Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Challenging or Building Consensus on India's Pakistan Policy?

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Abstract

Foreign policy think tanks are now an accepted part of policy making in most democratic societies, yet literature on think tanks is largely limited to American and European case studies. It fails to account for the development of these institutions in other political contexts and while globally think tanks are gaining recognition as policy actors, there is a lack of scholarship on foreign policy think tanks in India. The limited literature on Indian think tanks so far, is ambiguous and does not adequately examine their role in the formulation of India's foreign policy. It does not take into consideration India's unique political context and its various institutional structures, that have had an impact on the growth and position of think tanks within the policy landscape. This thesis seeks to problematise the assumptions about foreign policy think tanks in India through a detailed examination of their role within policy processes. It critically examines the policy discourse of Indian think tanks and their specific role in promoting and challenging policy narratives set by the state. The focus of analysis, in particular, is think tank engagement with one of India's most volatile foreign policy issues - its relationship with Pakistan and the conflict over the disputed territory of Kashmir. It is argued that the Composite Dialogue process which was initiated in 2004 provided avenues for policy change in India's relations with Pakistan and encouraged active civil society engagement, giving think tanks the opportunity to influence policy making.

Developing a novel framework that combines Discursive Institutionalism and Gramscian analysis, the thesis has considered think tanks' interactive processes – their coordinative and communicative discourse on Pakistan – and a critical analysis of their role and relative position within policy structures in India. The thesis argues that the institutionalisation and patronage to government think tanks such as Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Centre for Air Power studies has enabled the Indian government to build consensus on policy directions and perpetuate security centred government thinking on Pakistan. The infusion of foreign funding and relative independence from the government has also enabled the development of non-governmental think tanks. While some of these like the Observer Research Foundation, Centre for Policy Research and Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies are able to articulate ideas that challenge government positions, support from the government is crucial and is directly linked with their ability to retain relevance as non-state policy actors. While dominant literature on India's foreign policy has criticised think tanks for their lack of policy relevant formulations, the evidence in this thesis will show that policy recommendations from think tanks are extensive, particularly on key issues of the India-Pakistan relationship. They have

been active participants in the policy process, particularly during the Composite Dialogue. However, the predominant influence of the Indian state on policy making and the significant structural and material constraints on think tanks have collectively curtailed their influence – presenting significant challenges to their evolving role in foreign policy.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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List of Abbreviations

AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
AGPL	Actual Ground Position Line
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
APAO	Alternative Policy Advisory Organisations
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAPS	Centre for Air Power Studies
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CD	Composite Dialogue
CDR	Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CLAWS	Centre for Land Warfare Studies
COSATT	Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks
CPR	Centre for Policy Research
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CSA	Centre for Security Analysis
CT	Conflict Transformation
DGMO	Director General of Military Operations
DI	Discursive Institutionalism
DND	Draft Nuclear Doctrine
DPG	Delhi Policy Group
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organisation
ECCP	Economic Cross Cultural Programme
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
FNS	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
GOI	Government of India
HM	Hizbul Mujahideen

IAF	Indian Air Force
IBSA	India Brazil South Africa
ICRIER	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
ICSSR	Indian Council for Social Science Research
ICWA	Indian Council of World Affairs
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDSA	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
IF	India Foundation
IFS	Indian Foreign Service
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IPCS	Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
IPRI	Islamabad Peace Research Institute
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
IWT	Indus Water Treaty
JATM	Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism
JEM	Jaish-e-Mohammed
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
JUD	Jamaat-ud-Dawa
KRC	Kargil Review Committee
LET	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LoC	Line of Control
LSR	Lady Shri Ram
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMF	National Maritime Foundation
NRRM	Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures
NSA	National Security Advisor

NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council
NSCS	National Security Council Secretariat
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
NTS	Non Traditional Security
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
PAI	Pakistan-Afghanistan-India
PAK	Pakistan Administered Kashmir
PIPFPD	Pakistan India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
POK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RCSS	Regional Centre for Strategic Studies
RIS	Research and Information System for Developing Countries
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
USI	United Service Institution of India
VIF	Vivekananda International Foundation
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace

Chapter One

Introduction

India in the present day has made forays into forming international linkages, partnerships with superpowers and is playing an active role as a leader of the global South, forming new associations with other emerging world powers such as Brazil, China and South Africa (BRICS, IBSA). On the path of forging a high-profile power status, it has demonstrated high growth and advanced military capabilities and remains a firm adherent to the multilateral UN system. India has also taken a keen interest in global issues such as climate change, global trade negotiations, and nuclear disarmament and remains a key proponent for regional cooperation. While international factors are significant, India's foreign policy behaviour is also conditioned by its domestic political imperatives, namely its political leadership and its institutions.[1] However, more often than not, the study of Indian foreign policy has remained limited to a study of its bilateral and regional relationships rather than a nuanced understanding of foreign policy institutions and foreign policy actors. What is missing is a comprehensive exploration of the policy process, the actors and institutions involved; and the path that the policy process takes, to create policy narratives and policy frameworks.

