



THINKING POLITICS:

THINK TANKS AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Overview

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Thinking Politics: Think Tanks and Political Parties in Latin America

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Preface

Numerous studies have analysed the "crisis of the political party". Although the crisis is not limited to Latin America, the general discontent with political organizations seems particularly serious in that region. The list of criticisms (what Tom Carothers calls "the standard lament") seems endless, but perhaps the most crucial point is the challenges parties face in using their power –either as government or when in opposition– to formulate policies that achieve improvements in well-being and prosperity.

Although the causes of this type of democratic deficit are complex, and surely extend beyond political parties, it is useful to promote deeper research on the role of political parties in policymaking. This book seeks to understand how political parties know what they know. Specifically, the book studies the relationship between political parties and think tanks in five Latin American countries in an attempt to identify their historical evolution, the roles of each, and the impact that think tanks can have on parties.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) initiated this project as part of its efforts to study and promote the better use of research in international development policy processes. During the last five years, the ODI has consolidated a programme of work focused on the interrelationship between knowledge and practice; policy has recently begun to gain more importance in their studies. Think tanks play a key role in linking these three areas because they tend to dedicate their efforts to applied research, advising political actors, and the dissemination and debate of their ideas and proposals in the public arena.

Since it was set up in 1995, International IDEA has prioritized work with political parties. In recent years, IDEA has begun to analyse the capacity of political parties to develop government programmes in the context of the diverse political systems in which they operate. One research programme –"Politics and Poverty in Andean Countries"– seemed to confirm the varied, but limited, relationship between producers (research institutes) and users (political parties) of evidence.

We hope that this study will contribute to an improved understanding of the specific characteristics and the historical relationship between think tanks and political parties in Latin America. At the same time, it also seeks to identify opportunities for action that could contribute to strengthening the relationship between knowledge and politics,

and, in this way, between democracies and sustainable development in the countries analysed. Finally, we hope that the lessons and recommendations in this book should inform the development of a research agenda in other parts of the world where the attention being paid to think tanks is on the rise.

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Contents

Preface	5
Introduction Enrique Mendizabal	9
Regional perspective Adolfo Garcé	21
Political parties and think tanks in Bolivia Carlos Toranzo	27
Think tanks and their role in Chile's political arena Matías Cociña and Sergio Toro	32
Political parties and think tanks in Colombia Juan Fernando Londoño	37
Political parties and think tanks in Ecuador Orazio Belletini and Melania Carrión	42
Think tanks and political parties in Peru: Shaky institutions and informal networks Martín Tanaka, Sofía Vera and Rodrigo Barrenechea	49
Recommendations Enrique Mendizabal and Kristen Sample	56
References and further reading	58
About the authors	60

Introduction

Enrique Mendizabal

Some years ago, in a workshop at a Global Development Network conference in Dakar, an Argentinean participant began to make a point in a discussion on the use of evidence in the development of public policies. Speaking in English, to refer to a policymaker, the man used the term *politician*. An Indian man sitting next to him corrected him, explaining that what he had actually referred to was in fact a *policymaker* and not a politician. The Argentinean looked at him, confused, and repeated himself that the person was indeed a *politician*. “Policymaker” said the Indian again. “Well”, said the Argentinean, “it’s the same thing”, and he continued with his point.

This exchange not only illustrates the fact that, partly due to the language, it is hard to differentiate in Spanish between the career politician and the policymaker; it also shows that in Latin America in particular the technical and the political worlds coexist. The notion of separate worlds of academia and politics is difficult to defend.

In fact, the role of think tanks has not been studied with the same intensity as the role of other civil society organizations. Technocratic networks, private groups and hidden powers, the media, and other informal actors who affect the policy process are still relatively absent from the analysis.

The present study comes at a time when the attention being paid to think tanks appears to be on the increase. There are new initiatives to support think tanks in developing countries and the recent edition of the Think Thank Index by the Foreign Policy Research Institute has awoken the interest of the global press. It is important to point out that many of the lessons that emerge from studies such as these, and which seem novel from an industrial society’s perspective, are characteristic traits of the Latin American tradition.

In contrast to other contexts which have been studied in more detail (such as that in the United States of America, where think tanks were originally founded independently from the political arena), in Latin America think tanks originate from a political response focused first on the fight for independence and second on the construction of the modern Latin American republics. The precursors of the modern-day think tank, such as the Sociedad Académica de Amantes del Perú (1790) and the liberal and conservative Colombian journals of the second half of the 19th century, were fundamentally political intellectual and academic spaces for debate.

Definitions

We have focused on the civil society organization known as the think tank. Defining think tanks has been particularly difficult as in each case study we have found a number of diverse organizations which fulfil the functions of think tank. It is therefore impossible to suggest that there is one type of ideal organization. Andrew Rich shares this opinion in his book *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (2006). In fact, the variety of think tanks on offer is the first lesson to be taken from this research, and this resonates with the lessons learned in the study of networks carried out by Mendizabal (2006).

In his Overview to this report, Adolfo Garcé suggests that think tanks carry out a series of functions including the generation and dissemination of information and analysis on public policy and government issues, and that they can be different types of organization. Garcé also argues that the characteristics of a think tank can depend on the period of time in which they are formed in a regional and local context. The study carried out by Rich (2006), which focused on think tanks in the United States, agreed that the point in time when a think tank is founded subsequently affects its characteristics, and it added that the changes in context in which a think tank operates also have transformative effects upon it.

Citing a study by Diane Stone and Andrew Denham (2004), Garcé suggests three moments in history: the first from the Second World War until the 1960s, inspired by the influence of positivism and the vision of scientific and modern governance; the second in response to the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s; and the third during the 1990s, as a consequence of processes of political and economic liberalization which saw a surge of a wide variety of organizations inspired by new forms of association and management.

These historical periods form the basis of a tradition of Latin American think tanks which Adolfo Garcé explains is hard to define, but that does suggest a natural relationship with politics:

Each one of the three great moments of think tank formation is played out differently in different countries. As a consequence of this historical process there are many very diverse organizations: classic university centres which are oriented around research with private study centres specializing in consultancies and advisory units; state policy planning and assessment offices together with advocacy-focused NGOs; private centres financed by the private sector with Anglo-Saxon-style think tanks focusing on the impact on public debate.

The case studies presented here concur with Garcé and contribute to the description of think tanks as organizations that use research-based evidence to influence public and

private policy, directly or indirectly. This is done via the production of applied research, consultancy-style work, interaction with the media, development of or participation in policy networks, formal and direct participation in policy processes, informal relations with decision makers and de facto powers, by offering spaces for reflection, and so on. These activities or working methods reflect the typology of knowledge generators developed by Livny, Mehendale and Vanags (2006)¹ – problem solving or analysis, critique or advocacy, and rigorous and fundamental research.

Although this study focuses on think tanks, it does so in relation to political parties, as a proxy to the process of policymaking. Garcé uses Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge's (1994) definition and establishes that political parties are the main actors in the system that links citizens to the process of government. Political parties aggregate citizens' demands, they present programmes or strategies which incorporate a process to prioritize these demands, and they provide technical and expert cadres for the state (for the government and the opposition). Belletini and Carrión cite Sartori when offering a practical definition which established an important difference with other political actors: "A party is any political group that presents itself to elections and that can place its candidates in public office via elections".

The Overview by Garcé highlights the existing diversity in the relationships between think tanks and political parties, and it draws attention to the difference between external and internal think tanks. Internal think tanks seem to remain hidden from international cooperation; however, according to the case studies, they are important drivers of change. The Colombian case is an obvious one: internal think tanks have contributed to the definition, consolidation and promotion of ideas and policies. This said, they have also offered the intellectual basis or ideology to the political factions that, in their development, have defined the evolution of parties, whether in helping them to consolidate or to break them up.

Internal think tanks can also be considered as indicators of the value which political parties set on the role of evidence in policy. More stable systems such as the Chilean, the Colombian, or the Uruguayan offer examples of such institutions. On the other hand, in the less stable political systems such as those of Bolivia, Ecuador or Peru, internal think tanks are difficult to define and the relationships are more closely based on the roles of key individuals or political networks.

External think tanks are more common in the region, partly because available research resources tend to be mainly foreign. In these cases, and with the possible exception of the German Party foundations, the independence of research centres is a condition for access to funds and for their influencing the public arena.

As a result, Adolfo Garcé in the Overview presented here puts forward a typology of relationships between political parties and think tanks in each country, on the basis of two variables: (i) the degree of institutionalization of the political parties; and (ii) the degree to which these are connected with external think tanks. The case studies offer a more detailed account of the intensity and types of links between the parties and research centres.

As the various case studies confirm, the situation differs from country to country, but as a whole they provide a good panoramic view of the region. Even more importantly, they also offer positive comparisons between very different contexts as well as possible intervention strategies for the promotion of an improved relationship between knowledge and politics.

Similarities in the roles of political parties and think tanks

There is a certain degree of agreement among the case study authors on the roles of political parties: (i) they provide a forum for debate and deliberation for the aggregation of the visions, missions and aims of diverse political actors; (ii) they articulate these political demands in the form of policy programmes which constitute government plans or alternatives; and (iii) they develop a reserve cadre of future politicians, decision makers and civil servants.

These roles coincide with those assigned to think tanks by the studies in this document, and they help to describe the relationships between the two types of organization.

First, think tanks (in particular internal centres) can be considered as legitimators of policies, proposals or demands from political parties. This legitimization can come after policy has been defined, as in the cases of Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru; but equally it can be seen as the development of an ideological or scientific basis upon which policies are established, as in the cases of Colombia, Peru and Chile.

Second, think tanks act as forums for debate and deliberation or, as suggested by Orazio Bellettini and Melania Carrión in the Ecuador case study, they act as sounding boards for politicians and decision makers. They offer political leaders the opportunity to consider alternatives and to develop their proposals away from the public arena in which the natural pressures of an unstable and highly competitive environment would make evidence-based reflection impossible. However, this “safe area” is useful not only for the promotion of policies, but also for the protection of ideas and their proponents. This was the case of the Chilean think tanks during the military dictatorship and for some Peruvian centres focusing on the promotion of human rights during the government of Alberto Fujimori.

Third, the Bolivian, Ecuadorian and Chilean think tanks have acted as financial channels for political parties associated with these centres. This role, however, is somewhat limited and is mainly seen in the support strategies of the German foundations. However, as the focus on public policy increases and political parties make more use of research, it is possible to suggest that think tanks may act as key links in donor–party relationships, converting international cooperation funds into inputs for the parties.

Fourth, think tanks, almost by definition, seek the adoption and implementation of policy proposals, doing so via the development of policy networks, or technocratic networks as in the case of Peru. These networks, as with forums for debate and sounding boards, link political actors with researchers and experts in the same way that political parties bring their members together for the development of programmatic proposals.

Finally, as is clear in the case of Chile, Latin American think tanks train future political cadres for parties and governments and – why not? – for international cooperation and the private sector as well.

