



2018

2018 North American Think Tank Summit: Closing the Gap between Knowledge, Policy and Good Governance in the Digital Age

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McGann, James G., "2018 North American Think Tank Summit: Closing the Gap between Knowledge, Policy and Good Governance in the Digital Age" (2018). *TTCSP Global and Regional Think Tank Summit Reports*. 27.
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Disciplines

International and Area Studies | Political Science | Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration

Comments

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BROOKINGS



TTCSP

THINK TANKS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The  *Heritage Foundation*

2018

NORTH AMERICA THINK TANK SUMMIT

**Closing the Gap between Knowledge, Policy and
Good Governance in the Digital Age**

April 11 & 12, Washington DC



Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program

The Lauder Institute

The University of Pennsylvania

“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”

Researching the trends and challenges facing think tanks, policy makers,
and policy-oriented civil society groups...

Sustaining, strengthening, and building capacity for think tanks
around the world...

Maintaining the largest, most comprehensive database of
over 6,500 think tanks...

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REPORT

The theme of the 2018 North America Think Tank Summit is: Closing the Gap between Knowledge, Policy and Good Governance in the Digital Age. Understanding the significant rise of technology and disruptive nature of today's political scene is critical to shaping future politics and avoiding problematic consequences. Think tanks' role is growing as the world makes technological advancements that opens an unprecedented range of information and potential for the future. Think tanks have the only available network of organizations that can cooperatively filter fake news from the truth, give a number of net predictions for tomorrow with constructive evidence, and respond to the economic and political fallout with the incentive to truly advance the society's security architecture forward. Additionally, the national and global disorder requires that we develop new and better ways to address not only the principal conflict in content, but also how the information is being communicated. The Summit will explore these complex and evolving dynamics, and identify strategies and systems to address them.

Think Tanks in the Digital Age

Living in the very era where the advancement of technology is constantly pushing for changes and adaptation in our governance strategies, think tanks have an alarming need to adapt to the changing platform of communication to maintain their status as the primary source of expertise. During the panel discussion “What Consumers Think About Think Tanks in the Age of Digital and Political Disruptions,” panelists tried to answer a number of important questions for better communication between consumers and think tanks. How should think tanks adapt the technology? How can we differentiate our information? Who is and should be our audience?

Panelists discussed that there is a lack of trust between the public and the think tanks due to transparency and funding issues combined with shortfall in clarity. A surprising evidence from one of the panelists' sources showed that only one in five trust what think tanks have to say and that even among those who are interested in politics only 63% know what a think tank does. This begs the question, how can think tanks better-inform the public about themselves and the work that they are producing? Think tanks must be more transparent in their funding models. While bias cannot be entirely eliminated, the audience must have a greater understanding of the background of the think tank and be presented with clear, in-depth evidence. There is no harm in debating about different conclusions from different think tanks, but facts from think tanks should be perceived as reliable.

Think tanks should actively innovate and utilize the technology to make the data more engaging and accessible. Beyond round-table discussions and reports, think tanks can invest in creative videos and interactive models, and more

systematic use of the Big Data and Artificial Intelligence. Think tanks must also differentiate themselves in the current media platform that is clustered with 24-hour news cycle, 6000 tweets per second, and over 290,000 statuses on Facebook per second. They must strategically engage with a specific audience, leverage partnerships with other associations onto multiple platforms, and create content that, as mentioned, engages with the public through technology. Truth and accuracy are being hurt by the highly accessible media platform, but the fact that this is the easiest and most important way to reach people remains true.

Think Tanks and Emerging Technologies

In order to survive in the Digital Era, it has never been more important for think tanks to update their IT infrastructure and learn how to harness emerging technologies to enhance their research, outreach activities, and internal operations. During the panel on “How Think Tanks Can Harness Big Data and “AI” to Enhance Research and Analysis”, panelists discussed ways their organizations have integrated the use of emerging technologies, their operational and internal consequences, and shared lessons learned and best practices.

Whether it's AI, infographics, documentaries, or guided tours, emerging technologies provide a range of innovative ways for think tanks to improve their research and outreach. Panelists discussed how the use of emerging technologies has allowed think tanks to improve their big data collection and engage with audiences in a more digestible and approachable manner, such as analyzing big data on domestic economic trends and converting those large reports of information into short videos that can be viewed from around the world.