While the relevance and central position of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in making policy is often clearly articulated in the literature, there exists in India an informal and non-governmental network of think tanks that engage with India's foreign policy and strategic doctrines. Based on recent statistics, with 280 operational think tanks, India is placed number four in the list of countries with the largest think tanks and Indian think tanks have figured in the top 50 in the global think tank rankings for several years now.[2] With organisational capacity deriving from retired diplomats, bureaucrats, retired military personnel and academics, think tanks in India are also notable for a growing body of intellectual elites – adding to the public debate on policy issues. However, the role and relevance of think tanks, the importance of this elite and their specific engagements with policy processes is unclear. This in essence is the

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[1] Harsh V. Pant, "A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy," *Orbis,* 53:2, (2009a), pg. 251

[2] The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world every year. These statistics are based on their most recent report titled, James G. McGann, "2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", *TTCSP Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports,* 12, 2017 http://repository.upenn.edu/think_tanks/12

central research problem of this project. While Indian think tanks are sometimes identified as civil society actors[3] and while their research contributions are being recognised, there is limited engagement with the specific role that they play in policy making, particularly on issues of foreign policy. It is this gap in literature that this thesis aims to fill by critically examining the role think tanks play in foreign policy and developing a novel framework with which to analyse this relationship.

India's unique political context, its various institutional structures and the material realities have had a direct impact on the growth and position of think tanks within the policy landscape. Yet, while there exist considerable analyses with respect to American and European think tanks and their influence on some notable foreign policy decisions - in Asia and in South Asia, think tanks have only begun to be recognised as viable players. Addressing this gap in the literature, this thesis examines their growth and development in India and highlights their growing relevance to policy making. It will also highlight the specific structural constraints and the relative position of Indian think tanks within the policy structures. In doing so, the thesis will elaborate the distinctive approach referred to as the Discursive Institutionalist – Gramscian (DI-Gramscian) framework to analyse the role of think tanks in foreign policy making.

In critically examining the position of think tanks in policy making, this thesis will concentrate particularly on their role in one of India's most important foreign policy concerns, its relationship with Pakistan. India's relations with Pakistan have been characterised by disputes on several issues such as the political status of Kashmir and the contested borders. This is complicated further by four wars fought in 1948, 1965, 1971 and most recently in 1998 in Kargil. Other disputes revolve around the sharing of river waters, contending nuclear doctrines, Pakistan's support to separatist groups in Kashmir as well as its alleged complicity in acts of terrorism in India. The India-Pakistan conflictual relationship has left its mark on regional integration efforts in South Asia and is also often reflected in international alliances and partnerships with the two South Asian neighbours. As a key security concern for India therefore, the dynamics of the relationship with Pakistan has created both official and unofficial interest. Engagement with India's strategy towards Pakistan has been at the forefront of research agendas in most security policy think tanks. Yet, a critical examination into think tank discourse on India's Pakistan policy is missing. Further, the existing literature has not

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[3] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16

considered the unique contribution of think tanks in formulating a discourse on peacebuilding that makes way for an emboldened and more substantive foreign policy towards Pakistan. A critical examination of India's Pakistan policy therefore presents a good test case for the analysis of the role of think tanks in general, and an examination of the nature of their policy ideas in challenging or supporting existing policy frameworks. The examination of a specific foreign policy issue also presents an opportunity to investigate the place of Indian think tanks within the policy-making institutional set-up in India – a subject that has not been studied so far.

This chapter will present an overview of the overarching arguments presented in this thesis. It will begin with explaining the relevance of the Indo-Pak dispute to think tank development and their engagement with policy agendas on Pakistan. Responding to inadequacies in the literature, the subsequent sections will highlight the particular research contribution of this thesis and the development of the DI-Gramscian model as the most adequate theoretical explanation of think tank behaviour in India. The chapter will detail the research design and methodology used to account for think tank role in India, using comparative case studies of prominent Indian think tanks and their research programmes on India-Pakistan relations.

Think Tanks and India's Pakistan policy

As a key security and foreign policy subject, focus on Indo-Pak relations has been of considerable interest to Indian think tanks. In India as the evidence will show, most foreign and security policy think tanks have an active research and advocacy component centred on policy towards Pakistan. However, it is unclear how think tanks – both governmental and non-governmental frame the discourse on Indo-Pak relations and if their linkages with the government of India (GOI), help or challenge the introduction of new ideas on India's Pakistan policy?

To begin to understand think tank discourse on India's policy on Pakistan, it is first essential to present the broad characteristics of the Indo-Pak relationship. Some of the general features of India's Pakistan policy have been its emphasis on bilateralism as a principle for conflict resolution; the continuing sanctity of geographical borders in Kashmir, Siachen and Sir Creek; a focus on developments in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PAK)[4] as counter to Pakistani

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[4] To accurately reflect think tank policy discourse, this thesis has retained their categorisation of the disputed territory in Kashmir, thus, when think tank publications use the term Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), the author has retained the term. The author's preference however is the use of the term Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) in keeping with more objective analysis.

policies in Indian Kashmir; competing with Pakistan's influence in the region and the continuing emphasis on terrorism as a major hurdle in the bilateral relationship. All other issues of concern between the two neighbours are in turn seen through these broad contours of policy, based primarily on national security concerns. While there exist some examples of successful dialogue as seen in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) or the formal agreement on exchange of information regarding nuclear power research facilities and a commitment not to attack each other's nuclear installations – efforts to sustain a structured dialogue process were not very successful. There have been however, sporadic attempts to engage in multi-track diplomacy through bilateral dialogues (Track One), back-channel talks and civil society dialogues represented in the various Track Two and Track Three forums.