These roles offer collaborative and competitive opportunities with political parties and explain, in part, the historical richness of the relationship between parties and think tanks. The proximity of their roles also helps to explain why in many cases international cooperation has preferred to work with civil society over political parties.

However, there is a key difference which is sometimes overlooked. Think tanks do not present themselves, at least not explicitly, at elections; nor do they seek to place their representatives in public roles using electoral channels. This is an important difference because it highlights the origins of the legitimacy of both types of organization. While think tanks depend on the credibility of the knowledge they generate or use, political party legitimacy depends on public opinion (expressed via the ballot or the intention to vote).

The rich history of the relationship between think tanks and political parties in the region offers many examples of collaborative opportunities between the two. In the cases of collaboration, both political parties and the political systems may be strengthened. And this strengthening could promote an improved use of evidence in public policy without necessarily weakening the political system or its actors.

The case studies

In the case of Bolivia, Carlos Toranzo maintains that the traditional political party system appears to have collapsed and with it the role of think tanks in the formal policymaking process. According to Toranzo, President Evo Morales' Movement towards Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) does not seek to set itself up as a political party but instead aims to replace representative democracy with direct participation. In this context, the role of think tanks has been carried out by various NGOs and base organizations which work hand in hand with social movements which conform to the MAS alliance. Both the parties and the traditional think tanks remain somewhat isolated.

In the case of Ecuador, the relationship between think tanks and political parties is somewhat more discernible but equally fragile. Orazio Bellettini and Melania Carrión suggest that political parties and think tanks have been affected by the weakness of the teaching of political sciences, which has prevented the development of modern party structures and the supply of analysis and evidence-based policy proposals. As a consequence, the relationships between political parties and think tanks have been diverse, from the most programmatic and institutionalized (although strongly dependent on key personalities) and highly fluid (such as that of the Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (ILDIS) and the Izquierda Democrática party and the Democracia Cristiana), to the most spontaneous and least fluid, such as that of the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and the Alianza País movement.

The role played by the German foundations is of particular interest in the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador. Unlike other donors, they have opted to support not only the supply of but also the demand for research. They have encouraged the strengthening of the parties and also the relationships between the parties and ideologically supportive centres. This support veers away from the traditional focus of organizational strengthening and instead looks towards improving the political system within which think tanks and parties are two actors among many.

The case study on Peru falls somewhere in between the other studies presented in this document. According to the authors, Martín Tanaka, Sofía Vera Rojas and Rodrigo Barrenechea, technocratic networks, which lead the agenda-defining processes as well as the drawing up and assessment of policy options, have been formed. These networks are made up of politicians, expert researchers and representatives of the de facto powers. They are not a complete substitute for political parties or think tanks, but they do offer an informal link between the two, mainly between experts in the government and think

tanks. However, as this link is between politicians and experts and not necessarily the organizations to which they belong, these networks can actually serve to weaken the organizations themselves. It is also important to highlight that the formation of these networks is a response to a political process in which parties have not had the opportunity to strengthen themselves, either due to the brevity of the period of democracy in the 1980s or because of the anti-party policy of the Fujimori government during the 1990s, and therefore the relationships between parties (or politicians) and think tanks and their experts have not been able to become institutionalized.

As in other countries, a great deal of the history of the relationship between think tanks and political parties in Peru has been affected from within by the policies of the governments in power and the political system and its actors (including the *centros de pensamiento*). In fact, during the 1990s, the Fujimori government managed to weaken the political parties to such a degree that they were replaced by political and social movements. This change in the political leadership directly affected think tanks as they were not accustomed to working with these new actors, and it also increased the existing distrust between the two types of organization. It is due to this distrust between the parties and think tanks that informal technocratic networks emerged as a more viable option.

With a more stable party system, Colombia offers better examples of alliances between political parties and think tanks; many of these are closely related to the appearance and development of the parties themselves. Juan Fernando Londoño shows how the origins of the Liberal and Conservative political parties and the different factions that have emerged over their long history are linked to forums for intellectual and ideological debate, whether a media outlet directed by the political or faction leader of the time (or future leader), a research centre or organization, or a process of intellectual debate as part of a research programme, or an internal process of party reform or reflection. This introduces us to more concrete examples of formal and institutional relationships between parties and think tanks (despite the clear influence of “heavyweights”), but also to relationships affected by long-term processes such as the periods of political alliance between the main Colombian parties, as occurred during the National Front government (or, in the opposite way, during periods of hostility between them, as in Peru during the 1980s and 1990s).

Contrary to what would be expected, the lack of competition between the main parties during the National Front period reduced the importance of debate forums and, in turn, the demand for evidence and the need to strengthen alliances or relationships with think tanks. The absence of political competition also produced a kind of identity crisis within the parties which resulted in the intensification of internal personalized debate

at the cost of programmatic debate, thereby again reducing the demand for think tanks and their services.

Something similar was observed in Chile during the years of the Concertación (the governing coalition) after the return to democracy in the 1990s. The case study by Matías Cociña and Sergio Toro also shows how more developed and institutionalized organizations interact with one another. In Chile think tanks more clearly reflect the context in which they were created. For example, those formed during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet sought to establish secure places for academics and intellectuals on the left who were persecuted by the regime, and they succeeded in developing political and programmatic opposition platforms. With the fall of the dictatorship, these think tanks formed the basis of the political and expert cadres and ideas of the new democratic governing coalition, and as a consequence they were significantly weakened. With the new democratic regime emerged new research centres and foundations from the old regime, committed to protecting the reforms carried out in earlier decades.

As in the case of Colombia, the Concertación also brought with it the ideological stagnation of aligned parties and think tanks which, with the new millennium, led to the formation of new organizations fulfilling the role of think tanks, but using the structures and models of modern management. These new networks and alliances sought to break with the formal parameters of the party or thematic spaces and thereby reactivated the ideological and programmatic debate.

In general, we can find some truly intriguing and complex histories about the development of some of the most influential think tanks in the region. The case studies can barely do them justice. All the studies describe internal processes affected by the same political contexts which they aimed to affect. These studies describe different organizations that carry out the roles of think tanks and it is these roles which make up a central theme of the current study.

What we do find in the case studies, and what Garcé considers to be the main axis of his analysis, is that both the level of development of the political system and the relationships between parties and think tanks are closely linked to the degree of competition and collaboration which exists between the two types of organization. Bellettini and Carrión in the case study on Ecuador put forward a model which focuses on an ideological-organic link and the fluidity or intensity of the exchanges. This model allows us to incorporate the complexity of the relationships between parties and think tanks, the emergence of common ideologies, the exploration of cooperative models, the consolidation of alliances, experimentation in the political arena and, in some cases, the rupture of some relationships.



What do these studies tell us about strengthening relationships between knowledge and practice?

Most significantly, this study confirms that think tanks are political actors. It is not possible to think of them as separate from politics or as belonging to an isolated community which “communicates” with the community of politics and policies. Think tanks appeared as part of the political process and they have been marked by a constant interaction with other political actors. In Colombia they have been used as instruments to fight for political power while in Bolivia the fall of the parties led to the weakening of think tanks.

As well as this, these actors are a heterogeneous group and cannot be described in accordance with a pre-formed template or by some academic or formal definition. We could even say that think tanks are nothing more than forums or spaces (some more institutionalized than others) in which academic, technical, practitioner, political and activist actors and forces come together. These spaces fulfil different functions depending on the actor our analysis refers to, such as drawing up proposals, legitimizing policies, facilitation of debate or deliberation processes (sounding boards), the provision of technical staff for the parties or public institutions, and even the protection, both literal and figurative, of ideas and intellectuals. The development of these functions or roles also depends on the context in which they operate and how they respond to the needs of the political space.

The case studies also show a continuum in the relationship between parties and think tanks which, as Adolfo Garcé suggests in his Overview, depends on a series of factors linked to the external context of the relationship and the internal characteristics of both groups. These relationships depend on the origin of the think tanks and their links with political players, as well as movements, ideologies, parties and even political roles. The analysis carried out by Bellettini and Carrión enables us to look in more detail at the nature of this relationship.

The discussion on think tanks and their relationships with parties in different political contexts also leads us to accept that, although political parties enjoy little respect and credibility in the region, they do exist and are important and necessary for the generation and implementation of policies. When the parties are weak and not particularly institutionalized, the political system is also weak and consequently the opportunities for think tanks’ development are also weakened. For example, social movements in Bolivia have replaced the political parties in carrying out some of their functions, but they show the same characteristics as the weak parties in weak political systems, and in

Peru the permeability of the parties and think tanks has promoted the development of spaces which operate by taking advantage of and aggravating this weakness.

The promotion of better use of evidence in policy processes therefore requires us to treat research as a political process, carried out for better or for worse by actors and organizations that are part of the political system. Consequently it also requires us to look beyond the support from organizations or individuals and consider the institutions and systems in which they are based – and which can act as collaborative platforms, communication channels, and even learning forums.

Improving the relationships between decision makers and researchers also involves the exploration and promotion of innovative organizational models which on the one hand help to overcome the obstacles of weak political systems and on the other contribute to strengthening such systems. The “hybrids”, which a recent study by the Foreign Policy Research Institute (McGann 2008) presents as a new type of category, are the norm in this region.³

In this world of hybrids (as even the political parties of the region could be classed as such) it is therefore not surprising to find that a large number of the organizations studied lack complete independence. It is more appropriate to talk of relative independence (in relation to political parties, donors, governments, the media and other groups of power or interest). The centres studied cover a broad spectrum of diversity with regard to their level of independence. There is a growing supply of internal centres or centres associated with political parties as well as institutions which are in tune with governments or are created by governments themselves.

It is therefore interesting that, despite the diversity of relationships with political parties and the politicians themselves, as well as the similarities in the roles of think tanks and political parties as described earlier, efforts to ensure the rigour of research work have received less attention than efforts to maintain its relevance. This could be due to the increase in competition for both think tanks and parties but, given the findings of the case studies, it is more likely that it is a consequence of the lack of sustainable institutionalized relationships and/or the very nature of the political systems, which do not promote better collaboration.

It is important to conclude this introduction by mentioning the need to explore the relationship between think tanks and political parties, on the one hand, and other actors in the political arena on the other. The press, the legislative space, the public sector (its organizations and leaders), the private and corporate sector, international organizations,

the church, the armed forces and other hidden powers such as drug trafficking cartels all, in varying degrees of importance, depending on the country, play critical roles in national and local politics in many Latin American countries.

Notes

- ¹ See the text at [http://www.biceps.org/files/\(BRPsynthesis_final_version_December8_with_all_changes%20_205\).pdf](http://www.biceps.org/files/(BRPsynthesis_final_version_December8_with_all_changes%20_205).pdf).
- ² James McGann (2008) defines them as those which do not fit into any formal think tank category and which show strategies or structures which are characteristic of other industries.
- ³ See <<http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/mcgann.globalgotothinktanks.pdf>>.