During the panel, panelists also explained how collaborative software such as Google Drive, Slack and Trello have strengthened the communication and collaboration of their think tank's staff. Given that there exists an increasing variety of collaboration tools and services, panelists also discussed the importance of developing a standard platform across all staff. Additionally, they discussed the importance of integrating these tools from the bottom-up as well as investing in training staff members at every level to ensure these software are understood and used to their full potential.

In order to stay relevant, competitive and accurate in this digital era, think tanks must be prepared to adjust to new technological demands. That being said, panelists concluded the discussion with the following remarks: Think tanks are sought out for their thoughtful level of analysis and expertise on complex issues. Being thoughtful is at the core of their work, and it is what distinguishes these institutions from media outlets — who are also using emerging technologies in innovative ways. As a result, providing immediate responses is not exactly how think tanks are known to operate. When applying these emerging technologies to their work, think tanks must be cautious not to lose this level of analysis; it is crucial they continue to operate in a thoughtful manner, and only leverage emerging technologies to improve the work they already do, making the research more digestible and approachable to the world and working more efficiently.

Strategic Communications and Marketing the Answer to Policymakers and the Public

Technology has changed the landscape of communications and media, leaving Think Tanks with a pressing demand to innovate marketing techniques. Traditional methods of audience outreach and content generation are no longer adequate ways in which to influence policymakers or the public in a meaningful way. During the panel discussion “Is anyone listening? Reaching Policymakers and the public – Is Strategic Communications and Marketing the Answer?” panelists discussed how Think Tanks could approach marketing differently and use technology and strategic communications to better establish audience engagement and brand recognition.

A common theme discussed by each of the panelists was the importance of integrating data and analytics into communication operations in order to be intentional and strategic about audience outreach. Panelists emphasized the importance of using data to locate a natural audience via feedback surveys, social media or a formal analysis of content engagement. Understanding regular readership can help an organization streamline systematic outreach efforts and target specific segments of the public using different strategies or media. Data and metrics also offers the opportunity to conduct analysis on a cost basis to evaluate what methods and resources are worth investing in. It also allows organizations to use natural audiences as a gateway to other audiences or issues. For example, an organization can highlight an issue that young people care about and use this connection to introduce this population to other topics.

With the rapid development new medias and technologies, Think Tanks also face a challenge of how to make content more capturing and engaging. Fewer readers spend time reading an entire report and the demand for fast information is ever-increasing. During the discussion, panelists shared practices that harness new digital tools to communicate information in more innovative ways. For example, several panelists discussed the effectiveness of complimenting research with digital tools like podcasts, animation, video, or interactive tables. Also discussed, was the benefit of connecting information to personal and local narratives. Some Think Tanks have done this by creating story banks aligned with research others have developed a strategy of disseminating stories into the local press.

As the face of media and communication changes, it is imperative for Think Tanks to innovate content production and marketing in order to stay relevant. Integrating data and analytics for strategic audience outreach, leveraging compelling, local narratives and harnessing creative and interactive digital tools is key for Think Tanks to remain impactful to the public and to policymakers.

Fundraising for Think Tanks: Challenges and Opportunities

Political and technological changes have presented the think tank community with challenges that call for strategic innovation concerning fundraising. During the panel discussion “New Strategies and

Sources of Funding for Think Tanks”, panelists discussed the ways recent trends have affected the relationship between think tanks and donors, as well as the actions that are being taken to manage this new scenario.

Today’s donors have specific interests, and think tanks are seeing the need to invest time building individual relationships. Facing an increasing competition for donor bases from universities, media companies and consulting companies, sustainability has become a key concept in approaching new strategies in fundraising for think tanks. By establishing deeper relationships with donors, think tanks are able to offer customized engagement opportunities that can satisfy the donor’s need for short and long-term results.

An important issue raised by this closer relationship between donors and think tanks is the need for rigorous transparency. Credibility is an essential feature for think tanks, and for that reason guidelines and policies on independence must evolve to guarantee the integrity of its work. During the discussion, panelists shared practices that are helpful in this effort, as for example establishing a complex vetting process for donor companies and donor disclosure policies.