Representing a significant change, the Composite Dialogue (CD) was the longest sustained and institutionalised effort at peace between India and Pakistan, which was formalised in 2004 and continued till 2014 with some periods of disruption. The roots of India-Pakistan CD date back to May 1997, when at Male, the then Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif mooted the idea of a structured dialogue.[5] While first proposed in 1997, several years passed before the CD could begin formally. The CD framework comprised discussions on eight key issues that inform Indo-Pak relations i.e. Peace and Security; Kashmir; Sir Creek; Siachen; Terrorism; Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation channel (that is essentially a debate on the IWT); Drug Trafficking and; Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in various fields. The dialogue structure was based on an incremental approach attempting a simultaneous consideration of all key issues at the same time. It represented a departure from previously held positions and articulated a policy moving away from an excessive focus on Kashmir to one that attempted parallel progress on all issues.[6]

The CD created new spaces for out of the box thinking on Indo-Pak relations and generated an atmosphere conducive for think tanks and research organisations to engage with policy making. The dialogue process at this time also attempted to expand the stakeholders, "involving for the first time, the people of India and Pakistan with an orientation to work at all different levels of state and civil society."[7] This ran concurrent with a more liberal funding structure that enabled

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[5] Sajjad Padder, "The Composite Dialogue between India and Pakistan: Structure, Process and Agency", *Heidelberg papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, Working Paper, 65, February 2012, pg. 2

[6] Ashutosh Misra, "An audit of the India-Pakistan peace process", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 61:4, 2007, pg. 506

[7] As stated by National Security Advisor (NSA), Shiv Shankar Menon during a conference in New Delhi. For a detailed report see: Stuti Bhatnagar, Deepti Mahajan and Manjrika Sewak, *Collaborative Explorations: Fifth Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop Report* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2007)

foreign funding and a further involvement of think tanks. However, even though there are examples of think tank interface with the formal dialogue through their research and active participation in multi-track initiatives, their specific policy discourse has not been examined. It remains unclear if think tanks have broadened/strengthened the government agenda or challenged dominant narratives, offering new policy ideas relevant to specific aspects of the relationship. Think tank policy ideas and their specific involvement in the dialogue process will thus be detailed in this thesis. Special emphasis will be on think tank policy discourse on the basket of issues identified within the CD framework.

Research Contribution

While think tanks in India have developed to become a noticeable part of the Indian policy making scenario and some analysis and commentary has reasoned that think tanks should play a larger role in Indian foreign policy[8], research on their specific position within policy structures and their engagement with important foreign policy choices is missing. Questions such as who makes India's foreign policy; what constitutes the policy making establishment; who are the actors and agents responsible for formulating the foreign policy in India and how far each is influential are questions that remain unanswered and underexplored. Further, the approaches examining the role of think tanks in prevalent literature are inadequate for the Indian case primarily because scholarship is limited to American and European case-studies and do not take into account India's unique political context. A dominant theme in the literature,[9] is the bridging role of think tanks as, "organisations engaged on a regular basis in research and advocacy on any matter related to public policy. They are the bridge between knowledge and power in modern democracies."[10] While literature on Indian think tanks has identified this bridging role, their discourse is seen to be lacking in policy relevance.[11] Further,

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[8] While Daniel Markey has argued that think tanks have the potential to be a part of India's "foreign policy software", Alagappa identifies them as an integral part of India's IR architecture but is critical of their role in providing policy alternatives. For more see, Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16; Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy Software", *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96

[9] Matthew Taylor, "Think tanks, public policy and academia", *Public Money & Management*, 31:1, 2011, pp. 10-11; Donald E. Abelson, "Old world, new world: the evolution and influence of foreign affairs think-tanks" *International Affairs,* 90: I, 2014, pp. 125-142; Stella Ladi, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011)

[10] Andjelkovic Branka. "A limited dialogue: Think tanks and the policy making process in Serbia", in UNDP (ed.) *Thinking the Unthinkable*, (Bratislava: UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2003)

[11] This insight also emerged from many of the interviews, particularly with former policy makers. For more see: Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore), 67, 16 June 2009; Dhruv

the literature fails to critically examine the symbiotic and interdependent relationship and the existence of a knowledge/power nexus[12] manifested in the collaboration between think tanks and formal policy structures. Often considered as secondary actors, the discourse has emphasised the state-centric foreign policy making in India curtailing the foreign policy role of think tanks. Through an examination of think tank position within the policy process, this thesis builds on the understanding of think tanks as policy actors/ agents/ idea brokers and information filters. It responds to inadequacies in the literature and examines policy discourse of Indian think tanks and their specific part in promoting and challenging policy narratives set by the state.

The thesis develops a DI-Gramscian framework that analyses think tank interactive processes and identifies their position in India as ideational actors. It explores their role in building consensus on the Indian government's Pakistan policy and their possible potential to challenge dominant narratives and introduce alternative policy ideas. Through an examination of their roles in policymaking, creating a discourse on Pakistan and contributing to public opinion, the DI-Gramscian framework enables a look at "both the specific and the general influence on foreign policy…as catalysts and crystallizers of policy thought."[13] This approach also provides an analysis of the intellectual elite at Indian think tanks and their specific social and political backgrounds that have an impact on their foreign policy ideas as well as their ability to enable absorption of their ideas into policy frames.