Political parties and think tanks in Latin America

Regional perspective

Adolfo Garcé

Introduction

Although there is a great deal of literature about think tanks and about political parties, there are few studies of the relationship between the two. Studies of think tanks generally come from the area of public policy, while research on political parties falls into the more traditional field of political science, which focuses on political institutions and elections. There are few points of contact between the two, as public policy researchers give little weight to political parties, and researchers focusing on parties pay little attention to the field of public policy. Some have begun to close the gap between studies of political parties and research on think tanks, but they face several obstacles, including the great diversity of situations, even within a single country.

There are three important reasons for closing this research gap:

- In an increasingly complex governance scenario, with a large number and great diversity of stakeholders and institutions, political parties and think tanks play an important role in public policy development.
- There are various types of interaction between political parties and think tanks. In some countries, there is a cooperative relationship, with think tanks providing parties with input and/or personnel for the development, implementation or evaluation of their government programmes and public policies. In other countries, parties and think tanks compete in a “market of ideas,” mainly through the media. In both cases, in-depth studies are needed in order to understand the causes, dynamics and consequences of these relationships.
- Studying the relationship between think tanks and political parties offers the opportunity to use theoretical and empirical studies of “evidence use” that shift from a focus on a relationship between individuals (researcher and policymaker) to studies analysing interactions between organizations.

Democratic institutions and practices were slower to take root in Latin America than in North America. Three decades ago, democratic institutions functioned in only three countries in the region. Even though the “third wave” of democracy began in the late 1970s and swept through the region over the next 20 years, not all of the authoritarian regimes were replaced by fully functional democracies. In at least six cases, the process of political liberalization was incomplete, and many countries have continued to suffer significant crises in the functioning of their democratic systems. Many countries have

also been slow to evolve from electoral democracies into true democracies in which citizens fully exercise their rights. This is reflected in polls showing that, while three out of four Latin Americans agree that democracy is the best form of government, far fewer express satisfaction with the system: democracy brought political freedom, but there are still many problems, ranging from lack of jobs to poor public safety. Despite these shortcomings, however, people have high hopes for democracy.

In studying the fragility of democracy in Latin America, researchers have focused on various aspects, including the trend toward systems with strong presidents and weak legislatures, and the role of political parties. The possibility of serious conflict between the president and the legislature can increase depending on the type of party system or the degree of party fragmentation. Polls show that most people believe there can be no democracy without political parties, but they criticize the parties' performance. Several studies show that party institutions in Ecuador, Peru, Brazil and Bolivia are weak, while those in Costa Rica, Chile and Uruguay are stronger.

Recent studies of political parties have focused not just on party systems, but on the parties as institutions, analysing various dimensions, including the time when they were set up and their origin, their degree of formalization and main programmatic emphases, and their ideological tendencies. While parties are key political players in Latin American countries, with clear ideological differences, they face challenges in becoming solid institutions. Some are simply electoral machines that revolve around and are subject to the command of a strong leader. Lacking a clear programme, they turn to "technocratic proposals" that tend to be determined by the leader's own strategic vision. When a party becomes established as an institution, however, it distances itself from personalized leadership and develops more clearly defined programmes. Latin American countries vary significantly in the degree of institutionalization of their party systems. The level of institutionalization can also vary over time, and there can be variations within a country, with institutionalized parties coexisting with electoral-machine parties.

Just as there are different types of political parties, there is no single type of think tank. The functions of these organizations (among them, gathering and disseminating information and analysis about problems of governance and public policies) are performed by a diversity of both public and private institutions, including NGOs, university research centres, government-funded institutions, policy research centres connected with the business sector, and organizations established by politicians or political parties.

Modern think tanks emerged in Latin America at three major points: (i) between World War II and the 1960s, when universities established research centres and governments

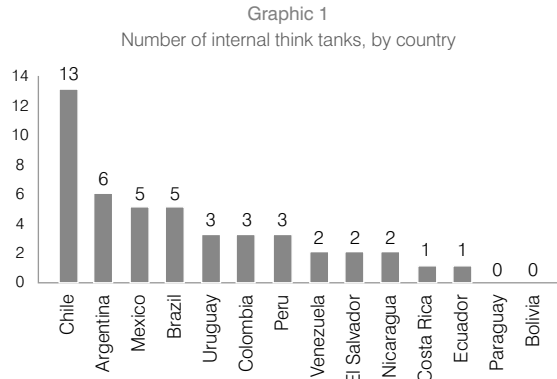


set up policy planning agencies; (ii) during the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, when many academics expelled from universities went into exile abroad or founded private research centres in their home countries; and (iii) in the 1990s, with the rise of foundations and university centres connected with the business sector to support free-market policies and the modernization of the state, and the emergence of NGOs in response to government downsizing. The 1990s also saw the emergence of think tanks established by parties, party factions or other political entities, including politicians who set up their own organizations to further their political careers. As a result, the number of think tanks continues to increase in Latin America, although it has been declining in other regions, such as Africa and Eastern Europe.

Latin American think tanks emphasize research on economic and social issues, although they increasingly focus on international relations and foreign policy. The challenges of democracy and citizenship are relatively low down on their agenda. It is difficult to define a Latin American “tradition” of think tanks, although there is a marked tendency in the region for universities to become involved in public affairs.

The relationship between think tanks and parties varies from close association to one of great independence. There is also a marked difference between think tanks that are “external” to parties (university institutes, private centres, NGOs, etc.) and “internal” think tanks created by parties, party leaders or factions and directly or indirectly tied to party structures. Internal think tanks –policy-generating centres that are part of a party structure– are not often encountered in the region. More common are party institutions that provide training for members and also serve as a crucible of ideas. The large foundations that grew out of German political parties began as “academies” for party members and gradually expanded into multi-purpose institutions.

Party leaders or factions may also launch organizations that are independent of the party, but still maintain close ties to it. If the definition of an internal think tank is broadened to include parties’ training centres and structures that promote debate and policy alternatives, there are at least 46 in the region, 29 of which are located in just four countries: Chile (13), Argentina (six), Mexico (five) and Brazil (five). Most were founded after 1990.



Source: consultation with experts and the Internet

Party foundations play three major roles: (i) providing input for public policy; (ii) promoting policy debate and theoretical reflection; and (iii) training party members.

Table 1
Internal think tanks by country and function*

Country	Promoting theoretical debate	Political training	Input for public policy
Argentina	2	4	2
Brazil	5	2	-
Chile	4	2	10
Colombia	3	2	1
Costa Rica	-	1	-
Ecuador	-	-	1
El Salvador	-	2	-
Mexico	1	2	2
Nicaragua	-	-	2
Peru	-	1	-
Uruguay	3	1	2
Venezuela	-	2	-
Total	18	19	20

Source: consultation with experts and the Internet.

* Some think tanks are counted more than once if they fulfill more than one function.

About half of the internal think tanks in Latin America make a moderate or significant contribution to the development of their parties' plans for when they are in government. Those making the greatest contribution are the Fundação Leonel Brizola–Alberto Paqualini, connected with Brazil's Partido Democrático Trabalhista; Chile 21 and Expansiva, linked to Chile's Concertación; the Fundación Rafael Preciado Hernández, related to Mexico's Partido Acción Nacional; and CIPRES, linked to the FSLN in Nicaragua.

For external think tanks, relations with political parties are more complicated. If they seek to influence parties, these organizations must engage in applied research, produce policy briefs, and establish systematic contacts and personal ties with party leaders and staff. Such contact, however, implies jeopardizing the think tank's most important asset, its public credibility.

According to experts surveyed for this study, only 23 per cent of parties consult think tanks frequently, 59 per cent do so occasionally, and 18 per cent almost never seek out these organizations. The frequency with which they consult think tanks increases in the case of governing parties, with 40 per cent consulting think tanks frequently. The region's parties maintain ties with a broad range of organizations. The Alianza Revolucionaria Nacionalista (ARENA) in El Salvador has close ties with the business sector and its main think tank, FUSADES. In Bolivia, the governing Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) has links to an extensive NGO network. Uruguay's Frente Amplio (FA) has a relationship with the Universidad de la República, and Peru's governing Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP) has ties with the school of government at the Universidad San Martín de Porres.

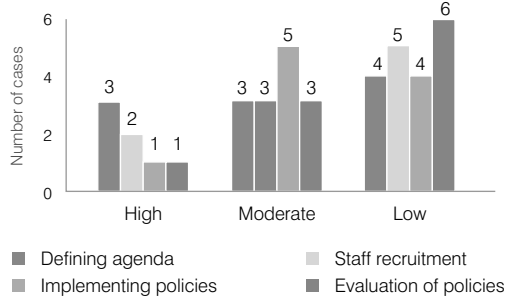
Table 2
Think tanks most frequently sought out by ten governing parties

Country	Party	External Think tanks
Bolivia	Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)	Various NGOs
Brazil	Partido de los Trabajadores (PT)	NGOs, universities, leftist research institutions
Chile	Partido Socialista - Concertación (PS)	Universities, research centres
Costa Rica	Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN)	Academia de Centro América, Programa Centroamericano para la Sostenibilidad de la Democracia, Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR)
Ecuador	Patria Altiva y Soberana (PAIS)	Various university centres, especially FLACSO – Quito (high recruitment of government personnel)
El Salvador	Alianza Revolucionaria Nacionalista (ARENA)	FUSADES – think tank supported by private enterprise
Mexico	Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)	CIDE – think tank and university centre specializing in government and public policy
Nicaragua	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN)	Universities, NGOs
Peru	Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP)	Various universities, especially Federico Villarreal, Garcilaso de la Vega and San Martín de Porres (School of Government)
Uruguay	Frente Amplio (FA)	Universidad de la República (FCS, Instituto de Economía), private centres (CINVE), NGOs such as El Abrojo

Source: consultation with experts.

Governing parties are more likely to consult think tanks to help set policy agendas than for policy implementation, staff recruitment or policy evaluation, as the figure below shows.

Graphic 2
Demand by 10 sitting governments, by type and degree of intensity



There are four general types of relationship between political parties and think tanks:

- (i) Parties with a weak institutional structure and little connection to external think tanks (such as Bolivia’s MAS, despite its links to some NGO networks);
- (ii) parties with a weak institutional structure and strong connections to think tanks (such as Ecuador’s Movimiento País and Peru’s Perú Posible);
- (iii) parties with a strong institutional structure but little connection to think tanks (such as Uruguay’s Partido Colorado and Partido Nacional, Colombia’s Partido Liberal and Partido Conservador, and Paraguay’s Partido Colorado); and
- (iv) parties with a strong institutional structure and strong ties to think tanks (including most Chilean parties, as well as Argentina’s Partido Justicialista and ARENA in El Salvador).

The outlook is more positive than might appear at first glance. Various political parties in the region have some relationship with organizations, either within their own structure or outside, that specialize in political training, theoretical debate or public policy analysis. More research is needed, however, to understand the nature of the region’s think tanks, the roles they play, whether legislation encourages parties to form their own think tanks, the role of international financing, the implications of ties between parties and centres sponsored by business interests or universities, and the way political parties use social research.



Political parties and think tanks in Bolivia

Carlos Toranzo Roca

In Bolivia, there is a relationship not only between think tanks and political parties, but also more broadly between think tanks and politics, as many such organizations are more closely aligned with the grassroots than with parties. In a country where the political and party systems are fragile, grassroots movements play a significant role in politics.

