*Culture*	*Objective*	*Limitations*	*Interest served*	*Example institutions*
Academic "university without students"	Scholarly-academic	Bring knowledge to bear on public policy	Theoretical approach to problems, not always directly conducive (relevant) to policy-making	Academics and policymakers	Brookings Institution
Contracting/ consulting	Technocratic	Serve government	Systems and quantitative approach to policy analysis does not apply to all policy problems and client interest priorities	Government agencies and bureaucrats	Rand Corporation
Advocacy	Ideological	Promote ideology expression of opinions	Ideology restricts research topics and narrow interest group	Ideologues and Studies	Institute for Policy
Policy enterprise	Marketing	Package and promote ideas for market and market segment	Orient their research toward the interests of the market (selected donors and policy makers)	Individual market segments	Heritage Foundation
For-profit	Business	Expand client base	Client's interest. Business approach to policy analysis may ignore political dimension of public policy	Private	Stanford Research Institute
Political party	Political	Get party elected	Party platform, party members limits range of policy options	Party	Progressive Policy Institute
Governmental	Bureaucratic	Provide information for policy production	Bureaucratic culture. Agenda set by branches of the government. Bureaucratic politics and turf issues constrains analysis and policy choices	Executive and legislative branches of government	Congressional Research Service
University	Academic	Advance knowledge	Education and knowledge creation are top priorities not politics or public policy	Academia	Asia Pacific Research Center – Stanford University

critical in the current think tank environment. Since many board members are also donors and have other affiliations, many institutions establish policies to ensure that all decision and financials are insulated from a conflict of interest. Many think tanks also have a Board of Advisors as well. At The American Enterprise Institute, The Hoover Institution, and The Brookings Institution for example, this body is made up almost exclusively of scholars from some of the leading universities in the United States, whereas elsewhere it can also consist of high-ranking figures from business and politics, including members of Congress. The size of the board varies from institution to institution, but the average number of board members is 25.[1]

Within the United States' think tank community, there is a highly complex system of categorization for the various types of full-time employees and associates from think tank to think tank. Despite this wide range, the research staff is generally referred to as scholars, senior fellows, policy analysts, senior researchers, etc. A distinction is made between resident fellows/scholars, associates, and nonresident/visiting fellows or adjunct scholars (Table 3.4 provides a breakdown of resident, adjunct, and visiting scholars for the leading think tanks in the United States). Resident fellows or scholars are part of the think tank staff, have an office, and are generally employed on a fulltime basis, usually with a fixed-term contract. Nonresident fellows, on the other hand, are, as a rule, employed on a part-time or fixed-fee basis and work from elsewhere, usually at their place of principal employment (i.e. a university) or increasingly from a home office. Although associate or adjunct scholars often work quite closely and regularly with one or a number of think tanks, and frequently do so for a period of many years, they are not part of the think tank's fulltime staff. The question of whether any payment is made for the work they do for the think tank is often determined on a case-by-case basis. Guest scholars, as a rule, are provided merely an office and logistical support for the research activities they carry out at the think tank. Finally, visiting fellows are normally given a fellowship, which is usually restricted to one year and includes a fixed stipend plus office space and logistical support for the pursuit of a research project in line with the think tank's own program. Some of these guest researchers may be members of the military, the administration, or industry, whereby their respective employer will have financed the research sabbatical, which generally lasts several months. The RAND Corporation makes extensive use of adjunct scholars, and almost all the researchers at The National Bureau of Economic Research are adjuncts who are managed by a relatively small fulltime staff. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), The Brookings

Table 3.4 Research staff size and budget

Institution name	*Research staff size*				*Total*
	Resident	*Adjunct*	*Visiting*	*Total*	*budget* $
Foreign Policy Research Institute	6	6	0	12	1,338,834
Nixon Center	6	0	0	6	1,500,000
New America Foundation	20	0	0	20	2,500,000
Progressive Policy Institute	18	18	0	36	2,740,000
Institute for International Economics	18	0	0	18	6,060,577
Hudson Institute	50	40	0	90	7,110,011
Center for Budget and Policy Priorities	39	0	0	39	7,736,269
Resources for the Future	38	18	14	70	12,009,228
Cato Institute	37	31	0	68	14,045,306
American Enterprise Institute	58	0	15	73	16,300,994
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)	94	54	0	148	16,775,453
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP)	48	0	4	52	20,092,833
National Bureau of Economic Research	0	500	0	500	23,844,357
Council on Foreign Relations	65	100	20	185	25,720,500
Hoover Institution	80	30	50	160	28,400,000
Brookings Institution	98	173	48	319	30,227,800
Heritage Foundation	45	43	5	93	33,481,921
Urban Institute	263	0	0	263	64,490,821
Rand Corporation (R&D)	640	460	0	1100	169,046,925

Note
Data obtained through personal interviews with the respective think tanks officals and IRS.

Institution, and The Hoover Institution all maintain well established, competitive visiting fellows programs that bring up to 50 scholars a year to these institutions.

Generally, the various topics of research are assigned to employees who specialize in a small number of fields or geographical areas. The degree of autonomy afforded to researchers is determined by the structure and culture (academic, consulting, advocacy, policy enterprise) of the organization. Scholars at academic-oriented institutions have almost complete control over their research interests and priorities, while policy analysts at consulting and advocacy-oriented think tanks tend to have the least amount of freedom. Typically, the members of an academic staff have diverse professional backgrounds, and have often

had successful careers in economics, security studies, international affairs, public administration, journalism, or legal affairs – or in academia. Frequently, they hold doctoral degrees and are recognized experts in their field. Logistical support for their activities is provided by administrative and research assistants, librarians, public relations experts, and journalists. Although a research topic may often take the form of an individual project run by a fellow, teamwork is common, usually within the framework of a more extensive research program that may be interdisciplinary and involve not only the think tank's own experts but also academics and specialists from elsewhere. This can even extend to collaboration between a number of think tanks in the form of a separate study center – i.e. The AEI–Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, or The Urban Institute–Brookings Tax Policy Center, which has been successful at reaching policy and media elites. In 2005, the Center was cited every 3 or 4 days by one or more of the top five national daily newspapers.[2]

Political and philosophical orientation

Think tanks can be classified broadly in the categories of conservative, libertarian, centrist, and progressive/liberal. However, these lines are not easily drawn – one can find both scholars and institutions that consider themselves to be liberal or conservative, but are not ideological, are open to countervailing evidence, and receptive to outcomes that challenge long-held, worldview assumptions. The political and philosophical foundations of think tanks can affect not only the perspective from which research is conducted, but also its outcome. Some think tanks offer forthright explanations of their ideological bent, while others prefer to maintain at least the appearance of nonpartisanship. Some of the most influential think tanks can be classified in one of the above categories based on their self-expressed political or philosophical orientation, the orientation of their associated scholars, and their sponsored publications. Conservative think tanks generally espouse both a free-market economic policy and a traditionalist social policy. Libertarian think tanks are similar, yet their emphasis on laissez-faire economics is primary, and the government's role in social policy is discouraged. Today's centrist think tanks are noteworthy for the wide range of their scholars' views as well as for their emphasis on a detached and nonpartisan approach to policy that allows for a synthesis of conservative and progressive elements. Finally, the progressives generally support state-interventionist economic policy, while concurrently supporting less state intervention in social issues. Some think tanks

that focus on particular fields or issues (i.e. defense and security think tanks) are categorized as conservative or progressive-based on the current manifestation of conservative and liberal orientation in those particular fields. For the purposes of this discussion and for the remainder of the book, I will use the terms progressive and liberal interchangeably.

Think thanks that follow the realist or neo-conservative school in defense and foreign policy are categorized as conservative, while those that generally represent a more liberal internationalist approach are categorized as progressive. The association of narrowly focused think tanks may shift over time, but Table 3.5 identifies the current ideological alliance of some of the leading think tanks in the United States. This

Table 3.5 Political and philosophical organization of US think tanks

Conservative	
American Enterprise Institute	Hudson Institute
Competitive Enterprise Institute	Manhattan Institute
Family Research Council	National Center for Policy Analysis
Heritage Foundation	Progress and Freedom Foundation
Hoover Institution	
Libertarian	
Cato Institute	Reason Foundation
Center-Right	
Center for Strategic and International Studies	Washington Institute for Near East Policy
Milken Institute	
Centrist	
Baker Institute	National Bureau of Economic
Council on Foreign Relations	Research Public Policy Institute of California
Economic Strategy Institute	RAND Corporation
Freedom Forum	Resources for the Future
Institute for International Economics	
Center-Left	
Brookings Institution	New America Foundation
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Progressive Policy Institute
Carter Center	Urban Institute
Progressive/Liberal	
Center for American Progress	Economic Policy Institute
Center for Defense Information	Institute for Policy Studies
Center for Public Integrity	Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	Justice Policy Institute
Citizens for Tax Justice	Worldwatch Institute

being said, the think tank community, regardless of an individual scholar's party affiliation or philosophical orientation, recognizes a scholarly tradition, a commitment to serving the public interest and developing policies that are for the good of the nation. While not every scholar or institution adheres to these standards 100 percent of the time, it is these standards that most think tanks and policymakers have come to expect from the scholars who work at these institutions.

State-based think tanks and networks

Over the past two decades, Congress and the White House have shifted considerable responsibility to the states – a movement that began with the attempts of the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations' to craft a "New Federalism." These changes have brought about a devolution of political power, legislative authority, and financial responsibility to the states. As a result, states today have more power and greater responsibilities than in the past, though they are currently contending with serious financial constraints and increasing demands for programs and services. In the wake of 9/11 and subsequent homeland security demands, most states' fiscal burdens have become even more strained and complex. Decisions about taxing and spending – a difficult enterprise under any circumstances – challenge policymakers as they shape their responses to issues such as improving the quality and funding for public education, health care reform, and economic development. Out of necessity, many states have had to develop new and often innovative approaches to funding programs, staffing government, and managing information. At the state level, necessity is the mother of invention and state governments now serve as incubators for policy innovations that are then adopted by other states and the federal government. These factors have not gone unnoticed by advocates on the right and the left. A growing number of liberal and conservative donors and think tanks have chosen to focus their resources on the State House rather than the White House, and with good reason, according to Mark Schmitt, Director of Governance and Public Policy at the Open Society Institute, "Many of the most exciting political reforms – health care, welfare and campaign finance reform, for example – are occurring at the state level."[3]

Once viewed as a Beltway phenomenon, public policy institutes have proliferated far beyond the banks of the Potomac. Washington, DC remains home to 368 public policy institutes, but the rest of the 1,368 such organizations in the United States are dispersed throughout the 50 states. Thanks to the growing demand for state-level analysis which

began in the 1970s, many state-based think tanks have been established to help governments analyze and solve more localized issues. John Raisian, Director of The Hoover Institution remarks, "The proliferation of state-based think tanks in the United States bespeaks an ambition to contribute to the well-being of citizens therein and make states true laboratories for observing diverse approaches to public policy formation and dialogue."[4] This section seeks to shed some additional light on the proliferation of these organizations at the state level by exploring the evolution of both liberal and conservative state-based think tanks.

The evolution of think tanks seems to parallel key political events and social movements in the United States. Dating back to some of the earliest think tanks, such as The Brookings Institution and The Russell Sage Foundation, it is possible to trace the growth to these institutions to seven time periods:

1st Wave:	1900–29	World War I and the Great Depression
2nd Wave:	1930–45	World War II
3rd Wave:	1946–80	Cold War, Vietnam War and War on Poverty
4th Wave:	1989	End of Cold War
5th Wave:	1980–2005	Conservative War of Ideas
6th Wave:	2001–Present	Globalization and War on Terror
7th Wave:	2002–Present	Liberal War of Ideas

Due to the heavy focus on domestic and foreign policy issues by public policy institutions inside the Beltway, a need for more localized and state-based think tanks has developed in the last 20 years. As written in "Academics to Ideologues":

> The newest trend in the industry is the creation of state-based think tanks, which are located in state capitals throughout the United States and are focused on state and local issues. The devolution of federal programs and increased power to the states has sparked this latest movement in the industry. Since the early 1980s, over 25 institutions have come into being, most of them with the backing of conservative foundations and corporations.[5]

While both conservative and liberal think tanks have been receiving continuous monetary support over the past three decades, the latter have not been provided with the same holistic, concentrated, and coordinated support from individuals and private foundations that conservative organizations have benefited from over the last 20 years.

Table 3.6 US think tanks by state

Alabama	16	Nebraska	7
Alaska	3	Nevada	4
Arizona	20	New Hampshire	12
Arkansas	8	New Jersey	36
California	165	New Mexico	7
Colorado	28	New York	142
Connecticut	43	North Carolina	22
Delaware	3	North Dakota	4
Florida	27	Ohio	26
Georgia	27	Oklahoma	8
Hawaii	11	Oregon	16
Idaho	4	Pennsylvania	38
Illinois	54	Rhode Island	19
Indiana	20	South Carolina	6
Iowa	11	South Dakota	4
Kansas	15	Tennessee	15
Kentucky	11	Texas	42
Louisiana	9	Utah	7
Maine	20	Vermont	5
Maryland	43	Virginia	99
Massachusetts	172	Washington	22
Michigan	30	West Virginia	6
Minnesota	23	Wisconsin	21
Mississippi	11	Wyoming	0
Missouri	18	Washington, DC	368
Montana	8		
			Total: 1,736

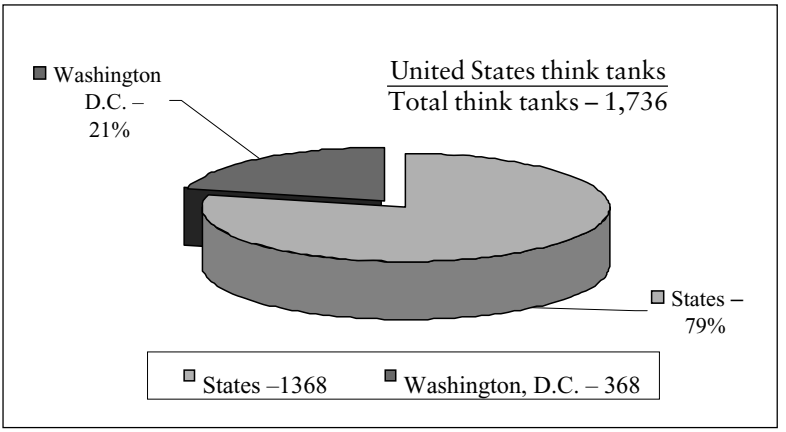

Figure 3.1 US think tanks by location

Not surprisingly the conservative movement is much more visible today as a result of its effective strategy of investing in ideas and institutions. Linda Tarr-Whelan, of the Center for Policy Alternatives, commented on the main issue facing the progressive community, "Progressive funders are funding direct service efforts at the state level … What's missing is anything dealing with a larger vision. Who is funding the infrastructure for a progressive agenda?"[6]

Without funding and a clear vision, progressive think tanks have developed in an uneven and uncoordinated fashion. The early liberal think tanks were established to challenge the Washington, DC establishment and support the Great Society and various other environmental and social causes. During the 1980s and 1990s, the conservative "war of ideas" ushered in a host of think tanks at the national and state level to challenge the welfare state and the social activists of the 1960s and 1970s. However, because of a hasty start:

> Progressives wound up with a strong set of small to medium-sized think tanks, mostly in the Beltway, oriented toward single issues and focused on analysis and information rather than on policy development and winning over the public or politicians to an ideological perspective … We wound up with a very young and incomplete set of state-level think tanks. And we wound up with an organizing capacity that is in many areas powerful at the local level, but is almost always disconnected from the substantial progressive policy-development capacity.[7]

With the conservatives on the march and establishing more state-based think tanks, liberals are getting the hint, too. David Dyssegaard Kallick notes a positive trend in progressive ideology:

> Slowly, progressives are acknowledging – sometimes even embracing – the reality of an increasing local and state-level progressive policy institutions pursuing local battles and creative strategies for addressing healthcare coverage, minimum wage hikes, and other issues once thought of as federal issues.[8]

In the late 1990s, liberals realized that they were losing elections and control of the policy agenda and began to rally foundations and activists to retake Washington, DC. Mark Schmitt, Senior Fellow at the New American Foundation and Director of the Open Society Institute's Program on Governance and Public Policy, captures what is at stake, "the future of progressive advocacy leadership and policy formulation

could depend on the viability of the state-based coalition[s]" that bring together progressive think tanks and advocacy groups at the state level.[9]

To fully understand the evolution of liberal/progressive think tanks, it is necessary to take a closer look at the think tank network of public interest research groups (PIRGs). Established in the 1970s as an outgrowth of the consumer movement spearheaded by Ralph Nader, PIRGs are now part of a nation-wide movement of state-based think tanks, primarily concerned with environmental issues, consumer protection, and political and social justice. Nonetheless, PIRGs differ from other think tanks in that they were founded as, and are still very much today a student group. In fact, most of their members and financial resources come from student-driven organizations. The first state PIRG was established in 1971, with a national group established in 1983.[10] Since their inception, the state-based PIRGs have mainly focused on the local impact of national issues, such as environmental advocacy and consumer safety, and have concentrated their campaigning efforts at the grassroots level.[11]

Nevertheless, PIRGs have come to include in their ranks a much broader group of people in both the research and advocacy parts of their activities. In comparison with progressive Washington-based think tanks, they have been in the vanguard in their proposals and even more so in their outreach methods by making extensive use of door-to-door and street canvassing. This has helped them to stay in touch with citizens' concerns, and made them comparatively more representative of local populations than their national counterparts.

One example of a state-based PIRG is PennPIRG. Founded in 1986, it has offices in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and a national lobbying office (USPIRG) in Washington, DC. Its mission statement reads as follows:

> When corporate or governmental wrongdoing threatens our health and safety, or violates the fundamental principles of fairness and justice, PennPIRG stands up for Pennsylvania consumers. We conduct investigative research, publish reports and exposes, advocate new laws, and, when necessary, take corporate wrongdoers or unresponsive government to court.[12]

PennPIRG has been successful on many fronts and continues to serve as a prime example of a state-based public research institute employing a progressive agenda and using extremely grassroots methodology. With that in mind, it should be noted that "while progressives fund a

variety of causes, progressive and mainstream organizations simply do not have similar foundation support" as conservatives.[13]

Another interesting model of a progressive, state-focused think tank network is The Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA). Although based in Washington, DC, CPA focuses exclusively on state legislative issues. As the motto reads, it is "of, by and for state legislators,"[14] and its actions are effectively split between policy research and the empowerment of state legislators through leadership development and network building. It provides legislators talking points, policy summaries, and the *Progressive Agenda*, a reference book for progressive legislators. CPA's most innovative feature is its emphasis on skills development, best seen through its creation of The Fleming Leadership Institute, which offers training for state legislators from around the country. With its integrated strategy, CPA is attempting to create a one-stop think tank for progressive state legislators by providing the training, the content, and the network necessary to implement policy.

Between the progressive and conservative think tanks, with an agenda neither too left nor too right, are the centrist think tanks. An example of a centrist state-based think tank, in the mold of RAND, is The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), which serves to improve public policy through objective, non-partisan research. The main areas of research for PPIC are population, economy, governance, and public finance, with correlate studies on such issues as immigration, growth and infrastructure, and political participation. In keeping with the RAND model, PPIC has assembled a staff of multi-disciplinarians, who provide divergent perspectives on key policy issues. PPIC also provides research to government commissions and presents testimony to lawmakers on a regular basis. Most importantly, PPIC makes their findings widely available to the public, in addition to lawmakers, nonprofit and for-profit sectors, media, etc. According to David Lyon, its President, the Institute is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy in California. The Institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett.[15]

Another centrist, regionally-based, statewide think tank is The Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL), which was established in 1936 and reflects the challenges of the period and the desire of civic leaders of that time to bring knowledge to bear on state and local policy issues. PEL is headed by Executive Director, Steven T. Wray, and about half-funded by its Board of Directors' membership contributions. The balance is derived through joint ventures with local governments, foundations, corporations, and private-sector leadership organizations. The League seeks to increase the competitiveness of the region by analyzing

the impact of public policies on the economy. Beyond analyzing public policy, PEL also advocates policies that have been beneficial in other areas of the country and collaborates with local leaders in the business, government, and civil society realms to promote initiatives that will make the region a more desirable place to live. Additionally, PEL strives to highlight current issues in an effort to inform the public of what is happening in the region. PEL's objectives include:

- creating opportunities to inform and involve taxpayers in the process of policy development and implementation;
- maintaining a network of private leadership and staff throughout the state to identify problems and opportunities associated with government and public policy;
- providing research, analysis, and planning to initiate actions by public and private leadership;
- working in partnership with governmental, business, and civic groups to develop consensus and action on programs and solutions that can increase the effectiveness of state and local governments, and improve the economic competitiveness and quality of life in the state.

Historically, PEL was an academic-oriented think tank that was deeply rooted in quantitative analysis and economics. In recent years, however, it has employed many of the strategies developed by more policy-oriented think tanks, and crafted innovative approaches to packaging and disseminating its research and analysis to reach larger audiences.[16]

Since 1991, conservatives have created an influential think tank network at the state level whose efforts often focus on family issues. According to Center for American Progress Senior Fellow, Eric Alterman and *Columbia Journalism Review* reporter, Paul McLeary:

> Many historians identify the origins of this [conservative] effort with an influential 1971 memo written by Lewis Powell … Powell decried what he termed to be the "broadly-based" attack on the American economic system by the "communists, New Leftists and other revolutionaries," which found its most prominent voice in all the usual liberal bogeymen – college campuses, the media, intellectual and literary journals, and the arts and sciences.[17]

Powell's solution was "a clarion call to multinational corporations to begin to fund the necessary institutions to train conservative journalists, economists and teachers to begin preaching the right-wing gospel."[18]

And answer that call they did. Sam Brunelli of The American Legislative Exchange Council, sums up the conservative approach:

> If we intend to govern this nation, then our battle begins on the other side of the Beltway. And we must recognize that on this new battlefield, a negative agenda will not sell. In the states, the conservative movement must advance a positive agenda for governance, an agenda which speaks to the real challenges people face and that draws its strength from the principles and values that the people hold dear.[19]

One purpose of local think tanks is to "influence policy using city, regional, and state media, whereas their Washington, DC-based colleagues try to influence policy using national media."[20] Similar to their national counterparts, think tanks trying to affect policy at the state level often have a conservative or liberal agenda. Accordingly, state level think tanks resemble their older siblings and adopt many similar methods of operation. According to Lawrence Soley, a professor of journalism at Marquette University:

> Conservative [state-based] think tanks [are] patterned after the highly successful Washington, DC-based American Enterprise Institute (1996 revenues: $16.5 million) and Heritage Foundation (1996 revenues: $28.7 million) that opened up around the United States during the 1980s and early 1990s.[21]

The State Policy Network, which provides training and networking opportunities to state-based think tanks, maintains that there are 49 conservative state-based think tanks spanning 42 states.[22] According to The State Policy Network, a self-described "leadership training center and resource clearinghouse for America's state-based free market think tank community,"[23] these think tanks are generally organized with The Heritage Foundation in mind and are funded by right-wing foundations, such as Bradley and Scaife. State-based think tanks, while a relatively new phenomenon, have been instrumental in the implementation of many important policy initiatives surrounding issues such as welfare benefits. An example of such an institution and its impact is The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, which was a major advocate of school vouchers.[24] In addition to The State Policy Network, the conservative state-based think tanks also connect through The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which was established in 1973 by Paul Weyrich. The Council proactively brings state legislators into the fold on conservative issues and aims to "advance the Jeffersonian

principles of free markets, limited government, federalism, and individual liberty."[25] In striving towards these goals, ALEC has been supported by corporations such as Ford and Texaco, and has been tied to prominent government officials such as Ronald Reagan, Tommy Thompson, and Newt Gingrich. ALEC aims to have conservatives control the policy agenda at the state and national level.

During the Reagan administration, ALEC formed task forces which teamed up with administration officials and focused on the development and implementation of public policy. Gradually, these task forces emerged as think tanks and creators of model bills. Currently, ALEC draws input from leaders in the private sector as well as government officials in order to generate model legislation that will stimulate debate. Following the Reagan administration, ALEC became less a promoter of ideas and more of an activist think tank that it is today.

One great example of a successful state-based conservative think tank is The Heartland Institute in Chicago, established in 1984:

> The Heartland Institute's mission is to discover and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. Such solutions include parental choice in education, choice and personal responsibility in health care, market-based approaches to environmental protection, privatization of public services, and deregulation in areas where property rights and markets do a better job than government bureaucracies.[26]

Under the leadership of its board of directors and President, Joseph L. Bast, The Heartland Institute's research focuses on the Midwest, particularly on issues of government spending, taxation, healthcare, and the environment. Besides the permanent staff, two committees also debate policy issues. One committee is made up of academics and conducts research, while the other consists of elected officials who suggest topics for research and produce model legislation.[27]

Recognizing the significance of the Internet, The Heartland Institute has created PolicyBot, a clearinghouse of conservative research from other think tanks such as The Heritage Foundation. Additionally, Heartland has various publications including *School Reform News and Health Care News* as well as three websites that together receive more than a million hits each month.

The Heartland Institute receives its funding from individuals, foundations, and corporations, and thus is able to work independently of the government or other special interest groups. The Institute also prominently and effectively adopts technology and other new trends in

Table 3.7 Political and philosophical orientation of state-based think tanks

Progressive	*Conservative*
Alabama Arise Citizens' Policy Project (Alabama)	Cascade Policy Research Institute (Oregon)
Center for Policy Alternatives (Washington, DC)	Center for the New West (Colorado)
Democracy South (Virginia)	Heartland Institute (Illinois)
Dirigo Alliance (Maine)	John Locke Foundation (North Carolina)
Northeast Action (New England)	Mackinac Center for Public Policy (Michigan)
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (Nevada)	Manhattan Institute (New York)
Revisioning New Mexico (New Mexico)	Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research (Massachusetts)
Western States Center (Oregon)	Public Policy Foundation (Georgia)
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (Wisconsin)	Yankee Institute for Public Policy Studies (Connecticut)

order to reach a broader audience. This ingenuity helps the organization adapt to society, continue its mission, and serve as a model for others to follow.[28]

While the explosive growth of think tanks would be expected to taper off, in actuality the exact opposite has occurred. This continuation is in part fueled by the growth of both liberal and conservative organizations. More and more, interest groups are formally organizing and adopting the think tank model to accomplish their goals. In a world of perpetual change based on the continual introduction of new ideas, more questions and information naturally needs to be researched to fill new knowledge gaps:

> The trend toward specialization and vigorous competition not only challenges existing institutions to alter the way they do business but also presents a major opportunity for new or emerging institutions to develop innovative technologies and seize a major share of the market.[29]

As PennPIRG, CPA, Public Policy Institute of California, Pennsylvania Economy League, ALEC, and Heartland Institute demonstrate, interest groups from liberals, centrists, and conservatives will fuel competition. The state-based think tank movement has proven to be extremely innovative and influential at the state and national level. Ideas and researchers do not appear to be in short supply; and if funding continues to be available, new state-based think tanks are sure to continue dotting the landscape well beyond the Beltway.

4 Marketing, public relations, and public engagement

The principal task of the large United States' think tanks is to generate policy-relevant knowledge and provide information for political and business elites as well as the public at large. Over the last 20 years think tanks have placed increased emphasis on disseminating their research, appearing in the media, and conducting public outreach programs. Think tanks often employ professionals with experience in marketing and public relations in order to facilitate the dissemination of information. For instance, the President of The Heritage Foundation, Ed Feulner, has an MBA in marketing, while Burton Yale Pines, the Foundation's former Director of Research, was a journalist. Think tanks employ a wide range of methods to propagate information, including:

Seminars, conferences, and briefings

Think tanks make a conscious effort to target their audiences with a range of lectures, seminars, conferences, expert meetings, and individual or group briefings. These seminars, conferences, and briefings may be on the record and open to the public or invited guests or off-the-record and closed to the public. For example, CSIS reports that it stages around 700 events of this kind every year; the newly established CAP reports that it organized 150 on-the-record events in 2005; and AEI produced over 200 of these meetings in 2005.[1] These events are often used to examine key policy issues, float policy proposals for members of Congress, the executive branch, and the media, and provide an important forum for policymakers and the public to offer feedback.

Publications

As a rule, the large United States think tanks also operate as highly productive publishing houses, generating both traditional and multimedia

publications. Brookings Press publishes about 50 new titles each year on important public policy issues in business, economics, government, and international affairs; The Urban Institute (UI) publishes 10 new books a year, half of which are written by UI scholars; and The Woodrow Wilson Center Press publishes an average of 12 new titles annually that "are exclusively written" by scholars affiliated with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The American Enterprise Institute, The Brookings Institution, The Urban Institute, and The Wilson Center actively promote their authors (i.e., all of these institutions conduct press conferences and seminars to launch new publications). Each think tank also publishes its own journal or magazine several times a year (i.e., CSIS produces the *Washington Quarterly*, Wilson Center has the *Wilson Quarterly*, and The American Enterprise Institute and The Brookings Institution both publish several journals). Such publications also carry work by external analysts and academics (i.e., *Foreign Policy* from The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, or *Foreign Affairs* from the Council on Foreign Relations). Institutions also quickly and easily produce newsletters and information brochures as well as policy briefs on individual topics. Finally, some think tanks provide special information services via fax or e-mail, which comment on the day's political and economic developments. Such daily analyses are often sent free of charge to members of Congress, government representatives, and top business executives.

One of the most important tools for any think tank is its website. Almost every think tank publishes an extensive range of information online, where it reaches the public at large. Most think tanks' websites also carry speeches, commentaries by their fellows, conference reports and programs, synoptic analyses, book abstracts, biographies of their experts, information on events, and increasingly, video and audio clips, all of which can be downloaded free of charge. Additionally, a website will publish information on research topics, research programs, and the think tank's organizational structure. These websites are followed closely and consulted frequently by the media, policymakers, and the public. While the methods for collecting data on website visits varies by institution, the following figures provide a good sense of the number of people who are going to institutions' websites for information on policy issues. The Heritage Foundation had 5,272,120 visits to its website during the year ending 31 December 2005 of which 3,907,750 were categorized as unique visits to its site.[2] The Urban Institute had approximately 48 to 72 million web hits during the same period, six million of which were unique visits.[3]

The media

Journalists seeking to fill column inches or program slots profit from the expertise of think tank employees. In turn, the think tank and the expert gain a wide forum for the opinion expressed – and sometimes even a certain renown as a result of the direct media exposure. Think tank analysts are quoted as experts in the print media and appear on television and radio news programs as well as on talk shows. Numerous think tank experts regularly publish their work, sometimes in their own newspaper columns, but mostly in the form of op-ed pieces. The large number of online political magazines also represents an increasingly important forum for publication of such contributions. Similarly, other forms of electronic media also play an increasingly important role in presenting both the think tank itself and its employees. The Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, for example, has a regular radio program called "Dialogue," which is broadcasted by more than 160 commercial and public radio stations in the United States and has over 350,000 listeners. "Dialogue" also produces a weekly television program that is broadcasted in a primetime slot in the greater Washington, D.C. viewing area. The Brookings Institution has its own television studio, and two think tank experts from the AEI each have their own weekly show broadcasted by the American public television station PBS. Many of their think tank colleagues appear several times a week as regular political commentators on CNN and other cable channels.

