Chapter – V

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CONCLUSION

Decision influencers: US foreign policy and think tanks

In the present study an effort has been made to analyse the domestic inputs involved in the formulation of American foreign policy. Further, we have tried to see what are the objective and issues in American foreign policy in which decision makers seek information or think tanks doing research? Having this background in mind this study found that in the formulation of American foreign policy, the role and responsibilities of the Executive, Congress, the National Security Council, the Pentagon, the State Department; the Central Intelligence Agency, and the decision influencer like public opinion, Mass media are clearly defined. However, the role and functions of think tanks in the formulations of foreign policy has largely been ignored. Think tanks are an increasingly mechanism for refining and presenting knowledge and expertise in a relevant and usable manner. Accordingly, one of the main objectives of this study was to provide a picture of the independent policy research industry in American foreign policy making. A further objective was to investigate their policy relevance and the strategies by which think tanks hope to sensitize decision makers to change and educate them into specific solutions. This study also tries to see how and why many of these institutions have cast aside their scholarly objectivity to immerse themselves in Washington politics.

By discussing the growing involvement of think tanks in the policy making process and their efforts to shape major foreign policy debates, the literature on foreign policy decision-making can be further enhanced. Moreover, examining the interaction, which takes place between decision-makers and members of think tanks, shed additional light on how information and advice is transmitted to the highest levels of government. Furthermore, by monitoring the career path of think tanks scholars to government posts and of
former government officials to prominent think tanks, it is possible to further elaborate on the networks of influence, which have emerged between policy research institutions and political leaders.

Foreign policy generally refers to how the government of state acts in relation to other states. It can also refer to what government do in relation to international organizations, multinational corporations, political and military organizations that are not state actors, and sometimes even prominent individuals.¹

Academics have sought to describe and explain U.S foreign policy through a variety of factors. Some of these factors involved the nature of the world faced by the United States as it formulates policy. Other factors relate to development and implementation of policy on a regional and global scale. Further sources of U.S foreign policy relate to the norms, historical experience, ideological preference, and perceptual biases of U.S policy makers and the U.S public. The mix and relative power of the interest groups seeking to influence U.S policy on any given issue present yet another important determinant of U.S foreign policy. Finally, U.S foreign policy is in some ways a product of the decision making process.²

The objective of US foreign policy serves first and foremost to promote the domestic well being of country. First, the country’s domestic well being presupposes its physical survival and that of its population. For this reason, security of population and territory represents one basic goal of US foreign policy. Ensuring the security of the US populations and territory, in turn requires that the United States acquire and maintain the capacity to identify and contain or eliminate threats that undermine the health and survival of the country. Second, the general well-being of the United States as a state depends on the continued economic prosperity of its citizens. In the context of

¹ Priya Singh. Foreign Policy Making in Israel Domestic Influences (Kolkata: Mulana Abul Kalam Azad, Institute of Asian Studies, 2005), P. 4
² C. Herrick and P.B. McRae, Issue in American Foreign Policy, (New York: Longman, 2003),
foreign policy, prosperity requires the United States to maintain, and where possible, promote the creation of international conditions that will allow the country and its citizenry to prosper economically. Finally, the US citizenry and its leadership have seen themselves as the guardians and promoters of a set of moral principles. These include the promotion of democracy and the respect for law. Through promoting these principles, the United States has expressed its moral values while ensuring its security and prosperity.3

Understanding U.S foreign policy requires not only knowledge of facts but also knowledge of process. That is, it is not enough to know names and dates, but one must understand the significance of the actors and their place in history as well as the implication of this for the present. In order to understand better the larger foreign policy making process, one needs to focus on its components. Beginning with the centre of foreign policy making the President and the executive, this study gradually broadens the scope to other governmental forces, and then adds the influence of the American public. Finally, included the diverse pluralistic aspect in American society is studied.

The making of American foreign policy is a complex process. Both the legislative and executive branches play important role; the role are different, although frequently overlapping. Both branches have continuing opportunities to initiate and change foreign policy, and the interaction between them continues indefinitely throughout the life of a policy. The President as the chief spokesperson of the nation, directs government’s officials and machinery in the daily conduct of diplomacy, and has the principal responsibility for taking action to advance US foreign policy interest. Congress in its oversight responsibility can affect the course of policy through enactment of legalisation governing foreign relations through the appropriation or denial of funds. Experience has shown that cooperation between the two branches is necessary for a strong and effective US foreign policy.