During the last two decades of the 20th century, political parties replaced trade unions as political forces. As institutions, however, they were weak, depending on strong-man leaders and operating as political machines. With the collapse of the party system in the early part of the present decade, grass-roots movements began to set the political agenda. In recent years, some NGOs have become think tanks for grass-roots movements, contributing to the platform of the governing Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Nevertheless, Bolivia continues to have a strong tradition of “street politics” in which massive public events, assemblies and protests take the place of institutionalized political processes. This role, traditionally played by the miners’ unions, is now played by coca growers’ unions, which gave rise to the MAS, or other grass-roots or community groups. “Street politics”, however, tends to be short-sighted, focusing more on immediate advantage than on long-term institution building.

In Bolivia, actions by civil society and grass-roots movements are as important as political parties in defining not only policies, but also politics. Historically, many parties defined their ideology in response to international and national contexts, even though they lacked organic structure. This was the case with the Marxist, Trotskyist and Communist parties in the middle of the last century. To design platforms and programmes, political parties tended to depend more on ad hoc groups appointed by party leaders than on think tanks.

Bolivia has a strong tradition of centralized, revolutionary trade unionism, which has emphasized not only economic issues but also politics. Trade unions see themselves as proto-parties whose goal is to gain power to govern. These unions and the grass-roots movements that accompany them receive support from some NGOs and public universities that play the role of think tanks to process ideas and proposals for a political agenda. Over the past two decades, networks of NGOs participating in social forums and anti-globalization and anti-neoliberalism events have helped to empower grass-roots movements, supporting their political organization. These NGOs include the Unión

Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social (Unitas), the Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA), the Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativas (CEBIAE), the Fundación Solón, the Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social (Cejis), the Centro de Desarrollo Integral (CEDI), the Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino (CENDA), the Centro de Información y Documentación Bolivia (CEDIB), and Programa Nina.

Think tanks have the greatest influence when they support or initiate meetings or work with selected groups of professionals, intellectuals, politicians and policymakers. They have less influence when working with broader audiences.

Nearly all think tanks involved in Bolivian politics have received some funding from international cooperation agencies. European-funded groups tend to focus on parties and the political system, while domestic NGOs are more closely aligned with grass-roots movements. German foundations work directly with political stakeholders, while funders from other countries tend to focus on issues of particular importance to them or to grass-roots groups. German-supported think tanks and the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy, funded by the Netherlands, collaborate on issues such as the modernization of the Congress, although each has certain priorities.

Bolivia's history of party politics is relatively short. Until 1982, the country had no true representative democracy. In the early 20th century, only the upper classes participated in a sort of two-party system, with the President elected by the vote of only 5 per cent of the population. The period 1952-64 was marked by a single-party revolutionary regime, which was followed by a series of military dictatorships, during which political opposition came from trade unions. In 1982, civilians returned to power with the Unidad Democrática y Popular (UDP) under President Hernán Siles Zuazo.

Because there had been no representative democracy, there was also no party system until 1982. Only after the dictatorship of Col Hugo Banzer (1971-78) did Bolivia begin to develop a party system in which elections would determine the transfer of power. Between 1979 and 1982, however, there were at least five presidential elections and as many military coups, reflecting the weakness of the party system and the political system. During those years, a pro-business party, Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN), was born under the direction of former dictator Banzer.

Many NGOs were established in Bolivia during the Banzer dictatorship, providing a refuge for leftists. Some of these groups began working in defence of human rights, developing relationships with grassroots groups and getting involved in development work, and some became think tanks for opposition groups, especially mining, labour

and farmers' unions. More NGOs emerged between 1979 and 1982, during the transition to democracy, and some became linked to political parties, especially the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), which reflected the classic model of the NGO-party relationships. Some parties also developed internal think tanks during this period, while others established relationships with specific NGOs to place certain issues on the agenda.

The Asamblea de Derechos Humanos had the highest profile in this area, while the Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (CIDOB) and the Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina (ISAL) focused on economics and political analysis rooted in Christian principles of social justice. Several NGOs began engaging in political awareness raising and literacy training, and raising issues related to indigenous identity. These included the Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (CIPCA) and CEDI in Oruro. Various NGOs began engaging in political work more than development projects.

The dictatorship ended in December 1977, and five presidential elections were held between 1978 and 1982, with no candidate winning an absolute majority at the polls or in run-off votes in the Congress. As a result, these elections were interspersed with military coups. More NGOs came onto the scene as of 1981, after the Banzer dictatorship. Many were connected with the MIR, while others had no party affiliation. A weak group of partisan organizations charged with designing social and political party programmes and platforms also emerged. These were not necessarily think tanks but groups of party leaders charged with shaping the parties' thinking. This occurred with the MIR, the Partido Socialista (PS), the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria (MNR) and the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda (MNRI). In the Marxist parties (the Trotskyist POR, the Russian-inspired PCB and the pro-China PCML), programmes were designed by central committees or programme commissions.

During the early 1980s, some NGOs continued to serve as think tanks for parties, especially the MIR and the MBL, although they became more independent after the MIR split into dissident parties. Leaders and active members of the MIR were closely tied to the work of the NGO Cinco, and party leaders who were exiled in Europe during the Banzer years formed anti-dictatorship support groups. These contacts helped make the MIR a pioneer in organizing NGOs with international support. As a result, the MIR and the breakaway MBL were seen as having various NGOs. In the second half of the 1970s, the MIR established some internal think tanks, made up of its key leaders and young leaders being trained in various parts of the country. These groups had contact with outside NGOs on specific issues. Most organizations, however, were connected with grass-roots organizations, especially trade unions and farmers' groups, including the FSTMB miners' union, the COB and the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB), which had actively opposed the dictatorship.

The years 1982-2000 saw the building of representative democracy, institutional reforms, a structural adjustment programme and the formation of a party system. Meanwhile, civil society organizations, particularly NGOs, with assistance from international cooperation agencies, raised issues related to social inclusion, ethnic groups, land and territory, natural resources management, participation and other social concerns. They often took a stance against neoliberalism and the political and party systems, calling for greater participation in the definition of public policy and encouraging direct, grass-roots democracy.

After a structural adjustment programme was implemented in Bolivia in 1985, many NGOs approached the trade unions and the community, and farming and grass-roots organizations, to offer assistance. At the same time, political foundations – such as the three German groups, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and its Fundación Milenio; the Hanns Seidel Foundation and its foundation, Fundemos; and the Friedrich Ebert-Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (ILDIS) – appeared on the scene to offer assistance to party organizations and democratic institutions such as the Congress, the executive branch and trade unions.

The party system that began taking root in 1982 lasted barely two decades before crumbling in the face of social unrest, including the “Water War” in Cochabamba in 2000 and the “Gas War” that brought down President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003. The MNR, ADN, MIR and Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR) played a significant role in the late 1990s, but by 2005 the MAS had become the country’s main political force, trailed by two new civic movements, Podemos and the Unidad Nacional. This marked a turning point in Bolivian politics, as democracy began to function without political parties. The death knell for the party system came in December 2005, when discontent with traditional parties put MAS leader Evo Morales into office as President. The MAS has never claimed to be a party, and it is not clear whether new opposition groups, which are civic organizations, will become parties in the future.

The period between 1985 and 2000 was marked by political stability and institutional reform that gradually gave way to political patronage and misuse of public resources that became a symbol of corruption. The neoliberal reforms introduced during this period did nothing to reduce poverty and inequality, but instead exacerbated the gaps between rich and poor and between the urban and rural worlds. Most of Bolivia’s traditional parties subscribed to these reforms and began receiving support from foundations that became think tanks for these organizations. Other NGOs and grass-roots movements took an opposition path, and nearly all bilateral cooperation agencies, especially those from Scandinavia and Europe, made social inclusion, equality, participation, grass-roots democracy and empowerment of the poor their priorities, aligning with social

movements rather than the traditional parties. NGOs aligned with the grass-roots movement focused on training people to address an economic and political model that they argued fostered inequality and poverty. These NGOs became think tanks for grass-roots groups and trade unions.

The largest NGO working specifically on issues related to political parties, the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy (Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria, FBDM), was founded with Dutch funding. The German NGOs have continued operating in the country. The Hanns Seidel Foundation supports Fundemos, which became a think tank for Podemos, which is led by former President Jorge Quiroga and is the second-largest bloc in the Congress. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation supports the Fundación Milenio, which no longer operates as a party think tank, but which constitutes a voice of opposition to the MAS government, especially its economic policy.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation has focused on supporting centre-left parties, especially the MAS. It also provides some assistance to the MSM and the Sí Bolivia collective, and works in conjunction with the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy, providing technical and political assistance for building consensus between the governing party and opposition forces. It provides assistance to trade unions and, to a lesser extent, the office of the Vice-President.

Other NGOs have also emerged in recent years. NGOs working with grass-roots groups have helped shape the country's social and political agenda and have contributed to ideas about the nationalization of hydrocarbons, elimination of the neoliberal model, state control of natural and strategic resources, land reform, and indigenous autonomy. They focus on political training and participation for members of grass-roots groups and indigenous people, and their areas of interest often coincide with the MAS campaign platform.

After Evo Morales took office, many NGO staff members were hired for top jobs in the new government. Various members of NGOs or NGO networks, such as Cejis, Cedla, Unitas, the Asamblea de Derechos Humanos, the Defensor del Pueblo, the Fundación Solón, Alas, Senda, the Observatorio de Democracia y Seguridad, Cebiae and the AIPE, ended up as ministers, ambassadors, vice-ministers, officials or top advisers in the MAS government. Top staff members of Cejis and Senda hold jobs in the Morales administration. Many NGOs operate as think tanks for government policymakers, offering analysis and opinion about policies and plans.

Think tanks and their role in Chile's political arena

Matías Cociña y Sergio Toro¹

Just as parties compete for votes, Chilean think tanks fight to influence public decisions and policies, emerging, adapting and disappearing from the scene depending on political circumstances. During the military dictatorship, many organizations were founded with international support. When President Patricio Aylwin took office in 1990, some of these groups vanished while new ones appeared, some of them related to people close to the military regime. As democracy took hold, the country's think tanks had to develop new visions and strategies.

Table 1
Stages of the emergence of think tanks in Chile

Military regime and transition (1973-1990)	Return to democracy and consolidation (1990-2000)	Consolidation of democracy (2000)
Corporación para Estudios Económicos de América Latina (CIEPLAN)	Libertad y Desarrollo (LYD)	Expansiva
Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo (CED)	Instituto Libertad (IL)	ProjectAmérica
Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP)	Chile 21	Instituto Igualdad
Corporación de Estudios Sociales y Educación (SUR)	Fundación Jaime Guzmán	Aire Libre
Instituto Chileno de Estudios Humanistas (ICHEH)	Justicia y Democracia	Fundación por la democracia
Centro Promoción Universitaria (CPU)	Tiempo 2000	Instituto Jorge Ahumada
Programa de Economía del Trabajo (PET)*	Fundación Futuro	Corporación de Investigaciones Sociales (CISO)
Programa Interdisciplinario de Investigación en Educación (PIIE)*	Avance	Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo
Fundación Eduardo Frei (FEF)		
Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Contemporánea (CERC)*		
Instituto de Ciencias Alejandro Lipschutz (ICAL)		
Grupo de Investigaciones Agrarias (GIA)*		

Sources: Puryear 1994 and the organizations' Web pages.