In an effort to asses the impact of think tanks, recent studies conducted by Andrew Rich and Kent Weaver (1997), Donald Abelson (2002), and Michael Dolny (2005) have collected and analyzed data on the number of think tank citations in major newspapers and television and radio transcripts that appear in the Lexis-Nexis database. According to Dolny, who conducts an annual survey of think tank citations in the media for Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) in order to gauge these organizations' influence, has determined that conservative think tanks have come to dominate the electronic and print media in the last 10 years.[4] The most recent survey found that conservative and centrist think tanks captured 50 and 33 percent of all the citations respectively in 2005, while progressive or liberal think tanks garner only 16 percent of the citations.[5] The Brookings Institution, The Heritage Foundation, CFR, AEI, and CSIS are some of the most frequently cited organizations in the print and electronic media. CAP reports that in 2005, its second year of operation, it conducted 30 television interviews and recorded 150 press mentions per month. The waxing

and waning of a think tank's influence can also be identified by these numbers. In order to illustrate this point Dolny cites the cases of Cato and The Institute for Policy Studies. As in the case of Douglas Bandow, a Senior Fellow from Cato, who wrote 24 op-ed articles favorable to clients of lobbyist Jack Abramoff and admitted to accepting money from him, negative publicity is bound to impact an institution's relationship with the media.[6]

Relations with government agencies

American think tanks are particularly concerned with maintaining lines of communication to members of Congress and their staff, administration officials, federal judges, and representatives from state and local bodies. Think tank experts regularly testify at Congressional hearings and also hold individual briefings for members of Congress and the administration, as well as their staff. In turn, government officials and members of Congress are invited to speak at think tank events, which provide them with opportunities to test out political ideas or initiatives on "neutral ground" in front of audiences of experts. A number of the major think tanks also stage regular meetings and discussion forums in an effort to develop formal networks with government representatives. For example, CFR has a Congress and US Foreign Policy Program that brings together Congressional staff members from both major parties. Additionally, members of Congress also serve on the board of directors of numerous United States think tanks, and three think tanks now have former members of Congress as their presidents. Some American think tanks purposely cultivate close links to political circles, since many of them – most notably RAND Corporation and The Urban Institute – obtain a significant portion of their budget from contract work (research projects, producing studies, preparatory work for legislation) for various government agencies.

Clearly, the logical question that flows from a recitation of the money contributed to think tanks and the scope of activities generated by them, is what impact do these organizations have on public policy? We will now turn to that very important question.

5 Measuring the influence of think tanks

Political scientists view think tanks as either part of the political elite or as one of many institutional interests competing for policymakers' attention in a pluralist framework. Neither approach helps in determining what kind or level of influence think tanks have on policy. The policymaking process can be broken down into several stages: problem definition/problem perception, agenda-setting, policy selection and enactment, and implementation. Are external advisers influential at each stage or only at some stages of the process, and – more importantly, how do the products and the channels of advice change from one stage to next?

My research has led me to conclude that think tanks are most influential in the early stages of the policymaking process, particularly in the problem definition and agenda-setting phases. Donald Abelson has concluded that influence in Washington, DC can take many forms, as some institutions work quietly behind the scenes with great success and without any publicity, while others attempt to transform public opinion with a more open approach.[1] He suggests a better understanding of what constitutes influence and how it is measured is needed, before specifying how different think tanks work. Thus, influence should be tracked and measured by direct and indirect indicators at various points in the policy cycle as follows:

- *issue articulation*: addresses to publics; intermediaries, such as media, elites, governments; channeling policy currents; coalition formation; and aim to get issues onto the public agenda;
- *policy formulation*: studies, evaluations, briefings, testimonies, consultations, networking, iconic projects, demonstration effects;
- *policy implementation*: contracting, advisory, media, supply of officials, training, database maintenance.

However, measuring such influence is even more difficult than determining what qualifies as influence, especially in the United States where the policymaking process includes external actors and outside forces. If one is skeptical about such claims and the value of such evidence, there are other ways to measure a program's relevance to the policy process and potential to shape outcomes:

- relationships/contacts with policymakers/implementers;
- relationships of board members, advisors, etc. with policymakers;
- extent of/quality of circulation of research products;
- utilization of products by policymakers (public references);
- utilization by other influential elites: editorial boards, columnists, media commentators;
- utilization by political pressure groups and other civic actors;
- cumulative media references to research products;
- references made to research and analysis in scholarly journals, new media, public testimony, etc.

According to Donald Abelson and Diane Stone, think tanks and networks themselves use various techniques and measures in order to account for their contributions to the policy process and to enhance public debate.[3] These include:

- column inches in newspapers or number of citations;
- number of website hits and/or page requests;
- incidence of interviews on radio or television;
- number of peer-reviewed publications;
- public, professional, and political attendance at institute events, lectures, and conferences;
- establishment of new programs, recruitment of new staff, renewal of projects;
- increased capacity to attract foundation grants, government contracts, and other sources of funds on previous years;
- appointment of research staff to government advisory boards;
- career progression of researchers into government or international organizations.[4]

Whereas the first five measures, provided above, indicate the extent to which there is a receptive climate and demand for the think tank's output, the last four roughly define the resources these organizations have at their disposal.

The market and systems analysis models that I applied to my

examination of US think tanks in the 1990s, has helped to articulate the relationship of think tanks to the policy, academic, and funding communities. More specifically the relationship between these entities and users of public policy research has been characterized as a result of this effort. It is important to recognize that donors are often "third-party payers" and are not the direct consumers of the products produced by think tanks. Understanding the market and systems analysis models defined in *The Competition for Scholars, Dollars, and Influence: In the Public Policy Research Industry*, enables us to develop a series of indicators that provides a clearer sense of a think tank's role, impact, and influence in the marketplace of ideas:

- *Resource indicators*: Ability to recruit and retain leading scholars and analysts; the level, quality, and stability of financial support; proximity and access to decision-makers and other policy elites; a staff that has the ability to identify, analyze, and produce timely and incisive analysis; institutional currency and credibility; quality and reliability of networks; and key contacts in the policy and academic communities and the media.
- *Output indicators*: Number and quality of: policy proposals and ideas generated; publications produced (books, journal articles, policy briefs, etc.); news interviews conducted; briefings, conferences and seminars organized; and the number of staff who are nominated to advisory and government posts.
- *Utilization indicators*: Reputation as the "go-to" organization by media and policy elites in Washington, DC; number of media appearances, web hits, testimony before Congress; briefings, official appointments, consultation by officials or departments/agencies; books sold; reports distributed; and numbers of attendees at conferences and seminars organized.
- *Impact indicators*: Recommendations considered or adopted by policymakers issue network centrality; advisory role to political parties, candidates, transition teams; awards granted; publication in or citation of publications in academic journals and the media; listserv and website dominance; and success in challenging the conventional wisdom and standard operating procedures of bureaucrats and elected officials in the Washington, DC.

Since think tanks are not lobbyists, and the tax laws governing nonprofit organizations in the United States prohibit them from attempting to influence a specific piece of legislation, think tanks tend to understate rather than overstate their influence on major policy

Table 5.1 Impact measurement of think tanks, 2005

Heritage Foundation	*Council on Foreign Relations*
Ranking No.1 in media citations among all conservative think tanks	*Ranking* No.1 ranking of Foreign Affairs in survey of most-influential print and broadcast media
Website Visits: 5,272,120 Unique visits: 3,907,750	*Website* CFR.org unique visits: 1,708,938 Foreignaffairs.org unique visits: 2,344,505
Media outreach 1,000 plus mentions per month in newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and news service stories	*Media outreach* 724 average monthly mentions in print, TV, radio, wire, and web outlets
12 commentaries produced per week for print and web-based news outlets	237 articles and op-eds written by Council scholars for foreign and domestic journals and newspapers
4 press briefings or on-the-record meetings with journalists conducted per week	20 average weekly number of web-released articles, reports and fact sheets
12 web memos (short, analytic reports addressing issues as they enter the news cycle) released per week	
Meetings and briefings 637 briefings for Administration officials, Senators, Representatives and their staffs	*Meetings and briefings* 156 briefings for Administration officials, Senators, Representatives and their staffs
172 on the record meetings which were open to the public	127 on-the-record meetings and press briefings
	Forces 9 Independent Task Force reports and Council reports published by the Council
Books 12 books published by Heritage scholars	*Books* 9 books published under Council auspices

Notes
Numbers are for calendar year 2005, unless otherwise stated. Foreign Affairs is the flagship publication of the CFR and has its own web site.

issues. Furthermore, given the complexities of the legislative process and the number of competing interests in American politics, it is difficult for any one actor to claim sole responsibility for any public policy. Finally, since there has never been any systematic analysis of the think tank sector and their impact on public policies, we have to rely on indirect indicators to assess the impact of think tanks.

Actual policy adoption/change/implementation is the most obvious indicator of impact. However, research (case studies) and data on causality is difficult to attain due to the fact that funders are not inclined to support this type of research. As a result of these limitations we are forced to rely on anecdotes, policymaker testimony, and circumstantial evidence in place of hard evidence. The literature on knowledge utilization and the World Bank's Bridging Knowledge and Policy Program are particularly instructive on this issue as they both attempt to understand and bridge the gap between knowledge and policy.[5]

All think tanks play a coordinating role by helping to create policy networks and form coalitions that feed into the policy currents that influence the executive and legislative branches of government. They also influence policymaking in other ways by providing a supply of key policymakers and staff, who then formulate and implement actual policy which creates a "revolving door" of public officials who take administrative and research positions at think tanks. Policymakers often use think tanks in a very public way to float policy ideas and proposals, make major policy announcements, or defend an existing policy. Think tanks such as RAND, Urban Institute, or The Institute of Defense Analysis work continuously on a contract basis with executive agencies, tend to steer clear of congressional politics, the media spotlight, and provide extensive support to the staff of all the executive agencies in Washington, DC.

In general, American think tanks have a competitive advantage in the formation of public policy and public opinion because of their access to policymakers and the media, which increases the utilization of their research and analysis by high-level policymakers and the public. Many US think tanks have a competitive advantage over officials in the executive and legislative branches of government, as compared to international organizations and foreign governments, in that they have greater degrees of freedom, fewer legal and diplomatic constraints, and better networks than states, governments, and bureaucracies.

6 Think tanks funding

The most distinctive characteristic of American think tanks is their independence. To understand the exceptional nature of the think tank landscape in the United States, one only needs to consider that there are 1,736 independent think tanks in operation in the United States today – more than any other country in the world. Even more astounding is that the vast majority of these organizations are privately supported, something that is unparalleled in the rest world. One of the reasons for this is that the United States has a highly developed civic and philanthropic culture and a set of state and federal tax credits and incentives that encourages corporations and individuals to support think tanks and other civic organizations. In addition, no other country has a policy environment that is able to support such a large number of independent institutions. Clearly, some of these donors are pursuing their own personal and political agendas, but many philanthropists are guided by enlightened self-interest and a desire to help improve global conditions. As privately supported organizations, think tanks enjoy the special tax status of nonprofit organizations, which makes them exempt from state and federal income taxes. This status also makes it possible for individuals and corporations to make contributions to think tanks and receive a tax deduction in return for their charitable contribution.

The progressive era notion of bringing knowledge to bear on government decision making was realized, in part, through the generous contributions made by philanthropist like Robert Brookings. In 1927 he created The Brookings Institution, an independent research institution devoted to solving problems of government and the economy through a merger with Robert Brookings Graduate School, The Institute of Economics, and the original Institute for Government Research established in 1916. To deal with questions of war and peace, Andrew Carnegie's vision and generous gift of 10 million dollars in 1910 led to the creation of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The number of private foundations and the size of their assets have grown

dramatically over the last century and the names of Carnegie, Ford Mott, MacArthur, Pew, and Rockefeller are identified with many of the leading think tanks in America. New arrivals such as Annenberg, Buffet, Gates, Hewlett, Olin, Packard, Scaife, and Soros are making their mark by supporting a range of issues and institutions. While the funding for think tanks is a narrow slice of the philanthropic pie relative to the contributions made to religious organizations, colleges, and universities, it is clearly the fuel that fires the ideas industry. There are 60,031 private foundations in America with $425,103,000 in assets.[1] The Foreign Policy Research Institute's Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program has identified 1,736 think tanks in the United States and determined through survey research that the average budget of most think tanks is between $500,000–750,000 a year.[2] From this data we can project that the total contributions to think tanks is somewhere in the range of $882,500,000–$1,323,750,000 a year, much of which is from private sources.[3]

The contributions of the "Big Foundations" often steal the headlines and overshadow the fact that most think tanks rely on the kindness and generosity of a legion of small contributions. It is important to note that much of the private support for think tanks comes from individuals, small businesses, and small private foundations. In general, think tanks finance their activities by raising funds from private foundations, corporations, individuals, government grants and contracts and endowment income. In addition, these organizations generate modest revenues from the sale of their publications, seminars, and programs. The mix of funding varies from institution to institution, but all think tanks strive to have a diversified funding base in order to avoid being overly reliant on a single funding stream or donor. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the level of funding support for some of the leading think tanks in the United States.

Over the years, the issue of funding has become an increasing concern for the majority of think tanks. While for a long time think tanks could rely on a passive attitude towards the monetary aspect of their operations – that the production of quality research would invariably bring donors to fund a given institution – this is no longer the case. The growth in the number and types of think tanks when coupled with changes in the funding policies of most donors has forced all think tanks to learn how to effectively package and present their institution and ideas. This increased competition for charitable dollars has forced many think tanks to specialize in order to effectively distinguish themselves from their competitors. Increased competition is, in part, a result of the proliferation of generalized and specialized policy research

Table 6.1 Revenues and expenses of US think tanks

Name of institution	*Fiscal year ending*	*Revenue ($)*	*Expenses ($)*
Progressive Policy Institute	2004	2,750,000	2,450,000
Henry L. Stimson Center	12/31/04	3,009,991	2,708,972
New America Foundation	12/31/04	4,733,381	3,914,864
Baker Institute of Public Policy – Rice University	6/30/04	6,740,006	4,524,506
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies	12/31/04	5,847,000	5,570,000
Economic Policy Institute	12/31/04	3,839,984	5,497,824
United States Institute of Pease	9/30/04	6,769,225	9,415,453
Nixon Center	11/17/03	6,475,479	5,671,834
Institute for International Economics	12/31/04	7,356,725	7,646,075
Hudson Institute	9/30/04	8,378,125	8,414,441
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	12/31/04	13,812,460	9,395,490
Brookings Institution	6/30/04	46,850,298	36,709,412
Cato Institute	12/31/04	14,530,419	17,002,063
Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars	9/30/04	12,772,783	19,492,815
Resources for the Future	9/30/04	9,189,422	10,571,130
National Bureau of Economic Research	6/30/04	23,126,921	24,505,980
Center for Strategic and International Studies	9/30/04	22,951,014	24,955,704
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	6/30/04	18,412,442	20,971,912
American Enterprise Institute	12/31/04	20,124,853	19,911,935
Council on Foreign Relations	6/30/04	30,701,862	30,925,814
Hoover Institution – Stanford University Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford JU	8/31/04	34,200,000	32,400,000
Heritage Foundation	12/31/04	52,292,374	35,829,107
Urban Institute	12/31/04	80,172,291	80,599,818
Carter Center	8/31/04	162,297,047	120,143,492
RAND	9/26/04	234,374,098	214,667,235

Notes

a These figures have been taken from lines 12 ("total revenue") and 17 ("total expenses") of the 990 forms that were submitted to the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

b Source: obtained from www.guidestar.org.

c Hoover Institution, Baker Institute, Nixon Center, and the Progressive Policy Institute financial data are provided by the institution and are not taken form their IRS 990s since they are filed by the host institution and not filed or reported independently.

organizations. Over the last 15 to 20 years, the number and types of public policy research institutes has grown at an astounding rate. Over two thirds of the institutions that have come into existence in the last 20 years have been specialized research organizations. Specialization comes in two principle forms: issue or ideological. A competitive environment tends to favor those scholars and institutions that are

entrepreneurial over those that are more established or unable to package and sell their programs. While certain aspects of the growth in the number of think tanks and the move toward specialized and issue-specific organizations has been positive, these new organizations are competing for the same scarce resources as multi-purpose research organizations.

Yet, according to many experts, this scarcity of funding has not affected right-wing and left-wing think tanks to the same extent. It has been argued that right-wing think tanks have won the so-called "war of ideas" as a result of their access to much more extensive financial support. However, although countless studies have tried to measure the amount of money received by conservative and progressive organizations, this has proven to be a difficult task. Given the impressive number of think tanks to be accounted for and the difficulty of classifying many think tanks on the ideological spectrum, many studies have failed to authoritatively define the financial capacities of progressive and conservative think tanks. One oft-quoted study conducted by the CPA, states that the major conservative think tanks in Washington, DC – American Enterprise Institute, American Legislative Exchange Council and Cato Institute – had, in 1995, a combined budget of $45.9 million.[4] Conversely, the largest progressive think tanks – CPA, Institute for Policy Studies, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, and Economic Policy Institute – had a combined budget of $10.2 million.[5] Therefore, according to this study, the top conservative think tanks have a cumulative budget more than four times that of the top progressive think tanks.

Nevertheless, studies like these should not be relied upon when analyzing the financial situation of US think tanks for a number of reasons. First, only 21 percent of American think tanks are located in the Beltway making a Washington, DC-based analysis overly restrictive. Many influential think tanks are located outside of the Beltway. Second, and as previously stated, it is inherently difficult to classify the ideological orientation of certain think tanks that qualify themselves as independent. Finally, no analysis can ever be completely inclusive. An inclusive study of think tank funding would have to take into account the differences in the types of think tanks on the left and on the right, acknowledging that, for instance, advocacy think tanks are more common on the right while university-based think tanks are generally more progressive in their views.

> In a time when the ideas and attitudes coming out of universities are very much on the left of the political spectrum, universities have become inhospitable to intellects of a certain viewpoint.[6]

If this is indeed the case, then it is imperative to find a way to calculate how much of a university's budget is allocated towards policy-oriented research. This is an extremely difficult and arbitrary task, but one that could nevertheless account for some of the alleged gap between conservative and progressive think tanks' funding. In terms of funding, one can only speculate on the differences between think tanks on the right and on the left. Although it appears that right-wing think tanks have won the battle for influence, it would be specious to argue that they have done so simply by enjoying greater financial resources.

One of the fundamental issues when discussing the funding situation of think tanks is not the amount of money received by a given institution, but the manner in which the money is being budgeted. It is in this area that there is apparently a significant divide between conservative and progressive think tanks.

Certain critical benchmarks have to be met in order for think tanks funding to be efficient. This is something that conservative think tanks have understood for sometime and actively sought. They have consistently been proactive in convincing right-wing foundations and donors of the need for funding their activities:

> We simply copied [ideas] from the world of business. What was original was the insight that ideas can be marketed like products and think tanks could market themselves like a business enterprise.[7]

In a strategy that is now well documented, a group of conservatives with the backing of some of the leading conservative foundations in the United States in the late 1970s launched a successful effort to support a national network of institutions and individuals that would challenge the liberal establishment and transform national politics. As it happens, at the same moment that the left was moving to diversify, and in some cases divest in think tanks, the right was investing in a highly sophisticated strategy to build the conservative idea industry. A legion of scholarly studies and newspaper exposés have attempted to demonstrate that donors on the left have, over the years, preferred financing non-controversial research or giving money to charities rather than pursuing an aggressive think tank funding strategy comparable to their right-wing counterparts:

> You would never hear senior officers of big mainstream foundations talking about building a movement. The enterprise is rather understood as philanthropic. If you research and model good policy,

> social change will somehow occur … By some alchemy, the research findings will lead to policy reforms through a messy political process whose ignition is somebody else's affair.[8]

In 1999, in a piece I wrote entitled, "Thinking About the Future of Think Tanks," I pointed out that as far back as the early 1980s liberal foundations moved away from funding policy research. A shift that I observed at the time had a profound effect on many centrist and liberal think tanks in Washington, DC The move away from supporting institutions and ideas led me to conclude that, "This change in funding priorities left many think tanks without the resources they needed to launch an effective counterassault on the conservative 'war of ideas.'"[9]

The second critical element of funding deals with the need for an integrated funding strategy rather than *ad hoc* funding decisions. In order for its constituents to reap the full benefits of the think tank's work, a wide variety of actors need to have the capacity to accomplish their responsibilities. This is where the conservatives once again clearly win over their progressive counterparts. Over the years, right-wing donors have funded not only think tanks, but also academic programs that work to create a new generation of right-wing thinkers, media that conveys the message to the population, lobbyists that bring these issues to the Hill, and a Republican Party that has the means to set new policies. These are all the essential parts of the policymaking process which enable an idea to make its way from think tanks to Capitol Hill and White House:

> Over the last two decades, the 12 [top institutions – the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Carthage Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, the Charles G. Koch, David H. Koch and Claude R. Lambe charitable foundations, the Phillip M. McKenna Foundation, the JM Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Henry Salvatori Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Smith Richardson Foundation] have … channeled some $80 million to right-wing policy institutions actively promoting an anti-government, unregulated markets agenda. Another $89 million supported conservative scholars and academic programs, with $27 million targeted to recruit and train the next generation of right-wing leaders in conservative legal principles, free-market economics, political journalism and policy analysis. And $41.5 million was invested to build a conservative media apparatus, support pro-market legal organizations, fund state-level think tanks and advocacy organizations, and mobilize new philanthropic resources for conservative policy change.[10]

Progressives were slow to adjust to these new realities. In the late 1980s, I made a presentation to the Board of Directors of the Brookings Institution where I outlined the impact that policy entrepreneurs such as Heritage were having on all think tanks. I pointed out that all think tanks, including Brookings, would have to rethink how they operated if they were to respond to challenges from the right and the left. I was surprised when two board members, one a publisher of a major newspaper and the other a former senior government official, said that they thought it would be ill advised to make any changes to their strategy or structure. The newspaper publisher stated, "We are the beacon on the hill and I will not let us become street fighters," to which I responded that I was not asking them to become street fighters, but was merely pointing out that the changes taking place in the policy and funding environment would have a major and continuing impact on the operation of all think tanks. The reality is that conservative think tanks came on the scene in 1973 and only in the last few years have liberal donors, politicians, and policy activists mounted a meaningful response. In the last two years, some 80 sponsors have committed themselves to donate at least one million dollars each to establish a network of liberal/progressive "think tanks" in collaboration with the newly founded "Democracy Alliance," which is closely tied with the Democratic Party. The Alliance, which since late-2005 has directed more than 50 million dollars to liberal think tanks and advocacy groups, was founded in response to the realization that "liberals do not have a well-funded network of policy shops, watchdog groups and training centers for activists equivalent to what has existed for years on the right."[11] To this end, the Alliance serves a medium through which donors are able to collaborate in their efforts to promote policy research by progressive organizations and achieve political influence in the legislative arena.

Finally, an effective funding strategy for think tanks is to create a reliable, long-term commitment from a set of core donors. Most breakthrough ideas take decades to become mainstream and be adopted by governments. A number of cases from across the political spectrum provide empirical evidence supporting this contention. Specifically, conservative think tanks have successfully offered proposals to reform the welfare system and Medicare, challenge selected antitrust regulations, and promote the school vouchers initiative. Similarly, progressive think tanks have effectively disseminated policy prescriptions regarding low-income housing, increasing minimum wage, and ensuring environmental protection. It seems that conservatives have been more efficient and effective at mobilizing and targeting the financial resources to develop these programs, disseminate the information, and advocate

change over a long period of time. Their funds have generally been focused on a smaller number of institutions,[12] but with a longer term commitment. Moreover, many foundations have established close links with one or two specific institutions, providing them with sustained financial support over a long period of time. One of the prime examples is the relationship between Cato Institute and the Koch family, the latter having committed $6.5 million from 1986–90.[13] However, the line between important long-term support and independence can be easily crossed. Donors' concentration makes it harder for institutions to set their own research agenda, especially if it challenges the ideas and beliefs of the funders. Some older studies illustrate the impact this funding had on conservative think tanks. There are a number of instances of such concentrated funding, particularly the Ethics and Public Policy Center (60 percent of the 1993 budget came from the Olin, Bradley, Smith Richardson, and Sarah Scaife foundations) and Cato Institute (over 50 percent of the 1990 budget came from the Koch foundations).[14] While the progressive think tanks may not have access to such a committed group of donors, they are less prone to undue influence on their research agenda and findings. Long-term support is as critical for think tanks as is independence, and ensuring a healthy balance between both ought to be a daily concern.

The progressive movement is now mobilized and has a strategy that mirrors the conservative's strategy of 30 years ago. The movement is fuelled by big money form the likes of George Soros and Tim Gill, and aggressively promoted by Democratic strategist, Bob Stein, who studied the conservative movement and concluded that they have come to dominate state and national governments because they "methodically made investments in groups that could generate new ideas, shape public opinion, train conservative activist … aware that there was no near-term pay off. Liberals have done nothing comparable."[15]

Stein has spent the last four years traveling the country with a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "The Conservative Message Machine Money Matrix," which is designed to rally donors and party activists to embrace and finance a strategy that will support a select group of think tanks and other organizations at the state and national levels. Stein and other left-wing donors hope that this initiative will enable them to take back Washington, DC from the conservatives. Similar but less partisan efforts have been launched by a consortium of liberal foundations to support parallel activities at the state level. Some conservative commentators have declared that the right has won the "war of ideas," a statement that recalls Francis Fukuyama's pronouncement at the end of the Cold War that we had "reached the

end of history" because the West had triumphed over communism.[16]

The road ahead for both left and right-wing think tanks is not an easy one. The left has recognized the need to rethink its funding strategy and to design an integrated approach to building the progressive policy advice network. The first milestones of its comeback are already being established, starting with The Center for American Progress. This left-leaning think tank, created with the support of Georges Soros, is a direct response to The Heritage Foundation and an attempt by the Democrats to beat the conservatives at their own game. The left has recognized its past mistakes and wants to ameliorate their past failings. This is what Bob Stein's initiative is all about. Over the last two years, it has ignited a new wave of optimism within the left-wing donor circle, cemented by the creation of The Democratic Alliance. This organization, which has deliberately remained relatively low-profile, comprises about 80 wealthy donors who have pledged to raise 200 million dollars over the next few years in order to create a strong progressive network of think tanks, media, and academia. The Democratic Alliance constitutes the central piece of the distribution of donors' moneys to create the network of organizations that will enable the progressive agenda to be redeveloped and disseminated. Nonetheless, as Stein points out, it is important that the left not simply copy the conservative model but develop its own strategy, justifying the special role of The Democratic Alliance:

> Progressives have different values, this is the twenty-first century, the conservative infrastructure is in place and will continue to grow, and so we have to do it all differently … We must be technologically sophisticated and new media, narrowcast-savvy. We must build institutions capable of great flexibility to deal with the rapid pace of change in the world. We need a new generation of leaders able to integrate the local/global complexity of the world to manage our institutions in 2010, 2020 and beyond.[17]

The task before The Democratic Alliance appears colossal, but this time left-wing funders seem dedicated to making their effort work.

On the right-end of the political spectrum, the battle over the next few years will be against complacency. The effectiveness of conservative think tanks to date in acquiring sufficient financial support to sustain their activities and creating an integrated public policy network is an achievement in itself. Yet, as the left begins to regain momentum, the right-wing community needs to find new strategies to address upcoming challenges. If they do not, they may face the type of downturn that the

left has experienced during the last ten years, and thus, right-wing think tanks are preparing for the future. Heritage, for instance, has built up cash reserves and an endowment of around 100 million dollars, an amount that would enable it to survive for two and a half years on its current budget.[18] This is a clear example of how conservatives are investing in institution-building, not just short-term programs. In time, right-wing donors' investment in think tanks' general operations will prove to be a strong asset for those organizations.

In the end, although most of the discussion on the funding situation of think tanks revolves around a small group of large donors, it has to be realized that think tanks need to diversify their base of funding, both in terms of type of donors and in the size of donations. In fact, small donors represent a much more sustainable and healthy base of funding for think tanks. Yet, they remain overshadowed by the big foundations, just like the partisan funding war overshadows the fact that many think tanks and scholars still provide nonpartisan research.

7 Current trends facing think tanks

In recent years, a number of environmental changes have presented the think tank community with new challenges and opportunities that impact their ability to operate effectively. In 2004, the TTCSP invited 34 leading US think tanks to participate in a survey addressing these issues, of which 23 of the institutes responded (Table 7.1).

These respondents identified a multitude of changes in the think tank community over the past 5 to 15 years, in six major areas: (1) changes

Table 7.1 2004 survey – participating institutions

Baker Institute for Public Policy
The Brookings Institution
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Center for American Progress
Center for National Policy
Center for Strategic and International Studies
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Council on Foreign Relations
Economic Policy Institute
Ethics and Public Policy Center
Henry L. Stimson Center
Heritage Foundation
Hudson Institute
National Center for Policy Analysis
New America Foundation
The Nixon Center
Progressive Policy Institute
The RAND Corporation
Reason Foundation
Resources for the Future
United States Institute of Peace
Urban Institute
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

in funding; (2) the proliferation of NGOs generally and think tanks specifically; (3) the emergence of a 24/7 media along with technological advances, specifically the dominance of the Internet; (4) increasingly partisan politics; (5) the rise of specialist and boutique think tanks; and (6) globalization. Respondents identified both positive and negative consequences from all six of these catalysts. The convergence of some of these trends has had a profound impact on the role of think tanks as policy advisors. The survey examines how the cumulative effect of restrictive funding policies by donors, the short-term and narrow orientation of Congress and the White House, and the superficial and sensational orientation of the cable news networks and the print media have served to erode the quality of policy research and limit the range of policy options available to the American public.

