

# **Globalization and think-tanks; Security policy networks.**

By Jiri Schneider  
Head of Policy Planning  
MFA, Prague

May 2003

- 1. Globalization - security, economy, governance**
- 2. Definitions and typology of think-tanks**
- 3. Role of think-tanks in security policy networks**

## **Executive summary:**

**This paper attempts to describe the way how of globalization affects security research and analysis.**

**In the first part security and economic aspects of globalization are considered from a perspective of different forms of governance.**

**In the second part think-tanks are presented as flexible institutions and forums that provide missing links among actors of policy-making and that are especially appropriate to deal with challenges of globalization.**

**In the final part of the paper we suggest that think-tanks can play new roles as knots of global security policy network. Think-tanks are apt for informal communication among security experts allowing them to exchange views concerning threat perceptions, broader conceptual frameworks and security paradigms in general.**

## 1. Globalization - Security, Economy, Governance

Keohane & Nye (2000) have distinguished notion of “interdependence” (state of affairs referring to mutual linkages) from “globalism” (type of interdependence characterized by global multiple networks of interconnections). In this framework globalization means growing “globalism” mostly in socio-economic terms where it is the most apparent. Economic dimension of globalization is driven by “*organizational logic of corporate industrial networks*” (ibid).

According to D.Armstrong (1998, p.461) the term ‘globalization’ has been used to refer to

- \* *processes (e.g., the expansion and internationalization of financial markets)*
- \* *interactive networks (e.g., global corporate management; worldwide epistemic<sup>1</sup> and interpretive<sup>2</sup> communities)*
- \* *structures (e.g., newly emerging power relationships deriving from changing global investment patterns)*
- \* *discourses (e.g., new social constructions of cognition, identity and meaning<sup>3</sup> built upon postmodern global conditions).*

In this paper we will focus on security dimension of globalization. Although economic, security and other (like environmental) aspects of globalization are by definition interdependent and inseparable.

Security aspects of globalization can be demonstrated on two contradictory trends after the end of cold war:

- ✘ decline of military globalism that has characterized previous strategic balance of power - “*In the context of superpower bipolarity, the end of the cold war represented military de-globalization*” Nye (p.11)
- ✘ general insecurity due to growing vulnerability of increasingly globalized world - “*asymmetry of global military power and the interconnections among networks raise new options for warfare*” (ibid). Therefore some scholars speak about “globalization of insecurity”(Ch. Bertram)

Obvious consequences of globalization on sovereignty and governance are often discussed, too. Globalization’s impact on governance has been spectacular. As Reinecke & Witte (1999) have stated: “*governments no longer have monopoly of a legitimate power over their territory*”. The consequence is that public policy making is more and more delegated to non-state actors (private and NGO sector). As Keohane & Nye (2000) have put it, “*governance need not necessarily be conducted exclusively by governments and the international organizations to which they delegate authority. Private firms, associations of firms, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and associations of NGOs all engage in it, often in association with governmental bodies, to create governance; sometimes without governmental authority.*”

Governance means not only **hierarchy**. Power can be mediated through **markets** and various **networks**. In economic discourse “network effects” refer to situations in which a product becomes more valuable once many other people also use it. In our context it can be applied to knowledge networks. On the other hand, in the post-positivist world one cannot take for granted that knowledge does reflect an objective reality: “researchers ‘construct’ the world they study and that the values, priorities, and conceptual models that they bring to their work influence the things they ‘find’.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter M. Haas (1991); International Organization, 46:1 (Winter 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge, 1995)

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Roland Robertson, *Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture* (London, 1992); Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London, 1994);

According to Carol Weiss (1991, p. 37) policy research can be based on data, values and interests; information, ideology and argument. Similarly, one can trace cognitive, normative and affective dimension of political culture (understood as a latent pre-disposition and attitude of citizens towards actors of policy process). In communicating policy research or certain policy recommendation one might seek a cognitive, affective, or behavioral response: „*think tanks may want to put an idea or result in the person's mind, change his or her attitude toward an issue, or get the person to take an action.*“ Struyk (2002, p. 2000).