* Institutions grouped under the aegis of the Academia de Humanismo Cristiano.

After the 1973 military coup, Chilean intellectuals who had been forced out of government or academic circles because of their political views began to create study centres that would later become the foundation of the fight for a return to democracy. One of the first was the Instituto Chileno de Estudios Humanísticos (ICHEH), founded in 1974 under the aegis of Cardinal Raúl Henríquez, former President Eduardo Frei Montalva, lawyer Jaime Castillo Velasco, and others, as “the voice of silenced intellectuals”. The next year, Cardinal Henríquez helped found the Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, which provided an umbrella for various centres that combined research, development programmes, and training.

In the late 1970s, a group of organizations committed to academic debate on public policy issues emerged, including the Corporación para Estudios Económicos de América Latina (CIEPLAN), the Centro de Estudios Sociales y Económicos (VECTOR), the Centro para Estudios Sociales y Educación (SUR), the Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo (CED) and the Centro Latinoamericano de Investigación en Política Económica (CLEPI). During this period, think tanks played four main roles: (i) providing a livelihood for opposition figures; (ii) interpreting the changes, especially the economic shifts, imposed by the military regime, and the crisis of democracy and failure of Unidad Popular (UP), which had put deposed President Salvador Allende in office; (iii) creating opportunities for dialogue between the left and Christian Democrats and the opposition; and (iv) developing policy ideas for a future democratic government.

As public protest forced the military government to open up space for civic participation, these organizations took advantage of those opportunities. They also received assistance from foundations in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United States.

Table 2
Organizations that supported think tanks during the military regime

Think tanks	Supporting organization
Corporación para Estudios Económicos de América Latina (CIEPLAN)	IDRC (Canada), Ford Foundation (USA), National Endowment for Democracy–National Democratic Institute (NED–NDI) (USA)
Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo (CED)	NED–NDI (USA), Rockefeller Foundation (USA)
Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP)	Hanns Seidel (Germany), NED–NDI (USA)
Corporación de Estudios Sociales y Educación (SUR)	n/a
Instituto Chileno de Estudios Humanistas (ICHEH)	Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany)
Centro Promoción Universitaria (CPU)	Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany)
Programa de Economía del Trabajo (PET)	n/a
Programa Interdisciplinario de Investigación en Educación (PIIE)	Ford Foundation (USA)
Fundación Eduardo Frei (FEF)	Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany)
Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Contemporánea (CERC)	French government
Centro de Estudios Sociales y Económicos (VECTOR)	Friedrich Ebert Foundation

Source: Pinto-Duschinsky, Michael, "Foreign political aid: the German political foundations and their US counterparts", *International Affairs*, 67/1 (1991), pp. 33–63, and interviews by authors.

Key: n/a = not available

Think tanks played a key role in the return to democracy with the election of President Aylwin. But as intellectuals took government posts and funding declined, the centres had to adapt to a new scenario, and many disappeared. Others, like Tiempo 2000, which was founded to provide advice on legislation and carry out research on future perspectives, emerged to meet the new needs. Meanwhile, intellectuals linked to the military regime formed their own centres. Other organizations arose in the 1990s to promote the ideas of former presidents or position candidates' campaign platforms.

The prospects for think tanks became more promising around 2000, as the need for critical thought from outside the bureaucracy became clear. Centres reorganized, and

competition between universities and the private sector evolved into collaboration. Think tanks also began providing advisory services. Expansiva was founded to debate and influence long-term public policy. CIEPLAN began exploring new agendas for Latin America. Some new centres, such as the Instituto Igualdad (associated with the Partido Socialista, PS) and the Fundación por la Democracia (associated with the Partido por la Democracia, PPD), belonged to political parties. Conditions for participation in the various political arenas of a stable party system steadily improved.

Chile has long had a relatively solid multiparty system, currently consisting of 12 parties, seven of which are represented in the Congress. Four of the latter – the Partido Socialista, Partido Radical Social Demócrata, Partido por la Democracia and Partido Demócrata Cristiano – make up the governing coalition, the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia, while two – the Partido Unión Demócrata Independiente and Partido Renovación Nacional – are part of the opposition Alianza por Chile. The Partido Regionalista de los Independientes (PRI) consists of former Christian Democrats who left their party. The others are the Partido Comunista, Partido Humanista, Partido Ecologista, Izquierda Cristiana and Partido Fuerza País. Both the number of parties and low levels of electoral volatility have held relatively steady since the return to democracy, with voters showing strong loyalty to coalitions, especially the governing Concertación and the main opposition group, Alianza.

Although many Chilean think tanks are identified with parties, they are actually very heterogeneous, corresponding more to ideologies and platforms than to party identities. The main distinction is whether they sympathize with the former dictatorship or with democracy. The Centro de Estudios Públicos (CEP) is a special case; although it was founded by a former Cabinet member of the military regime, it is distinguished by a pluralism and academic rigour that set it apart from others. A few centres identify themselves as independent.

Table 3
Parties and supra-party organizations

Parties	Supra-party organizations
CED (DC)	CIEPLAN (Concertación)
Instituto Igualdad (PS)	ProyectAmérica (Concertación)
Instituto Libertad (RN)	Chile 21 (Concertación)
Fundación Jaime Guzmán (UDI)	Expansiva (Concertación)
Corporación de Investigaciones Sociales (PRSD)	Instituto Libertad y Desarrollo (Alianza)
Fundación por la Democracia (PPD)	

Classification by authors based on interviews



The goal of a think tank is to have a voice in policy. Because of Chile's strong presidential system, the think tanks use formal and informal strategies to influence executive branch decisions. Centres associated with the governing party have greater access to decision makers and privileged information, while opposition-aligned organizations must often be content with serving on advisory councils.

The opposite is true in the Congress, where the opposition finds assistance from think tanks, especially the Instituto Libertad y Desarrollo, which are an important counterweight to the advisory services more readily available to legislators from the governing coalition. Think tanks influence policy by stimulating public debate and providing legislative assistance, especially advising congressional commissions and helping to revise legislation that is being debated. The relationship is sometimes marked by the natural tension between the centres' technical approach and the legislature's political needs. While some centres work closely with specific party caucuses, others assist legislators of any stripe.

Think tanks generally focus on medium or long-term issues, although that changes during campaigns, when they seek to influence electoral platforms and candidates take advantage of their expertise. This advice may be offered by the centre as an institution or by individuals within the think tank, if the organization does not want to take a partisan position.

Chilean think tanks also play a role in training members of political parties, targeting young leaders who are likely candidates for political careers. This training leads to networking among young party members who will soon hold administrative posts or elected office, honing their political knowledge and skills and building an esprit de corps that will make their individual political careers more "sustainable" by establishing bonds of loyalty and friendship.

Think tanks are likely to remain key players on Chile's political scene, venturing into new arenas and seeking new strategies to respond to changing circumstances. More than a strong institutional structure, they need flexibility to enable them to adapt to the vicissitudes of politics.

Notes

- ¹ The authors thank Adolfo Garcé, Rafael Piñeiro, Juan Pablo Luna, Mauricio Morales and Enrique Mendizabal for their comments.



Political parties and think tanks in Colombia

Juan Fernando Londoño

Although Colombia's parties are among the oldest in Latin America, they still lack a solid foundation. The history of two traditional parties, the Partido Liberal and Partido Conservador, which date back to the 1840s, has been marked by ideological confrontation and clientelist-style politics from which they have not yet distanced themselves. Although ideological conflicts often took the form of violence or political patronage, in the 19th century newspapers became mouthpieces for the parties' ideas. Since then, there has been a close association between the press and politics in Colombia.

Newspapers, and later the electronic media, engaged in a struggle of ideas that later became the domain of think tanks. One of the first think tanks was the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (SEAP), founded by Liberal leader Carlos Lleras Restrepo, who served as Colombia's President from 1966 to 1970. SEAP's launch in 1956 ushered in the modern era of think tanks in the country.

Analysts identify three types of relationship between parties and think tanks: (i) small parties that lack a solid institutional foundation and have little connection to think tanks; (ii) parties lacking a solid institutional foundation but closely tied to think tanks; and (iii) parties with a solid institutional structure and strong ties to think tanks. Colombia's long bipartisan tradition would seem to place it in the third category, but because of the changes in its party system and the emergence of new parties, it is more accurately classified in the first.

Historically, think tanks have often revolved around individuals, reflecting Colombia's strongly personal style of party politics. In the traditional parties, think tanks emerged in response to internal disputes, while newer centres were associated with particular political figures. For example, the Fundación Carlos Lleras is connected with Cambio Radical, but is even more strongly tied to the party's leader, Germán Vargas. Some political leaders have established NGOs to promote their own ideas. These centres have no real influence on public policy or party affairs, but support the activities of active or retired politicians.

The Partido Liberal and Partido Conservador have the most established think tanks, which is not surprising considering their longevity and importance on the national

political scene. The think tanks' work is not closely tied to party activities, however, and they generally lack the infrastructure necessary to make a significant impact.

Beginning in 1958, the Partido Liberal and Partido Conservador hammered out a series of power-sharing pacts that created the Frente Nacional, in which they agreed to take turns governing the country and distribute political offices between the two parties. The pacts blurred ideological distinctions between the groups and led to a power struggle based more on political patronage than on platforms. In response, independent think tanks, including Fedesarrollo and the Asociación Nacional de Instituciones Financieras (ANIF), emerged to provide public policy analysis. The end of the Frente Nacional and several political defeats of Liberals by Conservatives in the late 1970s led to the foundation of the Instituto de Estudios Liberales (IEL), which criticized the Partido Liberal's corruption and its use of political patronage. The party withdrew its backing, and the IEL disappeared, to be followed in 2000 by the Instituto del Pensamiento Liberal (IPL), which focused on the training and development of young leaders.

The difficulty of establishing a strong think tank in the Partido Liberal reflects the Colombian parties' weak programmatic foundations. The Partido Liberal has also undergone significant shifts in political vision. As a result, the views of the party and its think tanks often fail to coincide and sometimes conflict. While think tanks are formally charged with developing the party's programme, this programme is often not implemented by either party leaders or parliamentary representatives. This lack of a solid relationship between the party and think tanks tends to result in limited financing for the IPL. To avoid conflicts with party leaders, the IPL has focused mainly on training, rather than policy and legislation.