These are relevant challenges that the think tank community faces, and panelists discussed the need to adapt and evolve business models. The new conditions also offer an opportunity for innovation in fundraising. The difficulty to increase flexible funding has led some think tanks to pilot advisory services to generate resources. Also, by building a strategic program of work consisting of different products and deliverables, some think tanks are able to avoid the absolute commitment of project restricted funding.

As opportunities create room for innovation in fundraising, issues of transparency threaten think tank’s reputation as credible sources of expertise. This way, sharing best practices and building institutional structures to guarantee independence from sources of funding are essential for maintaining the perception of think tanks as reliable institutions.

Think Tanks and Cybersecurity

Cyber security is a global issue that does not often get the coverage that it deserves. Nonetheless, as expressed by Melissa Hathaway, think tanks have a critical role to play in raising the issue profile of

cyber security in order to protect their own information, the information of their respective governments, and overall economic stability.

To demonstrate the reality of society’s cyber security, it is worth examining the frequency with which Microsoft updates their software. In fact, Tuesday is referred to as patch Tuesday, with Microsoft releasing the list of all of their newly patched vulnerabilities on a weekly basis. The week before Hathaway’s speech Microsoft was revealed to have contained 66 flaws that needed patching. The frequency with which these vulnerabilities occur, is a major security flaw in our technological infrastructure.

More so, it is not very hard to purchase a cyber-attack. In fact, employing a virus can cost as little as one dollar; by contrast, one thousand dollars can purchase the hacking of a city grid. Overall, the results of cyber-attacks can be extremely detrimental. One example comes from the United Kingdom, where one Microsoft vulnerability led to the shutdown of eighty-one hospitals. When companies prioritize quickly releasing the newest model, security vulnerabilities arise that affect all of our personal data. For this reason, it is recommended that the government step in to create consumer standards for the technology industry.

Think tanks have the responsibility to relay the grave threat that insufficient cyber security presents. They should: (1) become a translator for reliable, digestible, and understandable information that can be acted on (2) find evidence that is dependable under great scrutiny, hard data (3) communicate the lessons learned by successes and failures (4) recognize that this international problem has an international perspective (5) quantify what is at stake in meaningful terms in the face of these threats. Without newly authorized action on the cyber security front, the United States will fall further behind and become at greater risk.

Shaping the Future of US, Canada, and Mexico: The Role of Think Tanks

As institutions, think tanks all over the world must face up to the question of, “Who is our audience?” However, answering this implies not only considering the demographics of the audience, but also examining how think tanks interact with that audience to accomplish a particular goal. During breakout session II, “Shaping the Future of the US,

Canada, and Mexico: The Role of Think Tanks”, the panelists confronted some of these questions as they pertain specifically to various audiences, populism, and the governments of Mexico and the United States.

Discussed during the panel was the question of think tank’s audience, and how the intended audience might be changing in the face of modern populism in Mexico and the United States. Specifically, the panelists expressed concern about several of the Mexican candidates for President and Trump’s own political agenda as they pertained to populist sentiments. Nonetheless, within this concern was still a place for think tanks, as they are seen as credible organizations that deliver well-researched proposals to the policy making community. In this regard think tanks push against populist sentiment in that they intend to verify the kinds of solutions being proposed, a necessary step within the creation of public policy.

Running parallel to the discussion of populism as a possible threat was the impact of the new kinds of media that have accompanied President Trump. Specifically, the members of the panel have experienced a kind of tension between keeping up with the demands of a face paced media environment, and respecting their own mission to delivery well-researched solutions. Many think tanks have, in order to interact with this media demand, invested greatly in communications, graphics, etc. However, apart from reaching a larger audience, these innovations have to be accompanied by communicating on a more common level. This is not meant to imply a lower quality of work, but if think tanks are to continue being relevant, they must also interact with the wider audience that is gaining a more political voice.

Think tanks have a very important role in the coming decades, but it is also incumbent upon the think tanks themselves to adapt and encompass a larger audience apart from the traditional policy decision makers.