While DI is found useful for processual analysis, Gramsci provides a theory of state-society relations that enables such an examination that goes beyond elites and ideas. Gramsci's emphasis on the state's role in building consensus through collaboration with private organisations to mobilise and advance its own causes and to legitimise and promote its own interests is particularly relevant. While Gramsci's understanding was based on domestic politics, its application to the study of think tanks is a new idea.[14] The elites for their part, particularly the body of intellectual elites that form think tank institutional opinions, symbolize Gramsci's concept of 'state spirit'. Private non-state actors like think tanks therefore become

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Jaishankar, "Can India's Think Tanks be Truly Effective?" *The Huffington Post India,* April 15, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.in/dhruva-jaishankar/can-indias-think-tanks-be_b_9688434.html;

[12] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg. 276

[13] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign* Policy (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 119

[14] It has been used by Inderjeet Parmar in his comparative analysis the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Chatham house in Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign* Policy (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

relevant for some decisions and are used for generating public opinion in others. The DI-Gramscian approach helps us understand how think tanks try to strike a balance between developing independent research agendas while benefiting from continued government patronage and support. The application of this framework to India's Pakistan policy will highlight significant patterns in think tank behaviour and their developing role in foreign policy decision making.

Main Argument

Highlighting the role of Indian think tanks in policy making, this thesis will argue that the institutionalisation and government patronage to think tanks in India has enabled the Indian government to build consensus on policy directions on Pakistan. This is aided by similarities in think tank membership and the close collaboration between intellectual elites and policy elites manifested in think tank policy discourse and their contribution to public opinion. While think tanks provide an academic understanding of policy debates, their policy discourse perpetuates government thinking on Pakistan and alternative perspectives are very often side-lined.

The infusion of foreign funding and relative independence from the government however, has also enabled think tanks to challenge government positions on Pakistan and introduce new and innovative policy ideas. Nonetheless, proximity to the government has a direct link with the ability of a think tank to introduce policy ideas and retain relevance as non-state policy actors. This argument is supported by a closer look at the institutional structures and material realities that have had an impact on the place of think tanks in the policy sphere and their ability to influence specific foreign policy decisions. With regard to policy paradigms on Pakistan therefore, policy direction is provided by the state and is subsequently adopted, refined and articulated by think tank research and analysis, making these foreign policy think tanks an active participant within the policy process.

In addition to policy influence and the capacity to introduce new ideas, this thesis will also consider the question of institutional embeddedness and the institutional relevance of think tanks themselves particularly when so many of them look to the government for financial support. The synthesis of the DI-Gramscian perspective enables a better understanding of the material interests and the elite character of think tanks, particularly visible in India where they

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represent the intellectual elite composed of retired diplomats, bureaucrats and senior members of Indian academia and civil society. The DI-Gramscian approach also provides an insight into research manoeuvring by think tanks to please funding bodies and government elites. Therefore rather than portraying think tanks benignly, this study provides a more critical examination of the nature of interactions between policy elites and intellectual elites.

Through case-study analysis, the thesis will highlight that research agendas at government think tanks are provided guidance and direction by policy elites in the government and while each of these think tanks follows its own distinct research direction, policy ideas on Pakistan often overlap. Similar membership patterns and similarities of opinion represented by intellectual elites favour dominant ideas on national security, often undermining deviation from government policy direction. Further, the creation of these think tanks and the support to the body of intellectual elites is an attempt by the GOI to institutionalise consensus on policy directions, particularly on security. In comparison, non-governmental think tanks are not dependent on government funding alone and have therefore developed a broader understanding of Indo-Pak issues and offered some new policy ideas. Yet, the involvement of their intellectual elites in government committees and specific projects funded by the government aimed at providing policy expertise in areas where the bureaucracy lacks capacity, have fostered linkages with government viewpoints on Pakistan. Further, similarities in the nature of this elite has also impacted the nature of their policy discourse on Pakistan.

Approach and Methods

As mentioned earlier, the thesis develops a DI-Gramscian framework which is a synthesis of Gramsci's concept of the 'integral state' and the Discursive Institutionalist conception of the socially constructed nature of institutions. Recognising the inadequacies in the literature to account for the role of Indian think tanks, the use of DI enables an enquiry of the different levels and different types of policy ideas as well as the interactive processes by which ideas are translated into policy. Such an approach is particularly useful when causal links between actors involved in policy construction and policy change are difficult to ascertain. This is of particular relevance to the Indian policy making scenario as the path to policy construction is unclear, made further complicated by the interactions (both institutional and non-official) between think tanks and the permanent bureaucratic structures. It is also relevant as studies on foreign policy in India often overlook the political processes that translate ideas into policy change. Examining policy making in India through the formal institutional settings described by DI

will therefore support the argument that there exists space for outside expertise - for actors like think tanks to impact the policy process.

The relevance and position of think tanks within the policy process and their ability to assume importance during what Ladi describes as "critical junctures" is also an important aspect here. Critical junctures "refer to particular historical moments that have lasting consequences and can provoke changes in policy."[15]The positive atmosphere created by the CD and its structure can thus be perceived as one such "critical juncture" wherein avenues for policy change in India's relations with Pakistan were available and active civil society engagement was encouraged. The discourse developed by think tanks during this period will be a significant focus of this study.