The survey results and follow-up interviews revealed six major negative trends in a number of areas, the most noted of which is the handling of funding within the think tank community. The shift in funding to short-term and project-specific from longer-term, general institutional support, has altered the focus and diminished the capacity of many think tanks. The short-term funds have challenged their independence and innovation, as donors specify research projects and inhibit them from exploring new research areas and thinking outside the box. Similarly, the omnipresent media, with its focus on sound bites rather than sound analysis, is driving think tanks to respond to its time and content parameters by producing quick, pithy analysis that is quotable and accessible. The growth of the Internet has exacerbated the problem of funding, as think tanks increasingly publicize their research findings and policy advice online, providing free access to the public, the media, and potential donors. The independence and objectivity of think tanks is being challenged by an increase in partisan politics, from which a corresponding rise in partisan organizations and institutions that produce analysis along partisan lines has been identified by a number of the survey respondents. These negative trends combine to pose great challenges for the sustainability of think tanks as independent, reliable providers of sound public policy advice in the future.

However, these six major environmental changes have also provided opportunities for think tanks to advance their missions. The advent of the 24/7 media and the Internet have helped raise the profile of think tanks and enabled them to reach a larger, more diverse audience and disseminate their publications at a lower cost. The proliferation of all nonprofit organizations has facilitated greater cooperation between think tanks and other NGOs at the local, state, and international levels.

This networking allows for the utilization of new mechanisms to effectively influence policy and to reach larger audiences. Additionally, the impact of globalization and such transnational events as 9/11 and SARS, have ignited greater interest in international affairs, foreign policy, and national security, thus allowing think tanks to increasingly focus on these issues. A whole host of boutique think tanks have been formed to address emerging issues at the national and global level. Think tanks now partner with other interest groups and advocacy organizations at the local, national, and international level. All of these trends were brought into focus during the 2004 presidential campaign. These opportunities afford think tanks the ability to advance both their institutionally specific missions and the role of the think tank community as a whole.

The main goal of this survey was to ascertain how think tanks cope with a changing environment while maintaining their relevance, independence, efficacy, and sustainability. The survey responses point to two main areas in which changes can be instituted to accomplish this task. If donors alter their funding timelines to allow for greater flexibility in research areas, think tanks can perform more thorough analysis and produce better policy advice for policymakers and the media. Correspondingly, if funders grant longer term organizational support, then institutions will have the ability to innovate and analyze emerging issues. Altering the funding will allow for the think tank community to regain some independence and innovation, both revitalizing and strengthening it. The second key way to ensure the vigor of the think tank community is for these institutions, despite partisan or ideological differences, to work together to insist upon high standards in their research, integrity, and independence from interest groups, partisan ideologies, and donors. Institutionalizing these reforms will help think tanks to benefit from the opportunities the environmental changes have created, while minimizing the negative consequences that have manifested themselves in recent years.

Background

Over the last several years, the research of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) has focused on the role and effectiveness of think tanks in the United States and other countries. In one of the recent studies, "Thinking Outside the Box: Think Tanks' Response to 9/11," I found that the convergence of three major factors – changes in how think tanks are funded, changes in the policymaking environment in Washington, DC and limitations within think tanks themselves – have

served to undermine the role that these institutions play in the policymaking process. In this book, I explore these issues further by engaging some of the leading think tanks in America in order to better understand these challenges and their impact on the policymaking process.

Prior to launching this book, extensive research was conducted to develop a list of the leading US think tanks. Relying on previous studies, think tank directories, experts in the field, and factors such as size of staff, budget, and years of operation, 34 American think tanks were identified for inclusion in the book. A detailed questionnaire was then developed and sent to these institutions, of which 23 of the 34 institutions responded (see Table 7.1). The majority of the questionnaires were completed personally by the chief executive of the organization. Survey respondents identified a series of trends that have emerged in recent years which have impacted the strategy and structure of their organizations. The consequences of several of these trends have come into focus in the last few years, some building on previous changes and others rising anew. Competing currents have emerged, presenting many organizations with novel challenges and opportunities. The analysis and recommendations that follow are based on survey findings and interviews with senior fellows, presidents, and executive directors. In order to provide a forum conducive to open and candid commentary, conditions of anonymity were offered to these individuals, and this is reflected in their comments below. These recommendations, coupled with my own analysis, derived from years of experience, are also presented.

Funding

The issue of funding continues to be the most troublesome issue for think tanks. While this problem has existed for the last 15 to 20 years, the economic downturn in the early part of the new millennium and the expansion of detrimental funding policies and practices have served to make this a critical concern for the boards and staffs of think tanks. What is new is that corporate and individual donors have followed the lead of private foundations and adopted the practice of making short-term, project-specific gifts, and grants. What was once a practice limited to private foundations, is now widely employed by donors of every stripe.

The economic downturn has reduced the gifts and grants that individuals, corporations, and private foundations have made to think tanks in three ways: (1) the slow economy has reduced the endowments of institutions, decreasing the internal source of funds from which to support general operations and programs; (2) business profits have

fallen and restricted their contributions to think tanks' work; and (3) grants from foundations have decreased because their investment portfolios have suffered, reducing the funds they have allotted for grant-making. As these three forces converged to decrease funds, the proliferation of think tanks has continued unabated, serving to increase the competition between a larger group of think tanks for a smaller pool of available grant dollars.

Compounding these funding restrictions is the new reality that most grants are now project-specific and shorter in duration. The limited funding that is available to think tanks is restricted. Shorter term, project-specific grants have replaced longer term institutional support, the consequences of which are far-reaching. Think tanks must respond to the issues donors specify in order to receive funding, hindering their ability to produce innovative ideas and new research on emerging issues that policymakers and their scholars identify as important. As grants become more focused, the agenda of research topics considered by an institution is increasingly less autonomous and the degree of freedom to explore innovative solutions to complex policy problems is diminished. Project-specific funding also limits a think tank's ability to fund three distinct and important areas: (1) providing seed money for the development of projects that examine old problems in a new way or emerging problems that are just coming into focus; (2) bridging funding for worthy projects that are in between grants; and (3) funding research on unexpected events such as 9/11 and Avian Flu epidemic. While these critical gaps can be largely attributed to the overly restrictive funding guidelines of most donors, the absence of significant endowments and limited sources of general operating revenue at most think tanks are also contributing factors. If institutions were to receive more unrestricted, institutional support, their research topics would not be as constrained.

There is a great concern among think tanks about the shift away from longer term funding. One survey respondent captured the sentiments of the majority of the institutions responding to the survey when they described the funding guidelines of most foundations as having "Too much emphasis on short-term projects, which is self-defeating." Short-term project support helps to foster the establishment of narrowly focused think tanks because they are better positioned to attract project-specific support from donors. This fundamental change has contributed to the rise of boutique or specialty tanks that specialize in a single area or on a single issue. The net result of the vanishing sources of general operating funds is that it has made the think tank community more risk averse, reactive, and short-term oriented.

This focus on short-term, issue-oriented project support rather than longer term, less restrictive funding discourages think tanks from identifying potential problems and preventing them before they begin or solving them before they spread. One survey respondent captured the depth of the problem by stating that "[T]here has been a tendency to move away from the kind of research that focuses on understanding problems and toward [an] over-emphasis on prescription." The short-run funding only affords think tanks the ability to work on current, popular policy issues, not preventing problems from occurring. While an over-emphasis on short-run policy issues may be popular with the media and the public, who are attracted to hot policy topics, this keeps think tanks from carrying out crucial longer run analysis. This situation is compounded by private foundations that are constantly developing new programs and guidelines – a practice I describe as "programitis." As scholars spend time researching popular, more transient issues and as funds are increasingly channeled in that direction, think tanks can no longer carry out the more balanced mix of long- and short-run policy analysis necessary for their continued success. While it is true that prescriptive policy can solve certain problems and short-run funding has been beneficial in its role of focusing the programs and operations of some institutions, think tanks should be funded in such a way that they may also produce preventive policy recommendations. Because short-term grants that result in policy prescriptions are not a cure-all, short-run funding has actually been counterproductive in its over-utilization as a funding tool. Compared to some of the more creative and successful corporations and institutions in the United States, think tanks differ in that they are funded in a manner that is not conducive to the production of truly innovative ideas, information, and analysis because they lack a stable base of long-term funding. Thus, there is a clear and pressing need for long-term, general funding to balance the types of research think tanks pursue and to improve the functioning of think tanks within society.

Many policymakers and members of the public look to think tanks as a resource to gauge current problems and as providers of sound analysis on issues, which maybe long-term and complex. Failure on the part of donors to enable institutions to carry out this role results in negative consequences for society. Short-run funding does not allow for the thorough and complex analyses that think tanks were originally organized to undertake. One survey respondent argued that "[D]epth of expertise" is a crucial role of think tanks as "[A]nalysts typically work on a limited portfolio of issues over many years (or even a whole career) and in so doing create great insight, historical knowledge, and

understanding." This is threatened by short-run funding, which forces scholars to compartmentalize ideas and miss the bigger picture. For a domestic example of the inadequacies of short-run funding horizons and the complexity of research, consider that a think tank performing research on welfare reform must not only consider the problem of helping people move from welfare to work, but must also consider education, day care, job creation and training, affordable housing, public transportation, and crime, as these issues are inextricably linked to the overall policy objective. A short-run project-specific grant on an issue such as welfare reform is far too narrow for an institution to carry out the level of analysis necessary to produce high-quality policy recommendations. This becomes an even greater dilemma when dealing with international issues, which have become an increasingly larger focus for think tanks. Short-term funding for an institution analyzing the costs and benefits of NAFTA and liberalizing trade in Latin America must consider not only economics, but wealth disparities, industrial makeup of nations, resolution of divergent legal and industry standards, language barriers, immigration, and many other dimensions that a short-run timetable does not allow. Short-term, project-specific grants lead to tunnel analysis and the compartmentalization of policy problems, ignoring vital areas of research. The devastating impact of these polices on the ability of independent public policy research organizations to challenge conventional wisdom was documented in a TTCSP report entitled, "Responding to 9/11 Are US Think Tanks Thinking Outside the Box," issued in July 2003.

Donors are also demanding a "greater bang for their buck" which forces think tanks to emphasize high-impact studies that grab headlines, generate website hits, are covered on the nightly news, and have a measurable impact on policies and programs. It is important to note that several respondents – 5 of the 23 – indicated that they were not affected by project-specific funding. Upon closer examination, it was revealed that most of them – 4 of the 5 – had significant endowments and were less affected by project-specific grants.

Proliferation of think tanks and other NGOs

Many of these trends are affected by the rise in the number of NGOs, and specifically think tanks, in the past two decades. The number of think tanks in the United States has more than doubled since the 1980s. Despite much of the negative feedback that the propagation of think tanks has increased competition and tension within the community, this phenomenon has facilitated the cooperation between think tanks

and other NGOs, allowing them to more effectively operate in the changing community. While national think tanks across the political spectrum may not be collaborating with one another, they are linking up with think tanks, advocacy and educational groups at the state and local levels, and with think tanks and other knowledge-based institutions at the international level. This increased networking creates synergies, extends the reach of think tanks to a broader audience, and makes them more productive.

Yet, while think tanks have embraced collaboration with other NGOs, domestically they have not explored the full range of cooperative, bipartisan, and interdisciplinary collaboration with other think tanks. This fact was underscored by one respondent who said in an interview: "I don't see my organization and the other think tanks in DC as being part of a community." Rather, this proliferation of think tanks has created a highly competitive environment in which a growing number of think tanks compete for funding and the attention of the media and policymakers. In addition, the push to specialize has forced many think tanks to differentiate themselves from their peers in a number of ways: research agenda, policy outputs, political orientation, and marketing strategy. Several respondents pointed to the creation of new organizational designs, such as The New America Foundation, as one of the positive results of the continued changes taking place in the think tank community. The competitive forces in the market place of ideas have clearly resulted in major changes in how think tanks operate and generate novel ideas, which have helped spark a lively debate on the issues. What they have not done is bridge the differences in approaches and politics so that effective policies and programs can be developed.

Rise in partisan politics

Another trend in the think tank community is the increased polarization and pressure to politically align. While Washington, DC and the public policy process are inherently political and the competition of ideas is a hallmark of the American democratic experience, the current state of partisanship has reached a fever pitch, and think tanks have been enlisted to provide the ammunition in the battle over good and evil that currently seems to preoccupy many politicians. Partisan politics and the war of ideas have become more complex and correspondingly, partisan institutions have become more common, as a greater number have adopted a political persona and a narrower view in their research and policy recommendations. The result is a shift toward either side of

the political spectrum: a large dichotomy of liberal organizations on one side, conservative organizations on the other, and a limited number of centrist institutions in the middle. Thus, it is increasingly difficult to find objective analysis that looks at a range of ideas, opinions, and policy options on an issue. As organizations become more partisan the level and quality of internal debate is reduced. One think tank executive noted that the partisan politics and war of ideas has "created a situation in which there is little interest in detailed analysis looking at both sides of an issue, and if a group does not support an issue 100 percent, the group is seen as an ally of the 'enemy.'"

Overall, this results in a heated environment, threatening the engagement of cooperation among think tanks, which would be one way to offset the negative funding trends. Respondents from across the political and ideological spectrum felt that while there should always be a vigorous debate of the issues, the current environment is not conducive for such an exchange. The increased level of partisan politics also serves to limit think tanks' innovation, as it is difficult to express ideas that are nontraditional in the current polarized environment. One survey respondent argued that it is "hard to get a hearing for ideas that do not fit neatly into the conventional left-right boxes." This is a dangerous gambit, because they place their independence at risk in their pursuit of

Table 7.2 Main liberal and conservative foundations

Liberal	*Conservative*
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
Arca Foundation	John M. Olin Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation
Ford Foundation	Sarah Scaife Foundation
MacArthur Foundation	Carthage Foundation
McKnight Foundation	Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation
Moriah Fund, Inc.	Charles G. Koch, David H. Koch Foundation
Nathan Cummings Foundation	Phillip M. McKenna Foundation
Noyce Foundation	John M. Olin Foundation
Open Society Institute	Earhart Foundation
Pew Charitable Trusts	Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundations
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	Smith Richardson Foundation
Rockefeller Foundation	Henry Salvatori Foundation

Note
The categorization is based on a review of the grants made by each foundation, media reports and scholarly articles on the role of philanthropic organizations in shaping think tanks in the United States.

greater influence. Think tanks owe much of their influence and credibility to their nonaligned status and intellectual independence. All of this has led one respondent to point out that "evidence and research standards have suffered," leaving one to wonder how much of the think tank community's credibility has been sacrificed on the altar of polemics.

However, once again, this trend has not been entirely bad, and some institutions have cited more partisan politics as being in fact beneficial as it has heightened the interest of both policymakers and the public in the work of think tanks, which has forced these institutions to conduct more focused research on current, high-profile issues and made them conscious of how, where, when, and to whom they disseminate their ideas. In fact, 5 of the 23 respondents indicated that they were not affected by partisan politics. This could of course be wishful thinking or an indication that these institutions do not view partisan politics as an issue that affects think tanks. These positive trends associated with the rise in partisan politics led one think tank executive to suggest that this is the "golden age of think tanks," as the increased partisan politics illustrated by the highly contested 2000 and 2004 presidential elections has stimulated interest in public policy research institutions, as well as areas of both domestic and international policy. Another think tank executive commented, "Never before has there been so much interest in international affairs, [and] presidential politics and think tanks are right in the middle of it." While these may indeed be positive consequences arising from partisan politics, partisan politics causes think tanks to diverge in terms of ideologies, and as new institutions develop increasingly specific focuses, gaps have arisen in the depth and variety of their research.

If the public begins to dismiss X institution's report due to simply being associated with the liberal agenda, and readily accepts Y institution's findings as being part of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" without discussing the report's merits or similar discounts, then a major, uneasily reversible disservice will be rendered.

The omnipresent media and rise of the Internet

The expansion of media coverage into a 24/7 phenomenon and the emergence of the Internet have presented the think tank community with new challenges and opportunities. The impact of the world-wide web is clear, as virtually every think tank now has an information technology professional as a member of the staff and a webmaster to maintain a fresh website. The widespread use of the Internet has

allowed think tanks to disseminate their ideas more easily and has contributed to the heightened interest in think tanks. The advent of the Internet and other communication technologies have reduced the costs of publishing research, enhanced the dissemination of information, and increased the access to scholars and publications which have served to expand the audience and influence of most think tanks. Yet, the widespread use of the Internet is not without its downsides. Some think tanks have argued that the Internet has reduced the quality of dialogue on certain issues because there is no mechanism to filter information and facts presented on the web.

Similarly, the omnipresent media has created new challenges for think tanks. The emergence of the cable news channels has drastically increased the exposure of think tank commentators on all the networks. The impact of this trend can be seen on the news shows that regularly feature commentators such as Ken Pollack of Brookings (CNN), Rachel Bronson of CFR (MSNBC), Tony Cordesman of CSIS (ABC), and Peter Brookes of Heritage (Fox). The 24/7 media that has emerged is characterized by sensationalism and sound bites. The national media is drawn to the 30-second sound bite rather than an in-depth analysis of the issues, and many websites publicize reports without critiquing the methodology or level of analysis. These practices serve to undermine the basic standards desirable for rigorous analysis of the issues.

It is the combination of these twin trends that directly affects the ability of a think tank to prepare carefully considered proposals and engage in reasonable discourse before presenting them to the public. These changes in how the media and Internet convey information to the public have created a pressure for think tanks to produce sound bites, rather than sound analysis, in order to "get it out there." While these developments have been constructive, increasing the interactions between think tanks and the public – one think tank executive observed it is helping to "put the public back in public policy." However, they have also made some institutions slaves to web hits and sound bites. The attraction of the media limelight and the need to offer real-time commentary on current events has proven to be a distraction for both scholars and institutions that cannot resist the lure of these sirens. While the Internet and 24/7 media can be effectively utilized by think tanks, they must not be allowed to infringe upon the quality and independence of the research associated with think tanks. The media's insatiable appetite for controversy and conflict and its superficial examination of issues have a distorting effect on informed debate. The highly competitive environment in which think tanks operate forces them to respond to issues of the moment in order to garner media attention.

The immediacy of the Internet and the 24/7 media have seduced think tanks into giving up control over their greatest asset – ideas, information, and analysis – to the media, world-wide web and donors. In the past, think tanks had greater control over their intellectual products, as they could require private donors, the public and the press to become members or sponsors in order to get invited to programs or receive the organization's publications. This is no longer the case, as information is more freely and easily disseminated and accessed, exacerbating the age-old problem of getting donors and the public to pay for ideas (policy advice). All of this led one think tank scholar to conclude:

> The media is challenging the way we communicate, and think tanks are slow to adopt new modes … video, audio, PowerPoint are the way people in business, military and government do it, but on the whole, think tanks still publish tomes of paper when reading is a lost art. Think tanks must adapt and develop web-published audio of talks, video, and E-Note format to reach thousands quickly in easily read chucks.

Another survey respondent argued that all these changes have caused some institutions to be more concerned with dissemination rather than quality control of their institution's output.

Rise of the specialist and boutique think tanks

Advances in technology are occurring in all spheres of society, challenging policymakers to understand today's many complex policy problems. Politicians trained in law or policy can have a difficult time understanding the area-specific complexities of emerging issues in areas such as biotechnology, genetics, nuclear energy, and the biosphere. Thus, they need the help of those scholars employed at think tanks who are trained in these specific areas to provide them with sound analysis and advice. As issues become more complex and outside the purview of the politician's expertise, the public experiences a similar trend in having trouble comprehending contemporary issues. Consequently, there is an increased need for solid analysis from think tanks on highly technical matters. This has led to a dramatic increase in the number of specialty and boutique think tanks concentrating in multi-disciplinary issues. The dilemma is that think tanks must hire a number of highly specialized analysts for a range of policy issues, rather than hiring more broad-gauged scholars who may have expertise in several areas. While

this may meet the needs of donors and policymakers, it further ties the hands of think tank executives who need to be responsive to a range of issues and concerns. Since the 1970s, the vast majority of think tanks that have come into existence have been specialized. The ideal, of course, would be a careful mix of generalists and specialists who work in interdisciplinary teams on both short-term and long-term policy problems.

Globalization and the increased demand for policy advice

Overall, funding has become more and more restrictive, which has limited the independence and innovative thinking at think tanks at a time when the need for independent and innovative analysis has increased. Globalization has made the complex relationships between localities, nations, issues, and spheres of life more apparent, through the transmission and diffusion of knowledge, which has both impacted think tanks and been impacted by think tanks and other knowledge/information-based institutions. This creates the need for a more thorough analysis of issues and the potential repercussions and contingencies of all policy alternatives. Without a more creative approach to funding, truly innovative policy research cannot be undertaken and the result will be inadequate policy advice. Yet, policy advice must be maintained at a high level, as the transnationalization of foreign policy or domestic issues like Terry Schiavo – where science, ethnics, and politics collide and need to be guided by sound analysis not sound bites – increases the interest in these issues. 9/11 catalyzed this trend and consequently, a heightened level of interest in foreign policy and national security have afforded think tanks numerous opportunities to educate policymakers, the public, nonprofits, the media, and other stakeholders on such issues. As a result, many think tanks have been able to capitalize on their institutional nexus between intellectual strengths and the heightened interest in public policy. Associated with this trend is the fact that most contemporary policy issues involve complex interrelationships and novelties that are not evident at first examination. This requires policymakers to "think outside the box" because current policies and paradigms are often no longer adequate or applicable. Thus, this transnationalization affects think tanks at both an institutional level and at a policy diffusion level, as think tanks cannot block the repercussions of what they say and do. Policy decisions and think tanks in the United States affect what goes on in the rest of the world and vice-versa. As economist Joseph Stiglitz argued, it is imperative to "scan globally, reinvent locally."[1] Think tanks need to

consider policy alternatives and the implications of policies around the globe, and then adapt them to their local context. Thus, there is both an increased need and demand for innovative solutions, yet changes in the international arena, as well as budgetary and institutional constraints keep think tanks from providing them.

Table 7.3 Summary of key findings

Positive consequences	*Negative consequences*
Funding changes: short-term, project specific and results-driven grants	
1 Has forced TTs to be more efficient and required them to demonstrate effectiveness	1 Lack of long run, general institutional support tends to distort the mission and research agenda of many TTs
2 Increased policy orientation and focus on current issues and legislative agendas	2 Limits the depth of analysis and innovation within TTs
3 Greater focus on dissemination	3 Increases the influence of donors on research design and outcomes
4 Gives donors greater control over how their gifts and grants are used	4 Limited ability to attract and retain the best scholars
Increased number of think tanks (TTs) and NGOs	
1 Virtually every interest or issue has a think tank	1 Increased competition for funding
2 Increased collaboration between TTs and other NGOs at state, local, and international levels (more vertical and horizontal integration)	2 Increased competition for the attention of policymakers and the media to utilize output
3 Greater competition increases output and sharpens focus	3 The rise of advocacy organizations that have been labeled TTs results in a confusion between lobbying and promoting sound public policy via research
4 New energy and talented new players have entered the scene	4 Increased competition for scholars
Emergence of 24 / 7 media	
1 Higher level of media demand for output of TTs	1 Media's focus on the provocative and sensational distorts policy debate
2 Provides TTs with a larger audience	2 Lure of media limelight forces TTs to go for the sound bite rather than sound analysis
3 Connects TTs and other policy elites with the public	3 Increased focus on op-eds and pithy reports rather than in-depth analysis
4 Makes TT's more visible and relevant	4 Shift in focus to the big picture and key points rather than on the details
5 Engages an apathetic electorate on issues of national and international importance	

Positive consequences	*Negative consequences*
Dominance of the Internet / technological advancements	
1 Reduced costs of disseminating information 2 Allowed TTs to reach a wider audience 3 Facilitated rapid and inexpensive coordination and collaboration between think tanks and other nongovernmental organizations 4 Increased the visibility of think tanks, which may lead to greater influence	1 Diminished the quality of dialogue on certain issues 2 Pressure for TTs to stay on the cutting edge of technology and expand staff to include professionals in the field 3 Loss of control over the intellectual assets and research on the part of TTs as the immediacy of the Internet places demands on organizations to demonstrate their influence on policy
Increased partisan politics	
1 Policy debate in Washington has greater openness and variation in ideas, allowing for output from all TTs to be heard 2 Partisan politics has forced some TTs to conduct more focused research and analysis and to be increasingly cautious of how and when to disseminate ideas	1 Increased polarization within the TT community 2 Increased pressure to politically align / difficulty to remain non-partisan 3 Decrease in the number of centrist organizations
Globalization: increased connectedness of issues, people, and ideas	
1 Increased interest in foreign policy, public policy, and international issues (they have emerged as hot topics) 2 Complexities/interrelationships of globalization have caused policymakers to increasingly turn to nongovernmental sources, like TTs, for research and analysis	1 Has facilitated the proliferation of TTs, creating a more crowded and competitive environment 2 There has been a disproportionate focus on Iraq, the war on terror, and homeland security, while other important international issues have been ignored

8 Conclusions

A major goal of this study is to ascertain what may help the think tank community and individual organizations reach their full potential. While each organization has a slightly different concept of its purpose, most survey respondents feel the role of think tanks is to serve as independent, innovative, and credible providers of ideas and analysis for policymakers, the public, and the media. Think tanks serve our country best when they are able to: study and analyze issues of national and international concern; challenge conventional wisdom and develop workable alternatives to the status quo; anticipate problems before they arise; and communicate their findings and recommendations to policymakers and the public. Many scholars feel that think tanks should be responsible for helping to identify emerging issues that have not yet become mainstream and alerting policymakers of their development. This requires longer term funding. Other roles of think tanks include providing a venue for debate, cutting through political discourse to identify the real problems, defining the questions that shape public policy, providing support for various policy alternatives and against others, and broadening the range of policy options.

Yet, many of the changes in the think tank community are hindering the ability of these institutions to carry out their functions. When questioned about how think tanks can improve their effectiveness, the community answered that they must tackle the negative trends from two different points of origin: externally and internally. Externally, many survey respondents identified the need for donors to allow for more flexibility in their funding guidelines for research programs. They also specified the need for funders to shift their focus from short-term, project specific grants to support research that is longer term and allows for the exploration of complex and enduring problems. Without allowing for long-run analysis and more general institutional support, think tanks cannot produce the analysis society needs. Other

respondents were concerned with maintaining and enhancing the credibility of think tanks, which must be approached both internally and externally. Externally, donors need to refrain from attempting to influence the findings of research projects. Internally, the think tank community should be proactive in developing industry-wide standards in order to "ensure that the credibility and independence of the think tank community is not jeopardized." Many institutions were concerned with creating uniform community standards; one respondent urged the creation of "rigorous intellectual standards and independence." Another respondent stressed this theme, arguing that it overcomes partisan differences, "The think tank community should adhere to rigorous standards and be willing to criticize the misuse of data, regardless of whether it [was] disseminated on the right or the left." This could be accomplished via the development and implementation of a "think tank code of conduct," akin to the corporate social responsibility movement occurring in the business sector, in which think tanks collaborate to identify, outline, and ensure that the community as a whole follows high standards, which would ensure the quality and independence of their research. Such a movement would strengthen the capacity of think tanks and facilitate their sustainability. This would require a good deal of cooperation from a diverse, competitive group of think tanks. However, the benefits of these institutions' working together to both the think tank community and society as a whole would greatly outweigh any costs of convening to establish such regulations. Additionally, the survey responses allow one to think that this may be plausible, as numerous respondents listed merging, consolidation, and working together as ways to improve the effectiveness, viability, and sustainability of think tanks.

These comments regarding the need for a change in the funding policies and practices, and a call for clear standards for policy research should not be interpreted as a return to academic-oriented policy analysis – 19 of the 23 survey respondents described the primary activity of their organization as "policy-oriented research" and only three institutions indicated that it was "scholarly-oriented research." Thus, merely desiring ongoing, longer term support from donors should not be viewed as a case for a shift toward more academic-oriented research and analysis, which no institutions are advocating. The tension between policy-oriented versus scholarly-oriented research is indicative of the broader imbalances and tensions that exist among think tanks, policymakers, and donors. The think tank scholars/analysts' desire to conduct rigorous policy research and analysis is pitted against the policymakers demands for timely, policy relevant,

action-oriented research, and the donors' proclivity to provide funding for short-term, results-oriented programs.

Additionally, to overcome some of the negative trends outlined in this report, think tanks should collaborate to ensure high standards and find solutions to the challenges. For example, think tanks could work together to develop incentives for long-term funding. If donors witnessed liberal, conservative, and centrist think tanks collaborating to pressure funders to promote innovation, longer-term support, and greater flexibility, they may be more apt to move in that direction. Thus, internally, think tanks can work to improve their environment by collaborating to reform the institutional mechanisms under which they operate – efficiently fulfilling their roles and achieving a greater positive impact on society.

9 Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are based in part on the results of the survey but are also informed and defined by my 23 years of studying, consulting, and surveying think tanks in the United States. In addition, they flow from two previous studies: "Thinking about the Future of Think Tanks" (FPRI 1999) and "Responding to 9/11: Are US Think Tanks Thinking Outside the Box?" (FPRI July 2003), which addressed some of the issues facing public policy research organizations. These reports, however, only identified problems; they did not set out to recommend a corrective course of action. The recommendations provided below are intended to serve as a starting point for further development, a process that will hopefully lead to a new architecture for how think tanks operate and are funded. At this stage in the process, not all the institutions that participated in the study have endorsed the proposed recommendations. Specific interventions also need to be mounted that will help develop the critical mass of researchers and analysts that will be needed to confront the domestic and international challenges that lie ahead. If think tanks are to effectively challenge the conventional wisdom in Washington, DC and around the country, they must be prepared to strengthen their institutions so that innovation, diversity, and collaboration can flourish. Finally, the recommendations are not intended to focus exclusively on the 23 institutions that participated in the study, but rather on the entire think tank community of 1,736 institutions. Provided below are a few modest recommendations for improving the quality and sustainability of independent public policy research, analysis and engagement organizations in the United States:

1 Convene a working group involving a broad cross section of think tanks to develop a set of strategies and recommendations for improving the funding environment for public policy research organizations.