## 2. Definitions and typology of think-tanks.

Think-tank was originally a World War II military invention reflecting growing complexity of modern warfare. It was used to describe secure environment for military planners (Day, 1993). Significantly, during early stages of the cold war in 50s think-tanks specialized in security policy that required most an interdisciplinary approach (e.g. RAND Corporation - which was originally research branch of US Air Force).

Development of modern democratic governance has led to proliferation of think-tanks to other areas of public policy - primarily social, economic and environmental. Some scholars therefore tend to view think-tanks through the lens of “market of ideas”: “*the growth of think-tanks can be explained by market forces that created a demand for different brands of think-tanks that produced new products for new markets.*” [McGann (2001); p. 7].

Think-tank in general means:

- *an institute, corporation, or group organized for interdisciplinary research (as in technological and social problems) -- called also think factory* 4
- *consultative committee: a committee of experts that undertakes research or gives advice, especially to a government* 5

Political scientists define think-tanks as **independent** actors in policy process: “*independent (and usually private) policy research institutes containing people involved in studying a particular policy area or a broad range of policy issues, actively seeking to educate or advise policy-makers and the public through a number of channels.*” [Stone (2000b), for other definitions see Denham & Garnett (1998); McGann & Weaver(2000)].

McGann (2000) speaks somewhat cautiously about **significant autonomy**: defines think-tanks as “*policy research organizations that have significant autonomy from government and from societal interests such as firms, interest groups, and political parties.*” [p. 5] Independence or autonomy as a prerequisite for free discourse is a distinctive feature of Western political culture: “*The Western view that a think-tank requires independence or autonomy from the state, corporate, or other interests in order to be free-thinking does not accord with experiences in other cultures*” [Stone (2002); p. 15688].

However, in case of security - the area that is monopolized by states and tight by confidentiality - the level of independence and autonomy of think-tanks is limited. Security community has to rely both on information and finance provided by state.

The idea and practice of policy research is deeply rooted in Anglo-Saxon political tradition. That is why the concept of public policy and its actors is a matter of political culture in broader terms. The concept of think-tank is so much embedded in English that it cannot be easily translated into other languages and transferred into other political cultures. Similarly, in most other languages it is difficult to properly translate notions like policy, polity,

---

4 Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2000)

5 Encarta® World English Dictionary [North American Edition] © & (P) 2001 Microsoft Corp.

politics.

Mediation of interests, values and knowledge depends on a model of policy making. In principle, there are two models of policy process: closed and open.

In a **corporativist** model there is no place for any independent intermediary structures. Corporatism = a system of interest mediation in which a limited number of societal organisations are directly integrated into the political process.

On the other hand, in a policy process that is **open** to participation of politicians, officials and interest groups think-tanks can be used as tools both in pursue of particular interests as well as in public policy formulation.

Think-tanks utilize methods of policy analysis in problem definition, collection of information, devising options and recommendations, policy evaluation. Think-tanks "*provide an organizational link and communication bridge between their different audiences*" [Stone; 2002] , try to link policy and ideas "*at the intersection of academia and politics*" [Stone; 2000]. Think-tanks serve as a source of information, conceptual thinking, inventory in area of public administration. Through creating of multidisciplinary network of experts and think-tanks contribute to public debate and help to articulate public interest.

Think-tanks can be active in all phases of policy process - from agenda setting, drafting policy proposals, creating implementation plans to assessment of existing policies.

Think-tanks can be viewed as agents of change, "*catalysts of thoughts and ideas*", "*catalysts for ideas and actions*" (McGann). Therefore **economic** think-tanks could be seen as ideal designers and promoters of transition policies in formerly communist states in 90s. **Security** oriented think-tanks are extremely useful focal points of security community, can serve as a sensors of threat perceptions, exchange of information that can be utilized in threat perception.

### **Different perspectives on think-tanks**

In studying think-tanks as institutions at the intersection of political, academic, media, entrepreneurial and non-profit sector different methodologies can be employed. It is possible to use an economic (welfare economics; public choice), sociological (social structure), managerial (organizational behavior, information processing) or philosophical approach. Research may be focused on institutional settings of think-tanks or on policy process as such.