The following think tanks are formally registered and affiliated, to varying degrees, with the Partido Liberal:

Established by PL	Linked to PL
Instituto del Pensamiento Liberal (IPL) (part of party)	Centro Nacional de Estudios Liberales (CENEL)
Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (SEAP)	Corporación para la Democracia y Renovación del Cesar, RENOVAR (Corpocesar)
	Fundación Nueva Estrategia Colombiana
	Instituto de Estudios para la Democracia y el Desarrollo (IED)
	Fundación PRODESARROLLO
	Instituto Liberal Socialdemócrata de Estudios y Capacitación (ILSEC)
	Colegio Mayor de Cultura y Ciencia
	Corporación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales

The Partido Conservador established its first think tank, the Centro de Estudios Colombianos (CEC), in 1959 in an effort to heal divisions within the party. The Frente Nacional had weakened the Partido Conservador ideologically and, like the Partido



Liberal, it began concentrating more on political patronage. The party fragmented in the 1990s, but after reunification in the wake of the Andrés Pastrana administration (1998–2002) it formed the Academia del Pensamiento Conservador y Humanista to train party leaders, engage in research and design public policy.

A new think tank connected with the Partido Conservador, the Corporación Pensamiento Siglo XXI, was established in 2008 to connect the party with private entities and international cooperation agencies (mainly the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the International Republican Institute). The new centre was designed as an independent organization that supported, but was not formally part of, the Partido Conservador.

When constitutional reform ended the bipartisan system in 1991, a complex and disorganized multiparty system emerged. Most of the new parties were offshoots of the two traditional parties. At one point, more than 60 were registered, although far fewer actually operated as political groups. The 2003 political reform gave rise to a more solid system, introducing a vote threshold for parties to register and to win seats in the Congress, an allocation system for proportional representation, and a party caucus system to avoid switching between parties.

When new electoral regulations were issued in 2006, parliamentary forces regrouped and new parties emerged. That year, at least five parties showed real possibilities of becoming firmly established. The Partido Conservador (which won 18 per cent of the vote), the Partido Social de la Unidad Nacional (Partido de la U) (18 per cent) and Cambio Radical (15 per cent) were the most visible members of the centre-right governing coalition, while the strongest opposition forces were the Partido Liberal (18 per cent) and Polo Democrático Alternativo (10 per cent).

Other parties occupy about 20 per cent of the political spectrum, including Convergencia Ciudadana (8 per cent), Alas-Equipo Colombia (5 per cent), Colombia Democrática (3 per cent), Colombia Viva (2 per cent), Mira (2 per cent) and some smaller groups. It is not clear which of these parties will survive.

The Partido de la U, formed in 2005 to support President Álvaro Uribe's re-election, became the strongest force in the Senate and the second-largest in the Congress. Its by-laws called for a think tank, the Instituto del Pensamiento Social, to define ideological and policy guidelines for legislative proposals, and a national political school to train young party leaders in matters such as ideology, civic participation and political campaigning. Neither, however, was actually established.

Cambio Radical (CR) was founded by former Partido Liberal leaders who supported President Uribe's re-election but had regional rivalries with members of the Partido de la U and Partido Liberal. While the party's by-laws do not mention a think tank, party leader Germán Vargas Lleras established the Fundación Carlos Lleras Restrepo as an independent centre. The think tank has organized forums on parliamentary activity and science and technology, and it continues the Colombian tradition of being closely tied to an individual party figure.

Several leftist groups, including the Polo Democrático and Alternativa Democrática, merged after the 2003 political reform to establish the Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA). Its by-laws do not mention a think tank, and it receives input for its political initiatives from various institutions, including left-leaning NGOs and foundations. Before his death in 2008, one of the party's leading intellectuals, Orlando Fals Borda, led an effort to found a think tank linked to the party. The idea never came to fruition, but people who had worked with Fals Borda founded the non-governmental organization Democracia Hoy.

According to Colombian politicians, the country's think tanks, including universities, have only moderate impact on legislation, reflecting weak ties between academia and the Congress. Members of the traditional parties are generally familiar with their parties' think tanks, while members of newer parties tend to seek information from a variety of sources. Members of the parties' legislative work teams, which support their parliamentary representatives, apparently make the greatest use of think tanks.

A survey carried out for this research in 2008 – of 70 legislators (29 senators and 41 representatives) from different political groups – found that members of the Congress depend mainly on their parties' legislative work teams for advice. Other sources, in order of importance, include experts close to the Congress, government officials, advisers from special interest groups, independent think tanks, party leaders, and other legislators. Most respondents said think tanks had moderate or little influence on legislative work and political oversight. The think tanks most often mentioned were universities, the Centro del Pensamiento Liberal, the Instituto de Ciencia Política (ICP), Fedesarrollo, the Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, FESCOL, Ideas para la Paz, the Fundación Buen Gobierno and the Academia del Pensamiento Conservador.

More than half the legislators said their parties always or frequently provided information useful for their congressional work. Legislators from the Polo Democrático Alternativo said they received the most support from their party, followed by those from the Partido Liberal and Cambio Radical. The legislators identified the following think tanks as being from their parties or party lines and supporting their work:



Party/movement	Organization or think tank
Partido Liberal Colombiano	Centro del Pensamiento Liberal (53%)
Partido Conservador Colombiano	Academia del Pensamiento Conservador (31%) Corporación Pensamiento Siglo XXI (15%) Gran Colombia, Católica and Sergio Arboleda universities (15%) Fescol (8%) Konrad Adenauer Foundation (8%)
Polo Democrático Alternativo	The party itself, through its executive committee and party caucus (33%) NGOs (17%) Opción Siete (17%) Trade unions (17%)
Cambio Radical	The party itself (22%) Universidad del Rosario y Santo Tomas (11%) Congreso Visible (11%)
Partido de la U	Fundación Buen Gobierno (10%)

The percentages are the shares of those interviewed from the respective political parties who mentioned the different institutes as providing support.

Most legislators agreed that the best way to reinforce the relationship between think tanks and the Congress would be through forums, workshops and conferences with experts. Other suggestions included training for legislators and their teams, special reports, invitations to national and international events, and reinforcement of party platforms. Some respondents said it would be helpful for think tanks to contact their offices directly with information on specific issues.

The study found that the party think tanks' work tends to be separate from the parties' political work, while the parties' solidity as institutions is closely tied to the strengthening of think tanks that provide information, analysis and criteria for decision making.

Future studies should look more closely at political parties' decision-making processes, as there seems to be a distance between the actual work done by think tanks (which is fairly weak) and the recognition they receive from congressional representatives. While parliamentarians say they consider the centres' work valuable, this could be an effort to legitimize the think tanks rather than a reflection of the real situation. The opinions of members of independent think tanks should also be studied to determine whether they play a role in party or parliamentary decision making.

The demands of modern politics are likely to provide the best incentive for parties to use think tanks. These centres are key tools for political work and for shaping debate over major issues, but are of little use in the distribution of small benefits characteristic of political patronage systems. As Colombian politics modernizes, politicians are likely to begin to see the importance of think tanks that support their parties' work.

Political parties and think tanks in Ecuador

Orazio Bellettini y Melania Carrión

The pace of public reform in Ecuador has been slow. The country has one of the lowest rates of economic reform in Latin America, and has not carried out second-generation reforms such as reform of the state, education or social security. Reasons for this include political instability (recent presidents have stayed in office for an average of two years), political crises, and the lack of institutionalized opportunities for civic participation in public policy development, which has eroded the credibility of public institutions and caused people to become disenchanted with politics.

This situation is exacerbated by informality and a lack of institutional solidity and ideological and programmatic consistency among the country's political parties. Not only do parties impede debate over public policy, but their fragmentation is also an obstacle to understanding between public and private stakeholders whose participation is crucial for the formulation of an agenda for development.

While the country has NGOs with experience in implementing projects in the areas of the environment, health, education, agriculture and indigenous rights, there are few organizations dedicated to designing and assisting with the implementation of evidence-based public policies aimed at systemic change. There are few think tanks, and those that exist offer a limited output of information to society.

The relationship between political parties and think tanks is shaped by a context that is characterized by (i) scant demand for analysis and the design of public policies, and (ii) a party system whose poor consolidation is accentuated by ideologized and limited social science research, weak and unstable public institutions, and a society trapped by short-sighted political decision making.

Political parties serve as representative bodies, channels of expression and participation, and mechanisms for the aggregation of interests. Think tanks engage in public policy analysis, legitimize policies, channel funding, network people and ideas, and sometimes serve as a source of party members. They may be NGOs, university research centres, or governmental or state-financed organizations, and may have ties to the business sector or be created by politicians or parties. Three examples – the Corporación de Estudios para el Desarrollo (CORDES), an NGO; the Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo (ILDIS), which was established by German social

democrats; and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO-Ecuador), an academic social research institution – illustrate the diversity of think tanks in Ecuador.

Although the country's think tanks have had little influence on policy design, that does not necessarily mean that there is not a close relationship between some think tanks and political parties. The best-known cases of collaboration are between CORDES and Democracia Cristiana (DC), ILDIS and Izquierda Democrática (ID), and FLACSO-Ecuador and the Alianza País (AP) movement.

(i) CORDES–Democracia Cristiana

The DC, one of Ecuador's most traditional parties, emerged in the 1960s as an alternative to the personalist, strong-man tradition that characterized Ecuador before the military dictatorship. Although there was a hierarchical relationship between the party elite and the grass roots, the party leaders established a formal party structure. The party received organizational and financial assistance from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany.

CORDES was founded in 1984 as a private, non-profit organization by DC leader and former President Osvaldo Hurtado and a group of academics and professionals with experience in the public and private sectors. CORDES offers training to the public and private sectors on topics related to macroeconomics, economic policy, econometrics, financial markets, economic theory and international economics. It also produces publications such as the semi-annual *Tendencias Económicas Financieras y Políticas*, the monthly *Carta Económica*, *Ecuador Economic Weekly* (in English) and *Discusión* (a free electronic bulletin).

The organization receives no government funding; its main contributions come from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. CORDES developed a close relationship with the DC during the 1998 Constituent Assembly, when Hurtado, who served as President of the Assembly, sought the organization's assistance. However, that influence did not extend to the executive branch when President Jamil Mahuad was elected in 1998, and after Mahuad's fall in 2000 the distance between CORDES and the DC increased, leading the think tank's management to consider maintaining independence from all political parties.

(ii) ILDIS–Izquierda Democrática

Founded in 1978, the ID quickly evolved into one of the country's best-organized political groups, becoming the strongest electoral force in 1984 and winning the

presidency in 1988, although it remained closely tied to its historical leader, Rodrigo Borja Cevallos. Despite its social democrat leanings, it never established a strong base among trade unions or peasant farmers.

ILDIS is an international organization linked to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany. It was founded in 1974 to carry out economic, political and social research and provide training, in collaboration with governmental bodies, international and non-governmental organizations, social groups and academic institutions. Its goal is to promote and assist parties that have a similar ideological identity. ILDIS provides logistical support and assistance to various political and grass-roots groups, mainly on the left, with activities ranging from seminars to publications to round-table discussions and guidance on electoral platforms. Unlike CORDES, in recent years ILDIS has focused less on public policy design than on facilitating social and political processes, while maintaining its autonomy.