3 Ibid.
To cope with the difficult task of formulating foreign policy, several government organisations were created after World War II. The departments such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defence Department, the State Department, the Treasury Department, and so forth, as well as the executive office of the President (National Advisor and other white house staffs). This policy-making machinery enhances United States capacity for coping with the complex process of foreign affairs.

This decentralisation of foreign policy making in the United States testifies to America’s expanding international concerns, to the interdependency of world economies, the growth of political and cultural internationalism, and the overlapping of social interests from human rights to the environment, from nutrition and health child labor, from the internet to genetic engineering and hormonal research. The world has gotten smaller and more complex. As a consequence, the pressures and players have multiplied, as has politics.

American foreign policy since the Spanish – American War of 1898 has sought to ensure U.S supremacy in the western Hemisphere. While at the same time asserting American influence widely around the globe. Until 1945, U.S foreign policy makers sought to fashion the United States into a great power, the equal of the major Europeans and contented with the Soviet Union, the other so-called super power. In the decade after the Cold War, it stood at apex of the international hierarchy. The men and women in charge U.S foreign policy have usually based their statecraft on the idea that the United States is in a unique position to provide balance and stability to world politics. In an era of increasing economic and cultural interdependence, or globalizations, the wealth, military power, and cultural diversity of the United States has helped officials promote the United States was bound to lead.\footnote{Fraser Cameron, \textit{US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?} (New York : Routledge, 2002)}

There are so many issues that are emerging or re-emerging in US foreign policy, because these problems have taken on greater significance at the

\footnote{Fraser Cameron, \textit{US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?} (New York : Routledge, 2002)}
beginning of 21st century. The security related US foreign policy problem is a high priority on the policy agenda. These issues include conventional force structure, ballistic missile defence, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational organized crime, and humanitarian intervention. Next two sets of issues are associated with environment-environmental degradation and biodiversity – since these have the potential of becoming major threats to US security. These are some issues that are traditionally considered to be significant to US foreign policy concerns; because they have an impact on the prosperity of US citizens and can ultimately affect US security. Among these issues are energy, international trade and international financial management. Finally, there are wide ranges of issues – sustainable development, pandemic disease control, international resource management, and democratisation – that are important general foreign policy concerns for the United States. They are important not only because they ultimately affect US security and prosperity, but also because the issues resonate with the historic US belief that the country has a responsibility, where possible, to help other people in the world to enjoy a better lifestyle that more closely resembles the standard of living enjoyed by US citizens. From the viewpoints of US political decision makers, policy influential and public opinion leaders, these issues are significant because they relate to the basic goals and core values of US foreign policy.\(^5\)

Making policies about any particular issue occurs not in a single moment, by a single decision, with a consistent set of actors but rather over a series of moments in a lengthy period that typically involves scores of different actors and different types of decisions. In addition to the executive and legislative branches of government and the media, there are numerous other actors that seek to influence US foreign policy. These include multitudes of lobby groups, business interest, trade union, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks and like.\(^6\)

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5 C. Herrick and P.B. McRae, \textit{n.2.}
6 Fraser Cameron, \textit{n.4.} p.82
Knowledge is a central aspect of power. In this increasingly complex, interdependent and information rich world, government and individual policy makers face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear in the governmental decisions making. Policy-makers need basic information about the world and the societies they govern how current policies are working, possible alternatives, and their likely costs and consequences. As a matter of fact, in both information rich and poor societies policy makers need informations that are understandable, reliable, accessible, and useful.

The relationship between political leaders and those who advise them is critically important to the study of governmental decision-making. By providing their expertise to members of Congress, the Executive and the bureaucracy, policy advisors play a vital role in formulating and injecting ideas into the policy making process. While policy makers in the United States continue to solicit the advice of experts in Universities, interest groups, professional and business associations, corporations, law firms and consulting agencies. they are relying increasingly on scholars from think tanks or policy research institutions to identify, develop, shape and at times implement policy ideas. Think Tanks are among the most numerous organisational forms devoted to policy research, and they are often among the most focused and visible sources of ideas and analysis in contemporary policy making.