2 Think tanks must find creative approaches to convincing donors to take a more strategic and long-range view of funding public policy research organizations. There is an imperative need for donors to engage more in institution and capacity-building and less in micromanaging institutions and research.
3 Think tanks (producers of policy research) should create a forum along with policymakers and the media (users of policy research) and donors (private foundations and corporate donors) that would engage in a constructive dialogue about how to fund public policy research so that it is more innovative, interdisciplinary, forward looking and effectively addresses today's complex and intractable policy problems.
4 Donors and the think tank community need to explore ways to foster greater synergies, collaboration and consolidation among the more than 1,700 public policy think tanks in the United States.
5 Develop a set of reasonable standards for funding public policy research in order to insulate think tanks from private and public donors who may attempt to exercise undue influence over their research and its findings.
6 Understanding that think tanks may be considered a "public good," they nonetheless need to find ways to better demonstrate the utility and efficacy of their work for donors and the public. A fuller and more enlightened set of criteria for measuring the impact of these institutions needs to be formulated.
7 Strategies and technologies need to be developed and shared that help think tanks recover the cost associated with the content service they provide to the media and the public through the Internet.
8 Think tanks should explore ways to effectively use the television, Internet and other technologies to advance and improve the dissemination of their policy research and engagement of the public in a meaningful dialogue on key policy issues.
9 Think tank collaboration should be increased not only in finding solutions to common problems but also in increasing the number of joint projects (i.e. AEI-Brookings Joint Center). This will enable think tanks to draw from a broader knowledge base and will increase the outreach potential of the projects' outcome.

Think tanks on the right and left should avoid being drawn into the partisan politics and ideological battles that are currently consuming American politics.

10 Essays on value, role, and impact of think tanks

Executives from 20 think tanks were approached to write essays on the role, value, and impact of these organizations, 19 of which submitted essays. The essays illuminate the data and analysis presented in the first half of the book by capturing the diversity of perspectives and the challenges facing some of the leading public policy research organizations in the United States. One of the central objectives of the book is to help understand how the field of think tanks has dramatically changed and why this class of institutions has become so diverse.

As evidenced in Chapter 9, not all the changes have been positive. The essays that follow reflect on these changes and include key insights into public policy research and the think tank culture. There are discerning commentaries on the ideological environment of a think tank as well as illuminating examples of think tanks affecting the political framework on debates. Richard N. Haass, President of the CFR reflects:

> The greatest impact of think tanks (as befits their name) is in generating "new thinking" that affects the way US decision-makers perceive and respond to the world. Original insights can alter conceptions of US national interests, influence the ranking of priorities, provide roadmaps for action, mobilize political and bureaucratic coalitions, and shape the design of lasting institutions.[1]

The executives also discuss the recent trend of forming think tanks outside the Beltway and touch on the effects of these state-based research institutions. John Raisian, Director of the Hoover Institution notes, "The proliferation of state-based think tanks in the United States bespeaks of an ambition to contribute to the well-being of citizens therein and make states true laboratories for observing diverse approaches to public policy formation and dialogue."[2] I believe these

essays importantly display the self-awareness of these think tanks – they understand that they must look at the larger picture and adapt to the events and trends around them in order for their institution to remain viable in this increasingly competitive industry.

These essays provide many insights, including into the think tank community's operating mentality. As think tanks have grown in influence and supplanted universities for policymakers, some also seem to have accumulated a degree of arrogance and believe too readily in their own importance. Some might find it disconcerting to read how competitive think tanks are but can understand that this competitiveness arises from supply and demand. Tim Roemer, President of The Center for National Policy writes:

> As public policy challenges have multiplied with the enlargement of government, the advancement of technology, and the onset of globalization, the need for think tanks has grown. Simply put, there are more policy problems to solve today than there were fifty years ago. Think tanks have proliferated to meet that demand.[3]

A few suggest there is very real competition with academic institutions, which are deemed too liberal by some so that many qualified conservative researchers seek employment at outside institutions, thus catalyzing the growth of think tanks. There are also a few instances where executives at these think tanks challenge the validity of the work done at universities and by government bodies and imply that the think tanks know best. Chris DeMuth, President of AEI writes:

> In a time when the ideas and attitudes coming out of universities are very much on the left of the political spectrum, universities have become inhospitable to intellects of a certain viewpoint. Conservative think tanks such as AEI have become sanctuaries for those more conservative scholars who do not feel welcome in the university setting, welcoming prestigious political scientists and economists who enjoy a more open and yeasty environment to do their work.[4]

Overall, I believe the historical development and phenomenon of think tanks in the United States is conveyed. As Strobe Talbott, President of The Brookings Institution states, the ideal think tank strives "to identify problems, study as many relevant factors as possible, recommend solutions, and spread those ideas to the widest possible set of audiences."[5] The older and newer institutions in this collection help narrate the influence of think tanks over the course of their existence

and the important role they play in the present in order to affect the future.

Christopher DeMuth – President, American Enterprise Institute
Edward P. Djerejian – Founding Director, Baker Institute
Strobe Talbott – President, Brookings Institution
John Podesta – President and CEO, Center for American Progress
Tim Roemer – President, Center for National Policy
John J. Hamre – President and CEO, Center for Strategic and International Studies
Richard N. Haass – President, Council on Foreign Relations
Ellen Laipson – President and CEO, Henry L. Stimson Center
Edwin Feulner – President, Heritage Foundation
John Raisian – Director, Hoover Institution, Stanford University
Herbert I. London – President, Hudson Institute
C. Fred Bergsten – Director, Institute for International Economics
John Cavanagh – Director, Institute for Policy Studies
Togo D. West, Jr. – President and CEO, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
John C. Goodman – President, National Center for Policy Analysis
Dimitri K. Simes – Founding President, Nixon Center
David W. Lyon – President and CEO, Public Policy Institute of California
James Thomson – President, Rand Corporation
Phillip Sharp – President, Resources for the Future
Robert D. Reischauer – President, Urban Institute

American Enterprise Institute

Christopher Demuth, President

A think tank might best be understood as a university without students. It is a place where scholars are able to engage in fulltime research – diligently reading, writing, and debating – in an effort to produce publications on government policy. Unlike university scholars, those conducting research within think tanks, such as the AEI, pride themselves on being earnest reformers. Think tanks are unique in their desire to evoke change in the political process – striving to produce work that is not only accessible and interesting, but that which can be promoted in an aggressive and pragmatic manner.

Think tanks can then use scholarly output in a direct effort to promote change. At AEI, for example, this means testifying frequently before

congressional committees, providing expert consultation to all branches of government, and being cited and reprinted in the national media. Think tanks fill a niche that modern American government has created. Presently, our governmental systems have become overextended in a way that has professionalized politics. A congressperson from any given region, for example, is unable to spend his or her evenings reading scholarly publications when his or her time is required at various other mandatory engagements. Think tanks have successfully become the "private sector" correction to this problem, balancing our highly mechanized system of politics by providing indispensable tools that the government lacks. There has been considerable innovation in the way that political research, arguments, and deliberation on political subjects are carried out, and this success should in no way be seen as accidental. Think tanks, for example, have become increasingly specialized in the last several decades, allowing comprehensive research in a variety of fields.

In a time when the ideas and attitudes coming out of universities are very much on the left of the political spectrum, universities have become inhospitable to intellects of a certain viewpoint. Conservative think tanks such as AEI have become sanctuaries for those more conservative scholars who do not feel welcome in the university setting, welcoming prestigious political scientists and economists who enjoy a more open and yeasty environment to do their work. At an institution like AEI, the resident faculty is augmented by a network of more than one hundred adjunct scholars at universities and policy institutes throughout the United States.

Think tanks provide an environment where individuals can develop their own research and can in turn advance genuine conclusions. At AEI, we promote individual liberty and responsibility but are careful not to institutionalize these values. Think tanks, in their enthusiasm for independent thinking, are able to hire people of extraordinary ability who are able to dictate their own research and thus their own conclusions and proposals. Right-wing think tanks in particular have reframed the national debate by investing in and then promoting ideas for the long-term. They are able to produce affirmative ideas, not simply counter-claims to any particular piece of liberal legislation.

There are three lessons that can be drawn from our experience that are applicable to all think tanks. First, things take time. It takes at least ten years for a radical new idea to emerge from obscurity. For instance, school vouchers and Social Security privatization are still evolving. Having funders who understand this and support projects over the long haul is critical.

Second, unintended consequences are not enough. For years, a staple of conservative ideology has been the claim that liberal social engineering backfires: Welfare makes people poorer, antitrust enforcement retards competition, safety regulations make people behave more carelessly, etc. But nobody claims that the Environmental Protection Agency makes the environment worse, and this is where the power of transforming ideas comes into play. This where think tanks play a critical role in framing or recasting policy issues using affirmative ideas that address a need or advance popular social goals.

Third, this does not mean, however, that we have lost sight of the importance of bipartisanship. All fundamental changes are bipartisan when they are actually realized, so think tanks such as AEI make great efforts to co-opt New Democrats – this is essential to our dedication to the execution of realistic policy. There have been successes in liberal think tanks, for example in policymaking such as in environmentalist legislation. The United States, for example, has produced spectacular improvement in the quality of air, water, in the way we deal with toxic chemicals and problems of land disposal. These improvements, however, were made in a way that was monetarily wasteful and it is the task of the modern conservative think tanks to change these superfluous patterns of spending. Right-wing think tanks such as the CSIS need to make sure their ventures include (safely conservative) Democrats. The bipartisan CSIS National Commission on Social Security Reform had no official standing, but with high profile Democrats as well as Republicans it successfully masqueraded as a bona fide national commission and received extensive press coverage.

Think tanks have been and will continue to be successful in conducting world class research on difficult policy and political problems and come up with solutions that actually have some appeal to people in the world of practical politics. As AEI demonstrates, think tanks can produce better ways, conservative ways, to achieve popular social goals.

James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy

Edward P. Djerejian, Founding Director

Public policy is not only about interests, it is about ideas. Increasingly, think tanks are the generators of ideas, the forum where they are debated, and a source of second opinions for policymakers. No one doubts that think tanks have influence, but influence is hard to measure. Certain criteria for measurement are nonetheless widely accepted. Does

the think tank lend an informed and distinctive voice to debate on key domestic and foreign issues? Do policymakers in government and policy shapers in the media perceive the organization as relevant and professional? Does the organization have access to public officials and the media through its publications, events, or personal and professional relationships? Do experts at universities and corporations, or other think tanks respect the research that the organization produces? Rarely does an idea leap from a think tank to become public policy. More often ideas contribute to national debate and influence the political climate in indirect ways. Sometimes that influence can be substantial.

Economists at the Brookings Institution helped make the Keynesian revolution. Scholars at the AEI helped make the Reagan revolution. The CFR's *Foreign Affairs* is a basic reference point for many in the foreign policy community. And we at James A. Baker III Institute of Public Policy at Rice University believe that the public policy community pays serious attention to the reports of our energy security and Middle East conflict resolution programs.

Few of the more than 1,500 think tanks in the United States achieve or sustain national influence. Those that have it conform to no single model. Think tanks may be focused on a single issue or several issues; they may be associated with a particular ideology, party, business association, or labor union. Some may be part of a university, either as a degree-granting entity or as a pure research center. The Baker Institute offers the model of a university-based, non-degree-granting public policy institute, nonpartisan in approach and committed to bridging the world of ideas and the world of action. We believe that bringing scholars from academia together with policymakers, private sector leaders, journalists and others can result in relevant analysis and public policy recommendations.

Research at the Baker Institute is conducted by endowed fellows and scholars on term appointments to study domestic foreign and domestic policy issues. We leverage this core competency by promoting collaborations with Rice University faculty from the social science, humanities, natural science and engineering departments. The policy areas that we emphasize – energy, health, tax policy, space, US–Mexico border issues, and conflict resolution – are areas where we enjoy comparative advantage, because of our location in Houston, concentrations of strength in the Rice faculty, or the experience of the Institute's leadership. We also cultivate relationships with other think tanks both in the United States and abroad, relationships that have often enhanced public policy deliberations.

To count in the world of public policy, think tanks must produce

research that is timely, relevant, and comprehensible to the non-expert. At the Baker Institute we make every effort to produce studies that are both accessible to the public and tailored to the needs of policymakers. Our telecommunications center with state of the art Internet, television, radio, and audio-visual capabilities has been a strong asset in getting the Institute's voice heard. Among forms of communication, the Internet, with its global reach, has emerged as preeminent. In a recent 3-month period, the Baker Institute website, where we publish our research findings, received 1.5 million hits.

Research is not the only way that think tanks can promote education. Many of them sponsor public events for the presentation, discussion, and debate of public policy issues. Moreover, those in university settings often add a public policy dimension to the undergraduate experience. From its beginnings ten years ago, the Baker Institute has offered an active schedule of public events, including national and world leaders. During a recent six-month period, we hosted conferences on stem cell research and space policy, a session of the commission on federal election reform, a 2-day meeting on North Korea, a panel on US–Cuban relations, lectures on suicide bombers, the Israeli–Palestinian peace process, and the prospects of constitutional government in the Middle East.

Though the Baker Institute offers no courses of its own, it actively reaches out to Rice students. Student involvement in public policy institutes is an important vehicle for interesting youth in public service. The Baker Institute Student Forum helps attract students to our events. With a budget provided by the Institute, it sponsors public policy programs of its own. The Student Forum also publishes a journal featuring articles on public policy authored by undergraduates. In addition, the Institute recruits student interns to work with our fellows on research projects, and it offer select undergraduates the opportunity to earn course credit as part of a summer internship program in Washington.

To be blunt, vision without funding is hallucination. Adequate financial resources are essential to think tanks in order to attract leading scholars, support research, and conduct outreach programs. Without a strong financial base, no think tank can be viable in the long run or sufficiently independent to maintain credibility. In today's competitive financial environment, think tanks must become entrepreneurial, and their directors must include fund-raising among their indispensable responsibilities. They must also resist the temptation of allowing potential funding to drive the research agenda. In the effort to raise funds, think tanks have one great advantage: During the past 20 years, they have established their value by elevating debate on public policy

and by advancing good ideas for its improvement. Those who invest in think tanks are, therefore, investing in American democracy.

Brookings Institution

Strobe Talbott, President

What is a think tank? In the simplest terms, it is an organization that conducts research on public policy issues and then makes its findings and recommendations available to policymakers, opinion leaders, and the citizenry. Some think tanks focus on a single area, while others are more broad-gauge. But virtually all think tanks espouse the same basic values – high standards of intellectual quality, independence and nonpartisanship – and all hope to have a constructive impact on the way America governs itself and provides international leadership.

That has been the mission of the Brookings Institution for ninety years. Our scholars include Democrats and Republicans, former policymakers and academics, diplomats and journalists – with opinions as diverse as their backgrounds. Our research and recommendations have contributed to landmark innovations since our founding. Our scholars were instrumental in the formation of the government's budget systems in the 1920s, the creation of Social Security in the '30s, the birth of the UN and the Marshall Plan in the '40s, the improvement of the presidential transition process in the 1950s, building the case for deregulation in the 1960s, and the establishment of the Congressional Budget Office in the 1970s.

More recently, Brookings scholars pioneered path-breaking work on health care and tax policy in the 1980s; new approaches to welfare, public service and campaign finance in the 1990s; and, in the wake of 9/11, led the search for more efficient ways of organizing the US government to defend the homeland. Our current agenda includes the reinvention of state and local government, the restoration of a fiscally sound federal budget, the reform of health policy, the fight against global poverty, and efforts to manage emerging global security challenges including through improved regional and global governance.

Our distinctive advantage, we believe, is the combination of breadth and depth in our expertise, along with our commitment to open-mindedness and rigorous research and analysis as we craft our policy proposals. That means giving priority to quality over all else. And while our scholars argue forcefully for their own policy prescriptions, they usually avoid advocating positions not derived from their own research.

We like to think this sets us apart from two other kinds of think tanks. The first are the creation of single-issue or for-profit organizations with specific points of view that "their" think tanks are intended to advance. We also distinguish ourselves from avowedly liberal (or as they sometimes call themselves "progressive") organizations as well as equally forthright conservative ones. And unsurprisingly, their research and findings tend to be driven by ideological positions or by the views of their sponsors. Indeed, there are plenty of donors who believe their influence on the political process will be enhanced if they channel their support to think tanks with clearly conservative or liberal viewpoints, especially when the political party that shares their outlook is in power.

These and other organizations take as their starting point a set of policy objectives, then tailor their research to buttressing those pre-set positions. This approach has been called "*Jeopardy* research," referring to the television game show where the host provides the answer and the contestants do battle to come up with the right question. While this might earn credit and citations from politicians who share a particular point of view, it is at odds with the premise of open-ended, fact-based research that is our stock in trade at Brookings. While my preference for the Brookings approach is obvious and natural, there is plenty of room for wide diversity in the kinds of think tanks that are competing for attention, influence, and funds. The nation is better off when its citizenry and leader hear a variety of views from different voices and perspectives.

That said, having been both a journalist who covered policymakers and a government official, I believe that policymaking is best informed when choices are framed and debated in a spirit of civil discourse – in an environment that encourages those on one side of an argument to respect the other side. Unfortunately, some of the newer think tanks associated with businesses or advocacy organizations have occasionally been part of the problem of political polarization that has infected so many institutions of our society. For over a decade, excessive partisanship has been at a fever pitch, and it has sometimes had a poisonous effect on the atmosphere in which think tanks operate – and therefore on the quality of the work they produce.

Just to be clear: partisanship in and of itself is a natural and healthy part of our political system. It's institutionalized in our national life in the form of the two-party system. Indeed, many consumers of ideas that come out of think tanks – the media, politicians, policymakers, even the public at large – expect public policy research to give them a clear choice.

Sometimes the public gets blamed for hyper-partisanship on the grounds that it wants to be entertained by a shouting match between the extremes. Polling data suggests otherwise. Citizens want their leaders – and those who presume to advise them – to be arguing about what's best for the country, not calling each other names. Moreover, polls also suggest that the public is not as divided as often portrayed, nor is the situation as bad today as it has been at certain points in the past (for example, our divisions are not as great as they were during the early days of the civil rights era). In some respects, there is actually quite a bit of continuity over time in public attitudes. Moderates are still a plurality among voters, usually making up about 40 percent of the electorate. That has been the case for the last 40 years.

To be against extreme polarization – and to be responsive to the hopes of moderate America – is not to advocate centrism for its own sake. Barry Goldwater had a valid point when he said that our two-party system should offer the American people "a choice, not an echo." A think tank that consciously tries to hit the center between the two ends of the political spectrum will produce bland compromises rather than innovative solutions. And when the spectrum shifts, that think tank will have to recalibrate its target.

Our goal at Brookings is not to end up in any particular place on the political spectrum. Rather, it is to identify problems, study as many relevant factors as possible, recommend solutions, and spread those ideas to the widest possible set of audiences.

Some in the press feel compelled to cite a conservative and a liberal voice on every issue. But for think tanks that creates what I call the *Crossfire* trap, where organizations find themselves type-cast – or typecast themselves – on one end of the ideological spectrum. That's a trap we try to stay out when our scholars go onto TV talk shows or panel discussions at conferences. In our view, one criterion for the "ideal" think tank is unpredictability – not in the quality of the research, of course, but in the substance and direction of recommendations. Sometimes self-described liberals would like what the ideal think tank proposes; sometimes the cheers would come from the conservatives; sometimes neither would be happy; sometimes both would be. But in every case, the scholars would follow their research and analysis wherever it led them.

At the same time, the ideal think tank would ensure its relevance by remaining alert to emerging issues that pose major challenges to America and the world. It would look for imaginative, effective ways of putting ideas and recommendations into the mainstream of the debate and the policy process.

All this may sound self-serving, since we at Brookings see ourselves as being in this model. We strive to maintain the quality and independence of our products while constantly looking for ways to increase the impact of our research and, at the same time, making sure that what we do and how we do it is an antidote to political polarization. None of that means shying away from controversial recommendations if they reflect top-quality research.

Meeting all of these standards is a careful balancing act. It requires scholars who are able to speak cogently and convincingly to several audiences. Academics want to see quality analysis of the longer-term trends shaping public life. Policymakers look for crisp recommendations responsive to the political needs of the day. Journalists want all of this, in plain English … and on deadline. We at Brookings have to be careful about which of these needs we can appropriately meet, and when, and how – always letting our basic mission and standards be our guide in saying "yes" or "no" to opportunities that come along.

One last point: the challenges facing our country and our world are so daunting – and the collective resources of the entire think-tank community are so modest – that creating consistently high-quality, independent, and relevant research is in everyone's interest. That's why a number of my counterparts in other think tanks and I are looking for ways to shift the ratio of competition to collaboration in the direction of the latter.

That's how our role, our value and our impact serve not just to keep faith with Brookings's legacy, but also to guide us in our work and serve as an example for our colleagues on Think Tank Row.

Center for American Progress

John D. Podesta, CEO and President

Having founded the Center for American Progress in 2003, my vision of a twenty-first-century progressive think tank is distinctly shaped by the evolving political, media and activism landscape and the predominance of conservative ideas in modern society. While progressive principles and accomplishments endure – from Social Security and Medicare to racial justice and environmental protection – these past achievements must serve as platforms for innovation rather than cathedrals of worship if progressives hope to persuade the public that we are fit to lead. Progressives can no longer harbor the illusion that past ideals alone are sufficient for capturing the America's imagination.

The challenge for progressives is to both provide solutions to the greatest challenges facing our country and world and to communicate our ideas and values to policymakers and the public in a compelling manner. Think tanks play a vital role in challenging the rightward shift in American politics by providing intellectually sound policy ideas and philosophical principles for building a more progressive society. Our work at CAP, therefore, includes rigorous policy analysis and development, innovative communications and outreach, and direct activism and political engagement to help achieve these goals. This differs markedly from the traditional notion of a think tank as an outside university or a purely intellectual environment devoid of direct advocacy to achieve practical results.

Our goal at CAP has been threefold: (1) to develop a strong progressive vision grounded in core principles; (2) to translate those principles to policy solutions that address the needs of all Americans; and (3) to turn these ideas into action through innovative and engaging means of advocacy and communications. In terms of the think tank's mission, this includes developing new ideas across issue areas – for example, knitting an economic strategy with national security or developing fiscal policy with education, health care, and critical infrastructure investments in mind – in order to show the country where progressives want to take the world and what a larger progressive vision might look like.

It also includes working to create various kinds of networks and partners to both harvest good ideas and market new thinking. Traditional media, the Internet, grassroots groups, existing and new advocacy networks, policymakers at every level of government, young people on campuses, the faith community, academics and popular culture are all part of building a new twenty-first-century identity for "progressivism."

In addition to idea generation and dissemination, modern think tanks can serve to help build partnerships across the progressive community to sustain and grow a real movement. Think tanks should look to engage activists and thinkers across the progressive spectrum to help explore new ideas; to knit together our progressive narrative; to expand our collective communications capacity; to encourage coordination; and to continue in our entrepreneurial spirit.

In short, like conservative think tanks, progressive think tanks should engage with the broader progressive infrastructure to move ideas and the public. Think tanks can strengthen the progressive idea machine, help us win the battle of ideas, and create more progressive thinkers, activists, leaders and voters. Only then will the conditions be right for real policy change in the country.

The Center for National Policy

Tim Roemer, President

The emergence of think tanks as sources for ideas and forums for dialogue has had a profound impact on the American discourse on public policy. Fifty years ago, think tanks were a relatively minor contributor to national dialogue. Today, there are think tanks devoted to nearly every subject of policy inquiry, representing nearly all ideological viewpoints. Out of this panoply of voices, think tanks are making a difference in numerous ways.

The classic purpose of think tanks is the generation of policy ideas through advanced research. Policy practitioners in government are often overwhelmed with the implementation of policies or problems that arise from it – there is little time to sit back, reflect, research, and consider policy directions. Moreover, those in higher education are bound to the next class of incoming students; the private sector is bound to the bottom line; and journalists are bound to the next story. Analysts in think tanks, however, are bound, by and large, only to their next idea.

There are, of course, notable exceptions to these generalizations; however, think tanks fill a clear void: they provide a venue for experts to analyze and generate policy ideas free from distraction, so the former foreign-service officer can contemplate a better way of conducting relations with a particular country, or a medical expert can apply his or her expertise to an emerging epidemic, or an economist can examine ways to improve job creation. As public policy challenges have multiplied with the enlargement of government, the advancement of technology, and the onset of globalization, the need for think tanks has grown. Simply put, there are more policy problems to solve today than there were fifty years ago. Think tanks have proliferated to meet that demand.

Just consider the position of a member of Congress, or his or her staff, who in the course of a single day may be asked about the war in Iraq, the accessibility of prescription drugs, a separatist movement in Indonesia, the security of America's ports, and the threat from bird flu. No Congressional office can create that kind of expertise in-house; other governmental sources may be useful, but potentially biased or incomplete. Think tanks are natural places to turn: if you have a meeting later in the day on port security, a think tank that specializes in homeland security likely has a publication or an expert who can quickly help get government employees up-to-speed.

In addition to providing research, analysis and ideas, think tanks serve as forums for dialogue. Issues can be debated – privately, among experts, or publicly, in front of an audience. In this way, new ideas can be scrutinized, or conventional wisdom can be challenged. Different think tanks approach dialogue in different ways. For instance, an institution that adheres to a particular viewpoint can serve as a kind of ideological hub, so people who are generally in agreement can congregate, pool their knowledge, and hone their ideas.

Other institutions, which welcome all views, serve as venues for dialogue and debate, so that these differing approaches are tested against one another. They can also serve as vehicles for convening experts. For instance, many think tanks provide institutional support for task forces of experts that can be brought together on a temporary basis to analyze, debate, and reach consensus on a particularly relevant public policy challenge. Often, the recommendations of such a task force can serve as an impetus for policy action.

Think tanks also serve as venues for people to rollout a particular idea by presenting a paper, convening a conference, or delivering a speech. At the CNP, current and former high-ranking government officials often address public meetings to issue critiques of the sitting government's policies. For such speakers, who have extensive experience and provocative ideas, a think tank like CNP can be an ideal place to organize and present thoughts while reaching an influential audience. Within Washington, a powerful public presentation can turn some heads, slightly shifting the terms of the debate, and then rippling out to the public policy community.

While think tanks are often associated with Washington policy-making, they play an increasingly important role around the country. Cities across America have think tanks addressing everything from local governance to world affairs. And Washington institutions have a role to play around the country as well. For instance, the CNP is dedicated to taking the dialogue on national security to the American people. By reaching out and scheduling speeches and events around the country, an institution like CNP can help explain the currents of thinking in the nation's capitol, while also drawing on the diverse perspectives of the American people, and bringing those perspectives back to the dialogue in Washington.

It can be difficult to precisely measure a think tank's impact, in part because not all think tanks pursue similar ends. Some may seek to advance a particular point of view on an issue, while others aim to have a very direct impact on a certain piece of legislation. Others pursue

broader, less measurable, goals: advancing public understanding, stimulating debate, or serving as an educational resource for policymakers.

There are, however, certain metrics available. Some think tanks turn out large audiences for public meetings and events. Some hold well-attended briefings with policymakers, executive branch officials, Congressional staff, private sector consumers, and members of the media. Some churn out books, policy briefs, and opinion pieces that appear in local newspapers. Web sites, too, can play an important role, serving as a clearinghouse of information and expertise available at the think tank.

Human capital is perhaps the most important measure of impact. The leadership or staff of think tanks is sometimes comprised of visible figures, appearing in the press, and establishing themselves as leading voices on key matters of public policy. The scholars and fellows who pass through think tanks take their obtained expertise back into the halls of government, academia, journalism or business. In Washington and around the country, think tanks often serve as temporary homes for people or political parties that are out of power. Perhaps the most telling sign of a think tank's influence is the number of its veterans who hold important offices or responsibilities.

Because of these different methods of impact, it is perhaps useful to think of a think tank as a community. Within a particular think tank's walls, you will find gathered a group of staff, programs, and visiting experts. However, the daily operations of a think tank are only a starting point for a broader community: the board that provides support, direction and guidance; the veterans of a particular think tank who have carried their enhanced expertise to new pursuits; the publications that have stirred and altered debate on a particular issue; and the students and citizens who silently join the community of a particular think tank every time they visit its website, read an article by one of its experts, or attend one of its events.

Think tanks are a vital component to civil society and democratic debate. Indeed, the very success of think tanks has made it more difficult to generalize about them: each serves a different purpose and brings a different expertise to bear. As the twenty-first century progresses, and modes of acquiring knowledge and sharing information become even more widely accessible, there is no doubt that think tanks will play an increasingly important role in understanding our world and in shaping its future.

Center for Strategic and International Studies

John J. Hamre, President and CEO

Where do new ideas enter consideration in America's form of constitutional government? Bureaucracies do not invent new ideas. They elaborate old ones. In our system of government, new ideas come in through the political offices – the political appointees in the executive branch and the Congress. Policy innovation comes through political interaction and competition. But where to politicians get new ideas? Many sources, obviously, but certainly think tanks. Think tanks become important incubators of policy innovation. This historic role has become more important during the last ten years in Washington. Politics has become brittle. Battles are more important than compromise and outcome. The Congress is so evenly divided that politicians endlessly battle each other, but neither side wants to make mistakes. And that means that policy innovation is limited.

It is in this context that think tanks find their full measure. The CSIS is committed to undertake strategic planning for the US government. We cannot do it across the board, of course, but we seriously consider this our role in our traditional areas of expertise. And we find the government is the very willing recipient of this strategic thinking. We can devote the time in a detached manner to assess problems and potential solutions in a deliberative and bipartisan manner. We produce the starting point for the policy innovation that must be refined and adopted in the political offices of government

Council on Foreign Relations

Richard N. Haass, President

Think tanks are among the most important and least appreciated influences on US foreign policy. A distinctively American phenomenon, independent policy research institutions have shaped US global engagement for nearly 100 years. But because think tanks conduct much of their work outside the media spotlight, they garner less attention than other sources of US policy – the jostling of interest groups, the maneuvering between political parties, and the rivalry among branches of government. Despite this relatively low profile, think tanks affect American foreign policymakers by generating original ideas and options for policy, by supplying a ready pool of experts for employment in government, by offering venues for high-level discussions, and by educating US citizens about the world.

Think tanks are independent institutions organized to conduct research and policy-relevant knowledge. They fill a critical void between the academic world and the government. Within universities, research is frequently driven by arcane theoretical and methodological debates only distantly related to real policy dilemmas. Within government, officials immersed in the concrete demands of day-to-day policy-making are often too busy to take a step back and reconsider the broader trajectory of US policy. Think tanks help bridge this gap between the worlds of ideas and action.

More than 1,200 think tanks dot the American political landscape. They are a heterogeneous lot, varying in scope, funding, mandate, and location. Some focus on particular functional areas or regions. Others cover the foreign policy waterfront. Several think tanks have large endowments and accept little or no official funding; others receive most of their income from contract work, while a few are maintained almost entirely by government funds. In some instances, think tanks double as activist nongovernmental organizations.