Several ways of classification appeared in recent publications on think-tanks. Since think-tanks operate in variety of institutional forms and legal arrangements, the most frequent typology is based on institutional aspects (legal form and status, principles of funding, affiliation, etc) [e.g. McGann (2000)].

Stone, Maxwell & Keating (2001) define types of think-tanks based on their research roles: contract researchers, 'in house' researchers (attached to executive), political advisors, civil society researchers (private think-tanks and NGOs) and disinterested research institutions. Stone (2002) is also keen to study think-tanks as parts of broader networks and communities ("*epistemic communities*" Haas (1991)). Similarly, Gellner (2000) is more interested in role of advocacy coalitions and policy brokers than in their institutional settings. Struyk (1999) sorts think-tanks according to their origin: private institutions, new institutions created by old fellows, institutions created by public figures, attached to political party, for-profit company, "spin-off" institution, etc. Krastev (2000) comes out with considering target groups: government-oriented, legislation-oriented and media-oriented think-tanks. In following table McGann's typology (academic, contract, advocacy/partisan think-tanks) is linked to general observation about cognitive, normative and affective dimension of social research Weiss (1991)

### Classification of think-tanks

basis of research (Weiss)	Role of experts	type of think-tank	similar institutions ("hybrids", "siblings")	dominant source of finance
data (knowledge)	academic scholars	"university without students"	academic research centers	foundations
- " -	contract researchers, experts	consulting firms	government research centers	state (public) budget
ideas (ideology) values	advocates	NGO (non-profit)	party think-tanks	political parties, individuals, corporations
arguments interests	intermediaries, lobbyists	lobbies	associated research centers of interest groups	entrepreneurs, corporations, associations (unions)

Based on McGann & Weaver (2000); Weiss (1991)

For our purposes it is useful to sort think-tanks according to policy area: socio-economic, environmental, security, etc. Security oriented think-tanks appear in all above mentioned forms, although because of specifics of security area in funding they tend to rely more on state grants and contracts

### Think-tanks and funding.

As we have shown above think-tanks can communicate knowledge (informative function) but also advocate values (normative function) and lobby for interests (affective function). As money is the most reliable "carrier" of interests, it is important to mention the ways how are think-tanks funded. Most of the funding is project based, think-tanks seek continuous funding for core costs (administrative staff, rent, communication, etc). If they have limited funds their personnel (researchers) have to be affiliated to either academic institution (university, faculty, academy of sciences) or for-profit institution (consultancy, financial companies). Alternative arrangement means minimal staff with volunteers running a network of certified experts or limited staff on fundraising, project management, public relations and information technology (web page) while researchers are hired on specific projects.

**Foreign** funding creates significant incentive for think-tanks to serve as a tools of transnational policy transfer.

My recent research (Think tanks in Visegrad Countries, 2002-3, see [www.policy.hu/schneider/](http://www.policy.hu/schneider/) supported by Open Society Institute, Budapest) has shown that major foreign resources providing funds to Central European think-tanks are as follows: private foundations (e.g. OSI, Ford Foundation, etc), foreign government agencies or entrepreneurial funds (e.g. USAID, British Know-How Fund), public foundations (funded by public funds - e.g. K. Adenauer Stiftung, F. Ebert Stiftung, etc), international organizations (e.g. World Bank, IMF, OECD, and last but not least European Union). Except of those of international organizations resources have been reduced in recent years. The only remaining sources are in fact public funds. EU's share in funding of policy research is constantly growing. As Central European countries accede European Union,, more

think-tanks will naturally seek financial resources in EU (6th Research Framework Program, structural funds). Generally, to apply for these funds is considered to be much more complex and bureaucratic procedure. Therefore it is not yet enough attractive when US funding still available although in decreased levels.

It has been relatively easy for think-tanks to operate in generous environment. Shortage of foreign funds creates a challenge to substitute them by domestic alternatives.