Public Policy Research, Analysis and Engagement Organizations (also known as Think Tanks) play a vital role in the 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 and advice, are non-profit, and operate independently from governments and political parties. While the primary function of these 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: 7

- Playing a mediating function between the government and the public that helps builds trust and confidence in public officials;
- Serving as an informed and independent voice in policy debates;
- Identifying, articulating, and evaluating current 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 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.

Among those concentrating on foreign policy, are the Council on Foreign Policy; the CFR is non-partisan and regards itself as most prestigious and influential think tanks. Its headquarters are in New York. But it has offices in Washington D.C and Chicago. The Brooking institution pursues a liberal research agenda and hosts regular seminars and working lunches to discuss foreign policy issues. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CISS). is also non-partisan but is regarded as leaning centre right, RAND has headquarters in Santa Monica, California and office in Washington D.C. it built its reputation in defence policy research for the US air force but now covers a wide range of domestic issues in addition to national security themes. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the US Institute of peace, and the Woodrow Wilson centre are leading liberal thinkers with a strong focus on
conflict resolution issues. On the right of political spectrum are the American Enterprises Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the CATO Institute, and Nixon Centre. 8

The activities involved in fulfilling these functions involve a balance between 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 and conducting various outreach activities (public testimony before Congress, media appearances and speeches); creating networks and exchanges via workshops, seminars, and briefings; and supporting midcareer and senior government officials when they are out of office (what it described as a “Human Resource Tank”). 9

Think tanks finance their activities by raising funds from private foundations, corporations, individuals and government grants and contracts and endowment income. The mix of funding varies from institution to institution but all institutions strive to have a diversified funding base in order to avoid being overly reliant a single funding stream or donor.

Think tanks are a diverse set of institutions that vary in size, financing, structure and scope of activity. There are currently well over 1,500 think tanks or political research centers in the US, 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 25-30 top think tanks in the US have a highly diversified research agenda that covers a broad range of policy issues on both the domestic and international fronts. However, since 1980 the vast majority of think tanks that have been established in America are specialized. These “Specialty” or

8 Cameron Frasser, n 4, pp. 102-3
9 James McGann, n 7.p.3
“Boutique” think tanks focus their activities on a single issue (i.e. global warming) or area of public policy (i.e. national security).\textsuperscript{10}

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, or as outsiders like the Economic Policy Institute and the Heritage Foundation, which attempt to get their ideas incorporated 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” and get their research in the hands of policy makers 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 king’s philosophers.” 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 be more policy oriented and thus focus more on the needs of policy makers and current policy issues.\textsuperscript{11}

The administrations and Congress rely heavily on the think tanks community for a great deal of analytical input and public policy advice. The frequent personnel movement back and forth among the ranks of the administration, Congress, and the think tanks ensure that the output is policy orientated. In addition to a vast output of publications, both of an advocacy and independent scholarly nature, the think tanks stage a continuous menu of conference, workshops, seminars, and lectures, on a wide variety of foreign and security policies issues. They provide a common meeting ground for frequent

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interchange of views and networking among policy makers, diplomats, legislators, business, and academia, media and the NGO community.\textsuperscript{12}

The literature on American foreign policy making continues to grow, but only recently has the participation of think tanks in the policy formation process been discussed. The increasing involvement of think tanks in the policy making process requires scholars to reevaluate various models and theories developed to explain how leaders make policy decisions. This is not to suggest that contemporary theories and models of foreign policy decisions making need to be supplemented, but rather that their parameters should be expanded to take into consideration how think tanks identify and shape policy issues and problems. By treating think tank as an important input into the policy making process, instead of passive observers of American politics, foreign policy analysts can provide a more detailed explanation of the various actors competing for power in the political arena.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Assessment of policy Research}