Conclusion

The 2018 North America Think Tank Summit welcomed some of the most influential and brilliant minds in North America to discuss ways for think tanks to adapt to the Digital Age, regional politics, and methods of cooperation and communication to best serve the think tank community in the future. Participants ended strongly with determination and

promise to work more closely together to help each other build a greater presence for think tanks in the rapidly changing society today.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Venue: *Heritage Foundation*

16:00-16:30 Registration of Participants

16:30-16:45 Welcome Remarks

- **Kay Coles James**, President, Heritage Foundation (United States)
- **James G. McGann**, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania (United States)

17:00-18:30 Opening Session (Think Tank Presidents' Panel): *"US, Mexico and Canada at a Crossroads: Think Tanks A Catalyst for Change, Consensus and Cohesion"*

These are truly extraordinary times for the United States, Mexico and Canada. The post WWII economic, political and security order are being challenged and redefined by national, regional and tectonic shifts in domestic and international politics. While we cannot predict the outcome, we now have a clearer sense of the issues that will shape the future. A panel of think tank presidents from Canada, Mexico and the US will explore the current political disruptions and the issues, institutions, people and politics that will shape future policy debates in all three countries. The senior executives will also discuss how their institutions are responding to the fundamental shift in alliances, politics and public policy.

Chairs: Jane Harman, the Director, President and CEO, Wilson Center

- **John Allen**, President, Brookings Institution (United States)
- **Robert D. Atkinson**, President, Information Technology & Innovation Foundation (United States)
- **Graham Fox**, President, Institute for Research on Public Policy (Canada)
- **Jason Grumet**, Founder and President, Bipartisan Policy Center (United States)
- **Kay Coles James**, President, Heritage Foundation (United States)
- **Juan Pardinás**, Executive, Director, Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad (Mexico)

18:30-19:00 Keynote Address: *Building North America's Physical and Digital Infrastructure for Future*

- **Eric Rosenbach**, Co-Director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School

19:00-21:00 Dinner

Thursday, April 12, 2018

Venue: Center for Strategic and International Studies

7:30-08:30 Vice Presidents' Breakfast Meeting (**Hosted by the Atlantic Council of the United States**)

Venue: Brookings Institution

08:30-08:45 Registration of Participants

08:45-09:00 Welcome Remarks
John Allen, President, Brookings Institution (United States)

9:00-10:00 Keynote Address: *AI and the Future of Work- Implications for Jobs, Skills, and Policy*
Michael Chui, Partner, McKinsey Global Institute
David Rennie, Washington Bureau Chief, 'The Economist'

The technology-driven world in which we live is a world filled with promise but also challenges. Cars that drive themselves, machines that read X-rays, and algorithms that respond to customer-service inquiries are all manifestations of powerful new forms of automation. Yet even as these technologies increase productivity and improve our lives, their use will substitute for some work activities humans currently perform—a development that has sparked much public concern. What jobs will humans do in the future as automation and AI technologies take hold? Will there be enough work for everyone and what skills will be required? How do we manage the transitions that lie ahead? What are the implications for policy?

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-11:00 Plenary Session: *Think Tanks in an Era of Digital and Political Disruptions: New Issues, Audiences and Business Models*

A panel of philanthropists, policymakers, corporate executives and social networking firms will examine the current digital and political disruptions and the implications for think tanks, policy advice and public policy. The panel will explore both the opportunities and challenges this create for think tanks. Each panel member will then provide examples of what think tanks need to do to meet these new challenges. They will also discuss why think tanks need to explore new business models, products and programs to effectively respond to the new operating and resource environment.

Chair:

- **Colin Crowell**, Head of Global Public Policy at Twitter
- **Joshua Marcuse**, Executive Director of the Defense Innovation Board
- **Tom Hashemi**, Director at We Are Flint
- **Courtney McCaffrey**, Manager at Global Business Policy Council of A.T. Kearney

11:00-11:15 Coffee Break

Break Out Sessions

The Break Out Session will include a set of critical policy issues facing think tanks and policy makers as well as the challenges facing think tank scholars and executives. These sessions are intended to be interactive and focused on sharing best practices, the transfer of strategies, and innovative approaches. Participants can select one of the four concurrent sessions listed below. A group of Break Out Sessions will be repeated in PM to give everyone the opportunity to participate in at least two sessions on policy and on think tank issues.

11:15-12:30 Break Out Sessions (A)

Break Out Session I: How Think Tanks Can Harness Big Data and “AI” to Enhance Research and Analysis

The panel will explore how to make think tank data and analysis more accessible, integrated and agile in the Digital Age. Meeting this challenge requires think tanks to learn new techniques and harness new technologies so they can reach key audiences and stakeholders better. Specifically, the panelists will be asked to present and discuss how the artificial intelligence, the cloud, info graphics, big data and mobile technologies have become an integral part of policy research and the operations of think tanks. The panel will also explore the tensions this creates within their institutions and the academic and policy communities.