In principle, there are two kinds of **domestic** funds:

1) grants and contracts provided by **public** (central, regional and municipal) budgets  
*"Think-tanks in Central and Eastern Europe will need to undertake consulting contracts with ministries or private businesses, or align themselves closely with political parties"* [Kimball (2000); p.258-9]

2) contracts and donations from **private** sources - entrepreneurs, interest groups, foundations

Share of projects funded by **international organizations** in socio-economic sector is lower - 20% than that in political, security area - obviously there is more commercial activity linked with economic research

**Government** (public) resources contribute to 20% (economic research) to 60% (sociological research) of projects. Economic research profits from closeness to parallel commercial activities (market research, economic forecast). Most of the economic and sociological institutions are commercially oriented (shareholder companies or holdings including for profit branch) whereas in security, foreign policy field the activities are less profit oriented.

Therefore **security oriented think-tanks rely mostly on contracts and grants provided by governments and international organizations.**

Most experts agree that apart from research contracts (e.g. market research, economic forecasting, sociological polling) it is extremely difficult to raise funds for an independent policy research. Both private and public funding may lead to a certain degree of dependence: especially reliance on single source of funding is delicate. Research contracts by international organizations (World Bank, IMF, NATO, EU, UN agencies) have impact on think-tanks' organizational culture.

There exists a viable model providing sufficient independence while being reliable and professional in managing for private donations: private foundations as intermediaries. Central European countries are in growing need of private foundations that would be able to raise funds domestically and that would allocate part of them (among others) to policy think-tanks. Fundraising for charity is easier than raising funds for advocacy or research of policy/"civic" issues. Sponsoring of sports, health, culture and charity is much more common under the provision of marketing and public relations than sponsoring of research and advocacy provided as gifts, endowments. Donors want to have the sense of ownership, stakeholders want to feel like shareholders.

Existing foundations have got used to generous foreign funding. In most cases they did not specialize in domestic fundraising and providing grants to other NGOs, but instead they have been involved in implementing projects themselves. Few of them are prepared to focus exclusively on cultivation of fundraising and credible allocation of funds to other institutions.

#### **Think-tanks and lobbying.**

So far, no rules and regulations apply for lobbying; lobbyists do not operate in sufficiently transparent environment (policy process is "closed"- see above). Lobbying market is not regulated but is politically divided (links between lobbyist groups and particular political parties).

There is little public pressure on transparency of decision-making process. Interest groups do not have a reason to engage think-tanks in producing policy related research and generating more sophisticated arguments to support their case. Direct lobbying is easier.

European lobbyists have realized that they need a robust and credible research capabilities in advancing interests of their clients. No wonder that some think-tanks have become involved in interest promotion.

*Think tanks aim to influence policy through analysis and argument, rather than by direct lobbying. ... However, Euro-groups that have developed think tank characteristics ... blurring the distinction between think tank and lobby group.* [Sherrington (2000), p.178]

Consistent pressure on transparency in lobbying might lead major interest groups to change their attitude towards more generous funding of independent security think-tanks. Both policy-makers and interest groups underestimate a potential of their influence on policies through international networks.

*“Think tanks attempt to influence or inform policy through intellectual argument and analysis rather than direct lobbying ...”* [Stone (2002); p. 15668]

Surprisingly enough, defense-related industry in Central European countries has been passive in providing funds for security policy research although they spent apparently large amounts of money on direct lobbying. Defense industry can only benefit from this kind of partnership.

### **3. Role of think-tanks in security policy networks**

Think-tanks play multiple functions that can be described in sum as follows:

*“As civil society organizations think tanks play a number of critical roles, including (1) playing mediating function between the government and the public; (2) identifying, articulating, and evaluating current or emerging issues, problems or proposals; (3) transforming ideas and problems into policy issues; (4) serving as an informed and independent voice in policy debates; (5) providing a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information between key stakeholders in the policy formulation process.”* (McGann & Weaver(2000); p.3)

By the same token security-oriented think-tanks provide a forum for exchange of views on security leading to building confidence among security experts across institutional and national boundaries and in the end contributing to a common perception of threats.

Following chapter will provide other perspectives, in order to show that think-tanks can play these roles not only on national but also on European and international level. In this context let me mention as an example the prominent role that some experts from RAND Corp.<sup>6</sup> played in sparking public debate about NATO enlargement in the U.S.