Think tanks have a long history of playing an important role in the formulation of domestic and international policy in the US. 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 policy making process), the desire to bring knowledge to bear on governmental decision making and 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, factors that include a:\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Cameron Frasser, \textit{n 4}, p.98
\item \textsuperscript{13} Donald Abelson, \textit{Think Tanks and their Role in US Foreign Policy} (New York: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 81-90.
\item \textsuperscript{14} James McGann, \textit{n. 7}, pp. 3-5
\end{itemize}
Division of power between the three branches of government (legislative, executive and judicial) and the levels of government (states and federal government)

- Political system that has weak political parties that exhibit little or no party discipline
- Highly developed philanthropic and civil culture
- Public that has a healthy distrust of government and prefers a limited role for government
- Proclivity of citizens to join and support interest groups rather than political parties to represent their interest and express their policy preferences
- Political system that has many points of access
- Tendency to embrace independent experts over politicians or bureaucrats

Clearly the permeable, decentralized and pluralistic nature of American political culture or what some have described as “American Exceptionalism” is the driving force behind the growth and diversity present among the more than 1,500 think tanks in the US. Think tanks have flourished despite the growth in staff in the legislative and executive branches of government, which has raised questions about what value they add to the thinking being done by the professional bureaucrats and congressional staffers. The perception is that think tanks can often do what government bureaucracies cannot. Specifically, think tanks are:

- More effectively future-oriented than government research functionaries, who work in an environment in which efforts at creative disruption are rarely rewarded;
- More likely to generate reconfigured policy agendas, while bureaucracies thrive on the security-maximizing environment of standard operating procedures;
And better able to facilitate collaboration among separate groups of researchers for a common purpose because they have no permanent vested interest in any one domain.\(^\text{15}\)

In addition, think tanks aid the intellectual synthesis that comes from breaking down bureaucratic barriers. They are uniquely suited to do this because they are:

- Better able to disseminate relevant policy research within government than government agencies themselves, for no jealousies attach to proprietary rights;
- And better able to "telescope" the policy function (i.e., from data collection to knowledge to conceiving means of implementation) than government bureaucracies, which may be internally segmented along such lines.\(^\text{16}\)

Yet, despite their appeal, on U.S. foreign policy formulation, the role of think tanks is among the most important and least appreciated. A distinctively American phenomenon, the independent policy research institution has shaped U.S. 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 U.S. policy — like the jostling of interest groups, the maneuvering between political parties, and the rivalry among branches of government.\(^\text{17}\)

Policy impact is a difficult task from the margins. Think tanks are not part of government processes. It is impossible to establish a causal link between the activities of think tanks and policy outcomes. A particular policy and its implementation can rarely be attributed to the influence of one organization. There are variety of intermediary forces such as political parties,

\(^\text{15}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5
\(^\text{16}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5
bureaucracies, interest group and the media. Furthermore, think tanks are not successful in all their activities or at all stages of the policy process. They have selective impact according to issue and circumstances, and are involved more in the innovation and diffusion of policy ideas than their adoption or implementation by the government. The complexities of the making process create a gap between the inputs of policy institutes and the outputs of policy making. It could also mean that think tanks have zero impact. This hiatus prevents measurement of their impact.\textsuperscript{18}

Moreover, rarely is there a one to one correspondence between a book or a study and a particular policy change. There are numerous intervening forces that mediate and alter the impact of research that shroud any cause and effect relationship that may exist between policy institutes and government decision-making. Hence, influence can not be measured. Proof of it is elusive and, at best, anecdotal. Think tanks indicators such as media citations or appearances of staffs before Congress and committees merely signify that think tanks have attracted the attentions of the media and politicians. It does not demonstrate that the thinking or perceptions of the public or politicians has been influenced or that some policy initiative or reform has resulted. Asking the question, ‘How do you measure the influence of independent policy research institutes? Misses the point. It is more important to ask first, ‘what do they do that is policy relevant, and how?’\textsuperscript{19}

The principal task of the large US 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 increasing 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. Think tanks employ a wide range of

\textsuperscript{18} Stone, Diane, \textit{Capturing the Political Imagination Think Tanks and the Policy Process}, Frank Cass Publication, 2002., p.4

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid}, p.238
methods to accomplish the vital goal of effectively propagating information, including:

**a) Seminars, Conferences and Briefings:** Think tanks make a conscious effort to target their audience with a range of lectures, seminars, conferences, expert meetings, and individual or group briefings. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), for example, reports that it stages around 700 events of this kind every year, and the annual report of the AEI generally lists 200 such occasions.²⁰

**b) Publications:** As a rule, the large US think tanks also operate as highly productive publishing houses, generating both traditional and, increasingly, multimedia publications. In addition to numerous print publications (e.g., Brookings stages press conferences and readings to launch new publications), each think tank today also publishes its very own high-quality journal or magazine several times a year (e.g., the Cato Journal appears three times a year, and The American Enterprise every two months). Such publications also carry work by external analysts and academics (e.g., Foreign Policy from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, or Foreign Affairs from the Council on Foreign Relations). Similarly, institutions often also print a number of quickly and easily produced 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. Today, almost every think tank publishes an extensive range of information online, which serves to reach the public at large. Most think tank websites also carry speeches, commentaries by the fellows, conference reports and programs,

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²⁰ James McGann, *n. 7*, pp. n. 4-7
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. At the same time, a website will publish information on research topics, research programs, and the think tank’s organizational structure. It will also provide details for contacting specific institution members and offers information for those who wish to apply as visiting fellows, general employees, or interns (e.g. the AEI employs almost 100 interns each year).  

**c) The media:** Journalists looking to fill column inches or program slots profit from the expertise of think tank employees. In turn, the think tank and the expert concerned gain a wide forum for the opinion expressed – and sometimes even 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 very 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 are also playing an increasingly important role for 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 broadcast by more than 200 stations and already has around 200,000 listeners. The Brookings Institution and the Heritage Foundation both have their own TV studios and two think tank experts from the AEI each have their very own weekly show broadcast by the US 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.  

**d) Relations with government agencies:** The US 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 an audience 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, the Council on Foreign Relations has a Congress and US Foreign Policy Program, which brings together Congressional staff members from both major parties. Additionally, members of Congress also serve on the board of directors of numerous US think tanks. Some US think tanks purposely cultivate close links to political circles, since many of them — most notably the 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 US government agencies.\textsuperscript{23}

It can not be denied that the impact of even the best known think tanks on policy is modest. Policy making is mainly driven by interest, not by ideas. Despite the absence of proof and criticism, the impact of many institutions in helping to forge a consensus on foreign policy has been and remains pervasive. Knowledge and ideas are a source of power. The modern state depends on experts whose views on issues can provide the theories and rationale for policy legislation. State structures are the dominant but not the only source of policy innovations as there is a need to consult other interests for informations. Think tanks seek to provide this kind of information and occasionally play a dynamic role in identifying problems. Policy research institutes are most likely to inform policy when they are part of an epistemic community, a wider policy community or discourse coalition. These analytical frameworks are concerned

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 4-7
with agenda-setting, networking, research brokerage and the ways in which policy actors operate to establish a discourse that frames understanding of problems and policy. In particular, institutes help forge common identities and shared values among experts and opinion leaders through their conferences, workshops and study groups, and thereby help determine the ubiquitous climate of opinion. Ideas about networks allow an assessment of think tanks influence or effectiveness that gets beyond providing or measuring the input of these organisations into a given policy or legislative act. In other words, power is not narrowly conceived as behavioral and observable, but that power is structural and operates through exclusion and non-decision making. Through both informal and formal avenues, think tanks become linked to centres of power such as the state or corporate sector.

Given the extensive ties between think tanks and government departments and agencies, as well as the frequency with which their members are appointed to higher level government positions, one cannot afford to disagree their growing involvement in the policy-making process. Through publishing brief and full length studies on a wide range of policy issues inviting decision-makers to conferences and seminars, providing commentaries on network newscasts, establishing liaison offices to develop and maintain contact with members of congress and the Executive, serving on various Presidential boards, commissions, election task forces and transition teams and giving testimony before congressional committees and subcommittees, think-tanks have become permanent fixtures in the policy formation process. Though not generally considered to be part of the formal structure of the American government for decades think tanks have managed to operate effectively within its parameters.