The greatest impact of think tanks (as befits their name) is in generating "new thinking" that affects the way US decision-makers perceive and respond to the world. Original insights can alter conceptions of US national interests, influence the ranking of priorities, provide roadmaps for action, mobilize political and bureaucratic coalitions, and shape the design of lasting institutions. It is not easy, however, to grab the attention of busy policymakers already immersed in information. To do so, think tanks need to exploit multiple channels and marketing strategies – publishing articles, books, and occasional papers; appearing regularly on television and radio, op-ed-pages, and in newspaper stories; and producing reader-friendly issue briefs, fact-sheets, and web pages. Small meetings with executive branch officials and members of congress, as well as Congressional hearings, provide another opportunity to influence policy.

Certain historical junctures present exceptional opportunities to inject new thinking into the foreign policy arena. The years after World War II offered one such instance. Following the war's outbreak, CFR launched a massive War and Peace Studies project to explore the desirable foundations of postwar peace. The participants in this effort ultimately produced 682 memoranda for the State Department on topics ranging from the occupation of Germany to the creation of the United Nations. Two years after the end of the war, the Council's marquee journal, *Foreign Affairs*, published an anonymous article on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." The article, authored by US diplomat George Kennan, helped establish the intellectual foundation for the

containment policy the United States would pursue for the next four decades. In 1993, *Foreign Affairs* published Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations," a seminal contribution to the debate surrounding American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Since 9/11, studies by the CFR and other think tanks have contributed to discussions within the government over strategies and organizations needed to confront the terrorist threat at home and abroad.

Think tanks also provide a steady stream of experts to serve in administrations and on Congressional staffs. This function is critical in the American political system. In the United States, each transition brings a turnover of thousands of mid-level and senior executive branch personnel. Think tanks help presidents and cabinet secretaries fill these positions. Following his election in 1976, Jimmy Carter staffed his administration with numerous individuals from the Brookings Institution and the CFR. Four years later, Ronald Reagan turned to other think tanks, including Heritage, the Hoover Institution, and the AEI, to serve as his brain trust.

The current Bush administration has followed a similar pattern in staffing the upper echelons of its foreign policy apparatus. Within the State Department, senior officials with think tank backgrounds include the Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, Paula Dobriansky, previously senior vice-president and director of the CFR's Washington office, and the ambassador to the United Nations, John R. Bolton, formerly vice-president of AEI. At the Pentagon, Peter W. Rodman assumed his position as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs after directing national security programs at the Nixon Center.

Having divided my career between government service and think tanks, I can testify to the insights to be gained by combining ideas and practice. Over the past quarter century, I have alternated stints at the National Security Council, the Defense and State Departments, and on Capitol Hill with time at Brookings, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and the Carnegie Endowment, before taking up my current post as President of the CFR.

Think tanks also provide departing officials with institutional settings in which they can share insights gleaned from government service, remain engaged in pressing foreign policy debates, and constitute an informal shadow foreign affairs establishment. This "revolving door" is unique to the United States, and a source of its strength. In most other countries one finds a strict division between career government officials and outside analysts. Not so in America.

A third contribution of think tanks is to offer policymakers venues in

which to build consensus. As a rule, no major foreign policy initiative can be sustained unless it enjoys a critical base of support within the broad foreign policy community. Among think tanks, the non-partisan CFR has been particularly adept at this convening role, hosting hundreds of meetings annually in New York, Washington, and major cities around the country. For US officials, events at major think tanks offer non-partisan settings to announce new initiatives, explain current policy, and launch trial balloons. For visiting foreign dignitaries, the opportunity to appear before prominent think tank audiences provides access to influential segments of the US foreign policy establishment.

Even as they convene elites, think tanks enrich America's broader civic culture by educating US citizens about the nature of the world. The accelerating pace of globalization has made this outreach function more important than ever. As the world becomes more integrated, global events and forces are touching the lives of average Americans. Whether the issue is ensuring foreign markets for farm exports, tracking the spread of infectious diseases, protecting US software from piracy abroad, ensuring the safety of American tourists overseas, or safeguarding our ports against terrorist infiltration, the US public has a growing stake in foreign policy. Think tanks scattered around the United States provide valuable forums in which millions of adults can discuss international events.

Founded in 1921, the CFR is a hybrid organization that exemplifies the many ways think tanks influence foreign policy. The Council has established itself as a world-class think tank, with research focusing on American grand strategy, reform in the Islamic world, and global governance as well as critical regions and countries. Council-sponsored Independent Task Forces serve as de facto bipartisan commissions that offer much needed analysis and prescription on the most pressing and often controversial foreign policy challenges facing the country. The Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies shows how economic and political forces interact to influence world affairs.

The Council also develops and provides talent through several conduits. The term member program affords an opportunity for more than 500 individuals between the ages of 30 and 36 to increase their knowledge of world developments. The Council's fellowship programs merge talented individuals with unique skills and experience into the Council community so that they can advance their professional development. Fellows from the military services and the worlds of intelligence, diplomacy, and journalism broaden their understanding of foreign relations by spending a year in residence at the Council. The International Affairs Fellowship enables select individuals from the

private sector to serve in a policy-oriented environment while permitting government officials on leave to study issues in a scholarly atmosphere free from operational pressure.

New York, Washington, and National meetings programs offer individual and corporate members the chance to exchange ideas with influential policymakers, business leaders, and opinion-shapers. One example is the Council's "history makers" series, where individuals who have made a unique contribution to foreign policy are invited to share their personal experiences and reflect on the important lessons to be learned from critical junctures in foreign policy. Other meeting series include "Iraq: The Way Forward," "Religion and Foreign Policy," and "The Nexus of Science and Foreign Policy."

The Council furthermore engages and educates the public through its state-of-the-art website, cfr.org. Unlike most think tank sites, cfr.org is not limited to in-house material. Instead, it is a guide to the best information and analysis of the most important international developments, regardless of whether it is written at the Council or at another institution. Researchers scour the Internet and written material from other think tanks, government agencies, educational institutions, and NGOs to deliver the widest range of high-quality information and insight. Additionally, cfr.org's editorial team writes original content for the site relating to the top international news stories of the day.

The Henry L. Stimson Center

Ellen Laipson, President and CEO

Think tanks, or public policy research centers, are an integral part of the political process in most democratic countries. They live, of course, almost entirely in the nongovernmental sector, but they have evolved from semi-academic institutions that opine on matters of government policy to real actors in the give and take between government and civil society that is characteristic of the globalized, integrated world in which we live. Think tanks are not passive observers, they help shape the public conversation about official policymaking, and their impact and value must be assessed with this more dynamic concept in mind.

Think tanks play a variety of bridging roles, in their capacity as "knowledge brokers." Increasingly, think tanks serve as a bridge between the government and academia, by knowing how to organize public policy issues into analyzable topics, and by translating academic work into the language of the policy process. This requires think tanks to build teams who, collectively or individually, have who both

academic credentials and government experience. Think tanks also provide a bridge between the media and the government, helping feed the media with in-depth understanding of current issues so they can ask tougher questions, and, in the other direction, helping government get out its message by providing for officials to explain current policies to public audiences. Think tanks also sometimes facilitate or participate indirectly in relations between the executive and legislative branches, in the US case, by helping educate members of Congress on key issues and providing them independent sources of information from what they would otherwise receive from the executive branch. Lastly, think tanks serve as a bridge between government and citizens who have an interest in what government does, by translating government initiatives into concepts and language that are accessible to concerned citizens.

It is true that think tanks in the United States may be more numerous, larger, and more diverse than in most other democracies, but certain key features are shared, and this essay attempts to focus on the commonalities, and the potential for all think tanks to play constructive and important roles in the development of public policy. Think tanks vary in whether they advertise their political preferences openly, or opt for a more implicit association with a set of values and principles that may resonate with one side of a debate more than another. In some cases, think tanks become such passionate advocates for a policy preference that they are seen as ideologically driven, less open to a fair debate where competing ideas are vetted and scrutinized. Nonetheless, most American think tanks pride themselves on working for the public good, examining each issue with an open mind, and being willing to work with incumbent power for a common goal of better policy.

In the information age, think tanks have had to adapt their techniques and styles to a faster paced dissemination of ideas and commentary, at some cost. An old tradition of publishing books, quarterly journals or newsletters, and other print materials has given way to more frequent interaction with audiences via email, websites, meetings by teleconference, and to a higher priority for op-eds as a venue for publishing new ideas or quick reactions to current events, rather than longer research products. The pressure to be part of the news cycle, to be available to comment on daily news and government action, risks diminishing the quality and enduring value of think tanks' contribution to public policy. It pushes smart experts to spend more time responding to press queries and less time on the "thinking" part of think tank work.

Think tanks also play an informal role in international diplomacy and in the interactions between societies and governments across national boundaries. In a capitol city like Washington, for example,

think tanks are invited to brief visiting foreign officials by that country's embassy, and to help visitors understand and anticipate what may be said in official meetings. American think tanks also bring their work to cities where foreign governments are well represented because of a United Nations presence, such as New York, Geneva, and Vienna. Think tanks in diverse countries help each other, and raise the level of sophistication of analysis and insight into how foreign governments think and act. In this way, think tanks are part of an open-ended form of track two diplomacy.

There is one more function of think tanks that some may believe is a central purpose but is really an unintended byproduct. In democratic societies with real alternation of power, after an election, there are lots of smart and experienced policymakers looking for work. Some are so attached to the policy game that they do not want to return to life in a law firm or family business that may have preceded their time in government. Think tanks provide a refuge for former government officials where they can reflect on their experience, evaluate and critique their opponents' performance, and even prepare for their next turn in government. For the party out of power, think tanks can be useful laboratories for alternative policy ideas and to nurture and season the human talent that will move into policy positions if elections bring an opposition party into power. In that way, think tanks can serve as the incubators for governments in waiting, even if there is a bipartisan or nonpartisan leadership and identity to the institution.

Funders who support think tanks constantly look for effective metrics to evaluate their impact. Sometimes a success story is clear and simple; an idea that was incubated in a think tank is embraced by government and becomes official policy. Early concepts of arms control and the post-Cold War program of Cooperative Threat Reduction (eliminating Soviet era stockpiles and finding gainful civilian employment for former weapons scientists) are examples of think tanks' contributions to lasting government policies. Sometimes think tanks work over a long period of time to develop new and different approaches to enduring problems, such as funding social security or improving public health surveillance systems, and these ideas may germinate and make their way into the thinking of government officials slowly and incrementally. Long after a discrete project on a topic finishes its work, the ideas it produces may make their way into legislation or public policy. Radical reform of the welfare system and promoting democratic change in the Middle East are two examples from the recent past of ideas that germinated in think tanks as politically impractical until a political leader was ready to take a risk.

But more often, a more indirect measure of impact must be used. Think tanks add value to the democratic process by educating the public, press and legislature, but the immediate or direct impact of that contribution cannot always be measured concretely. Or, as the old adage goes, success has many parents. Think tanks operate transparently, and provide platforms for lots of smart people to collaborate informally over the challenges facing government, and how to solve policy problems. A good idea can emerge from that process, without a clear provenance. But the fact of the think tanks' activity created the environment for a policy solution to be found.

Think tanks in sum are an increasingly integral part of the architecture of public policymaking. Despite their nongovernmental status, they are intimately part of governance, from generating new ideas to offering criticism and evaluation of government performance. Democracies cannot thrive on formal institutional mechanisms alone, and think tanks, as part of the robust civil society sector, contribute meaningfully to the quality of democratic practice and the content of its policies.

The Heritage Foundation

Edwin Feulner, President

The concept of a think tank began as a uniquely American institution. And although research institutions have proliferated throughout the world, their importance to the American government, and the ideas that help the government run, remains unmatched by any other nation. They have grown from a few scattered organizations with limited funding into a vast network operating at international, national, state, and local levels.

The rise of the American think tanks over the past century altered both the origins of and the accuracy of ideas; ideas that US policymakers now depend on in order to progress and reflect the opinions of American citizens. Originally formed as an outgrowth of progressivism and the scientific management movement, think tanks grew to provide more technical expertise for the government during the Cold War internationally and the domestic War on Poverty through organizations such as the Brookings Institution, RAND Corporation and the AEI.

Today, think tanks like the Heritage Foundation have further developed unique roles as idea factories that drive political discussion and Congressional legislation by providing principled research and specific policy proposals. In fact, so much has their role progressed that the *Economist* credits think tanks with supplanting the university as

the primary source of policy ideas, saying "Rather than looking to Oxford or Harvard, governments have looked to think tanks such as the Institute of Economic Affairs in London and the Heritage Foundation in the United States."

And that is what we hope happens – that policymakers in Washington in the executive branch and particularly on Capitol Hill will look to us for new policy ideas that can no longer be produced by an academic world out of touch with the American public, and frankly, out of touch with mainstream ideas. The phenomenon of left-wing fanatics overrunning most of the Academy has actually boosted the need for attentive think tanks in a significant way. When it comes to political philosophy, the modern American academy presents a grim front of uniformity – an almost religious orthodoxy of left-liberal hegemony. That ought to trouble thoughtful people on both the right and the left.

Prof. Stanley Rothman of Smith College examined the politics of more than 1,600 college faculties at almost 200 schools. He found that in "all faculty departments, including business and engineering, academics were over five times as likely to be liberals as conservatives." In fact, he determined that a leftist political viewpoint was almost as important a factor in hiring decisions as tangible academic achievements, such as publications and awards. Hence, think tanks permitting diverse views are where the best and brightest are now employed.

When I joined The Heritage Foundation as a board member in 1973 and then as its president and CEO in 1977, I set out to develop an organization that could influence the policy discussion as it was occurring. We set out to deliver credible, timely and concise information to a specific target audience, primarily the US Congress and Congressional staff aides. We opted to run Heritage like a business, and due to its success, our model has now become the industry standard.

Over time, as Heritage grew in size and influence, and as our model was emulated at other think tanks, the entire American think tank community has grown in influence. Add to that the rise of cable news and the 24-hour newsroom, and suddenly we see experts from think tanks being interviewed almost non-stop. Kenneth S. Baer, former speechwriter for Al Gore, said that advocacy think tanks, and specifically The Heritage Foundation,

> … work so well because they bring policy, political, and communications people together all under one roof. They rapidly respond to the other side's message of the day. They develop policy alternatives. And they actively sell both to the media and to allies in government.

If you are a reporter with a tight deadline, what better place can you go to get a good quote, and, hopefully, a good idea, than a think tank with a score of more of policy experts all under the same roof?

The trend for think tanks in the United States is moving toward multiplication, localization, and specialization. Our Resource Bank at The Heritage Foundation lists in its annual Guide to Public Policy Experts and Institutions, over 200 think tanks operating in Washington, DC and 350 think tanks in the United States as a whole. The established think tanks, such as AEI, Brookings, Cato, and Heritage, are also growing larger, with several new think tanks on the left trying to compete (the Center for American Progress, Moveon.org, etc.) As our institutions grow and multiply, the successful think tanks must become less dependent on large individual contributors. One of Heritage's secrets is that we can boast voluntary support from more than 200,000 individual donors every year.

Ideas, as the late Senator Daniel Moynihan reminded us, represent the raw product from which all policy decisions are made. When The Heritage Foundation first brought up Social Security reform in the late 1970s, it was regarded as the "third rail" of American politics. We could have just left it at that and moved onto another topic. Instead we continued to fight for the issue, until eventually it became a mainstream issue and our proposals became significant alternatives. And although it has not been resolved, at least now politicians in Washington and citizens across America can discuss it openly. Our persistence in approaching lawmakers and getting our message out through the media, after planting the initial seed corn, played a big role in that. Think tanks now regularly promote this research through marketing, publications, websites, and other means that can increase the exposure of their ideas to government and to the people.

Now that think tanks have appeared all across America, politicians must take notice; maybe they could ignore us when they were solely a Washington phenomenon, but politicians across the spectrum will commit political suicide if they shun our role now. Organizations provide a constant stream of information and prescriptions that can give lawmakers easily-read material that has influenced policy and will continue to do so. Think tank briefs are now required reading among Hill staffers, members of the media, and the congresspersons themselves because they provide the quickest way to gain understanding of a particular issue.

I do wonder about the new think thanks, and particularly those on the left. Some of their leaders have been quoted as saying they wanted to start another Heritage Foundation for the left, but I question if they

have the power to do so. The war of ideas is truly a war of ideas, not a war of money, and not simply a war of sound bites and press releases. Funding of course plays a huge role in getting your ideas out, but if all you have is a lot of money to buy airtime and no good ideas, the American public won't pay attention to you. I think often times people in Washington underestimate the resiliency and the intellect of the American public. They think that all wisdom resides on the banks of the Potomac and that they know the only reasonable solution to a problem. Only time will tell if the new generation of think tanks can truly compete by generating sound policy ideas that will be seen as real options across our land.

Hoover Institution, Stanford University

John Raisian, Director

Before the 1970s, the think tank was an obscure and exotic entity, conjuring up images in the popular mind of disembodied brains cogitating away. Though the embryonic beginnings of the Hoover and Brookings institutions span back to the Woodrow Wilson era, it was not until the immediate post-World-War-II era that the term "think tank" came into existence. For years after the war, most think tanks were largely dedicated to advising the federal government on some aspect of military or foreign policy, further lending them an exotic air of secrecy and elitism.

In the twenty-first century, think tanks, once rare, have become a sector. They have also gone "prime time," involved in every aspect of public policy and the national debate. The major think tanks may still not be household words, but they are known to millions of people, and feed data and arguments directly to those who are interested in, and charged with, public policy formation. In short, the think tank sector of today provides the grist for the national debate on every governance issue of societal consequence.

A few years ago, some foundations, donors and journalists wondered aloud if there were too many think tanks – allegedly more than 2,000 exist today. We've since come around to deeper questions: What is the role of the think tank today? Does it create value? Does it have an impact, or is it an insular debating society?

While some think tanks are shrill political "hit" squads that exist for the sole purpose of advancing the special pleading of a narrow interest group, for the most part, think tanks – regardless of their ideological orientation – must produce quality research on issues of broad interest,

or they will cease to flourish. A think tank, after all, can only pay scholars/analysts and publish materials if it can persuade foundations, donors and subscribers to support it financially. No one wants to pay for research that is derivative, sloppy, or poorly organized. And no think tank has prospered by doing so.

The winners in this market are organized in ways that reflect the intended reach of their ambitions. The proliferation of state-based think tanks in the United States bespeaks of an ambition to contribute to the well-being of citizens therein and make states true laboratories for observing diverse approaches to public policy formation and dialogue. Other think tanks have ambitions of shaping national policy. Some are geared to focus on selected industry. Others seek to reform policies within developing countries. Some are oriented toward specific topical areas, from economic to political to social concerns, covering domestic and foreign landscapes.

There are other, less obvious organizing principles. Some think tanks are organized broadly around prominent individual scholars, and some much more focused on specific policy initiatives using a diverse group of analysts. Consider Robert Conquest, the Hoover Institution senior fellow, a recent recipient of the presidential medal of freedom, and a scholar who redeemed one of the most consequential and moving stories of the twentieth century from obscurity, that of Stalin's Great Terror. What is the Hoover Institution's directive to Robert Conquest? It is to continue to be Robert Conquest. By selecting a range of scholars with a diversity of interests, we naturally manage to produce incisive research on our institutional initiatives, ranging from economic and education policy, to the rule of law, to government performance, to American culture and values, to democratic capitalism as a societal ideology, and to global security and cooperation. We assemble teams of scholars from within and outside of Stanford University to address collective concerns and interests. Yet each individual scholar has an individual agenda, choosing where to participate, and what kind of inquiry to pursue.

Other think tanks, with an equally valid approach, carve out more precise issue areas and assemble teams to produce research and opinion on such topics. While the final products do acknowledge individuals, the identity of the efforts is focused more on the think tank and its shared approach to an issue.

A relatively few think tanks, like the Hoover Institution, have prospered by making the most of an institutional connection with a great university. There is great synergy and complementarity to be exploited from such proximity. Hoover is part of Stanford University.

Dozens of our current 100+ scholars hold joint appointments with other departments of the University. Many others have courtesy relationships – that is, Hoover fellows teaching occasionally in academic settings, and Stanford professors participating in Hoover's policy research enterprise. Hoover's own library and archives, available to all of Stanford, stored on-site within 25 miles of shelving, covering materials on political, economic and social change in modern times, when combined with the wealth of information available within Stanford's eminent library collections, provide Hoover scholars a world-class information resource. The combination of Hoover's public policy orientation and Stanford's academic standing has proven to be a powerful blend.

Of course, there is another breakdown for the categorization of think tanks, perhaps the most important one of all – ideology. Needless to say, the "i" word can have a negative connotation these days. A famous economist once said that ideology is a substitute for thought. Like many maxims, it is too sweeping a judgment. Though some public policy think tanks advertise themselves as resolutely non-ideological, most that grapple with the deepest problems in American society adopt a broad, ideological approach in some form – conservative, liberal, "third way," whatever. Some adopt ideologies that are rather partisan and narrow, and others adopt an orientation that is more philosophic and liberating. Ideology provides a framework for thinking about issues within the defined boundaries as stipulated in mission statements.

To illustrate, with reference to a "free-market" think tank, such an ideological orientation is not a substitute for thought. It is a framework for thinking about a problem with the aide of an ideological compass. Alternatively, if one believes in the efficacy of government, the directed thinking amounts to devising a new or modified government program and backing it with appropriate public spending, implicitly dismissing free-market alternatives. It can be challenging to devise and convince society that market solutions for pressing public issues are better than government solutions, and vice versa. Whether the ideology is free-market or better government, the notion is that legitimate thinking is required within the adopted framework, and not resorting to a mantra of mere dismantling of markets or government. The challenge is to devise and propose alternatives to the status quo within the chosen ideology, choices for society and its governing representatives to consider for future implementation.

My Hoover colleague, Milton Friedman, recently opined that after World War II, intellectual opinion was socialist – defined as government

ownership and operation of the means of production – and practice was free-market and limited-government. Milton's view is that intellectual opinion has distinctly moved away from collectivism and toward limited government, though the practice of government has nearly tripled over sixty years, as measured by government spending as a share of national income, thus leading Milton to conclude that practice has become more socialist. Whether opinion can line up with practice is a conundrum, and think tanks will likely have an opportunity to play a prominent role in the future evolution of this struggle.

Hoover's ideology is broad and philosophical – ideas defining a free society. Our scholars are oriented to promote individual freedom, economically, politically and socially. There is skepticism of proposed government solutions to society's challenges, especially those that involve a government industry to manage such solutions. We are steeped in an intellectual environment that relies on democratic capitalism as avenues toward achieving peace and prosperity.

Ideological labels are commonplace, some of which are self-imposed, many others of which are bestowed externally. Hoover is known as "conservative", though I would personally prefer the term "classically liberal," a descriptor that emphasizes individual liberty over collective value-laden pronouncements of elites for all. Labels can be misleading, as they are adjectives that vary in the eye of the beholder. Nonetheless they are reality, and not necessarily detrimental, as they can contribute to the productive dialogue of societal options.

What, then, is the value of the modern think tank? It is to educate a broader public about prevailing public policy issues, and to generate and propose novel solutions to policy dilemmas. The policymakers themselves – the men and women in the arena – are busy people, with limits to which they can research relevant details and internally solve problems. Thus, there is an opportunity for think tanks to contribute to the process of solving problems that prevail. But can we reach them? This is an ongoing significant challenge.

Does the think tank have impact? There is a risk here that any given think tank community will spend its time confirming the accepted wisdom of its own constituents by preaching to the faithful. Comfortable isolation is the occupational danger of a think tank.

Can we get out of our comfort zone and engage larger, more skeptical audiences? Hoover struggles against this tendency by reaching out to the broader public with published opinions and editorials, with invitations to media to engage in institutional activities as visiting fellows, with efforts to secure opportunities for scholars to disseminate using the air waves, with a huge effort to communicate via the Internet to any

public seeking our views, by targeting crisply written publications to opinion and policy leaders, and by inviting controversy in our symposia with diverse views from other prominent voices. The ultimate success or failure of the think tank sector will rely on its ability to break through the white noise of current events portrayed in the media, which can unduly influence the political leadership as part of any effort to openly evaluate ideas of all kinds in an effort to engage in constructive dialogue, particularly in times when popular opinion seems so overwhelmingly influential and limiting to alternative thinking.

The late Peter Drucker once pronounced, "A think tank's job is to change minds." Further, Thomas Jefferson used the term of "eternal vigilance" when thinking about preserving the ideals of America. Arguably, the job of think tanks is, with eternal vigilance, to endeavor to change the minds of society toward its betterment.

Hudson Institute

Herbert London, President

Government policy is generally an amalgam of ideas put through the cauldron of a committee process and hammered into shape through a system of logrolling and back scratching. What actually emerges from the corridors of Congress faintly resembles the original idea. But democracy, as James Madison noted, depends on the unfolding of competing interests.

There is a question that remains largely unaddressed: What is the origin of policy ideas? Clearly members of the Congress have the ability to initiate proposals, but they rarely do. Authors can start the ball rolling with policy prescriptions and that sometimes works. However, the institution overlooked by most, that is often a catalyst for reform is the think tank, policy center with an eye on change.

There isn't any reason to believe that tea leaves at think tanks are any more refined than those found in kitchens across America. However, they concentrate on issues others either ignore or haven't had the opportunity to consider. Think tanks exist to concentrate on questions and offer suggestions.

Think tanks are also places generally resistant to ideological bias or recognize that bias as the basis for its prescription. CATO, for example, makes no pretense to be anything but a libertarian center. Its policy proposals are invariably consonant with its stated ideology. Hudson Institute, by contrast, is not driven by ideology other than a bias in favor of the free market. As a consequence, it has had fellows in favor

of the war in Iraq and fellows opposed to it. It has had a fellow testify in behalf of Microsoft during its court proceedings and one who testified against Microsoft. One might describe this concept as intentional idea competition.

Contrast, however, the think tanks with universities that have imposed a left wing ideological bias on its faculty through a tenure system that often applies a political litmus test for acceptance. Think tanks tend to be more independent, even when they rely on foundation support.

In order to ensure reality tests for think tanks' proposals, there is a temptation to hire those who have had government experience. This doesn't mean that experience is always a valid guide for policy prescription, but it is one of several tests that are usually considered.

There is a difference between ideas and implementation. While most think tanks consider their role as propagators of ideas, there are several that work to put ideas into action.

As an example, Hudson Institute not only proposed a shift in welfare from culture of dependency to one of work, it actually played a role in managing the Wisconsin welfare agency responsible for this policy revision. One might assume that promoting ideas and seeing them through to implementation would go together like a hand and glove, but this is rarely the case.

Think tanks are a refuge for ideas in the manner of the government's strategic oil reserve. To cite one case, the flat tax is an idea first floated by Milton Friedman a half century ago. It has been embraced by Heritage and CATO as sensible policy. It has been stored in the archives of these esteemed organizations. When someone like Steve Forbes disinters the idea for future policy consideration, the arguments are there, ready for legislative debate.

Whether the ideas are sensible or not, tested or not, think tanks can be a national resource simply by raising ideas no one is likely to propose. If independence from government can be maintained – a sometimes-difficult chore – think tanks can be useful laboratories on which officials can rely.

It would be a mistake to overestimate the role of think tanks in American life and an even bigger mistake to underestimate their importance. They operate in a shadowy region of policy formation, usually behind the scenes but with the ammunition promoters require to win an argument. If think tanks didn't now exist they would probably have to be invented. Since they do exist, we should attempt to understand their role and appreciate their value.

Institute for International Economics

Fred Bergsten, Director

The mission of serious, independent, non-ideological think tanks is to constructively affect policy in the United States and in other countries. They can do this only by combining the four fundamental components of intelligent think-tank operation.

First, all policy proposals must be based on objective and balanced in-depth analysis. This requires consideration of all responsible points of view and dispassionate appraisal of the relevant data. It must be prepared by skilled and credible analysts, hopefully with sufficient reputations to be listened to attentively.

Second, these proposals must be presented in policy-relevant formats that are readily accessible to key decision makers (in governments, parliaments, international organizations and/or the broader policy communities that in turn affect decisions). The most brilliant and compelling ideas are largely useless if they are not communicated in an intelligible, and hopefully attractive, manner.

Third, the resulting publication(s) must be steered into the hands of the targeted audiences on a timely basis. They do little good sitting on a shelf. They lose much of their impact if they are conveyed too late or, almost as fatal, too early with respect to the decision-making timetable. It is thus of critical importance to be able to assess the likely emergence of an issue onto the policy agenda so that the analysis will be presented when needed.

Fourth, the written analyses and recommendations need to be buttressed and magnified through direct explanation and advocacy by the authoring scholar and institution. Multiple outreach effects can be garnered, in particular, through media and other third-party coverage.

This is of course an idealized set of criteria for achieving the basic goals of a think tank. Conditions in the real world seldom permit full application of the model.

In one notable case, however, our Institute for International Economics was able to closely approximate the model in practice. The issue was Senate consideration of legislation to place import quotas on steel in the summer of 1999. The House of Representatives had already passed the bill and the White House alerted us to their fears that it could also win Senate approval and become law (even over a presidential veto). We believe it is fair to say that, following the four-part strategy outlined, the Institute was able to play an important role in demonstrating the shortcomings of the bill and thus in its defeat.

First, our Senior Fellow Gary Hufbauer had done extensive in-depth analysis of the impact on the US economy of restrictions on steel trade. His initial modeling and quantitative estimates were presented as one of the many sectoral case studies in Measuring the Costs of Trade Protectionism in the United States, which we published in 1994. The steel import issue resurfaced periodically over succeeding years and Hufbauer updated his assessment on several occasions, relating it to the different specific proposals as they emerged. Hence his data and policy context were constantly refreshed and applied to the evolving policy debate.

Second, I sensed after House passage of the quota legislation in March 1999 that the decisive debate would occur in the Senate within the next few months. Hence I asked Hufbauer to apply his well-developed methodology to the pending bill in order to assess its impact on US producers and workers, US consumers and steel-using industries, and major supplying countries. Because of his previous in-depth research and subsequent updates, he and his team of research assistants were able to do so quickly and efficiently. The most striking finding was that fewer than 2,000 jobs would be saved by quotas that would cost each American consumer an average of $800,000 per year – which became the one-line lead by opponents of the legislation. We released the new results as an Institute Policy Brief several weeks before the climactic Senate vote.

Third, we conveyed copies of the new Policy Brief to all key members of the Administration, Senators and their staffs, and the media. The opponents of the bill were thus able to use Hufbauer's brief as their text in demonstrating its huge costs and limited benefits, and the Senate leaders did so extensively in the floor debate.

Fourth, virtually every leading newspaper in the country cited and featured our analysis in their stories on the bill on the morning that it came to the floor of the Senate. Several of them included in-depth interviews with Hufbauer and myself as well. A number of editorials echoed the key numbers in opposing passage. Public attention was thus called to the exceedingly poor benefit–cost ratio of the proposal and most papers editorialized strongly against it.