A limitation of the DI approach, identified particularly during the research process, is its over-reliance on ideas and under-estimation of material constraints. Relevant particularly in the case of Indian think tanks, the introduction of a DI-Gramscian framework is therefore important to consider the power of the state and the material/structural limitations of non-state institutions like think tanks. Such a framework was found more suited to examine Indian think tanks; their role in policy making; and to account for an analysis into state-society relations. The approach places emphasis on elites – their intellectual backgrounds, membership patterns and collaboration with the state – highlighting the Indian state's potential in building hegemony on its policy directions towards Pakistan.

Research Design

The methodology and design of this project has developed through the course of the research process and field research in India that brought to light the specific environment in which think tanks operate. Understanding the policy narratives of think tanks and providing insights into their role in policy making is a complex process. It involves a detailed discourse analysis of policy ideas from think tanks; tracing their interaction with policy processes and determining how they seek to introduce these ideas into the policy frameworks on India's Pakistan policy. Beginning with DI's emphasis on the interactive dimension of discourse – both the coordinative

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[15] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 208

and communicative functions operating within specific institutional backgrounds is adopted to understand the processes through which think tanks in India seek policy influence.[16] Further, process tracing is used to identify the intervening causal process – between an independent variable (foreign policy) and the outcome of the dependent variable (think tanks).[17] The idea is to create a narrative of events to analyse the level of influence of think tanks that may explain "how specific actors carried certain ideas into the policy-making fray and used them effectively."[18]

While these methods enabled a broader understanding of think tank processes, they did not sufficiently explain the role of the intellectual elite at Indian think tanks. The predominant role and the ability of this elite to contribute to think tank policy relevance and their proximity to policy elites is an important aspect of Indian think tanks. Further, as a relatively new phenomenon, think tanks are still dependent on government funding and patronage, that is also very often a function of this elite. To incorporate this dimension, case studies of different types of think tanks were chosen as the most useful way to examine their role in foreign policy. Through cross-case comparisons and within-case analysis, the differences in material and structural capabilities to influence India's Pakistan policy were identified.

The three case studies that have been adopted delineate think tanks on the basis of their funding patterns and their relative proximity to the government of India. They highlight the processes that think tanks are involved in and the articulation of their policy recommendations on Pakistan represented in the research output of some of the major think tanks in India. The first case is Government Think Tanks that are directly funded by the GOI and include the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), National Maritime Foundation (NMF) and Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS). The second case analysed non-government think tanks that have secured private funding but continue to have significant linkages with the government. Think tanks in this category include Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and India Foundation (IF). The

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[16] Developing the Discursive Institutionalist approach, Vivien Schmidt's writings have elaborated on the specific types of ideas and interactive discursive processes that contribute to policy change. For more see: Vivien Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse" *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11: 2008, pp. 303-326

[17] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2005), pg. 206

[18] John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, pg. 29

third and final case study also examines non-government think tanks but these institutions significantly lack government funding and patronage. These are the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Delhi Policy Group (DPG), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR). The use of case studies in this thesis incorporates the synthesis of the DI-Gramscian approach that allows for an examination of specific constraints – structural and ideological – that impact the way a particular think tank is situated in the Indian policy making scene.

The policy input from think tanks was analysed through their research publications – policy briefs, project reports, conference proceedings – secondary data on the evolving Indo-Pak policy debates, as well as writings of think tank elite in popular media. However, think tank engagement with policy issues in India is often not institutionalised and operates at an informal level, leaving their specific involvement in the policy processes undocumented. This gap has been mitigated to the best extent possible through semi-structured interviews conducted between August and October 2015. The interview material provided insights from the personal observations of experts on some of the undocumented aspects as well as an insider perspective into think tank positions. For this purpose, attempts were made to interview senior researchers in leadership positions who could provide insights into organisational goals and decision-making. Added attention was given to include researchers who were actively involved in projects related to India's Pakistan policy.

Between August and October 2015, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 respondents using an open-ended questionnaire (see appendix 2) at 14 think tanks in New Delhi, India (list in appendix 1). In keeping with the research ethics guidelines, interviewees were provided prior information about the project and their consent was taken for recording and attributing their opinions. Contacted electronically, a snowball technique was used to secure appointments. The list is restricted to the National Capital of Delhi as most foreign policy think tanks are situated there and it is also where India's foreign policy bureaucracy is based. To incorporate the government and policy-maker perspectives, some interviews, although limited were also organised with current and former bureaucrats. The interviews were also used as an opportunity to gather think tank research materials not available in the public domain.

Challenges/Limitations

While case study analysis illustrated how think tanks in India analyse and introduce policy ideas on Pakistan, there were however challenges in examining this role. The insights gained from the interviews were able to alleviate some of these, however a significant challenge is the nature of the issue itself. The volatility and complex nature of India-Pakistan relations has affected think tank involvement and was also reflected in some of the interview responses that offered a very general perspective rather than a detailed account of think tank involvement. Further, an aspect of think tank-government interaction in India is the exchange of classified policy briefs that were not made available for analysis. Some think tanks also maintain ambiguity on their funding information as well as specific project funding towards projects on Pakistan. Additionally, viewpoints from within think tanks were also likely to be biased in favour of their role and organisational influence. While there were attempts to include more government actors to present a more balanced picture, appointments were provided only for junior level bureaucrats or retired diplomats and bureaucrats, whose insights while helpful were dated.