Think-tanks can serve as *“agents of change”* [Krastev (2000)]; they promote and advocate reform policies based on shared best practices and know-how. In a process of *„policy imitation“* (ibid) they both import ideas and export experience. Although the very idea of policy transfer can be questioned because *“transfer of ideas to another social environment in itself changes their meaning and function”* [Krastev (2000a), p.276]

Only independent institutions can promote a change credibly. Embedded and established experts tend to defend status quo. Lack of analytical capacities of political parties in practice leads to acceptance of policies created by direct influence of interest groups affecting state bureaucracy. Public interest is understood as an outcome of particular and individual interests aggregated through political parties, discussed in media and on various platforms. Research institutions like think-tanks provide standing platform for such discussions and contribute to the public debate by relating it to data, values and interests.

---

<sup>6</sup> see Building A New NATO by Ronald D. Asmus; Richard L. Kugler; F. Stephen Larrabee, Foreign Affairs, September/October 1993

Growing importance of soft governance brought attention to **networks** as a way of communication complementary to **hierarchical** and **market** mechanisms. International NGOs and advocacy groups use networking as powerful instrument in pursuing their agenda. Academic networks called “epistemic communities” [Haas; 1992] or “knowledge networks” facilitate common understanding of various aspects of policy and society. “Invisible college” of experts and researchers that share their basic values and assumptions (casual beliefs) and problem perception can contribute considerably to policy formulation. Valuable example of specialized epistemic community was provided by Reid [1993] in case of terrorism research. Think-tanks are like knots of institutionalized policy networks.

*“There appears to have been a growth in think tank activity at the European level in the last two decades, perhaps simply explained by the deepening of EU competences, the increased impact of EU policy-making on member states, and thus a heightened awareness of all things European.”* [Sherrington (2000), p.173]

One of the most visible examples of such networking on emerging EU agendas is activity of Center for European Reform (London) with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) in the area of European security and defense policy.<sup>7</sup>

An ability to participate in international networks multiplies options and horizons to pursue interests. Think-tanks capable of networking on European and international level increase country’s competitive edge<sup>8</sup>. Analysts have observed that international governance offers new opportunities for private, non-governmental research institutions to affect policies: *“the demand for advice and expertise has grown as the EU has matured. Therefore, EU policy-making processes can provide think tanks with a variety of windows for influence. The issue then is whether such potential has been exploited”* [Sherrington (2000b), p.178]

**Security policy networks may play an essential role in providing forum for exchange of views among security experts, creating communication channels for informal diplomacy, “an interface between knowledge and policy”** [Stone(2000)]. Through common security paradigms, coherent perception of threats, mutual confidence across the boundaries can be built. Thus, policy networks contribute to the learning process in foreign and security policy.

x x x

## **Bibliography**

### **Books**

Donahue, John D. & Nye, Joseph S. (Eds.) (2000) *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Brookings Institution Press

Marsch, David (1998) *Comparing Policy Networks* Taylor & Francis

McGann, James G. & Weaver, R. Kent. eds. (2000) *Think-tanks and Civil Societies*:

---

<sup>7</sup> Andreani, Gilles & Bertram, Chris & Grant, Charles (2001) *Europe's military revolution*

<sup>8</sup> e.g. see website of The International Relations and Security Network (ISN) - <http://www.isn.ethz.ch>  
The ISN’s main objective is to promote networking, dialogue and cooperation in the international security community. It is supported by the Swiss Government as part of its contribution to the Partnership for Peace, the ISN is run by the Center for Security Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.



Catalysts for Ideas and Action, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick

Parsons, D.W. (1996) Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis, Edward Elgar Publishing

Smith, James A. (1991), Idea Brokers - Think-tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite, Free Press, N.Y.

Stone, Diane (1996, 2002) Capturing the Political Imagination : Think-tanks and the Policy Process, Frank Cass Publications,

Stone, Diane & Garnett, Mark. eds. (1998) Think-tanks of the World: Global Perspectives on Ideas, Policy and Governance. St. Martin's Press

Stone, Diane & Denham, Andrew & Garnett, Mark. eds. (1998) Think-tanks Across Nations: A Comparative Approach, Manchester University Press

Struyk, Raymond J. (1999) Reconstructive Critics: Think in Tanks in Post-Soviet Bloc Democracies, Urban Institute Press, Washington D.C.