Despite the fears of the White House on the eve of the vote that the bill would pass, it was rejected handily. Determinants of Congressional votes (or any other policy decisions) are of course very difficult, if not impossible, to discern even with painstaking historical research. We were told by many direct participants in the process, however, that our analysis and especially its communication to the right places at the right time had a major, perhaps decisive, impact.

I would reiterate that few instances occur where it is possible for a think tank to carry out its mission as successfully as in this particular case. The example does demonstrate that doing so is possible, however, and many less ideal though still effective examples of think-tank impact can be identified. I hope this rendition, and particularly the specific example, are helpful for your analysis.

Institute for Policy Studies

John Cavanagh, Director

The Institute for Policy Studies was founded in 1963 as an innovative center to turn ideas into action for peace, justice, and the environment. Since then, thousands of IPS fellows and interns have created hundreds of projects to channel frustration over injustice, violence, corruption, and other corrosive realities into dynamic campaigns for constructive public policies. Many IPS projects have fostered new progressive organizations.

Today, IPS contributes to the struggle for a genuine democracy through seven overlapping activities:

1 convening new networks and coalitions across sectors and issues and borders;
2 catalyzing and empowering social movements through research;
3 incubating projects and "social experiments" that become new organizations;
4 responding rapidly to new developments and crises;
5 fostering realistic alternatives;
6 building bridges from the advocacy community to progressive academics;
7 training leaders.

Too often, progressive forces in the United States compete more than they collaborate. Hence, the billions of dollars that flow into progressive groups rarely add up to the sum of their parts.

IPS Fellows and staff have spent decades building relationships of trust with other research groups along with hundreds of organizations of environmentalists, workers, faith communities, farmers, women, students, civil rights advocates and others who campaign for peace and justice. Hence, key IPS staffers have a unique convening power that helps catalyze new social movements, and often helps groups add up to more than the sum of their parts.

TWO EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATE THIS COMMITMENT:

Peace: In October 2002, IPS Fellows were central to the convening of what became United for Peace and Justice, the largest coalition opposing the Iraq war, now with over 1000 member organizations. After helping with the convening, IPS staff continued to support UFPJ by serving on its governing bodies, fundraising, designing and implementing a plan to link it with local elected officials, writing talking points and other educational pamphlets, hosting several strategic meetings for members, and providing communications expertise for large events of the coalition. IPS's Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights awards also gave great prominence in 2004 to peace organizing among military families, and IPS has continued to assist and advise several of the military family and Iraq veterans groups. An IPS-sponsored teach-in on the war was broadcast on C-SPAN. DVDs of this teach-in were circulated to student activists around the country.

Globalization: Since the early 1990s, IPS has served as a strategic meeting place for groups across borders that have opposed corporate-led globalization and that have proposed alternatives. IPS convened the first large gathering of Canadian, Mexican, and US groups to address the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement in the early 1990s. Later, IPS helped found and lead the International Forum on Globalization, and it has played a key role in citizen networks across the Western Hemisphere. Currently, IPS's Sustainable Energy project is convening groups in North and Latin America to work with parliamentarians on gaining greater democratic input into the multilateral development banks that exercise such a huge impact over people's lives.

In addition to peace and globalization, IPS staffers play key roles in convening groups on energy, nuclear waste, drug policy, the United Nations, ecotourism, foreign policy, domestic slavery, and other issues. In each of these, IPS brings not only its long-standing relationship with an international array of civil society actors, but also its long-term relationship with the 61-member Congressional Progressive Caucus, and with a growing network of local elected officials and activists through Cities for Progress.

At a time when much of the progressive movement remains alarmingly segregated along racial lines, IPS also brings a proven track record of building multi-racial coalitions. Most recently, as mentioned above, IPS has launched Cities for Progress, which brings together local elected officials and activists from communities of color as well as predominantly white communities in a common project.

IPS researchers work closely with social movements to craft strategic

research proposals that play a variety of roles in social change. Here are three examples:

United Security Budget: IPS's Foreign Policy In Focus (a joint project with the International Relations Center) developed its Unified Security Budget project to provide progressives with an analytical framework and specific proposals for demilitarizing our foreign policy. In its two years of existence, the Budget has reshaped the conversation about defense spending. It provides the progressive security framework in a widely used political science college textbook; The National Priorities Project has used the FPIF Budget data as the basis for a state-by-state breakout of security spending and alternatives in its "Better Security for Less Money" and "New National Security" campaigns. It has also formed the basis for budget trainings across the country conducted by Physicians for Social Responsibility and Women's Action for New Directions (1,000 copies now in use). Six months after the release of the 2005 report, the Stanley Foundation requested 30 copies for a November 2005 conference. These uses continue to multiply. In 2006, IPS will expand the impact of the report by institutionalizing it. At the request of relevant staffers from both parties on the Senate Budget Committee, IPS has prepared a scope of work proposal, endorsed by a broad spectrum of military and foreign policy experts to make a Unified Security Budget an additional feature of the Congressional Budget Office's annual "Budget and Economic Outlook" report. This would give progressives a powerful additional tool with which to critique US security spending priorities in the years ahead.

CEO pay: For 12 years, IPS has produced an annual study on executive compensation. For the past several years, we have collaborated on the study with United for a Fair Economy. The study has consistently been one of IPS's top media successes. In a typical year, CNN, NPR, at least one major national daily and other major print and broadcast media each run a major story on executive pay excess. How has this translated into real change? The 2001 report, for example, focused on CEO pay among layoff leaders. After broad national media coverage, including an AP story that ran in nearly every paper in the country, the report fueled the ability of fair minded members of Congress to set an important precedent. Within two weeks of the report's release, Congress was considering a bailout of the airline industry devastated in the aftermath of September 11. Several members spoke out strongly, demanding that executives not profit personally while they were laying off many workers and the nation was in crisis. In a law that authorized a $15 billion bailout for airlines hurt by 9/11, lawmakers required that companies receiving the funds ban raises and limit severance pay for

executives whose pay in the year 2000 exceeded $300,000. IPS and our allies are now using this precedent to encourage policymakers to consider similar controls on CEO pay at companies that receive other types of government assistance. In 2003, the IPS-UFE report included an expanded section on the problem of companies using a loophole in accounting standards to avoid reporting the value of stock options in their financial statements. IPS had long pointed out that this contributed to the boatloads of options dumped on CEOs, in addition to contributing to misleading financial reports. The study went into great detail to highlight the role that Sen. Joe Lieberman had played in blocking legislative efforts to require options expensing. An op-ed based on the report, entitled "Lieberman's Looking Out for Greedy Executives," appeared in his hometown paper, the *Hartford Courant*. As a Presidential contender hoping to avoid bad publicity, Lieberman dropped his role as the champion of the anti-expensers, opening the door for a requirement that will finally close this loophole in 2005.

Slowing global warming: Beginning in the mid-1990s, studies by IPS's Sustainable Energy and Economy project began to expose the role of a giant public agency rarely associated with climate change: the World Bank. By systematically document the high cost of the carbon cycle, from extraction to combustion, in terms of poverty, disease, and environmental quality, especially in the Global South, IPS reports pressured the World Bank to abandon coal industry financing. The Bank responded by acknowledging that it should examine its investments by instigating a thoroughgoing Extractive Industries Review. That report reinforced the IPS argument that energy sources and climate change must be considered in the "development" debate. The IPS reports have alerted a wide array of activists, directly affected communities, and advocacy groups to press the World Bank and, increasingly, other international financial institutions on this issue.

Dozens of important progressive organizations and publications received crucial early support as IPS sponsored projects. Many have received seed funding from IPS. A list of prominent examples includes Food First, the Institute for Southern Studies, the Government Accountability Project, the Transnational Institute, In These Times, and the Data Center.

Time after time, IPS has demonstrated a nimble capacity to respond to both crises and opportunities that have the potential to either threaten or advance our values. Examples abound with more emerging every year.

- When the first Bush administration announced plans to negotiate a North American Free Trade Agreement, IPS immediately convened

relevant US groups, whom we quickly connected with key groups from across North America to launch a broad resistance.
- When Enron and Worldcom sent the corporate world into crisis in early 2002, IPS convened a wide range of affected organizations and communities to consider new rules and institutions to create checks and balances on corporations.
- When the Bush administration announced plans to invade Iraq, IPS convened groups that soon coalesced to form United for Peace and Justice.
- When Hurricane Katrina exposed deep-seated American racism, inequality, and environmental devastation, IPS convened groups to respond.

Whereas most groups committed to advancing democracy and social justice are wedded to particular issues, strategic approaches or agendas, IPS has developed a fundamental institutional commitment to facilitate, inform, and strengthen the organizations and individuals whose particular passions are most appropriate to the historical moment.

IPS also brings to all of this convening work a set of skills and a commitment to conceiving and articulating realistic alternatives to "broken" policy models. Too much of the work of progressive groups is solely in an opposition mode. IPS specializes in helping organizations design constructive, practical alternatives:

- IPS chaired the "alternatives" task force of the International Forum on Globalization, which produced the book *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: Another World is Possible*. The book has sold over 25,000 copies in English and has been translated into 9 languages.
- IPS's Foreign Policy in Focus project (a joint endeavor with the International Relations Center) has produced detailed reports on an alternative framework for US foreign policy, drawing on FDR's "good neighbor policy." FPIF has also developed an alternative to Bush's "war" on terrorism.
- IPS's Nuclear Policy project has worked with a range of experts to produce a plan to secure American nuclear power plants from terrorist attack.
- IPS has helped craft a detailed "Alternatives for the Americas," working with researchers and activists from across the Americas as a counter to the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas.
- IPS has helped members of Congress hold educational forums on proposals for an exit strategy from Iraq.

IPS has a 42-year history of public scholarship, by which we mean the generation of ideas linked to practical activities to achieve social change. A centerpiece of this work has been engaging progressive academics, and we have done this through a number of different models. IPS has employed five principal routes of engagement with academics:

1 *Virtual Think Tank model*: IPS and the International Relations Center have, over 9 years, built a virtual think tank on foreign policy called Foreign Policy in Focus (www.fpif.org) that has engaged several hundred academics to write policy briefs, join task forces, and write op-eds.
2 *Big Ideas model*: the *New York Times* recently ran a front page story on the 30-year history of the Olin Foundation, which spent roughly $20 million a year for the generation of big ideas through the American Enterprise Institute, the Hudson Institute, and other conservative think tanks. Their grants helped support books by such influential conservative thinkers as Charles Murray and Dinesh D'Souza. IPS has a similar model on a smaller scale in our Paths for the 21st Century project, run by IPS co-founder Marc Raskin. This project has stimulated big books on overarching themes, most recently including books on liberalism, media, ideology, and economic justice.
3 *Task forces*: IPS has created specific task forces, which include academics, whenever we feel they can make an impact on the public debate. Three recent examples include:

   - *Safety at nuclear power plants*: IPS Senior Scholar Bob Alvarez convened a group of leading scientists and social scientists to study how other countries have secured nuclear power plants from terrorist attack in other countries. The group then created an effective plan for the United States. They published this in a respected academic journal. At the same time, they unleashed an effective media campaign to broadcast their findings in the *New York Times* and other media outlets. The task force provoked a response from the National Academy of Sciences as well as the Bush administration. The debate they inspired continues.
   - *Alternative security budget*: IPS Research Fellow Miriam Pemberton has, for the past two years, convened a task force with the Center for Defense Information to develop a specific security budget with potential to make the United States more

safe and secure. The budget has been released to the public and media in conjunction with Congress' consideration of the military budget.

Alternative to national security state: IPS co-founder Marc Raskin ran a 7-year seminar at George Washington University with generals, academics, and policy leaders to better understand both the power of the national security bureaucracy and the path to transform it. With IPS alumnus, Carl LeVan, Marc edited the best papers from the series into a book, *In Democracy's Shadow*, published by Nation Books in 2005. The book was released at a seminar on Capitol Hill in April 2005.

4 *Links with a specific university*: With an initial grant from the Ford Foundation, IPS Fellow Martha Honey has built at IPS a Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development jointly with Stanford University. The Center engages Stanford professors and graduate students, along with others at IPS, in efforts to design new certification systems to promote more robust models of ecotourism and of corporate responsibility. This model requires a dedicated professor at a university and a creative funding strategy, and is highly effective.
5 *Networks of academics on specific topics*: In the 1980s, IPS helped to create and house the Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America (PACCA) network. This network was the brainchild of the brilliant scholar/activist Xabier Gorostiaga and it engaged several hundred academics and graduate students in developing peaceful alternatives to the US wars in Central America. Several of those academics worked with IPS to write the best-selling book: *Changing Course: A Blueprint for Peace and Development in Central America and the Caribbean*. The book became a particularly huge success among religious and other activists.

IPS hosts the Social Action and Leadership School for Activists (SALSA) which trains hundreds of local activist leaders each year in both the skills necessary to be good leaders and in the key political and social debates of our time. IPS has also mentored over 1,000 interns, primarily college students, since our creation in 1963. We are now embarking on a paid "young public scholars" program to systematically attract and mentor more of the best young activists and scholars into the world of effective public scholarship.

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Togo D. West, Jr., President and CEO

In a world split along lines of race, class, political party, religion, and gender, among other divisions, the stage is set for heated and often difficult debates on the issues that matter to a given society – or to the global community as a whole. Policy think tanks promote an informed debate that encompasses comprehensive information and multiple perspectives, and facilitate communication and the building of relationships across the various lines that crisscross society.

By informing leaders in the private and public sectors, as well as members of the general public, think tanks have the capacity to contribute to the policymaking process on a variety of levels. The importance their work can be assessed from two different angles: the value of information dissemination and the value of nonpartisan analysis.

By making information available, including through the increasingly important medium of the Internet, think tanks help to level the playing field, offering research and analyses that people from all different walks of life can access and put to good use. Serving as nexuses of information, they also bring the views and ideas of one group to another group. This circulation of perspectives and ideas is crucial to the vitality of the marketplace of ideas upon which this country is built.

Think tanks can work to convey the opinions of Americans to policymakers by gathering and analyzing public opinion trends. For example, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies conducts national opinion polls, which sample the opinions of African Americans, as well as those of the general population, on a range of issues, such as welfare reform and devolution, health policy, elections, criminal justice, and attitudes towards corporations, globalization, and foreign policy, among many others. Analyses of the opinions of a variety of groups on different issues, examined from varying angles, help policymakers understand the perspectives of Americans and weigh the policy options accordingly. By providing such analyses, think tanks do more than just parrot data on what the public "thinks," they work to interpret survey findings and offer policy recommendations that have been determined by experts to best address the needs and concerns of the public.

As illustrated by the Joint Center's public opinion research and analysis of minority populations, the perspectives of those with fewer means to influence political leaders can be brought into the policy discussion through studies conducted by think tanks – work to which policymakers often turn when developing policy. One salient example

of this is a report by the New York Academy of Medicine, Redefining Readiness: Terrorism Planning through the Eyes of the Public, for which Joint Center senior research associate David Bositis served as co-investigator. This report shows the disparities among racial groups regarding their responses to official protective instructions in the event of a terrorist attack; African Americans expressed greater doubt and concerns about following such instructions. The report included recommendations for improving emergency planning and incorporating great community input into the development of such plans.

Leaders in the private sector also rely on think tanks, which is significant given the influence of corporate interests in the policymaking process. Businesses, for example, turn to think tanks to provide research and analysis of issues that are relevant to their interests – information that is subsequently used to inform the positions that leaders in the corporate community take and the interests that they promote. Indeed, leaders in the private sector often develop close working relationships with think tanks, serving on their governing boards or contributing funds to enable research. Such cooperation facilitates continuous communication between expert researchers and policy influentials, thereby contributing to an ongoing exchange of ideas and perspectives, and ensuring that issue debates and policy discussions reflect the most recent information and expert assessments.

Information that think tanks produce and disseminate can also work to enhance the quality of the public's understanding of important policy issues, thereby helping citizens to shape their views and determine how their interests are best served. The Joint Center, for example, provides information that promotes political participation, specifically among groups of voters, such as African Americans, who tend to have lower rates of participation. A warehouse of data and fact sheets on a host of trends is available for free on the Joint Center website – a resource that can be used by scholars, public officials, private organizations, and the general public alike. For the November/December 2005 issue of its magazine *Focus*, the Joint Center interviewed the chairman of the US Election Assistance Commission, providing readers with information about their rights as voters and changes they will see at their polling place this November. The more such information is made available to the public, the greater opportunity Americans have to develop informed opinions about issues critical to their lives and to the nation as a whole, and the greater propensity they will have to participate in the political process. By the same token, by encouraging participation among groups currently underrepresented in the political arena, information dissemination by think tanks enhances the demo-

cratic process. The decisions of policymakers, in turn, reflect the quality of public debate and the people who are engaged in this debate.

Think tanks can also communicate information relevant to the technical needs of leaders. The Joint Center's roster of black elected officials, produced annually since the organization's founding in 1970, offers statistics and information on black elected officials. Conferences, seminars, panels, and other forums for discussion convened by research institutions also helps leaders learn from one another and pool their ideas and resources.

The value of nonpartisan analysis is both clear and simple. Nonpartisan think tanks provide quality assessments – of policies, politics, public opinion, and societal trends, among many other topics – that are free from the constraints of partisan ties. Perfect objectivity may be an elusive ideal, but the nonpartisan standards to which many think tanks adhere are nonetheless crucial to fair and balanced analysis. The provision of quality information and research with no strings attached – that is, no partisan agenda and no expected quid pro quo – is, in turn, a critical component of honest and informed policy discussions.

It is in these vital capacities that think tanks serve the nation and contribute to the policymaking process. Across all of these functions, there is a common theme: Leveling the playing field among various participants in policy debates – from domestic to international policy, and from the local to the national level. Indeed, think tanks provide an opportunity for the many strata of society to come to a more equal footing in policy discussions, whether this opportunity is manifested in government officials hearing the voice of a poor New Orleans hurricane survivor, or in local leaders pooling their resources to achieve greater minority representation in elected office.

As forums in which to foster discussion, resources upon which to rely for nonpartisan information and analysis, and intermediaries through which to facilitate communication between the man on the street, the executive in the corner office, and the elected representative in the US government, think tanks are indispensable to the policymaking process.

National Center for Policy Analysis

John C. Goodman, President

What is a think tank? What do think tanks do? Why are they important? These questions are more pertinent than ever in today's public policy environment.

A think tank is an organization that sponsors research on specific problems, encourages the discovery of solutions to those problems, and facilitates interaction among scientists and intellectuals in pursuit of these goals. A public policy think tank explicitly focuses on government policies, usually for the purpose of improving those policies or creating viable alternatives to them.

By their very nature, public policy think tanks are involved with the academic and scholarly world. In fact, the most important sources of political change are not politicians, political parties or financial contributions. They are ideas generated on college campuses and in think tanks and other research organizations around the country.

As a wise man once said, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." Almost all important political change starts with an idea. And the idea inevitably originates with people who spend a great deal of their lives thinking. Indeed, it's hard to point to any major public policy in the modern era that did not originate in the academic world. Here are some examples:

- When Chile became the first country to privatize its Social Security system, the architects were US-trained economists who looked to Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman and his colleagues at the University of Chicago for guidance. Since then, more than thirty countries have followed Chile's lead.
- When Margaret Thatcher set out to privatize the British economy, she relied on the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute for Economic Affairs for key ideas that were later promoted in the United States by the Reason Foundation and others.[6]
- The idea of the flat tax which has been adopted in Russia, in many Eastern European countries and elsewhere around the world, was originally proposed by Milton Friedman[7] and subsequently promoted by the Hoover Institution.[8]
- Ronald Reagan's supply side economics came from Nobel Laureate Robert Mundell and was popularized by economist Art Laffer and *Wall Street Journal* columnist Jude Wanninski.[9]
- School vouchers, another idea rapidly spreading around the world, were also an original Milton Friedman proposal.[10]
- Welfare reform, perhaps the most successful public policy reform of the last quarter-century, almost single-handedly flowed from Charles Murray's Losing Ground,[11] sponsored by the Manhattan Institute.
- Many of the Bush administration's attempts to use market forces to solve environmental problems stem directly from the free market

environmentalism spawned by the Property and Environment Research Center (PERC) and the Foundation for Economics and the Environment (FREE).

- Health Savings Accounts and Roth IRAs are only two of the numerous ideas generated by the National Center for Policy Analysis.

Before the collapse of communism, underground copies of Milton Friedman's book *Free to Choose* were smuggled into Eastern Europe, where they introduced a generation of students and political dissidents to classical liberal economic ideas. This and other Western publications played a decisive role in bringing about the collapse of the Communist system and later served as a foundation in countries' post-communist economic policies.

Ideas come from think tanks. But where did the idea of a think tank come from? It may well have come from Thomas Clarkson, an Englishman who founded the Society for the Abolition of The African Slave Trade in 1782. By meticulously describing the condition of the slave trade, supplying diagrams of slave ships, and combining factual inquiry with moral argument, Clarkson engaged in a war of ideas: "Powered by an evangelical zeal, Clarkson's committee would become what might be described as the world's first think tank," writes Lawrence Reed. "Noble ideas and unassailable facts would be its weapons (Reed 2005)."

Think tanks figured prominently in the twentieth century. The Manhattan Project was a very focused think tank of sorts. The RAND Corporation, the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute are other examples of organizations that left their mark. Of special interest are organizations that sprung up in the latter part of the twentieth century, often for the explicit purpose of defeating collectivism, much as Clarkson sought to end slavery. Among these were the Hoover Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute and the Cato Institute.

No single person was more important in encouraging the spread of think thanks than Sir Antony Fisher. An RAF pilot in World War II who went on to become successful in business, Fisher sought advice from Nobel Laureate Fredrich Hayek on how to stop the spread of collectivism and encourage a resurgence of nineteenth-century classical liberal ideas. Don't go into politics, Hayek advised. Focus instead on the world of ideas.[12]

Fisher started the Institute for Economic Affairs in London, which later became Margaret Thatcher's think tank. Following that success,

he helped start the Fraser Institute in Canada, the Institute for Liberty and Democracy in Peru and the Manhattan Institute and the National Center for Policy Analysis in the United States. His Atlas Foundation supplied modest seed money for these efforts and convened an annual think tank conference. By the time he died, Fisher had helped start more than three dozen think tanks around the world.

Ideas tend to filter through a hierarchy. They start in the realm of intellectuals. Through conferences, speeches, briefings and reports written for lay readers the audience expands. Then they begin to appear in newspaper editorials. Special interests may find an idea to their liking and help it along. Gradually, more and more people become aware of it. Politicians are often the last to climb on board. Still, it's a process that has been repeated again and again.

From the Republican Contract with America to Bill Clinton's highly successful welfare reform, from Ronald Reagan's supply side economics to George W. Bush's plan to reform Social Security – all these ideas came from think tanks. For that matter, so did Medicare, Medicaid and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. For good or evil, ideas are powerful engines of change.

So why do so many people view think tanks as impotent – producing papers and reports that collect dust on bookshelves? The answer is: impatience. Ideas take time to cause change. Their impact occurs with a lag: It took twenty years from the time Clarkson started his think tank until Britain passed the first anti-slavery law and 26 more years after that until slavery was finally abolished throughout the realm.

- It took more than thirty years after Milton Friedman first proposed the ideas for school vouchers and the flat tax for them to emerge as part of the national debate.
- More than 20 years elapsed before George W. Bush campaigned on Social Security reform: an idea that the Cato Institute, the NCPA and other think tanks originally proposed.
- More than 15 years elapsed between the time the NCPA first proposed health savings accounts and the time they became available to most people.
- Even such popular ideas as the Roth IRAs and repealing the Social Security earning penalty took a decade.

Bottom line: people who want important public policy changes need to be willing to make long-term investments.

In general, think tanks that were formed before the emergence of the Internet tend to follow the "one roof" model. The idea was to bring a

diverse group of scholars together in one place, so they can interact face to face. One reason was communication. Forty or fifty years ago, the costs of communication from campus to campus were quite high, relative to what we experience today. For think tanks formed in the classical liberal tradition, there was also another reason.

When I was a graduate student at Columbia University in the early 1970s, the Reason Foundation attempted to compile a list of the entire liberal arts faculty in the entire country who believed in free markets and personal liberty. The actual criteria were quite loose. They basically included everyone who was not a socialist or a Hubert Humphrey liberal. The list was also very short. As I recall, there were only 15 or 20 names.

In those days, if you were a classical liberal teaching at a university, you were probably the only one on your campus. There was literally no one else to talk to who was simpatico. So places like the Hoover Institution (where as a young Ph.D. economist I first was employed) served a valuable function. They brought people together who would otherwise be quite lonely.

Today, things are different. The academic world is teeming with scholars (especially economists) who believe that markets work and that they are powerful engines of social change. In addition, the Internet has made communication cheap and easy. As a result, almost all younger think tanks are based on a different model: they are organizations without walls. At the NCPA, our tax specialist is in Boston, our Medicaid expert is in Cleveland, the scholars who model Social Security and Medicare are in College Station, Texas, our Center for European Studies is in Washington, DC and our administrative personnel are in Dallas.

Think tanks without walls typically have no endowments and are less well funded than older organizations that try to assemble everyone under one roof. To make their smaller budgets stretch further, they economize by contracting with scholars at other institutions rather than employing them. This means that the university pays all the overhead and the think tank pays only the marginal cost of the research it wants. Against these greater efficiencies, the think tank may suffer an identity problem, however. A news story about a scholarly study may mention only the professor/author's name and perhaps also the name of the university that employs him – omitting the name of the think tank that actually funded the research.

The notion that ideas can be marketed like products is a fairly new concept. When the NCPA was started in 1983, the typical think tank report did not make use of bolded headings, bullet points for emphases,

call-out sentences or visually pleasing graphics. Executive summaries were virtually nonexistent. Annual reports were all in black and white and the photos were typically of amateur quality. No think tank had a promotional video at that time. The NCPA introduced all of these techniques and today they are commonplace. But the techniques were not original with us. We simply copied them from the world of business. What was original was the insight that ideas can be marketed like products and think tanks could market themselves like a business enterprise.

Antony Fisher thought of me as an intellectual entrepreneur, by which he meant someone who applies entrepreneurial skills one often finds in the business to the world of ideas. I was not alone. Over the past twenty-five years, the think tank community has been highly entrepreneurial. Under the leadership of Michael Walker, the Fraser Institute in Canada pioneered techniques for measuring waiting times for medical care in Canada – evidence that was used by Canada's Supreme Court to strike barriers to private care in Quebec.[13] Hernando de Soto measured how long it took to get approval to start a new business in Lima – a technique that has been repeated in less developed countries around the world.[14] At the NCPA, we calculated the differential Social Security benefits expected by black and white workers (even though all pay the same tax rate), showing that pay-as-you-go elderly entitlement programs discriminate against blacks and other minorities.[15]

The NCPA is a nonprofit institution. But, it is run as a business. We invest in new programs and we judge our success by the return on those investments. We have a five-year plan. We have a succession plan, including key-man insurance. Other successful think tanks are also run like businesses. They apply business techniques to the world of ideas.

When the NCPA was formed in 1983, there were older, larger think tanks already in existence. Our job was to find a market niche. Ronald Reagan was president and the existing right-of-center think tanks tended to focus on the president's agenda. The niche for the NCPA was all of the items that were not on Reagan's agenda: Social Security, health care, employee benefits, and other "social insurance" issues. As it turns out, these are the hardest areas to reform, not only in our country, but also all over the world. However, by investing in these especially-hard-to-solve issues, the NCPA built up expertise and institutional memory that could be brought to bear in later years when the body politic was ready to address them.

In recent years, there has been a tendency for all organizations interested in pubic policy to move to Washington, DC – if they were

not already there in the first place. In my opinion, this is a mistake. There is enormous pressure on everyone within the Beltway to focus on what Congress and the Administration are focusing on. To fail to do so is to risk being characterized as irrelevant. It is in this way that the DC environment stifles creative thought.

My view is: If you want to think about what Congress is not thinking about (and is unlikely to think about any time soon), you need to do your thinking away from Washington. That, in any event, was the strategy followed by the NCPA. The NCPA opened a Washington office only when it was clear that Congress was ready to focus on some key NCPA proposals. The year was 1994, and the core tax ideas in the Republican Contract with America came directly from a pro-growth proposal generated by the NCPA and the US Chamber of Commerce.[16]

We continue to have an active Washington office, but its goal is narrow and focused: to provide research, testimony and advice and to conduct conferences and briefings on issues of direct interest on Capitol Hill.

Like think tanks, colleges and universities hire scholars, encourage research and provide a forum for scholarly interaction. So how are these academic institutions different from think tanks? Part of the difference is that the research of tenured professors is unmanaged and undirected. The object of research is up to the whim of the professor. The goal may or may not be to solve an important social problem. Think tanks, by contrast, tend to be very goal-oriented. They employ or contract with scholars to research specific topics and encourage solutions to well-defined problems. Universities tend to be graded based on the academic prestige of their faculty members. Think tanks tend to be graded based on their success in solving real world problems.

In recent years, there has been a huge proliferation of groups who openly advocate public policy changes (usually on a single-issue). These groups, however, are not incubators of new ideas. They are better thought of as lobbyists for ideas. Often they receive financial backing from special interests. They may be very helpful in promoting needed public policy changes. But they are not staffed or led by intellectuals. In fact, they are typically anti-intellectual – resisting ways of thinking that are different from the narrow goals of their financial backers.

To what degree do ideological preferences influence the output of think tanks? Among first-rate research organizations, ideology has no effect on findings of fact. If the economists at the NCPA, Urban Institute, Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute calculate the government's unfunded liabilities under Social Security and Medicare, they are all likely to arrive at similar numbers. Where

ideology matters is in deciding what problems to research and what solutions to investigate.

The Brookings Institution is more likely to investigate unmet needs and ask what government programs could solve the problem. The NCPA is more likely to investigate how government policies are causing the problem in the first place and ask how the private sector can be utilized to solve it. Of course, occasionally we see eye-to-eye on problems and solutions.[17]

The NCPA is in the classical liberal tradition. We are animated by the same desire to reform institutions that motivated Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and other historical figures who worked to empower people and unleash the energy, creativity and innovative ability of individuals pursuing their own interests in competitive markets.

At 22 years of age, I believe that the NCPA is the youngest national think tank on the center right of the spectrum. By that I mean that ours was the last organization that was able to successfully enter the think tank marketplace and address wide spectrum public policy issues at the federal level. All the newer organizations that have formed since that time have been state think tanks or organizations that focus on a narrow range of issues. I do not expect that to change. Today, our best think tanks are well managed and so alert to market opportunities that potential entrants into the market are unlikely to find much opportunity.