An additional dimension of note in Indian think tanks is the lack of diversity in think tank membership patterns that also resonate with the Gramscian framework. With the predominant presence of former bureaucrats, defence officials, diplomats and academicians from a narrow socio-economic base, think tanks form a part of the power bloc in India. This is also an aspect that enables the hegemony of intellectual ideas not far from government thinking. Also visible is a gendered dynamic, the majority of interviewees were men with a very small sample of women-led think tanks or women researchers. This has also changed the way ideas are represented in think tank discourse with only limited attention to foreign policy ideas that focus on the different impact that the India-Pakistan conflict has on men and women. While there is some attention in this thesis to think tanks that actively articulate women's voices (WISCOMP, CDR, DPG), they represent a minority perspective.

This project began in April 2014, however since May 2014, there have been significant changes in Indo-Pak relations under new political leadership in India. In addition, under the Narendra Modi government, the institutional position of think tanks, their funding structures and their ability to engage with policy processes has changed. There is also an emergence of new US styled think tanks like the Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, Brookings and Carnegie India which are funded primarily by corporate interests in India and are changing the

relative position of think tanks. Since these are new institutions, their policy discourse on Pakistan has been left out of this thesis but offers potential for further research.

Thesis Outline

As argued in the previous section, a DI-Gramscian framework forms the core of enquiry in this research highlighting the collaboration of policy elites and intellectual elites in making policy. Chapters in this thesis will therefore begin with a review of literature on think tanks moving into a detailed analysis of the Indian policy making landscape. DI provides the tools to establish processes of interaction between think tanks and policy and Gramsci indicates the state's collaborative influence. Case studies are developed on the basis of funding and affiliation and will thus examine both government and non-government think tanks. The cases will highlight membership patterns and composition of intellectual elites; their role as policy actors through an examination of their discourse on Pakistan; and their role in policy promotion and contribution to public opinion.

Chapter Two will shed light on the theoretical and methodological arguments that best explain the behaviour and impact of think tanks in the literature. In understanding the role of non-state actors like think tanks within the policy process, this chapter will highlight the literature on the role of ideas and discourses and will identify the various policy processes that think tanks are involved in. The interactive processes of policy construction as emphasised by the DI approach will be detailed and the framework will be applied to think tanks both in terms of their potential in creating discursive spaces and their possible contribution as discursive and ideational actors. Further, the chapter introduces the DI-Gramscian approach to examine the symbiotic relationship between policy elite and the intellectual elite within think tanks.

After introducing the broader theoretical and conceptual literature on think tanks, *Chapter Three* will highlight how literature on Indian foreign policy explains the role of think tanks. This chapter will consider the trajectory of the foreign policy planning process in India and investigate the engagement with civil society and grassroots actors. It will elaborate on the structure of policy making in India; the origins and development of think tanks and their changing relevance and position. The second part of this chapter will discuss India's foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan, focusing particularly on the structured dialogue process initiated by the CD in 2004. It will also highlight how the period of the CD expanded the space for think tanks in India – particularly those dealing with foreign and security policy.

The next three chapters will focus on the specific case-studies of think tanks in India. Demarcated on the basis of affiliation and support from the Indian government, the comparative case studies will relate each organisations' membership, leadership and worldviews to the specific role in policymaking and public opinion mobilisation with regards to relations with Pakistan.

Chapter Four will focus on Government Sponsored Think Tanks. Through the analysis of five government think tanks namely Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) and National Maritime Foundation (NMF), the chapter will focus on membership; funding arrangements; specific research agendas and policy ideas for relations with Pakistan. Using a DI-Gramscian framework, the relevance of the intellectual elite will be highlighted through a focus on partnerships and networks indicating inroads into formal policy making. The critical examination of policy discourses will provide evidence that the emphasis of policy ideas at government think tanks has been to highlight dominant viewpoints of each of the defence forces from where these think tanks receive patronage. While they may differ on operational details, they reflect the interests of India's defence and foreign policy community towards Pakistan, through discourses emphasising national security concerns.

Both chapters Five and Six will analyse Non-Governmental Think Tanks but while one will examine some of the bigger and better resourced institutes with broad research agendas, the latter will focus on think tanks with a specific emphasis on peacebuilding. *Chapter Five* will examine four important think tanks in this category namely, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and India Foundation (IF). With diversified funding, the ability of these think tanks to challenge government policy narratives on Pakistan was enhanced, reflected in a broader and more academically informed policy discourse. However, the Indian government's control over funding legislation and the close involvement of think tank elite in government policy initiatives has restricted the research independence of these think tanks. This was demonstrated in changes in policy directions as the CD process faltered and was prompted by the continuing need to balance proximity to policy elites and retaining institutional relevance.

The second part of the analysis on non-governmental think tanks in *Chapter Six* will concentrate on institutions with research agendas specifically focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation like the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Delhi Policy Group

(DPG), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR). It will examine how relative freedom from government funding brought about by India's liberalisation process and the specific focus on peacebuilding impacts the nature of policy discourse emerging from these think tanks. Further removed from government patronage, these think tanks are able to expand narratives on India's Pakistan policy, articulating the specific concerns of the civil society, notably women and youth perspectives. Yet, their significantly weak linkages with formal policy elites and a distinct membership style has restricted their ability to influence policy changes on Pakistan.