Struyk, Raymond J. (2002) Managing Think-tanks - A Practical Guide for Maturing Organizations, Urban Institute Press (available at <http://www.urban.org/>)

-

### **Articles, papers**

Abelson, Donald E. (2000) Do Think-tanks Matter? Opportunities, Constraints and Incentives for Think-tanks in Canada and the United States, Global Society, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2000

Armstrong, David (1998) Globalization and the social state, Review of International Studies 24, 461-478

Boerzel, Tanja A. (1998) Organizing Babylon - On the Different Conceptions of Policy Networks, Public Administration, Vol. 76, Summer 1998, pp. 253-273

Gellner, Winand (2000) Think-tanks in Germany in: Stone & Denham & Garnett (1998) Think-tanks Across Nations Chp. 4, pp. 82-106

Haas, Peter M (1992) Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination, International Organization No. 46/1, pp.1-37

Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.Jr. (2000) Globalization: What's new ? What's Not ? (And So What ?) in: Foreign Policy, Spring 2000

Krastev, Ivan (2000) The Liberal Estate: Reflections on the Politics of Think-tanks in Central and Eastern Europe, in: McGann & Weaver (2000), Ch. 12, pp. 273-292

Krastev, Ivan (2000) Think-tanks: Making and Faking Influence in: "Banking on Knowledge", Routledge (Ch. 8)

McGann, James G. (2001) Globalization and the Growth of Think-tanks, ©McGann Associates (available at <http://www.thinktankconsultants.com>)

Reid, Edna O.F. (1993), Terrorism research and the diffusion of ideas, Knowledge & Policy, Spring93, Vol. 6, Issue 1

Sherrington, Philippa (2000) Shaping the Policy Agenda: Think-tank Activity in the European

SAREM International Seminar, Istanbul, May 30, 2003

Union, *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations*, Apr2000, Vol. 14 Issue 2

Stone, Diane (2000) Non-Governmental Policy Transfer: The Strategies of Independent Policy Institutes, *Governance: An International Journal on Policy and Administration*, Vol.13, No.1, Jan 2000

Stone, Diane (2000) The policy roles of private research institutes in global politics in: Ronit, Karsten & Schneider, Volker eds. (2000) *Private Organizations in Global Politics*

Stone, Diane (2000) Think-tank Transnationalisation and Non-profit Analysis, Advice and Advocacy, Vol.14, No.2, Jan 2000

Stone, D. Maxwell, S. & Keating, M. (2001) Bridging Research and Policy, Warwick Univ., International Workshop, 16-17 July 2001

Stone, Diane (2001) Think Global, Act Local or Think Local, Act Global ? Knowledge Production in the Global Agora, CEU Conference, Budapest

Stone, Diane (2002) 'Think-tanks' in: Elsevier Encyclopaedia [p.15668-671]

Struyk, Raymond J. (2002) Management of Transnational Think-tank Networks, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol.15, No.4, Sum 2002

Thunert, Martin (2000) Players Beyond Borders? German Think-tanks as Catalysts of Internationalisation, *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations*, Apr2000, Vol. 14 Issue 2, p. 191-211

Weiss, Carol H. (1991) Policy research as advocacy: Pro and con, *Knowledge & Policy*, Spring/Summer91, Vol. 4 Issue 1/2, p.37-57 , see also *Policy Research: data ideas or arguments ?* in: *Social Sciences and Modern States* (1991) pp. 307-332

### **Directories and Internet sources**

The International Relations and Security Network (ISN) - <http://www.isn.ethz.ch> - Supported by the Swiss Government as part of its contribution to the Partnership for Peace, the ISN is run by the Center for Security Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. The ISN's main objective is to promote networking, dialogue and cooperation in the international security community

Think-tanks in Central and Eastern Europe (1999). Freedom House, Washington (available at <http://www.ngonet.org/>)

World Directory of Think-tanks (1999) National Institute For Research Advancement(NIRA), Tokyo