But although I do not expect to see an increase in the number of organizations, I do believe the national think tanks are on the cusp of a virtual explosion of intellectual activity.

There is enormous untapped potential in the academic and scholarly world. As think tanks grow in terms of budget, skills and expertise, their ability to tap that potential will grow exponentially. The successes we have seen so far are not aberrations. They are the beginning of an intellectual revolution that will set the stage for the policy debates of the twenty-first century.

The Nixon Center

Dimitri K. Simes, Founding President

Richard Nixon was always a little uneasy about think tanks. He appreciated their effectiveness, but had a complex relationship with some particular institutions and viewed the work of some experts as parochial and unrelated to America's national priorities. Ultimately, however, he decided to create a think tank and to give it his name.

Nixon's experience with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace played an important role in defining his overall view. Though initially shaped by the Alger Hiss case, Nixon's perspective of Carnegie and other public policy institutes evolved considerably over time, largely through his involvement with an informal group chaired by former Secretary of Defense Jim Schlesinger under the Endowment's auspices in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The exercise persuaded the former president that think tanks could generate ideas and provide a useful forum for debate. This was ultimately a catalyst of his decision to establish The Nixon Center, which drew many of its professional staff from Carnegie.

Also important to Nixon was traditional foreign policy bipartisanship, the idea that "politics stops at the water's edge." (He is known to have viewed former Democratic Texas Governor John Connally – who became Nixon's Treasury Secretary and eventually a Republican in 1973 – as a preferred successor.) Likewise, he was a strong believer in foreign policy realism – but defined broadly, not coldly or insensitively, as often caricatured. This was related to his firm conviction that the United States could not be an effective international leader if it did not take into account others' perspectives and that in foreign policy, results are more important than intentions.

Today, think tanks do have an important – but complex and subtle – influence on policy. Yet they are often misunderstood, perhaps because public policy institutions are rare "outside the Beltway" and may appear somewhat mysterious to many Americans. In fact, ironically, the myth that think tanks and their left-wing or right-wing experts control government policy is likely considerably more widely held than the more skeptical view. Commentators who fail to make a distinction between polemical opinions and positions based on analysis of the facts contribute to this problem, by blurring the invisible boundary between strong but informed views and ideological warfare.

Of course, the reality of think tanks and their role is much more banal than the myth: they do have a real influence on policy, but it is generally "front-loaded" in the policy process through the development of ideas, influence over public debate, and the definition of options. Think tanks can also establish new connections among people and issues. However, despite the aspirations of some think tank experts, real decision-making happens in the legislative and executive branches of government, where policy is established and then implemented. This latter fact can contribute to a false sense that think tanks have a limited impact.

Think tanks exercise their influence on several levels. Notwithstanding

the suspicions of conspiracy theorists, they are usually most active – and most effective – when operating in the public arena. Because foreign and domestic policy issues are often very complex, think tanks play a very useful role in analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of policy options. When top experts hold differing views, they can be a powerful catalyst for public debate of key issues from the war in Iraq to reforming Social Security. Alternatively, when think tank scholars broadly favor a particularly policy course, such as NATO membership for the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, US financial support for programs to secure Russian nuclear weapons and materials, or permanent normal trade relations with China, this can provide a strong impetus to policymakers.

Likewise, think tanks can play an important role in setting the agenda and defining policy options. In the mid-1990s, for example, think tanks added to the pressure on the Clinton Administration to become involved in the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Though the issue was not central to American foreign policy interests, a broad array of institutions and experts pushed for US involvement. They also shaped American options, particularly in the conflict in Bosnia, where the [Cyrus] Vance-Owen peace plan was essentially taken off the table due to concerns that it could "reward" the Bosnian Serbs. "Task forces" or "study groups" composed of eminent former officials and top academic authorities can be very effective in raising the profile of certain issues and testing support for policy approaches.

Think tanks can play an important part in establishing new connections as well. New contacts between people can be especially valuable when the United States has limited diplomatic interaction with a particular government or when travel is restricted. In these cases, academics and experts are often key sources of information about developments in a given country and can considerably improve broader American understanding of circumstances there. In other cases, when relations are politically sensitive, informal communications between specialists can often address complex or difficult issues that would be taboo in official interaction. Think tanks can also connect old issues in new ways, by studying China's growing role in the Middle East, for example.

Of course, much of think tanks' public influence operates through the prism of the media, which affects the policy process in broadly similar ways – that is, by focusing attention on particular issues and by shaping debate. As a result, think tanks and the media have a close and even symbiotic relationship through which think tanks provide substance to and media provide an audience. Yet, as the American

media shift increasingly to 24/7 formats always hungry for content online and on television, think tanks may be increasingly challenged to maintain their identity as homes of long-term and in-depth analysis rather than instant reaction to the latest scandal or crisis. The danger is driven not only by the media's perpetual need to attract viewers, but also by increasingly harried reporters in shrinking newsrooms who have a declining ability to develop personal expertise on key issues. The resulting outsourcing of the news business to think tanks provides important opportunities for the institutions themselves and for their individual experts. But the temptation to become an arm of the media – rather than an arm of academia – can be quite strong. Failing to strike an appropriate balance between sophisticated analysis and instant commentary can undermine an institution's capability to provide the substance that makes it valuable in the first place. Failing to find this balance also makes it more likely that think tanks will be seen as part of the "chattering class" – or all sorts of conspiracies – rather than players in the policy process.

The Public Policy Institute of California

David W. Lyon, President and CEO

Over the past 30 years, hundreds of new think tanks have been created, some with the view that objective analysis will improve public policy decision making, others, no doubt, in the belief that the public sector has run amok and needs to be reined in. Most have been created with a passionate belief that more and better information will change what we do in our national and state capitols, thereby improving the health and well-being of the American public. It is important, however, for consumers of the information provided by these institutions to understand not only the extent of their power and influence, but also how to judge the quality of their work.

THEIR ROLE

If we look back in time, we find ample evidence of think tanks' influencing public policy. Brookings was part of the progressive movement that brought about the institution of a more systematic and transparent approach to public budgeting. RAND formulated an approach to national defense that served as the bulwark of our cold war strategic defense from the late 1950s until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Resources for the Future designed a system of marketable pollution

permits that provides the basis for many modern programs of air quality control. The Heritage Foundation designed a program of tax reductions, deregulation, and streamlined bureaucracies that served as a blueprint for the Reagan Era. To put it simply, think tanks have clout.

During the Great Society initiative of the 1960s, many came to believe that universities were not well-equipped to provide the novel ideas, information, and program evaluations necessary to launch a new approach to government. The Urban Institute, Mathematica Policy Research, and the Domestic Division at RAND were created to fill the gap.

It soon became obvious that these institutions were becoming popular not only with Congress and the executive branch, but with the public as well, with its newfound and insatiable appetite for information about public spending. How many Americans were uninsured? How long did people stay on welfare? Would the negative income tax work? The list was long. As more government programs were created, the complexity of government management increased, and the demand for think tanks grew as well.

A number of trends have driven the most recent growth in think tanks. First, confidence in the ability of state government to solve problems is at an all time low. Seventy-five percent of Californians believe that the really tough public policy problems should be decided at the ballot box, not in Sacramento; and similar feelings of distrust abound around the country. Second, with the cacophony of voices asking for favors in Washington and state capitols, many think tanks have been specifically created to assume an advocacy role – on the left, the right, and in the middle. This competition for the attention of legislators has resulted in the proliferation of think tanks just to collect the facts necessary to ward off the competition. What was once a rather sedate, elite sector of the economy hiring people to work on the most intractable problems has evolved into an industry with a large number of institutions that are known as "think tanks with attitude." National think tanks and their funders have spawned even more institutions at the state level, with nearly ten state-level think tanks focused on California policy issues alone.

Contrary to the view that our nation is "Bowling Alone," a modest annual check to the think tank of your choice can put you in touch with friends, politicians, movie stars, governors, senators, members of congress, and local elected officials to discuss matters of pressing interest. Annual fundraising dinners for think tanks have become major social events with speakers as diverse as Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, and the Dalai Lama.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Think tanks gather, analyze, and disseminate information. Most also offer recommendations or advice, based on their analyses. Their research often focuses on public spending programs that the government cannot or does not care to undertake itself. Thus, their research complements the program analysis within government agencies.

While not all staff at a think tank are high profile researchers, the success of a given institution tends to raise the profile of its research staff. Other researchers, in turn, are attracted to the institution for the opportunity it gives them to speak clearly and frequently to the public policy debate without the constraints faced by civil servants.

A think tank also provides a setting for private interests to contribute to the public debate through more credible sources than are usually associated with political parties and lobbyists. Think tanks hold private-public interests in a delicate balance that, if done correctly, actually increases their credibility among government leaders, corporate executives, and the general public.

JUDGING INFLUENCE AND RESEARCH QUALITY

Leaders of think tanks work strenuously to demonstrate that their institution is making a difference. Legislation shaped or influenced by a staff report is noted, news coverage is documented and counted, and daily "hits" on websites are cited, all as evidence that a think tank is using its money wisely and effectively – whether the source is government grants and contracts, grants from foundations or corporations, or individual gifts.

However, if a think tank is to gain trust and respect as a producer of high quality and objective analysis, it must openly demonstrate certain qualities. Thus, a careful look at *how* a think tank does its job is even more important than *whether* it scores an occasional victory in the policymaking game. Six lessons can be observed from the successful twelve-year history of the nonpartisan, independent Public Policy Institute of California.

1 *The principal investigator must be, first and foremost, a first-class researcher*. The clarity of thought, conduct, and explanation that is the hallmark of good policy research and analysis comes only from those who are well-trained and able and willing to explain complicated ideas in easy-to-understand terms. Assuming a research team is involved, the importance of fine leadership cannot be overstated.

2 *A project must be shaped, in part, by what policy "clients" want to know – but it should also be designed to tell them what they did not realize or may not have wanted to hear.* Welfare reform through TANF in the early 1990s was possible because there was increasing evidence nationwide that welfare recipients lived in households that provided their own version of a safety net. Thinking of welfare dependency as one of families rather than individuals changed the design of national and state-level programs.
3 *An institution must be willing and able to support a project through its entire life.* This means early reviews of project design, first-class external reviews, a formal plan for publication and dissemination, a network of external contacts with the client and media communities, a clear and simple statement of findings, and a follow-through capability to work with audiences and interest groups long after the report has been published.
4 *The research team should be committed to the project.* Studies designed by a research team generally prove to be the most successful. Top-down designs tend to end up like committee reports, whereas team members involved in designing a project are more likely to deliver a comprehensive set of findings and to commit to any follow-through tasks.
5 *An institution should be ready to "pull the plug" on projects or reports that don't meet its standards.* In the policy research and analysis field, there are many reports that should have never been released: the analysis is weak, the presentation is shoddy, and the conclusions are muddy. PPIC has cancelled a number of projects when it was clear that the research did not meet its standards for quality or clarity.
6 *An institution must ensure that its work preserves and strengthens its reputation for nonpartisan, independent, and objective research and analysis.* PPIC has developed clear policies on taking positions and making recommendations that are consistent with its status as an operating foundation. The institute is dedicated to preserving its policies because they have been essential to gaining the attention and respect of the policy community.

AS FOR TRADEOFFS ...

Accomplishing both first-rate research and establishing influence in the policymaking community represents a challenge for all think tanks, but it is not necessary to surrender one in search of the other. However, the cautious consumer should understand that all think tanks are not the

same. In a world where think tanks are proliferating in number and kind, the best advice is: caveat emptor.

RAND Corporation

James Thomson, President

Different think tanks play their roles in the policymaking process in different ways. At the RAND Corporation, our mission commits us to "help improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis." There are two chief mechanisms through which we accomplish this.

In the first, which is perhaps 60 percent of the time, we are working directly for someone who is going to use the results of the research to make a decision that will change policy or practice. That someone is usually also the client – the one paying for the research. Thus, policy is improved by means of our interactions with the client: informal meetings, briefings, draft reports, letters or informal communications answering specific questions, and, of course, final reports. These reports are also made available to the public unless they are classified or involve other sensitive security-related information.

The second mechanism comes into play when there is no clear single decision maker who will be able to act on the basis of our work. Rather, we need to address (and influence) a broad, frequently amorphous, policy community. There is no czar of health care policy in the United States or – thinking globally – of international economic development. A large community of actors and influencers need to learn about our work if we are going to fulfill our mission. In those cases, we need mechanisms to reach a broad audience. Published products, either journal articles or our own reports, are critically important. So are other RAND corporate publications, such as the *RAND Review*, our web site, news releases, and the like. In addition, we frequently hold workshops or special briefings, including on Capitol Hill.

Although publishing the fruits of our research is clearly critical for the second mechanism, it is also important for the first. RAND is a nonprofit and, as such, owes something back to the public to compensate for the special status the public has accorded us. Making the results of our work available publicly is one way for us to pay back. We know from our publications distribution data and – more recently – from web site downloads that there is a large public appetite for our research results, including work performed for specific clients. Equally important is the role that publications play in the quality assurance

process. RAND is dedicated to quality and objectivity. Although we have a host of internal practices aimed at ensuring those core values, the best way to ensure that we meet the highest standards of quality and objectivity is to publish – and to take care in what we publish. Poor or biased products will be noticed quickly in the harsh glare of public scrutiny.

But how do we know whether we are really accomplishing anything – meeting our mission, making a difference?

At the end of each year, we ask ourselves three questions to determine if we have fulfilled our responsibilities in the policymaking process during the previous 12 months. We share our answers to these questions with all members of the staff as a sort of annual corporate report card.

The first question we ask is: "Are we addressing issues at or near the top of the policy agenda? In doing that, do our products and services meet the high standards of quality and objectivity that are our core values?"

One positive answer to this question from our work during 2005 relates to our analysis of the many ways in which the US Army has become strained by its repeated and lengthy deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. This topic is at the very top of the national and global policy agenda. There is perhaps no more important contemporary issue for the US military. We at RAND have taken pride in our ability to grapple with the scope of the problem in an objective manner, even though our findings have displeased many people in the US national security apparatus.

We found that the continued deployments have placed growing stress on the Army as it seeks to train its personnel and to maintain a pool of units ready to respond rapidly to new contingencies. We outlined the risks and likely outcomes associated with seven policy options designed to mitigate the problems. We concluded that each option presents its own downsides, resulting in unavoidably difficult trade-offs. For a pressing policy problem like this one – replete with heated political, financial, emotional, and international implications – only an honest, objective analysis could help the Army wrestle effectively with the tough choices that lie ahead.

The second question we ask ourselves is this: "Is our research and analysis reaching key decision-makers and the broader public, thereby improving the quality of the policy debate?"

A core function of think tanks in the policymaking process should be to improve the quality of the policy discourse on all levels of public discussion. The work that I just cited certainly did that. But there are policy debates even more fraught with emotion and history than that one.

Perhaps nowhere in the world has the need for broad-based education about common policy challenges been greater than within Israel and the Palestinian territories, specifically with respect to the challenge of laying the groundwork for a Palestinian state.

During 2005, we examined how an independent Palestinian state, if created, can be made successful. We described options for improving governance, security, economic development, access to water, health and health care, and education, and we estimated the financial resources needed for successful development over the first decade of independence. We also outlined an urban development plan that would provide housing, transportation, and other necessary infrastructures for a large and rapidly growing Palestinian population.

Perhaps most important of all, we have been communicating and disseminating these ideas in face-to-face meetings with numerous key policymakers among the Israeli, Palestinian, US, and UN leadership. The proposals have sparked nearly unanimous praise from normally antagonistic parties throughout the Middle East and have demonstrated to policymakers and the public at large, through extensive media coverage of these efforts, how the very process of building a Palestinian state could itself contribute greatly to peace in the Middle East.

The third question we ask ourselves is this: "Have our products and services contributed to significant changes in policy and practice?"

In other words, have we made a tangible difference on behalf of the public good? In this regard, we can point, ironically perhaps, to our work during 2005 in improving public health preparedness in response to Hurricane Katrina. The initial response of government agencies to the hurricane has been widely acknowledged as abysmal on nearly every front and at many levels, but RAND can point to its public health exercises in Georgia as having contributed favorably to the management and care of 70,000 Katrina evacuees who ended up in that state.

The Georgia director of public health emergency preparedness cited the RAND-sponsored exercises as having helped the state in multiple areas: coordinating messages across government sectors, having different agencies use the same methodologies, focusing on the groups that could reap the greatest benefit, expanding surge capacity through cross-training, using volunteers, preparing for isolation and quarantine, and establishing private-sector partnerships to provide transportation for evacuees. This example illustrates how researchers, working hand-in-hand with public servants, can first evaluate and then improve the end-to-end processes and management of public service delivery.

What is the role of think tanks in the policymaking process? Ideally, it is to analyze objectively the most important and intractable national

and global policy issues of the day; to share this knowledge both with key policymakers and with their constituents in the public at large; and to make meaningful, concrete changes in the ways that policies are shaped and implemented.

Resources for the Future

Phil Sharp, President

Until 3 months ago when I was given the challenge of leading Resources for the Future (RFF), my experience with think tanks had been as a consumer for my work in Congress and later in academia. My views here, frankly, are preliminary; I am climbing a steep learning curve regarding the way think tanks are managed and the environment in which they exist.

In academia there is special appreciation for original thinking and methodological concerns. In Congress, and in other policymaking arenas, there is a strong focus on practical application and political acceptability. These two worlds do not easily communicate with each other – indeed, too often live in disdain of one another. Perhaps as a result of my experience, I am drawn to the image of the think tank as a bridge between these worlds, though clearly there are other visions and models.

I think this view hopes or assumes that think tanks will provide academic sanctuaries for scholars seeking practical, solution-oriented policies on a range of substantive and often contentious issues. Providing such an atmosphere, it is hoped, will encourage the kind of intellectual entrepreneurship that produces new, rigorous, and pragmatic approaches to problems that enable those in government and the private sector to better chart their courses with confidence and clarity.

At most independent research institutions, researchers are freed of the obligations of teaching, allowing them more time to conduct basic research – what one observer called "the good, hard think" that takes place every day in conference rooms and offices, convenings, and corridor confabs.

In recent decades, some think tanks have become purveyors of research driven by ideological or commercial goals. Indeed, the current economic and political markets appear to reward these approaches.

At RFF, we strive to adhere to the traditional model where ideas and data are pursued to their logical conclusions, without regard to preconceived notions or political spin. In the long run, we trust the public interest will be better served.

In an opinion article headlined "The Impending Death of Honest Expertise," a *Washington Post* editor in 2004 lamented the stream of pundits and experts seen and heard around the clock on the airwaves, all finding themselves in the position of having to defend a point of view, often against another authoritative voice speaking from a rival stance. "The players prove their sophistication by holding fast to the belief that everyone has an agenda, that independence is a myth."

All too often, that observation is on target. The policy process is rife with the view that all the players have axes to grind – seeking to advance their careers, sell books, or create controversies. And it's not just the media: public forums from City Hall to Capitol Hill frequently pit one advocacy spokesperson against another, one special interest group facing off with its counterpart.

Fortunately, some scrupulously independent and nonpartisan think tanks remain, where individuals are motivated by a desire for new ideas that can be applied non-judgmentally to the creation of effective policies. At Resources for the Future, we believe that governance is most effective when policymakers, political leaders, and the public are cognizant of the key issues, available alternatives, and tradeoffs – informed by an independent and objective perspective.

We are convinced that policy decisions are far more likely to succeed when they have been subjected to rigorous, evidence-based, peer-reviewed analysis. To that end, RFF freely shares the results of its economic and policy prescriptions with members of both political parties, as well as with environmental and business advocates, academics, the media, and interested citizens. RFF neither lobbies nor takes any institutional position on legislative, regulatory, judicial, or other public policy matters. Of course, individual researchers, speaking for themselves and not for RFF, are free to espouse their personal opinions and judgments on policy matters, based on their research conclusions.

Even in the midst of political battles, when public discourse is often reduced to simplistic and sensationalized sound bites, RFF – acting as a neutral broker of sound information and data – remains focused on providing a dispassionate setting in which to enrich the policy process. The forums vary, from technical workshops, where researchers consult with their counterparts in academia, government, and the business and NGO communities, to periodic public lectures by leading authorities from the public and private sectors that are invited to present their ideas in a serious setting to engaged and thoughtful audiences.

In the twenty-first century, environmental politics has become more decentralized and digitized. In addition to holding public forums in Washington, DC and maintaining a wide-ranging publications effort,

RFF is committed to making our work widely available on our website through electronic materials and web casts. Our audience ranges well beyond our direct peers in academia and the NGO world: we want to help inform staffers in the statehouse trying to write policy, as well as the next generation of policymakers, who are now in college.

Whatever the tools used to tease out actionable ideas, the reality is that solid answers can be frustratingly elusive, and progress toward resolution agonizingly slow.

Environmental and energy policymaking in America is often polarized, with free-market conservatives standing firm against political combatants on the green end of the scale. This standoff can mean that policymaking becomes paralyzed with far-reaching consequences. Those who seek, for example, to preserve air and water quality, protect healthy forests and habitat, and promulgate meaningful global climate policies – while at the same time knowing the value of a vibrant economy – find themselves enmeshed in gridlock.

Often, of course, the reasons for such gridlock go beyond vested interests. Circumstances and realities change. Programs that once were entirely satisfactory now come up short, perhaps because of new scientific data or industry restructuring. Sometimes, we find, old laws and regulations stand in the way of improvement and progress.

In recent years, government agencies, particularly the Office of Management and Budget, have championed cost-benefit analysis as the paramount approach to ensuring that proposed regulations and policies will have the intended effect. Certainly RFF was an early pioneer of this methodology and many of our recommendations have been incorporated into current government mandates.

For example, in the 1960s, RFF raised concerns that the government was making inefficient use of a valuable resource, the electromagnetic spectrum. The solution, eventually adopted by regulators, was to auction the airwaves – a suggestion that was seen as radical at the time but which led to creative new uses of the spectrum and fostered a number of the telecommunications technologies that we have today.

In the 1970s and 1980s, RFF looked for innovative ways to limit harmful emissions from power plants and other large factories – and produced prototype policy models that were brought to bear in the 1990 Amendments to the Clean Air Act. The result was a market-based emissions trading process that led over the next decade to a 50 percent drop in sulfur dioxide emissions and a significant decline in nitrogen oxide emissions as well.

Our scholars have often focused on incentive-based regulatory approaches to enhance or to substitute for traditional command and

control regimes; they have helped design policies that can be both environmentally effective and more efficient in terms of societal costs.

Do all these efforts make a difference? As noted above, the policy process can be frustratingly prolonged and easily sidetracked – and often depends on timing, personalities, and external events. And yet, RFF believes that the patient nurturing of compelling ideas with the appropriate audiences does provide the structure and methodology, the useful blueprints, the tactical tools, and the feasible strategies that can be quickly injected into the debate when they are needed. Clearly, RFF's long espousal of incentive-based approaches to environmental protection finally came to fruition in ways that have won plaudits from both the regulators and the regulated.

Over time, it is clear that such efforts pay off in beneficial policy impacts and positive results for the economy and the public. At the same time, many would acknowledge that think tanks could do more to accelerate the adoption of ideas that flow from our scholarly research – to shorten the "policy lag" that keeps too many good ideas stranded on the shoals until a new tide sweeps them into the right channels. In the future, these institutions should pledge to work more intentionally and unapologetically to ensure that their ideas find traction in the appropriate policy arenas, and with the right audiences.

The Urban Institute

Robert Reischauer, President

The number of think tanks and their influence in policymaking have grown significantly over the past four decades. The National Journal's *Capital Source* lists over 150 organizations in Washington, DC alone that it considers merit the think tank label. Many employ only a handful of individuals, but others have staffs numbering in the hundreds. While most think tanks rely on a mix of mechanisms to influence policy, many place an emphasis one of three roles.

Some think tanks see their primary role as developing original analysis and research that sheds light on policy problems and their solutions. Researchers at these organizations apply the latest social science methodologies and information to the analysis of the issues that are or should be the concern of policymakers. Sometimes this undertaking entails gathering new data as The Urban Institute did through its National Survey of American Families, a 40,000 household survey conducted in 1997, 1999 and 2002 that informed policymakers about the impact that welfare reform and the devolution of social

policy to states was having on vulnerable populations. Or it could involve developing the complex models needed to estimate the impacts of possible changes in policy. The Urban Institute's TRIM model, which allows researchers to simulate the effects of changes in transfer policies on different types of families and the Urban-Brookings Tax Simulation model, which can be used to estimate the effects of tax code changes on revenues and taxpayers are examples. While think tanks specializing in contributing original research issue papers, briefs, and fact sheets, their premier products are books that provide sophisticated analyses for policy advisors and help shape the graduate-school training of tomorrow's policymakers.

Other think tanks primarily translate, synthesize and package other researchers' technical analyses and often-voluminous information, making them easier for policymakers and their staffs to understand and use. This job can be undertaken from a neutral or mainstream perspective or through a particular philosophical or partisan lens. Thus, some think tanks have an avowedly libertarian, liberal, conservative, or free-market orientation. Others strive for objectivity and hope to be labeled nonpartisan or independent. These brokering organizations pride themselves on short, jargon free publications that are accessible to the non-expert but valued by the busy professional looking for a summary of the facts, issues, arguments, and alternative solutions related to a particular policy problem. With the e-mail/Internet revolutions, the costs of such communications have plummeted, allowing even relatively small organizations with limited budgets to be effective.

Still other think tanks view themselves largely as conveners and facilitators that enrich policy debates. The conferences and forums they sponsor allow experts and practitioners to share their takes on policy problems and their possible solutions with the Washington policy community and the media. Some sponsors seek to present a range of perspectives on an issue – a true debate; others strive to make an effective case from only one perspective.

The impact that the proliferation and maturation of thinks tanks have had on how policy is made cannot be underestimated. Think tanks have spawned broad new approaches to policy and developed detailed program proposals. While paternity for new polices is usually shared, some examples of recent significant policy changes that sprang largely from think tanks include economic deregulation (Brookings), housing vouchers (The Urban Institute), Social Security privatization (Cato), welfare reform (Heritage) and tradable emissions permits (Resources for the Future).

Think tanks have undoubtedly broadened the range of policy options that are considered. They have allowed new ideas to be floated with little risk to elected officials or bureaucracies, the exclusive sources of almost all policy innovation before the 1960s. Now politicians can see how new approaches fare in the court of informed opinion and can reject or modify them accordingly.

Think tanks have also informed and enriched the public debate on policy options. The media relies heavily on think tank experts for information, insights, and commentary on the nation's problems and their possible solutions. Many of these researchers and analysts have first-hand experience in key policymaking positions and can thus offer perspectives that few university-based academics possess. They help shape public opinion by fusing theory and practice.

The critical analyses provided by think tanks also serve as an important check on the policy process. As the nation's social and economic structures and policies have become more complex, few outside the government have the capacity to analyze a policy's myriad impacts. Think tanks do so. Theirs are often credible cautionary voices deflating or contradicting the exaggerated claims of policymakers and advocates.

The proliferation of think tanks has not simplified policy-making: more voices sometimes heighten confusion, at least initially. But, on balance, these institutions have improved policy-making in the United States and represent an institutional strength of our democracy that no other nation can match.

Taking into consideration the comparative differences in political systems and civil societies, I have developed the following categories that attempt to capture the full range of think tanks that can be found around the world today.

Appendix A
US think tanks – the global context

In this increasingly complex, interdependent, and information-rich world, governments, and individual policymakers face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear in governmental decision-making. Policymakers need basic information about the world and the societies they govern, how current policies are working, possible alternatives, and their likely costs and consequences. Independent public policy research, analysis and engagement organizations, commonly known as "think tanks," have filled policymakers' insatiable need for information and systematic analysis that is policy relevant.

For most of the twentieth century, think tanks (nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations that perform research and provide advice on public policy) were an organizational phenomenon found primarily in the United States, with a much smaller number in Canada and Western Europe. Although think tanks existed in Japan for some time, they generally lacked independence, having close ties to government ministries or corporations. There has been a veritable proliferation of "think tanks" since the 1970s. Two thirds of all the think tanks that exist today were established after 1970, and over half were established since 1980. In regions such as Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and parts of Southeast Asia, think tanks are a more recent phenomenon with most of the institutions being created in just the last 10 years. Today, there are approximately 5,000 think tanks around the world, in almost every country that has more than a few million inhabitants and at least a modicum of intellectual freedom (see Figure A.1).

Think tanks now operate in a variety of political systems, engage in a range of policy-related activities, and comprise a diverse set of institutions that have varied organizational forms. And while all think tanks perform the same basic function – i.e. to bring knowledge and expertise to bear on the policy-making process – not all think tanks have the same degree of financial, intellectual, and legal independence.

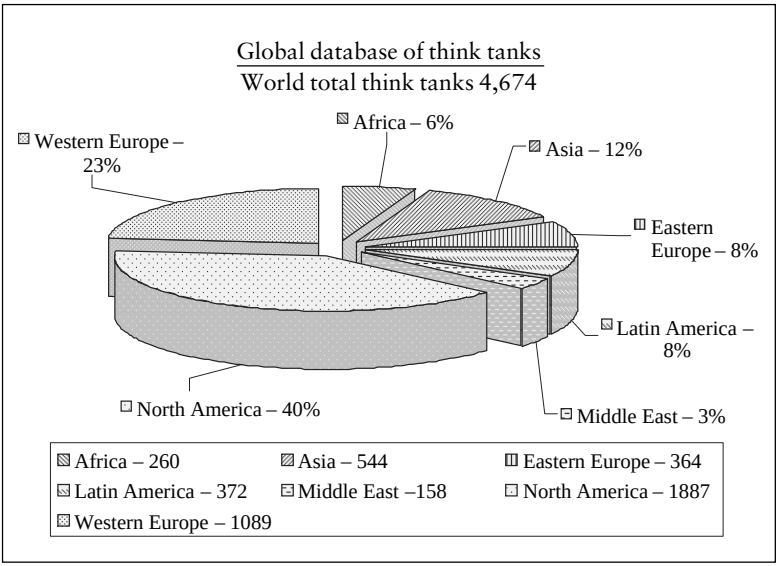

Figure A.1 World think tanks by location

The challenge facing all think tanks is how to achieve and sustain their independence so they can speak "truth to power."[1]

Despite the efforts of some scholars and policymakers to question the potential transferability of US-style independent think tanks to other regions and countries of the world, many policymakers and civil society groups from around the globe have sought to create truly independent, free-standing think tanks to help their governments think. So while the transferability of The Brookings Institution, RAND Corporation, or The Heritage Foundation model to other countries and political cultures may be debated, the need and desire to replicate the independence and influence these institutions enjoy is unchallenged.