The study will conclude in Chapter Seven with a discussion on specific patterns that emerge in think tank membership, the nature of intellectual elite and the level of interaction and communication with policy elites. Through a summary of material conditions that enable or restrict think tank involvement in the policy processes, the chapter will argue that although policy directions and foreign policy agendas are decided by the government and top leadership in India, Indian think tanks are crucial actors used for the promotion of ideas in support of dominant state narratives and filling in knowledge gaps in new policy areas. particularly with regards to the discourse on India's Pakistan policy. Hence, think tanks are used to build consent for government policy and have very little space to challenge dominant ideas.

Chapter Two

Think Tanks and Foreign Policy – A Discursive Institutionalist-Gramscian Approach

The growth and development of think tanks in India is a part of a global phenomenon of think tanks playing an increasingly important role in policy making. While later chapters will highlight specifically the role of Indian think tanks in the policy process, this chapter sheds light on the theoretical and methodological arguments that best explain the behaviour and impact of think tanks in the literature. The conceptual analysis of think tanks has moved from their dismissal as viable actors to a grudging acceptance of their role. Further, the literature on ideational structures and more recently institutionalism has adopted a more nuanced understanding of think tanks, their role and their influence in shaping foreign policy choices. Identifying think tanks as non-state actors and highlighting their interaction with state structures through their particular position in the policy sphere will thus be an important focus. This thesis advances a Discursive Institutionalist-Gramscian framework (DI-Gramscian) that seeks to understand how think tanks attempt to create discursive spaces to contribute as policy actors. Institutionalists have argued that think tanks as agents are involved in framing and agenda-setting as well as the articulation of foreign policy for the purpose of creating public opinion. The power of discourse as highlighted by the DI approach, in particular the emphasis on the interactive processes of policy construction is helpful, as causal relationships between think tank research and tangible policy decisions are difficult to find. Such an approach is particularly relevant to the restrictive bureaucratic structure in India but one which has also seen the significant proliferation of foreign and security policy think tanks in recent years. It is therefore important to examine the role that these expanding institutions play in India's foreign policy making.

However, while DI helps in identifying processes, it lacks in the explanation of material interest calculations and the bureaucratic bargaining of think tanks, particularly visible in the case of Indian think tanks. Therefore, to overcome the inadequacies of the DI approach, the thesis combines Gramsci's understanding of the role of the elite and introduces the DI-Gramscian framework as a synthesis of the two perspectives. The need for such a fusion is also a result of the research process and the specific context of Indian think tanks. The DI-Gramscian approach enables a more suitable understanding of think tank behaviour in India with its emphasis on

the role of intellectual elite and its collaborative relationship with the state. It is better able to substantiate think tank role within the policy landscape in India, represented in the symbiotic relationship between foreign policy elite and the intellectual elite that makes up the composition of Indian think tanks. Beginning with a focus on internationally recognised typologies, this chapter will consider the theoretical approaches that have accounted for think tank influence in policy. In identifying think tanks as important policy actors, the chapter will subsequently present the work of scholars of ideas and institutions and their critique that has led to this thesis's development of the DI-Gramscian perspective.

Definitions and Typologies

The literature on think tanks has grappled significantly with issues of definition and typologies.[1] Think tanks are identified as actors, agents or intellectual elites or simply research institutes narrowly focused on academic research. A generally accepted definition describes think tanks as organisations that are distinct from the government and whose objective is to provide advice on a diverse range of policy issues through the use of specialized knowledge and the activation of networks.[2] Often referred to as civil society organisations or policy research institutes; they are different from philanthropic organisations and are both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organisations. Definitions have also differed owing to the history of their development. For instance, while American definitions emphasize civil society background, European scholars define think tanks as practice oriented and science based organisations.[3] The bridging role of think tanks has also been a dominant theme in the literature[4] with think tanks characterised as, "organisations engaged on a regular basis in research and advocacy on any matter related to public policy. They are the bridge between knowledge and power in modern democracies."[5]

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[1] Stella Ladi, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011); R. Kent Weaver and Paul B. Stares, *Guidance for Governance: An Overview* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2001), pp. 71-88; Tom Medvetz, *Think Tanks as an Emergent Field* (New York: Social Science Research Council, October 2008)

[2] Stella Ladi, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), pg. 3

[3] James McGann and R. Kent Weaver eds., *Think Tanks and Civil Societies: Catalysts for Ideas and Actions* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005)

[4] Matthew Taylor, "Think tanks, public policy and academia", *Public Money & Management*, 31:1, 2011, pp. 10-11; Donald E. Abelson, "Old world, new world: the evolution and influence of foreign affairs think-tanks" *International Affairs,* 90:1, 2014, pp. 125-142; Stella Ladi, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011)

[5] Andjelkovic Branka. "A limited dialogue: Think tanks and the policy making process in Serbia", in UNDP (ed.) *Thinking the Unthinkable* (Bratislava: UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2003)

There does exist however, criticism of this "dualism imposed in seeing science on one side of the bridge, and the state on the other, to address the complex relations between experts and public policy."[6]Highlighting the symbiotic and interdependent relationship between knowledge and policy, Stone concludes that "think tanks are not bridges but a manifestation of the knowledge/power nexus."[7] The limitations of the traditional definitions are also complicated by the expansion of think tank networks, each operating within their unique cultural, political and historical environments, also emphasised by Inderjeet Parmar.[8] The overemphasis of Anglo-American definitions in the literature fails to account for the "socio-political context in which think tanks were first constituted,"[9]as well as the proliferation of think tanks in political contexts outside of Europe and the US. This thesis will therefore attempt to define and contextualise think tanks in India operating within their distinct political and bureaucratic settings.