The relationship between ILDIS and the ID is due to ideological and programmatic links and was strongest during Borja's electoral campaign and administration. ILDIS was critical of the ID's failure to establish a base among trade unions, indigenous groups and other emerging social sectors, however, and diversified its activities to include other partisan and social groups. Most recently, it supported the Constituent Assembly process and, with it, the leftist school of thought falling under the umbrella of Alianza País.

(iii) FLACSO–Alianza País

One of the best-known partnerships between an academic research centre and a political party is that of Alianza País and FLACSO-Ecuador. Alianza País, which was shaped by the charismatic leadership of President Rafael Correa, appeared on the political scene in 2005, at a time when traditional political parties and the legislature had lost credibility. The political organization drew on a group of intellectuals, academics and activists, including some who came from NGOs, universities such as FLACSO, and centres like ILDIS. Although its programmatic approach is somewhat ambiguous, it generally identifies with the reformist left.

FLACSO-Ecuador is a social sciences graduate school that also operates as a think tank, offering research and consulting services. There are no restrictions on its work with political parties, and its political activities are pluralistic and aimed at providing input to governments, civic organizations and other groups. Various members of Alianza País and the Correa administration taught or studied at FLACSO.

Of these three examples, the ties between DC-CORDES and ID-ILDIS are more typical of party-think tank relations. The link between FLACSO and Alianza País depends largely on individual relationships. The cases share some similarities: (i) people involved in CORDES and FLACSO are reluctant to be identified with parties, while those in ILDIS emphasize the organization's independence from any party and the diversity of stakeholders with which it works; (ii) both CORDES and FLACSO have served as recruiting grounds for political party members and government officials; (iii) personal ties and certain political figures carry particular weight in all three think tank-party relationships; and (iv) the few existing cases of party-think tank relationships involve relatively centrist parties, whether slightly to the right (the DC) or to the left (the ID and Alianza País).

There are also differences. A financial and organizational relationship exists between CORDES and DC (with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation providing funding for both, and party leaders serving as directors of CORDES), but not in the cases of ILDIS-ID and FLACSO-Alianza País. CORDES and the DC have engaged in training for party members and other activities based on shared ideology. This has not occurred in the case of FLACSO-Alianza País, while ILDIS has mainly provided logistical assistance to the ID.

In all three cases, collaboration on public policy and political action has been scant because of weaknesses on the part of both the parties and the think tanks. The organizational weakness of political parties makes it difficult for think tanks to establish successful relationships with them, while their lack of internal democracy and debate is an obstacle to the competition of ideas and proposals. Parties also tend to focus on elections, paying little or no attention to programmatic proposals. There is therefore little demand from parties for the kind of work done by think tanks. This situation is exacerbated by political instability in the country, which has had eight presidents in the past 20 years. This has led parties to emphasize ephemeral electoral coalitions over long-term government programmes.

Relationships between think tanks and political parties in Ecuador can be classified on the basis of two main variables – (i) the degree and solidity of the organic and ideological links between them and (ii) the fluidity of the relationship, reflected in the intensity of the flow between them of party members, logistical support, and plans and policy proposals.

The organic and ideological relationship falls on a continuum from less linkage to greater:

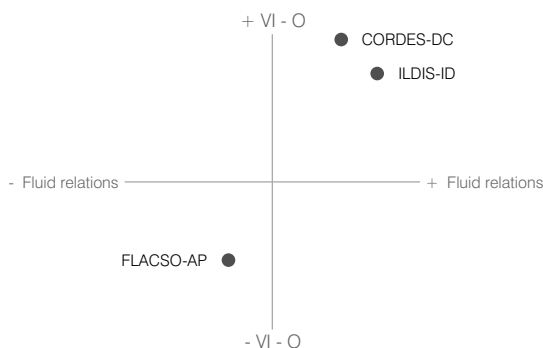


- O-I link FLACSO-AP | ILDIS-ID CORDES-DC + O-I link

The intensity of the flow of support between Ecuador’s think tanks and parties can also be represented graphically:



The most fluid relations are the long-standing ones between ID and ILDIS, and between CORDES and DC. The FLACSO-Alianza País relationship is less formal and based more on personal relationships, mainly with a flow of members from the think tank to the party. This analysis results in the following graph of party-think tank relationships, which provides a basis for discussing ways in which these relationships can be enhanced:



There is a shortage of organizations that engage in public policy analysis and proposals. Only a handful of universities offer advanced degrees in political science, and few professionals have expertise in this area. There is little empirical research in political science in Ecuador, and the field tends to be fragmented, ideologized and lacking in a broader, comparative perspective. When political parties win public office, they usually do not turn to think tanks for assistance. Combined with the country’s weak public institutions, this means that public policy is shaped more by street protests, popular assemblies and newspaper editorials than by policy experts.

The goal of think tanks is to improve the quality of public policy. If they hope to influence weak parties that lack internal democracy and are more concerned about winning elections than about designing sustainable, forward-thinking policy, they must ensure that their work is relevant, focusing on problems that citizens consider priorities. This means redefining both the social sciences, to avoid dogmatism and promote critical analysis and tolerance of differences, and the role of universities and study centres, to ensure academic rigour in applied research on public policy and the functioning of political parties.

It also requires channels of communication that enable think tanks and political parties to share their agendas, ideas and public policy proposals. The cases described here range from the extreme of CORDES, which has a completely institutionalized communication flow with the DC, to that of FLACSO and Alianza País, which arose spontaneously and depends on personal contacts. Finding a middle ground will require a joint effort to design evidence-based proposals for solving public problems and disseminate them creatively and systematically among stakeholders.

Another challenge is ensuring the sustainability of think tanks, which only have limited resources. One possibility is funding from the government and international cooperation agencies that is allocated competitively among policy centres that demonstrate an ability to design proposals for strengthening democracy and governance in the country. Some of these funds could come from resources for financing political parties. This would enable think tanks to contribute to the institutional solidity of political parties and their ability to mediate between citizens and the political system. It would require a system that ensures transparency and the appropriate use of funds, as well as good management of the think tanks.

As Ecuadorian society becomes more democratic, the groundwork will be laid for a truly competitive party system. There will also be an increasing need for proposals and analysis of policies and laws to foster political competition and enhance the political and technical capabilities of parties in both government and opposition. Universities and research centres will contribute information and ideas to promote informed debate, while the public will demand well-designed, feasible policies. This will create greater opportunities for think tanks and parties to work closely with public institutions at various levels of government.

In Ecuador, as in other Latin American countries, citizens are increasingly demanding an end to partisan fragmentation. It is crucial to begin to envision a post-party future for Ecuador. This does not mean the disappearance of political parties, but it does

imply the emergence of a new generation of political organizations with new forms of representation and civic participation, and with ideas and plans for addressing the problems facing society. By designing technically rigorous and politically feasible proposals, think tanks can play a key role in building a democracy characterized by a new generation of political parties that are more connected with citizens and capable of developing public policies that lead to economic, social and political development.

Think tanks and political parties in Peru: shaky institutions and informal networks

Martín Tanaka, Sofía Vera Rojas and Rodrigo Barrenechea

In an ideal relationship between think tanks and political parties, academic and applied research organizations would collaborate actively with political groups, strengthening their proposals and, as a result, public policies. In Peru, however, weak institutions and distrust among political stakeholders make such a relationship difficult. The political crisis of the 1990s weakened the party system, and parties today show little interest in obtaining assistance from intellectuals or training party members. Parties also tend to distrust NGOs and civil society. The two main groups of academic technocrats – those on the left and those with an economically liberal bent – are also viewed with distrust. The former are viewed dubiously by those who believe that they are trying to achieve, through special interests, what the left has failed to win at the ballot box, while the latter are often viewed as having been complicit with the Alberto Fujimori administration.

The few think tanks that exist are fragile and not financially stable, which limits their ability to engage in research and influence policy. Many of these organizations view the political world with scepticism, considering it corrupt, opportunistic and elitist. Because of this gap between parties and think tanks, policymaking often depends on informal networking and contacts among politicians, groups of technocrats and de facto powers.

Even Peru's oldest political parties are relatively young by more established standards. Except for the Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP), the ideological parties that exist today emerged in the second half of the 20th century and did not establish a solid electoral role until 1980, after a dozen years of military dictatorship. That group, consisting of the Partido Aprista Peruano, the Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC), Acción Popular (AP) and the Izquierda Unida (IU) coalition, lost ground in the 1990s with the collapse of the party system and the rise of personalist political organizations. Ideological parties reappeared in 2001, after the fall of the Fujimori government, but were weak and lacked public support.

In this fragile institutional scenario, parties have been unable to establish organizations specializing in developing policy proposals, or to establish stable relationships with universities and research centres. Peru lacks the kind of party-related think tanks that are found in Chile or Colombia. Some “traditional” parties, such as the PAP and PPC,

have training centres for members. The PAP has received assistance from the German social democrat Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and the PPC from the Christian socialist Konrad Adenauer Foundation, but these foundations' support has not led to the development of real party think tanks.

Because of the lack of “organic” think tanks, any study of the issue in Peru must focus on those that are independent of parties. Peru has few think tanks in the strict sense of centres dedicated to public policy research with stable ties to government officials and political stakeholders. If a broader definition is used, there are some, but they have little connection with political stakeholders, and their research is not necessarily aimed directly at public policy. There are three types of research centres in Peru: NGOs, independent research centres, and centres affiliated with universities or business associations.

Because funding for research in Peru is limited, it is difficult for researchers to set their own agendas; they often depend on priorities established by others. This makes it even more difficult for their agendas to coincide with those of politicians or policymakers. Parties and public officials, meanwhile, do not consider research immediately relevant to their decisions. One challenge for think tanks and parties is to adapt research to the political agendas of the parties in the Congress and ensure that politicians are ready and willing to adopt long-term policies.

There are, however, some connections between research centres and the political system. Some think tanks establish direct, ongoing relations with government officials on particular issues, rather than with parties. Moreover, once elected, public officials from various parties who lack their own technical staff seek assistance from think tanks.

This relationship between parties, politicians and think tanks is due to Peru's particular political history. The 1980s were marked by the presence of four major “traditional” parties – the PAP, PPC, AP and IU. There were some casual ties with think tanks, but they broke down during the decade that followed. The relationship between think tanks and parties depended on ideological alignments, but was mainly expressed through personal commitments rather than institutional ties. Leftist research centres that emerged in these years included the Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo (DESCO), the Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES), and the Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Participación (CEDEP). Many people involved in these organizations were also leaders of parties that were part of the IU or provided technical expertise in government. Examples include Henry Pease of DESCO, who served as



Vice-Mayor of Lima under Alfonso Barrantes (1983–86), and researchers from CEDEP who were involved in the first Alan García administration (1985–90).

On the liberal side, one of the most influential think tanks is the Instituto Libertad y Democracia (ILD), founded in 1981 by economist Hernando de Soto. The ILD defines itself as a research centre that works with all political forces while remaining independent of partisan interests. It played an active role in the Belaunde and first García administrations and the early years of the Fujimori government.