Taking into consideration the comparative differences in political systems and civil societies, I have developed the following categories that attempt to capture the full range of think tanks that can be found around the world today.

The growth of public policy research organizations over the last two decades has been nothing less than explosive. Today there are nearly 5,000 of these institutions around the world. Not only have these organizations increased in number, but the scope and impact of their work has also expanded significantly. Still, the potential of think tanks to support and sustain democratic governments and civil societies

around the world is far from exhausted. The challenge for the new millennium is to harness the vast reservoirs of knowledge, information, and associational energy that exist in public policy research organizations so that it can support self-sustaining economic, social, and political progress in every region of the world.

Table A.1 Typology for autonomous and affiliated public policy think tanks

Organizational type	*Organization*	*Date established*
Political party	Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany)	1964
	Jaures Foundation (France)	1990
	Progressive Policy Institute (US)	1998
Government	China Development Institute (PRC)	1989
	Institute for Political & International Studies (Iran)	1984
	Congressional Research Service (U.S.)	1914
Quasi-governmental	Institute for Strategic & International Studies (Malaysia)	1983
	Korean Development Institute (Korea)	1971
	Woodrow Wilson International Center For Scholars (US)	1968
Autonomous and independent	Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (Pakistan)	1947
	Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)	1990
	Institute for International Economics (US)	1981
Quasi-independent	European Trade Union Institute (Belgium)	1978
	NLI Research Institute (Japan)	1988
	Center for Defense Information (US)	1990
University-affiliated	Foreign Policy Institute, Hacettepe University (Turkey)	1974
	Institute For International Relations (Brazil)	1979
	The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University (US)	1919

Notes
Political party-affiliated – Formally affiliated with a political party.
Government-affiliated – A part of the structure of government.
Autonomous and independent – Significant independence from any one interest group or donor and autonomous in its operation and funding from government.
Quasi-governmental – Funded exclusively by government grants and contracts but not a p art of the formal structure of government.
Quasi-independent – Autonomous from government but controlled by an interest group, donor or contracting agency that provides a majority of the funding and has significant influence over operations of the think tank.
University-affiliated – A policy research center at a university.

Appendix B
US think tanks in brief

The 1,736 think tanks in the United States engage in a range of policy-related activities, and comprise a diverse set of institutions that have varied organizational forms. The following fact sheet profiles 29 United States think tanks, selected to show a representative range of views research agendas and areas of expertise. The budgets range on average from 3 million dollars to nearly 30 million dollars, and staff sizes that range on average from 35 to about 200. The profiles were developed from material posted on the institution's web site and information provided by each institution. Every effort was made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the profiles with each institution prior to publication. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

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Mission

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, founded in 1943, is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of freedom – limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense

– through scholarly research, open debate, and publications. AEI is strictly non-partisan and takes no institutional positions on pending legislation or other policy questions.

Structure

AEI has a Board of Trustees composed of 30 leading business and financial executives. President Christopher C. DeMuth guides the Institute's daily operations. The Institute has about 50 resident scholars and fellows, and maintains a network of more than 100 adjunct scholars at American universities and policy institutes.

Funding

AEI is an independent, nonprofit organization supported primarily by grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Its budget in 2005 was $24.6 million.

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www.bakerinstitute.org

Mission

The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University is strictly non-partisan and dedicated to the highest standards of intellectual excellence. Bridging the gap between the theory and practice of public policy, the institute brings together experts from academia, government, the media, business, and nongovernmental organizations. These collaborations are designed to promote ideas, both innovative and practical, for the improvement of public policy at every level of government.

Structure

The Baker Institute is a non-degree-granting entity of Rice University, devoted mainly to public policy research and programs on domestic and foreign policy issues. The founding director of the institute is Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian. The institute's Advisory Board is chaired by E. William Barnett, the former chairman of the Board of Trustees of Rice University and includes, as ex officio members, former secretaries of state Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, and James A. Baker, III, and Rice University President David Leebron.

Funding

The institute has raised more than $75 million during the 12 years of its existence, including $52 million in endowment, mainly for the support of 15 research fellows and scholars in policy areas both national and international. The institute's budget for the fiscal year 2004 was $4 million.

Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW
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brookinfo@brookings.edu
www.brookings.edu

Mission

The Brookings Institution is a private nonprofit organization devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions. Celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2006, Brookings analyzes current and emerging issues and produces new ideas that matter – for the nation and the world. Research at the Brookings Institution is conducted to inform the public debate, not advance a political agenda. Its scholars are drawn from the United States and abroad – with experience in government

and academia – and hold diverse points of view. Brookings' mission is to provide high quality analysis and recommendations for decision makers in the United States and abroad on the full range of policy challenges facing an increasingly interdependent world.

Structure

A Board of Trustees is responsible for the general supervision of Brookings, approval of its areas of investigation, and safeguarding the independence of its work. The Institution's president is its CEO, responsible for formulating and setting policies, recommending projects, approving publications, and selecting staff. More than 140 resident and nonresident scholars research issues; write books, papers, articles, and opinion pieces; testify before congressional committees; and participate in dozens of public events each year.

Funding

Brookings is financed largely by an endowment and through the support of philanthropic foundations, corporations, and private individuals. The Institution's funds are devoted to carrying out its research and educational activities. Brookings also undertakes a small amount of unclassified government contract studies, reserving the right to publish its findings from them. Its budget in FY 2005 was approximately $41.5 million.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
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Telephone: 202.483.7600 / Facsimile: 202.483.1840
info@CarnegieEndowment.org
www.ceip.org

Mission

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910, is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation

between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Through research, publishing, convening, and, on occasion, creating new institutions and international networks, the Endowment's associates shape fresh policy approaches.

Structure

The Board of Trustees, composed of twenty-three leaders of American business and public life, governs the Endowment and directs its research initiatives. President Jessica T. Matthews oversees the Endowment's daily operations. The Washington Office supports a staff of 100, while 40 Russians work at the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Funding

The Endowment's budget for FY 2005 was $18.5 million. The Endowment's funding comes from grants and publications, including *Foreign Policy*, one of the world's leading magazines of international politics and economics.

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Mission

The Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering; it seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health.

Structure

Founded in 1982 by former US President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, and led by the Carters and an independent board of trustees, the Center's staff wage peace, fight disease and build hope, and have helped improve the quality of life for people in more than 65 countries. The Carter Center has strengthened democracies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa; helped farmers double or triple grain production in fifteen African countries; mediated or worked to prevent civil and international conflicts; intervened to prevent unnecessary diseases in Latin America and Africa, including the near eradication of Guinea worm disease; and strived to diminish the stigma against mental illness.

Funding

Private donations from individuals, foundations and corporations, together with multilateral development assistance programs, support the current annual operating budget of $50 million.

Center for American Progress
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progress@americanprogress.org
www.americanprogress.org

Mission

As progressives, we believe that America should be a country of boundless opportunity where all people can better themselves through education, hard work and the freedom to pursue their dreams. We believe this will only be achieved with an open and effective government that champions common good over narrow self-interest, harnesses the strength of our diversity, and secures the rights and safety of its people.

Structure

An eight-member Board of Directors governs the Center; while President and CEO John Podesta and Executive Vice President for Management Sarah Rosen Wartell oversee the Center's daily operations. As of 5 December 2005, the Center for American Progress has 113 full-time and three part-time staff members, as well as a team of 25 volunteer interns. This includes 6 full-time resident fellows, 18 part-time or nonresident fellows, and 30 policy staff.

Funding

The Center, which in 2005 had an annual budget of $16.7 million, is supported by contributions primarily from individuals and foundations.

Center for Strategic and International Studies
1800 K St, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: 202.887.0200 / Facsimile: 202.775.3199
www.csis.org

Mission

The Center for Strategic and International Studies seeks to advance global security and prosperity in an era of economic and political transformation by providing strategic insights and practical policy solutions to decisionmakers. CSIS serves as a strategic planning partner for the government by conducting research and analysis and developing policy initiatives that look into the future and anticipate change.

Structure

Founded in 1962 by David M. Abshire and Admiral Arleigh Burke, CSIS is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC with more than 220 full-time staff and a large network of affiliated experts. Former US Senator Sam Nunn became chairman

of the CSIS Board of Trustees in 1999, and John J. Hamre has led CSIS as its president and CEO since April 2000.

Funding

Contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals constitute 80 percent of the revenues needed to meet the CSIS budget, which was $27.1 million in FY 2004. The remaining funds come from endowment income, government contracts, and publication sales.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
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center@cbpp.org
www.cbpp.org

Mission

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a research and policy institute that works at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public policies and programs that affect low and moderate-income families and individuals. The Center conducts research and analysis to inform public debates over proposed budget and tax policies. Among the issues we explore are whether federal and state governments are fiscally sound and have sufficient revenue in the short and long term to address critical priorities, both for low-income populations and for the nation as a whole. We also develop policy options to alleviate poverty, particularly among working families.

Structure

The Center is governed by a 17-member Board of Directors. Robert Greenstein is the Center's Executive Director and Iris Lav is the Deputy Director. It has a staff of approximately 80, with experts in federal tax and budget policy, state fiscal issues, health care, low-income housing,

social insurance, income support, income and poverty trends, and applied international budget work.

Funding

The Center is an independent nonprofit supported by foundation grants, individual donations, and publication sales. The organization's 2005 calendar year budget was approximately $12 million.

CENTURY FOUNDATION
founded in 1919

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Telephone: 202.387.0400 / Facsmile: 202.483.9430
www.tcf.org

Mission

The Century Foundation conducts public policy research and analyses of economic, social, and foreign policy issues, including inequality, retirement security, election reform, media studies, homeland security, and international affairs. The foundation produces books, reports, and other publications, convenes task forces and working groups, and operates eight informational Web sites. With offices in New York City and Washington, DC, The Century Foundation is nonprofit and nonpartisan. It was founded in 1919 by Edward A. Filene.

Structure

A 26-member Board of Trustees governs the Institute.

Funding

The Century Foundation is an operating foundation. It was endowed in 1919 by Edward A. Filene. It operates from its endowment, and

sometimes other foundations will support projects we run. In Fiscal Year 2005, CF's expenses were $4.4 million and total revenues were $3.0 million.

Council on Foreign Relations

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communications@cfr.org
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Mission

The CFR is an independent, national membership organization, non-partisan research center, and publisher. Founded in 1921, CFR is dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individuals and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.

Structure

The Council is governed by a 31-member Board of Directors. Richard N. Haass is the President. It has a staff of approximately 200 (in New York and Washington, DC) including about 44 fellows. Its membership (approximately 4,200, chosen by a nomination process) is divided almost equally among New York, Washington, DC, and the rest of the country.

Funding

The Council is an independent, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization financed by member dues and contributions, foundation and individual

grants, corporate contributions, and revenues from its own endowment. The total budget for its FY05 fiscal year was $31.3 million.

Economic Policy Institute
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epi@epi.org
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Mission

Established in 1986 the mission of the Economic Policy Institute is to provide high-quality research and education in order to promote a prosperous, fair, and sustainable economy. The Institute stresses real world analysis and a concern for the living standards of working people, and it makes its findings accessible to the general public, the media, and policymakers. EPI's staff and its network of researchers have a proven capacity for high-quality scholarship, a demonstrated ability to communicate to diverse audiences, a commitment to a free exchange of ideas, and a willingness to challenge conventional thinking.

Structure

A 19-member Board, composed of business, community, and trade union leaders, academics, and writers, governs the Institute, and Lawrence Mishel, President, oversees EPI's daily operations. EPI's staff of about 50 includes more than 13 Ph.D.-level researchers, as well as administrative, communications, development, executive, and finance professionals. In addition to its in-house staff, EPI also works closely with a national network of prominent scholars.

Funding

EPI's annual budget is about $6 million, a majority of which, about 60 percent in, was received through grants from foundations. EPI also

receives support from individuals, corporations, labor unions, government agencies, and other organizations.

Foreign Policy Research Institute
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fpri@fpri.org
www.fpri.org

Mission

Founded in 1955 by Robert Strausz-Hupé, FPRI is devoted to **bringing the insights of scholarship to bear on the development of policies that advance US national interests.** We add perspective to events by fitting them into the larger historical and cultural context of international politics. We conduct research on issues ranging from homeland security and the war on terrorism to the roles of religion and ethnicity in international politics or the nature of Western identity and its implications for the United States and the Atlantic Alliance. Our history institutes "teach the teachers," and our weekly "E-notes" reach 25,000 key people in 85 countries directly and thousands more by web posting.

Structure

A 40-member Board of Trustees oversees the institute. The scholars of FPRI include a former aide to three US secretaries of state, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, a former President of Swarthmore College and a Bancroft Prize-winning historian, and two former staff members of the National Security Council. We count among our trustees a former Secretary of State and a former Secretary of the Navy (and among our former trustees and interns two current Undersecretaries of Defense). And we count among our extended network of scholars – especially, our Inter-University Study Groups – representatives of diverse disciplines, including political science, history, economics, law, management, religion, sociology, and psychology.

Funding

FPRI is financed by contributions from its board of trustees, foundation and corporate giving, membership contributions, revenue from publications (including books and Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs), the annual dinner, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The budget for FY 2005 is $2 million.

Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002–4999
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info@heritage.org
www.heritage.org

Mission

Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institute whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. The Foundation produces research and generates solutions consistent with its beliefs that are marketed to the Congress, the Executive Branch, the news media and others.

Structure

A 21-member Board of Trustees governs the work of 195 Heritage employees, including some 80 experts in a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. President Edwin J. Feulner oversees the Foundation's daily operations.

Funding

The Heritage Foundation, whose budget for CY 2005 was $42 million, is supported by contributions from its members, including foundations, corporations and more than 275,000 individuals across the United States.

Hudson Institute
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www.hudson.org

Mission

The Hudson Institute was founded in 1961. It is a research and educational institute designed to foster sound public policy approaches. The institute shares a guarded optimism about the future and a willingness to question conventional wisdom. The organization believes in free market, individual responsibility, the power of technology to assist progress, traditional American values and a determination to preserve America's national security.

Structure

The institute has a 30-member Board of Trustees which governs the work of the institute's staff. President Herbert London and Chief Executive Kenneth Weinstein oversee the institute's operations.

Funding

The institute's annual budget is $7.5 million and is supported by contributions from the board members, foundations, and the corporate sector.

Institute for International Economics
1750 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036.
Telephone: 202.328.9000 / Facsimile: 202.659.3225 / 202.328.5432
www.iie.com

Mission

The **Institute for International Economics** is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan research institution devoted to the study of international economic policy. Since 1981 the Institute has provided timely, objective analysis and concrete solutions to key international economic problems.

Structure

The Institute is advised by a Board of Directors and an Advisory Committee. C. Fred Bergsten has served as the Institute's director and CEO since its inception. The Institute's staff of about 50 includes more than two-dozen researchers, who are conducting about 30 studies at any given time. Its agenda emphasizes global macroeconomic topics, international money and finance, trade and related social issues, investment, and the international implications of new technologies. Current priority is attached to China, globalization and the backlash against it, outsourcing, transatlantic issues, reform of the international financial architecture, and new trade negotiations at the multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels. Institute staff and research cover all key regions – especially Asia, Europe, and Latin America as well as the United States itself.

Funding

The Institute's annual budget is about $8 million. Support is provided by a wide range of charitable foundations, private corporations, and individuals and from earnings on the Institute's publications and capital fund.

Institute for Policy Studies
733 15th St., NW, Suite 1020
Washington, DC 20005
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www.ips-dc.org

Mission

Founded in 1963, the Institute for Policy Studies is a research institute linked to citizen organizations that are working for peace, justice and the environment. The Institute engages with progressive academics, nonprofit organizations, local elected officials, and members of Congress. The main ways in which the Institute has an impact is through creative convening new networks and coalitions across sectors and issues and borders, catalyzing and empowering social movements through research, incubating projects and "social experiments" that become new organizations, responding rapidly to new developments and crises, fostering realistic alternatives, and building bridges from the advocacy community to progressive academics.

Structure

The Institute is governed by a 20-member Board of Trustees. John Cavanagh is the Director. It has a staff of 30, including 9 Fellows. It has 12 projects each of which fall within one of three clusters: peace and security, democracy and fairness, and global economy and environment.

Funding

Funding: The Institute is an independent, tax-exempt organization. Roughly two thirds of its $2.5 million budget for the fiscal year of 2005 comes from foundations and the remainder comes from individuals.

International Crisis Group (ICG)
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www.crisisgroup.org

Mission

Crisis Group was established in 1995 by a group of prominent international citizens and foreign policy specialists who were appalled by the international community's failure to act effectively in response to the crises in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda. Their aim was to create a new organization, wholly independent of any government, which would help governments, international organizations and the world community at large prevent or at least contain deadly conflict – and, if and when prevention failed, try to resolve it. Crisis Group's primary goal is prevention – to persuade those capable of altering the course of events to act in ways that reduce tensions and meet grievances, rather than letting them fester and culminate in violent conflict.

Structure

Crisis Group is an independent, nonprofit, non-governmental organization, with nearly 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located in or within close proximity to countries at risk of outbreak, escalation, or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decisionmakers. Approximately half of the staff members work in the five main advocacy offices and half work in one of the 11 field offices in Amman, Bishkek, Bogota, Dakar, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pretoria, Pristina, Seoul, and Tbilisi.

Funding

Crisis Group is an independent, nonprofit, non-governmental organization that receives funding from governments, charitable foundations, companies, and individual donors. Total revenue for 2005 was $10,477,992, almost all of which came from contributions. Total expenses for 2005 were $11,389,795, of which program expenses totaled $7 million, advocacy over $3 million, and administration $1.3 million.

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies®

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
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Washington, DC 20005–4928
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www.jointcenter.org

Mission

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies works to inform the nation's major public policy debates by conducting research, providing analysis, and disseminating information on a broad range of issues of concern to African Americans and other communities of color. The Joint Center's goal to improve the socioeconomic status of black Americans and other minorities, expand their effective participation in the political and public policy arenas, and promote communication across racial and ethnic lines. Since its founding in 1970, the Joint Center has operated as a non-partisan, nonprofit research and public policy institution.

Structure

Togo Dennis West, Jr., is President and CEO of the Joint Center. A 22-member Board of Governors oversees the organization's agenda, its future outlook, and appointments. The Joint Center has about 12 resident experts, and works in collaboration with outside scholars and organizations on a variety of projects and programs.

Funding

The Joint Center is an independent, nonprofit organization supported solely by grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Total expenses in 2004 were $5,569,842. Total revenue in 2004 was $5,158,770.

National Center for Policy Analysis
12770 Coit Road, Suite 800
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www.ncpa.org

Mission

The National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization established in 1983. The NCPA's goal is to develop and promote private alternatives to government regulation and control, solving problems by relying on the strength of a competitive, entrepreneurial private sector.

Structure

The NCPA is led by John C. Goodman, its founder and current President, and guided by a Board of Directors, chaired by former Delaware Governor Pete du Pont.

Funding

The NCPA has an annual budget of $6.5 million for 2006, and is supported by contributions from foundations, corporations, and like-minded individuals.

NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION

New America Foundation
1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: 202.986.2700 / Facsimile: 202.986.3696
newamericanfoundation@newamerica.net
www.newamerica.net

Mission

The purpose of the New America Foundation, founded in January 1999, is to bring new voices and new ideas to the fore of the nation's public discourse. Relying on a venture capital approach, the Foundation invests in outstanding individuals and policy ideas that transcend the conventional political spectrum. In the process, New America sponsors a wide range of research, published writing, conferences, and events on the most important domestic and foreign policy issues of the day.

Structure

A 24-member Board of Trustees, composed of leading business and financial executives, governs the Institute, and its research agenda and appointments are reviewed by a Council of Academic Advisers, a group of distinguished outside scholars. President Christopher C. DeMuth guides the Institute's daily operations. The Institute has about 50 resident scholars and fellows. The New America Foundation is an independent, non-partisan, nonprofit public policy institute with a full time staff of 65. Based in Washington, DC, New America also has a satellite office in California. The Foundation has over a dozen policy programs spanning a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues, in addition to its Bernard L. Schwartz Fellows Program, whose purpose is to identify and support a new generation of aspiring public intellectuals. New America is governed by a prestigious Board of Directors that is chaired by James Fallows. Ted Halstead is the organization's founding President and CEO.

Funding

The calendar 2005 budget for New America is $7 million. New America is supported by grants and contributions from philanthropic foundations and individual donors.

The Nixon Center
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Washington, DC 20036
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mail@nixoncenter.org
www.nixoncenter.org

Mission

The Nixon Center was founded by former President Richard Nixon in 1994 as a non-partisan foreign policy institute. The Center's mission is to promote pragmatic yet high-minded analysis of the challenges and opportunities America faces in the international arena. The Center publishes The National Interest, a leading foreign policy magazine.

Structure

The Center is a programmatically and substantively independent division of the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation with its own Board of Directors, chaired by Maurice R. Greenberg. Dimitri K. Simes is President and CEO of the Center and Publisher of *The National Interest*. Together, the Center and the magazine have a professional staff of 12. The Center is located in Washington, DC.

Funding

The Center's operations are supported by foundation, corporate, and individual contributions and endowment revenue. Its annual budget, including *The National Interest* magazine, is approximately $3 million.

National Bureau for Economic Research
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info@nber.org
www.nber.org

Mission

Founded in 1920, the National Bureau of Economic Research is a private, nonprofit, non-partisan research organization dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of how the economy works. The NBER is committed to undertaking and disseminating unbiased economic research among public policymakers, business professionals, and the academic community. The NBER is the nation's leading nonprofit economic research organization. Sixteen of the 31 American Nobel Prize winners in Economics and six of the past chairmen of the President's Council of Economic Advisers have been researchers at the NBER. The more than 600 professors of economics and business now teaching at universities around the country who are NBER researchers are the leading scholars in their fields. These Bureau associates concentrate on four types of empirical research: developing new statistical measurements, estimating quantitative models of economic behavior, assessing the effects of public policies on the US economy, and projecting the effects of alternative policy proposals.

Structure

The NBER is governed by a Board of Directors with representatives from the leading US research universities and major national economics organizations. Other prominent economists from business, trade unions, and academe also sit on the Bureau's Board. Martin Feldstein is the NBER's President and CEO. In addition to the Research Associates and Faculty Research Fellows, the Bureau employs a support staff of 45. The Bureau's main office is in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with additional offices in Palo Alto, California, and New York City.

Funding

The NBER's annual budget of about $25 million is financed by a combination of contributions from business and individuals and by grants from private foundations and from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

RAND Corporation
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Santa Monica, CA 90407–2138
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www.rand.org

Mission

For nearly 60 years, decisionmakers in the public and private sectors have turned to the RAND Corporation for objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the nation and the world. These challenges include such critical social and economic issues as education, poverty, crime, and the environment, as well as a range of national security issues. Today, RAND researchers and analysts work with decisionmakers in both the public and private sectors to carry out RAND's mission of helping to improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.

Structure

RAND is governed by a Board of Trustees representing the public, business, and academic communities. The Board appoints the officers of the Corporation and establishes the general policies that guide its work. Research is carried out by five units that address social and economic policy issues, both in the United States and overseas; by three federally funded research and development centers that focus on national security policy; by RAND Europe, an independently chartered RAND affiliate; and by the RAND-Qatar Policy Institute in Doha. RAND also operates a fully accredited graduate school that grants a Ph.D. in public policy. James Thomson has been RAND's President and CEO since 1989.

Funding

The RAND Corporation is an independent nonprofit research organization. RAND's research is commissioned by a wide range of sources: US federal, state, and local governments and agencies, private-sector firms, foundations, and foreign governments. Contributions from charitable foundations, private firms, and individuals, as well as earnings from RAND's endowment, furnish a steadily growing pool of funds. Although modest, the endowment income provides crucial flexibility, allowing RAND to address problems not yet on the policy agenda. RAND's revenue in 2005 was $215.1 million.

Resources for the Future
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www.rff.org

Mission

Resources for the Future, an independent and non-partisan Washington, DC, think tank, seeks to improve environmental and natural resource policymaking worldwide through objective social science research of the highest caliber. Research encompasses such areas as use and conservation of natural resources, pollution control, energy policy, land and water use, hazardous waste, climate change, biodiversity, food safety and security, fisheries, forestry, endangered species, and public health.

Structure

Founded in 1952, RFF is the oldest Washington think tank devoted exclusively to policy analysis on energy, environmental, and natural resource issues. It comprises a research and administrative staff of more than 80 persons. Most researchers hold doctorates in economics, but RFF analysts also hold advanced degrees in engineering, law, ecology, city and regional planning, American government, and public policy

and management, among other disciplines. The institution is overseen by a president and Board of Directors.

Funding

The RFF annual budget in 2004 was nearly $11 million, and the institution's endowment currently stands at nearly $70 million. More than 70 percent of the financial support provided each year by individuals, corporations, private foundations, and government agencies goes directly to RFF research and public education activities.

The Henry L. Stimson Center
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Washington, DC 20036
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www.stimson.org

Mission

Founded in 1989 by Barry Blechman and Michael Krepon, the Henry L. Stimson Center is a nonprofit, non-partisan institution committed to providing practical solutions to problems of international and national security. Through independent, creative, anticipatory, and integrative analysis as well as carefully designed outreach and collaborative programs, the Stimson Center seeks "a world in which instruments of security cooperation and peace overtake historic tendencies toward conflict and war."

Structure

The Center is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of leaders from the policy, academic, and corporate communities. Ellen Laipson serves as its President and CEO. Located in Washington, DC, the Center has nearly 40 senior scholars, research, and administrative staff in addition to a number of competitively-selected visiting fellows from abroad.

Funding

The Henry L. Stimson Center is a 501c3 organization funded through the generous support of individual, foundation, and government donors. The total budget of the Center for 2005 is $3.8 million.

The Urban Institute
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paffairs@ui.urban.org
pubs@ui.urban.org
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Mission

The Urban Institute carries out non-partisan analysis of social policy, collects data, evaluates social programs, and helps educate the public and the media. Founded in 1968, the Washington-based independent Institute works in all 50 states and more than 20 countries to inform debates on public policy and help government, communities, and non-profit organizations function more effectively and efficiently. UI's research and perspectives are shared with policymakers, program administrators and practitioners, businesses, academics, students, and the public.

Structure

The Institute's board of trustees advises the President, Robert D. Reischauer. Research is carried out in 10 policy centers – Assessing the New Federalism; Education; Health; Justice; Income and Benefits; International; Labor, Human Services, and Population; Metropolitan Housing and Communities, Nonprofits and Philanthropy; and Tax – that collaborate frequently to come at broad research topics from multiple angles.

Funding

The federal government is the Institute's largest funder, providing 72 percent of the Institute's funding in 2004. The other major funder is the foundation community (26 percent in 2004). A small share (2 percent) comes from state and local governments and private donors. The Institute's total budget in 2004 was $84 million.

United States Institute of Peace
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usiprequests@usip.org
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Mission

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, non-partisan national institution established in 1984. Its programs are funded by Congress. Its mission is to help prevent, manage, and resolve international conflicts by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by the Institute's direct involvement in peacebuilding efforts.

Structure

Led by its President, Richard H. Solomon, the Institute is overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the US Senate. The Institute draws on a variety of resources in fulfilling its mandate, including Institute staff, grantees, Jennings Randolph senior fellows, and a broad array of governmental and nongovernmental partners. The Institute staff consists of almost one hundred specialists with both geographic and subject-matter expertise. These experts, who are leaders in their field, come from the government, military, NGOs, and the private sector. The main areas

of the Institute's work are performing cutting edge research on the dynamics of conflict and on policy-and practitioner-relevant subjects; identifying best practices in conflict management and developing innovative programs; providing professional/practitioner skills training on conflict resolution techniques; educating emerging generations about international conflict management; and supporting policymakers while informing academia, the media and the public through a wide range of materials, publications, and events.

Funding

The Institute's Congressional funding for fiscal year 2005 was $23 million.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
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www.wilsoncenter.org

Mission

The Wilson Center is a non-partisan research institution which investigates important issues in the humanities, social sciences, and public policy. Established by Congress in 1968 as the nation's official and living memorial to our 28th President, the Wilson Center provides a link between the world of ideas and the world of policymaking. Scholars from all over the world are invited to the Center to perform in-depth independent research on particular issues, and take advantage of the tremendous personal, historical and archival resources that exist in the city. At the Center, policymakers, scholars, and other leaders can take a step back from the rush of politics, academia, and the marketplace to look at issues from a broad and objective viewpoint. Better decisions can be made, and more effective action taken, as a result of the serious dialogue that takes place on a daily basis at the Wilson Center. The

Wilson Center's mission to sponsor frank, open, and fair discussions of the key public policy issues of the day in their full historical and international context reflects its status as a center for advanced research. These qualities set it apart from the more traditional think tanks in Washington.

Structure

The Wilson Center is governed by a 17-member Board of Trustees, 10 of whom are appointed by the President and 7 of whom serve ex-officio. Lee H. Hamilton serves as the President and Director of the Wilson Center. The Center's staff numbers about 140 and in addition roughly 250 fellows, scholars, and interns are in residence during the course of a year. A Wilson Council, numbering over 125, is a core group which takes a special interest in the Center's success and financial well-being.

Funding

The Wilson Center is a public–private partnership and it receives an annual appropriation from the US Congress, which now, following successful fundraising initiatives, represents a diminishing percentage of the Center's annual budget of over $25 million. The Center has an endowment with an approximate value of $35 million. The Center's goal is to raise more than half of its annual financial resources from private sources.

World Resources Institute
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Mission

The World Resources Institute's mission is to move human society to live in ways that protect the Earth's environment and its capacity to

provide for the needs and aspirations of current and future generations. Because people are inspired by ideas, empowered by knowledge, and moved to change by greater understanding, WRI provides – and helps other institutions provide – objective information and practical proposals for policy and institutional change that will foster environmentally sound, socially equitable development.

Structure

The World Resource Institute is governed by a 33-member Board of Directors. President – Jonathan Lash; Managing Director – Paul Faeth; CFO – Steven Barker; Chairman – James Harmon. WRI has a staff of approximately 125 people, in addition to numerous partner organizations throughout the world.

Funding

The World Resources Institute is an independent nonprofit organization funded by foundation, federal and international governmental grants and cooperative agreements, corporate grants and contributions, individual gifts, and revenue from it own endowment. The total budget for 2005 fiscal year is $21.4 million.

Notes

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4 Marketing, public relations, and public engagement

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5 Measuring the influence of think tanks

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