Chair: Darrell West, VP of Governance Studies, Brookings Institution (United States)

- **Jeffrey Hiday**, Director, Office of Media Relations, RAND Corporation (United States)
- **Rebecka Shirazi**, Managing Directors, Ideas Lab, Center for Strategic and International Studies (United States)
- **Anne Bowser**, Director, Wilson Center (United States)

Break Out Session II: Think Tanks Catalysts for Policy Innovation and Change

Greater unpredictability at national government levels is likely to lead to greater policy paralysis and further erosion of confidence in the legislative and executive branches of government. This is likely to grow as the public search for solutions – not necessarily fact-based – to fill the void left by policymaker’s failure to get the job done. While we are distracted, and dysfunctional, other countries are surging ahead. This, however, is when think tanks are needed the most; when conventional wisdom and established institutions are being challenged and new thinking is required. Think tanks can play a critical role by identifying and advancing workable solutions to the complex problems we face at home and abroad. Think tanks can help provide the ideas and leadership that can help break the vicious and counter-productive cycle in our nation’s capitals. Finally, they have a major role to play in promoting innovative policy proposals and consensus on key issues such as: investing in our knowledge and physical infrastructure to ensure our economies remain competitive, closing the growing income gap, preparing for conflicts of the future (cyber and information wars) and managing the new world order and the digital era. The Panelist will be asked to discuss the policy grid lock and explore how think tanks can serve as a catalyst for change.

Chair: Fred Kampe, President and CEO, Atlantic Council of the United States

- **Bridget Lowell**, Chief Communications Officer, VP for Strategic Communications and Outreach, Urban Institute (United States)
- **Khristine Brookes**, Vice President, Communications, Cato Institute (United States)
- **Jacob Leibenluft**, Vice President, Center for American Progress (United States)

Break Out Session III: Is Anyone Listening? Reaching Policymakers and the Public-Is Strategic Communications and Marketing the Answer?

Henry Kissinger described that being a policymaker is like being at the end of a firehose. The problem is that policymakers and the public are both inundated with information. This problem is compounded by the fact that the internet has increased the velocity of information and policy flows. You'd think that this would lead to a more informed public and decision-making but, in fact, it leads to the opposite. Today we are faced with an avalanche of information and not enough time to understand it. The marketplace of ideas is a noisy and confusing one filled with information and disinformation that makes it difficult to know which sources to trust. This new reality poses both an opportunity and a challenge. How can think tanks make sure that their information, ideas and analysis are in the right form, in the right hands, and at the right time? A Panel of experts will discuss how strategic communications and marketing have helped their organization reach key audiences and inform key public policy debates.

Chair: Niels Veldhuis, President, Fraser Institute (Canada)

- **Winnie Stachelberg**, Vice President, External Affairs, Center for American Progress (United States)
- **Rob Bluey**, Vice President, Communications, Heritage Foundation (United States)
- **Linda Roth**, Vice President, External Relations, Wilson Center (United States)
- **Andrew Schwartz**, Chief Communications Officer, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

12:30-13:30 Networking Luncheon and Keynote Address

13:30-15:00 PM Plenary and Keynote Address: *Think Tanks, Politics and Political Tribes*
Amy Chua, John M. Duff Jr. Professor of Law, Yale University, Author of *Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations*

15:00-15:15 Coffee Break

15:00-16:15 Break Out Sessions (B)

Break Out Session IV: Shaping the Future of the US, Canada and Mexico: The Role of Think Tanks

Many are saying that this is actually the best of times for think tanks, thanks to the digital and political disruptions sweeping across the globe. These turbulent times make carefully considered insights and analysis a necessary commodity that is in short supply. But to take advantage of these opportunities think tanks will have to adapt and innovate because they can no longer do business as usual. A Panel of think tank scholars and executives will help provide a set of suggestions for how to navigate the policy and organizational challenges facing North America and its think tanks. They will also attempt to incorporate some of the strategies and conclusions generated by the summit.