Peru's parties have had varying relationships with think tanks. Although since its foundation the PAP has been one of the best-organized parties, and had roots among intellectuals, that influence eroded in the 1960s as the party became more conservative and the country's intellectuals more radical. Nevertheless, party leader and President Alan García maintained a personal relationship with researchers from CEDEP. Acción Popular lacked stable relations with a think tank, and after the military dictatorship (1968–80) President Fernando Belaunde recruited Peruvian technical experts and academics from abroad to implement his government plan. The PPC, meanwhile, was closely tied to lawyers, but had little connection with other professional groups or centres involved in public policy research. In the late 1980s, the AP and the PPC joined the Movimiento Libertad to form the Frente Democrático (FREDEMO) for the 1990 elections. ILD founder Hernando de Soto was a founding member of Libertad, but distanced himself from the group shortly afterward. He collaborated with the first García administration and with the Fujimori administration during its early years, publishing reports and implementing publicity campaigns on issues such as the nationalization of banks, cost analysis in government regulation, and the reform of public administration. Some of those contributions found their way into legislation.

The 1990s were marked by the collapse of the party system and a serious economic crisis followed by structural adjustment policies. If that course had continued, Peru might have seen the emergence of closer connections between the political system and think tanks, but the authoritarian, anti-party, anti-institution Fujimori administration eschewed long-term policy development in favour of “technical” and “pragmatic” decision-making criteria. The collapse of the party system combined with the impact of the Fujimori administration eroded the influence of leftist think tanks, while new liberal groups aligned themselves with the government, but not with parties. The traditional parties were replaced by new, highly pragmatic political groups shaped by individual political figures rather than ideology.

While independent university research centres and NGOs suffered during the financial crisis of the late 1980s and 1990s, new liberal centres focused on free markets and government reform. These included the Instituto Peruano de Economía (IPE) and research arms of business associations, such as the Foreign Trade Society of Peru (Sociedad de Comercio Exterior del Perú, COMEX). Centres identified with the left lost ground, as they were forced to downsize and their political influence eroded because they were viewed as opposing the government. In the early 1990s, the Civic Proposal (Propuesta Ciudadana) consortium was formed as an academic and research group critical of the Fujimori government. The consortium gradually began focusing on decentralization, not only in support of policy reform, but also in resistance to political control by a centralist, authoritarian government. It works most closely with local governments. To some extent, this reflects the difficulties encountered by think tanks in establishing broader ties. Efforts to build connections in the Congress have been shaky, while relations with the governing party are practically non-existent. Because congressional party caucuses are poorly organized and undisciplined, the best strategy seems to be to establish ties with individuals rather than parties, even though this further undermines the think tank's influence.

In the political “transition” that followed the decade-long Fujimori government, political parties moved into a new phase; but in their weakened condition they were not true protagonists of the transition, nor were they capable of a real break with the past. Since 2001, therefore, there have not been any major changes in the relationship between parties and think tanks, despite the reappearance of ideological parties such as the PAP and PPC (the strongest force after the Unidad Nacional alliance). These parties share the stage with volatile, personalist parties typical of the last decade's style of politics. During the Alejandro Toledo and Alan García administrations, there was an apparent strengthening of ties between technocrats in key positions and certain think tanks through informal networks, but not through formal relationships with parties.

The weakening of both political parties and research centres in the 1990s contributed to the informal, personal nature of relationships between policymakers and think tanks. Political parties lack clear programmes and only design generic platforms for electoral campaigns. Their lack of emphasis on government plans reflects the “pragmatic” anti-politics attitude of the Fujimori years. Parties believe that policy experts can be hired, so that it is not necessary to have any within the party, while many technocrats believe that parties block decisions for “political reasons”. As a result, the two groups have a distant, utilitarian relationship. The think tanks that currently influence the public policy agenda do so through informal networks that include ministries and other key state agencies, but which are disconnected from political parties.

In the vacuum left by political parties, two networks of technical and professional expertise have emerged, one wedded to liberal policies, with varying degrees of connection to the Fujimori administration of the 1990s, and the other left-leaning, identifying to varying degrees with the IU and leftist parties of the 1980s. As a result, although there are no truly liberal or leftist parties, in recent years experts from these schools of thought have had a decisive influence on public policy, the former most closely tied to the García government and the latter to the Toledo and Paniagua administrations, although with significant overlap.

The case of Alejandro Toledo's Perú Posible (PP) party typifies the weak or non-existent connection between parties and think tanks in recent years. Despite its key role in protests against the Fujimori government before the 2000 elections, the party lacked an organizational apparatus. Once in office, Toledo convened or was approached by experts from different schools of political thought, who constituted a minimal base of support. He gave them significant autonomy and they formed work teams by drawing on their personal networks.

The Partido Nacionalista Peruano (PNP) is another example of the weakly institutionalized parties founded in recent years. Its ideological profile is clearer than that of other leftist parties, but this ideological clarity is not reflected in clearly defined programmes and public policy proposals, and it has no relationship with think tanks.

Of the traditional parties with deeper ideological roots, the largest is the PAP. The party practically disappeared during the Fujimori years and was rebuilt after its leader, Alan García, returned to the country and won the 2006 presidential election. Both the PAP and the PPC, another party with a defined ideological tradition, differ from the PP and the PNP in that they have centres for training party members, supposedly to ensure turnover of leadership. These may be incipient efforts to establish think tanks with organic ties to parties – institutions promoted by traditional parties, or at least by their leaders. They include the Instituto de Gobierno at the Universidad San Martín de Porres (USMP), whose founders have ties to the PAP, and the Instituto Peruano de Economía Social de Mercado (IPESM), linked to the PPC. Both are recent initiatives in which the leaders of the respective parties, Alan García and Lourdes Flores, had a decisive influence.

In general, the parties with representation in the Congress use think tanks very little for technical assistance or to gather information or carry out studies on public policies. NGOs and research centres connected with universities and other groups exercise some influence with studies and research on public policy proposals, but they have little

connection with parties. Some NGOs whose members are former members of leftist parties specialize in issues such as decentralization and regionalization, political and electoral reform, education and health policies, and defence reform. International financial assistance has been important for some of them, such as Propuesta Ciudadana, the Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), and the Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL). Many of these NGOs base their advocacy strategies on networking with politicians and government officials with whom they have personal connections.

Other think tanks are linked to liberal or business groups that wield strong influence over some public agencies through informal networks and mechanisms. These include the IPE, APOYO and COMEX, which serve as research centres for the government by offering consultancy services, ideas and input on public policy, as well as training, especially in economics, to prepare professionals to hold public office.

Overall, Peru can be described as a country with weakly institutionalized parties that have little connection to think tanks, although parties have moved slightly towards greater institutionalization since 2001. Public policy decisions, therefore, tend to be defined under pressure from international and local de facto power groups, which are not accountable to citizens. For Peru's fragile democracy, the predominance of these technocratic networks in public policymaking exacerbates problems with the political system's legitimacy. Citizens feel that politicians make campaign promises that they later break, or that the administration changes but policies remain the same, which leads to disenchantment.

Policymaking also tends to depend on personal contacts between government officials and policy experts, rather than on parties' governance plans. This is aggravated by the mutual weakness of and distrust between parties and think tanks. While parties distrust professionals with political experience on the left, who often work in university or NGO research centres, some liberal think tanks remain tainted by their closeness to the Fujimori administration during the 1990s. This makes it difficult to develop long-term public policy and helps explain why there has been little change in Peru's poverty and social welfare statistics despite steady economic growth in recent years.

To, conclude, there is a need for applied research in research centres, the development of government policies based on public debate, and regular discussions between the academic community and political stakeholders. Think tanks should research issues related to the current political agenda and provide new and better tools for analysing those that are of greatest interest to the political parties. The Consorcio de Investigación Económica y Social (CIES) is experimenting with such an approach, with a Public

Advisory Council made up of representatives of ministries and public agencies that raises policy issues for in-depth analysis.

Another way to address the weakness of public policy research and of ties between think tanks and parties would be to bolster the legislature's technical capabilities through technical guidance provided by research centres to parliamentary commissions. A more professional approach in the Congress would facilitate communication between research centres and politicians.

A third step would be to promote the establishment of training centres and proposals related to them. The public financing provision in Article 29 of the Political Parties Law (Law 28094) should be implemented, with funds earmarked for training and research. This should be accompanied by other measures to ensure that parties' campaign platforms are transformed into a road map for the government and proposals for legislation.

Recommendations

Enrique Mendizabal and Kristen Sample

Relationships between parties and think tanks take many forms. Some think tanks are established within parties, some are completely external, and there is a broad spectrum in between.

As part of the “third wave” of democracy (in the late 1970s), many Latin American parties set up internal think tanks. These range from organizations created to advance particular politicians’ careers to institutions that provide training for party members and help design campaign platforms and government plans. Further research is needed into the size and financing of internal think tanks and their relationship with parties and party (parliamentary) caucuses.

There are different types and degrees of links between parties and external think tanks. The relationship is generally shaped by the nature of the supply (the information offered by the research organization) and the demand (the profile of politicians seeking information, their perception of the usefulness of evidence in policymaking, etc.). Additional study should be carried out to identify institutional factors affecting the links between external think tanks and parties.

To fully understand the relationship between parties and think tanks, however, it is also necessary to know more about parties’ organizational and decision-making structures and the characteristics that influence their ties with think tanks, as well as their solidity as institutions.

A series of recommendations can be drawn from these five country case studies. There is a need to:

- (i) accept a broad definition of think tanks, including their function, their form of organization, whether they are part of the political system, and the diversity of their relationships with other stakeholders in the system. Ideally, they should contribute actively to the development of the political system and the use of research;
- (ii) recognize that the relationship between think tanks and parties is dynamic and subject to the demands of the electoral cycle. It is crucial to study and understand the incentives that affect political parties’ interest in and demand for information and programmatic evidence;
- (iii) promote applied research on issues of concern to citizens in order to provide new and better tools for analysis and interpretation about parties’ concerns;

- (iv) strengthen relations between parties and think tanks, providing opportunities for ongoing dialogue. This means that research centres must generate evidence-based proposals related to problems of interest to society and disseminate them more creatively and systematically to external stakeholders, especially political parties;
- (v) improve the legislature's technical skills through advisory services provided by research centres to party caucuses and congressional committees. Think tanks should play a role not only during campaigns, but also in parliamentary decision-making processes;
- (vi) build capacity to promote collaboration instead of competition, by strengthening political systems and expert advisory networks. This could involve establishing party training centres, especially for young party members who aspire to a political career. This could foster an esprit de corps that would make individual political careers more "sustainable", building friendships and loyalty. Training would become a way of forming a political elite;
- (vii) strengthen relations between think tanks and the media, so that the latter have a better appreciation of the role of research;
- (viii) consider establishing a fund, with financing from the government and international cooperation agencies, to be allocated competitively to public policy research centres that demonstrate the ability to design proposals for enhancing democracy and governance. This could enable think tanks to develop proposals that would reinforce not only the ideas, but also the institutional foundation of political parties, and their ability to intermediate between public demands and expectations and government policy; and
- (ix) finally, as a long-term government policy, it is important to support initiatives that promote fields of academic study and research that are related to policy design and public administration.

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