25 Diane Stone. n 18, p.220
26 Donald E. Abelson. n 13, p. 2.
27 James A. Smith. n 24, p 62
Policy institutes are on the margins of government but not in the government. There is enormous scope for the investigations of the mechanism that connect organisations on the margin of government with the conventional structures of government. While the approval of public policy remains with elected representatives and appointed officials, governments draw upon outside sources of advice and informations.\textsuperscript{28} Think tanks are shown to be a contemporary mode of interaction between the world of scholarship and inquiry and the domain of policy-making. In a world where knowledge, information and expertise are burgeonising, think tanks are an increasingly important mechanism for filtering and refining such resources in a relevant and usable manner.

Yet, despite their appeal, only a fraction of the estimated 1,500 think tanks in the United States have made their presence felt in key policy-making circles. The Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the American Enterprise Institute, Rand, and the Heritage Foundation, among others, are frequently referred to in the media.

In the last twenty years, think tanks have undergone major changes. From institutions committed to scholarly research to organizations largely engage in political advocacy, think tanks have redefined their mission in American politics. Should the trend towards political advocacy continue, the type of think tanks that were created in the early twentieth century would gradually cease to exist? Taking their place will be political research organizations specialising in lobbying members of Congress, the Executive and the bureaucracy.

While policy-makers are often drawn to the Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations, the RAND Corporation Institution and the number of other research institutions because of their expertise in a particular era, some think tanks have had to employ aggressive marketing and lobbying
strategy to capture the attention of decision-makers. As hundreds of think tanks emerged in around the Washington during and after the World War II, policy research institutions devoted considerable resources to determining the most effective methods to reach decision makers.\textsuperscript{29}

In the early 1900s, it is doubtful that this question would have been posed. In establishing their think tanks, Robert Brookings, Andrew Carnegie and Herbert Hoover, among others, made a concerted effort to insulate their institutions from partisan politics. Recognizing that the pursuit of scholarly inquiry had to be protected from political interest, founders of early twentieth century think tanks sought to safeguard their institutions from the vicissitudes of American politics. Although the Brooking Institution, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and other think tanks created in the progressive era provided decision-makers with advice on various public policy issues, their primary objective was not to impose their political and ideological agenda on the American public, but to enhance the economic and political interest of the United States.\textsuperscript{30}

However, while few observers of American politics may have pondered such a question in the first half of the twentieth century, it has become a legitimate and important question to ask in light of the changing role of think tanks in the United States. Encouraged by the meteoric success of the Heritage Foundation in capturing the attention of the Regan administrations, advocacy think tanks began to take root in and around the nation’s capital. Convinced that scholarly publications alone would not persuade members of Congress and the Executive to implement their policy ideas, the Heritage and other advocacy think tanks began to rely on several strategies to influence the content and outcome of major policy debates. Moreover, as the number of think tanks entering the marketplace of ideas increased, so too did the competition

\textsuperscript{29} Donald Abelson, \textit{n.13}, p.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.}
between them to attract the attention of decision-makers and the contributions of potential donors. \(^{31}\)

By relying on various governmental and non-governmental channels, think tanks, either acting alone or in concert with other actors in the political process, have attempted to influence the contents and outcome of major policy initiative. The effort of think tanks to become actively involved in the foreign policy making process has become a characteristic feature of contemporary policy research institutions. Whether on their own or as part of a network of organisations sharing similar concerns, think tanks are committed to influence the political agenda. By assuming the role lobbyist, many think tanks have revealed their primary functions. While some institutions continue to assign the highest priority to the advancement of knowledge, other has redefined their role in American politics. Rather than remaining disinterested observers of the political process, some think tanks have made a concerted effort to become part of it. Many think tanks have become more committed to influencing policy than to improving it. They are run like businesses whose performances are measured on how successful they are in mass marketing their ideas. But think tanks that promote a particular ideology, without having the expertise to substantiate their views, will not survive in the increasingly competitive marketplace of ideas; nor will think tanks that sacrifice scholarship for short-term public notoriety. Only those think tanks that maintain a healthy balance between scholarship and aggressive salesmanship will remain well entrenched in the policy-making process.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.