Chair: Laura Dawson, Director, Canada Center, Wilson Center (United States)

- **Joe Barnes**, Bonner Means Baker Fellow, Baker Institute
- **Aaron Shull**, Managing Director, Centre for International Governance Innovation (Canada)
- **Andrew Selee**, President, Migration Policy Institute (United States)
- **Jose Luis Chicoma**, Executive Director, Ethos Public Policy Lab (Mexico)

Break Out Session V: Free Trade: Dead or Alive? Economic Nationalism vs. Economic Internationalism

Chair: Wendy Cutler, Vice President, Asia Society Policy Institute (United States)

- **Monica De Bolle**, Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics (United States)
- **Hugo Perezcano Díaz**, Deputy Director of International Economic Law, Centre for International Governance Innovation (Canada)
- **Juan Pardinas**, Executive Director, Instituto Mexicano para la Competividad (Mexico)

Break Out Session VI: New Strategies and Sources of Funding for Think Tanks

Chair: Kelly Ogle, President, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, (Canada)

- **Manish Bapna**, Managing Director, World Resource Institute (United States)
- **Gina Wood**, Atlantic Council, Director, Foundation and Institutional Giving (United States)

Kevin Cowl, Middle East Institute, Vice President for Development (United States)

- 16:15-17:15 Plenary Keynote Address: *Think Tanks and Cyber Security: Everything You Always Wanted to Know But Were Terrified to Ask*
Melissa Hathaway, President, Hathaway Global Strategies LLC (Cyber Security Advisor to U.S. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama)
- 17:15-17:45 Closing Remarks and Plans for the 2018 Global Summit, 2018 Latin America Summit and 2019 NATTS Summit
- **Jen Berlin**, Chief of Staff, Brookings Institution (United States)
 - **Kim Holmes**, Executive VP, Heritage Foundation (United States)
 - **James G. McGann**, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania (United States)

Summit Contributors

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Heritage Foundation (United States)
Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania (United States)

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Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (United States)
Center for Strategic and International Studies
McKinsey Global Institute (TBC)

2018 North America Think Tank Summit Planning Committee

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Brookings Institution (United States)
Cato Institute (United States)
Centre for International Governance Innovation (Canada)
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CONFIRMED LIST OF THINK TANKS

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Asia Society Policy Institute	Inter-American Dialogue
AT Kearney Global Business Policy Council	International Peace Institute
Atlantic Council	James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy
Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (Harvard Kennedy School)	Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Bipartisan Policy Center	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Brookings Institution	Laboratorio Nacional de Políticas Públicas (del Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas- CIDE)
Canada 2020	McKinsey Global Institute
Canadian Global Affairs Institute	Mercatus Center at George Mason University
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Middle East Institution
Cato Institute	Migration Policy Institute
Center for American Progress	Migration Policy Institute
Center for Climate and Energy Solutions	MMTC
Center for New American Security	Peterson Institute for International Economics
Center for Strategic and International Studies	RAND
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Centre for International Governance Innovation	SSTP - Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
Chicago Council	Stimson
Committee for Economic Development	The Lugar Center
Economic Policy Institute	The Middle East Institute
Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia	The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)
Ethos Public Policy Lab	Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program
Foreign Policy Research Institute	TTCSP
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Heritage Foundation	We are Flint
Hudson Institute	Wilson Center
Human Rights Watch	World Resources Institute
Independent Institute	
Information Technology and Innovation Foundation	
Institute for Research on Public Policy	
Institute for Women's Policy Research	

About TTCSP

Think Tanks And Civil Societies Program

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 26 years, the TTCSP has developed and led a series of global initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environmental issues, information and society, poverty alleviation, and healthcare and global health. These international collaborative efforts are designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that improve policy making while strengthening democratic institutions and civil societies around the world.

The TTCSP works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs, and produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index that ranks the world’s leading think tanks in a variety of categories. This is achieved with the help of a panel of over 1,900 peer institutions and experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. We have strong relationships with leading think tanks around the world, and our annual Think Tank Index is used by academics, journalists, donors and the public to locate and connect with the leading centers of public policy research around the world. Our goal is to increase the profile and performance of think tanks and raise the public awareness of the important role think tanks play in governments and civil societies around the globe.

Since its inception in 1989, the TTCSP has focused on collecting data and conducting research on think tank trends and the role think tanks play as civil society actors in the policy-making process. In 2007, the TTCSP developed and launched the global index of think tanks, which is designed to identify and recognize centers of excellence in all the major areas of public policy research and in every region of the world. To date TTCSP has provided technical assistance and capacity building programs in 81 countries. We are now working to create regional and global networks of think tanks in an effort to facilitate collaboration and the production of a modest yet

achievable set of global public goods. Our goal is to create lasting institutional and state-level partnerships by engaging and mobilizing think tanks that have demonstrated their ability to produce high quality policy research and shape popular and elite opinion and actions for public good.

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies offers an M.A. in international studies, and conducts fundamental and policy-oriented research on current economic, political, and business issues. It organizes an annual conference that brings academics, practitioners, and policy makers together to examine global challenges such as financial risks, sustainability, inequality, and the future of the state.

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. Its peer institutions are Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, and the University of Chicago in the US and Oxford and Cambridge in the UK. A world-class research institution, Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York.

Penn was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and empowering them to make an impact on the world.



Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program

The Lauder Institute

The University of Pennsylvania

“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”

Researching the trends and challenges facing
think tanks, policymakers, and policy-oriented
civil society groups...

Sustaining, strengthening, and building
capacity for think tanks around the world...

Maintaining the largest, most
comprehensive database of over
8,000 think tanks...

All requests, questions, and comments should be directed to

James G. McGann, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer, International Studies

Director

Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program

The Lauder Institute

University of Pennsylvania



About TTCSP

Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 30 years, the TTCSP has developed and led a series of global initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environmental issues, information and society, poverty alleviation, and healthcare and global health. These international collaborative efforts are designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that improve policy making while strengthening democratic institutions and civil societies around the world.

The TTCSP works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs and produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index that ranks the world’s leading think tanks in a variety of categories. This is achieved with the help of a panel of over 1,900 peer institutions and

experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. We have strong relationships with leading think tanks around the world, and our annual Think Tank Index is used by academics, journalists, donors and the public to locate and connect with the leading centers of public policy research around the world. Our goal is to increase the profile and performance of think tanks and raise the public awareness of the important role think tanks play in governments and civil societies around the globe.

Since its inception in 1989, the TTCSP has focused on collecting data and conducting research on think tank trends and the role think tanks play as civil society actors in the policy-making process. To date TTCSP has provided technical assistance and capacity building programs in 81 countries. We are now working to create regional and global networks of think tanks in an effort to facilitate collaboration and the production of a modest yet achievable set of global public goods. Our goal is to create lasting institutional and state-level partnerships by engaging and mobilizing think tanks that have demonstrated their ability to produce high quality policy research and shape popular and elite opinion and actions for public good.

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TTCSP Recent and Forthcoming Publications:

Think Tanks: The New Knowledge and Policy Brokers in Asia (Brookings Press and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2019) <https://www.brookings.edu/book/think-tanks/>

Trends and Transitions in Security Expertise from Deterrence to Climate Change and Back Again (Routledge, 2017) <https://www.routledge.com/Global-Trends-and-Transitions-in-Security-Expertise-From-Nuclear-Deterrence/McGann/p/book/9781138304000>

Think Tanks, Foreign Policy and the Emerging Power Policy Networks (MacMillan, 2017) <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319603117>

Think Tanks and Emerging Power Policy Networks (MacMillan, 2017) <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319719542>

The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks Public Policy and Governance (Brookings, 2016) <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/chapter-one-the-fifth-estate.pdf>

Think Tanks and SDGs: Catalysts for Analysis, Innovation and Implementation (TTCSP 2015) <http://www.lulu.com/shop/james-mcgann/think-tanks-and-sdgs-catalysts-for-analysis-innovation-and-implementation/paperback/product-22563604.html>

How Think Tanks Shape Development Policies (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/15244.html>

Security Expertise Practice, Power, Responsibility (Chapter 6) (2014 Routledge) <https://www.routledge.com/Security-Expertise-Practice-Power-Responsibility/Berling-Bueger/p/book/9781138819115>

Think Tanks and Global Policy Networks, Chapter in an edited volume (Routledge, 2013) <https://www.routledge.com/International-Organization-and-Global-Governance/Weiss-Wilkinson/p/book/9781138236585>

Global Think Tanks, Policy Networks and Governance (Routledge, 2010) <https://www.routledge.com/Global-Think-Tanks-Policy-Networks-and-Governance/McGann-Sabatini/p/book/9780415779791>