There are no specific definitions adopted for think tanks in Asia[10] but the attention of this thesis is on institutions that have been focused on research based policy planning and advocacy in India – particularly on foreign policy. Think tanks and policy research institutions in this research closely resemble what Weaver and Stares call Alternative Policy Advisory Organisations (APAOs) – organisations outside of government departments which serve as institutionalized sources of policy expertise for government policymakers.[11] Thus, think tanks go beyond the lobbying groups and governmental sub-committees that are constituted to formulate a specialised policy initiative. Yet, it is the proximity to policymakers and their specific position in the society that also indicates their relative significance to the policy landscape – an aspect that is better understood through a theoretical examination of think tanks.

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[6] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg. 276

[7] Ibid pg. 26

[8] Inderjeet Parmar, "Institutes of international affairs: their roles in foreign policy-making, opinion mobilization and unofficial Diplomacy," in Diane Stone and Andrew Denham (eds.) *Think Tank Traditions: Policy Research and the Politics of Ideas* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

[9] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg. 260

[10] Some classifications used to define think tanks in India include: Myron Weiner, "Social Science Research and Public Policy in India" *Economic and Political Weekly,* 14:37, September 1979, pp.1579-1587; Jayati Srivastava, *Think Tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011). While Srivastava defines think tanks more broadly as a heterogeneous group of organisations, engaged primarily in research-based policy advocacy, Weiner classifies them into four kinds – research institutions under the jurisdiction of central or state government departments; government funded but legally autonomous organisations; educational institutions and private consultancy firms that conduct research under contract.

[11] R. Kent Weaver and Paul B. Stares, *Guidance for Governance: An Overview* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2001), pp. 71-88

In addition to highlighting the theoretical debates surrounding the acceptance of think tanks as policy actors, this chapter will also elaborate on the literature's specific focus on the study of ideas and discourses. Of particular relevance to this thesis is the approach developed by the Discursive Institutionalists with their attention to the interactive aspects of discourse formation and dissemination. Further, through the introduction of the DI-Gramscian framework, the study of discourses will be situated within particular structural and material concerns. The DI-Gramscian model will therefore bring to light the specific role of intellectual elites in policy processes – both in framing discourses as well as perpetuating dominant narratives of the state.

Theorising the role of Think Tanks

While literature is divided on definitions, similar divisions exist in the theoretical formulations of think tanks. The theoretical understanding of think tanks has essentially emerged through an analysis of their place within policy circles; their engagement with formal state structures and the power of their ideas in influencing policy and ultimately in creating structural change in policy frameworks. Theoretical explanations have analysed think tanks through their position vis-à-vis formal state policy apparatus. While realists are likely to dismiss think tanks as "irrelevant bit players, liberal formulations have described think tanks as secondary actors – with the state interest and authority being paramount."[12] In a similar conceptualisation, depicting think tanks as a closed network of corporate, financial and political elites, theorists like C. Wright Mills believe think tanks to be "instruments deployed in the service of a ruling class political agenda. On this view, the actual purpose of think tanks is to assist in the business of top down policymaking,"[13] a viewpoint also adopted by Thomas Dye.[14] Dependent on funding and political support by policy elites, think tanks are recognised as instruments for gathering information and developing policy alternatives but remain limited by the issues of concern highlighted by the elites themselves. Indian think tanks like the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) and Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the armed forces think tanks, based on such a statist and elitist point of view would be subservient to agendas defined by the government, particularly when completely reliant on government funding.

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[12] Diane Stone, "The ASEAN-ISIS Network: Interpretive Communities, Informal Diplomacy and Discourses of Region," *Minerva,* 49, 2011, pg. 242, 243

[13] Thomas Medvetz , *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pg. 8

[14] Thomas R. Dye, *Top Down Policymaking* (New York, London: Chatham House, 2001)

Pluralist explanations of think tanks particularly within debates on the nature and distribution of political influence in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, have identified think tanks as one kind of organisation among many in a wide range of societal groups that compete to shape public policy, thus discounting the power of the ruling state.[15] For pluralists as Parmar argues, think tanks like Chatham House and Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) would be expected to be "independent of the state and self-interested".[16] Such institutes thus, would be able to "exert significant influence over a relatively weak state/governmental system of policy formation."[17]The recent proliferation of think tanks in India, particularly those with independent financial resources have also led some towards the pluralist point of view.[18] The growing potential of think tanks have also led to arguments that think tanks have the potential to be a part of India's "foreign policy software"[19] and a viable institution of foreign policy in the future.

Similar to elitist understandings, Parmar also identifies the instrumental Marxist point of view on think tanks as "representing ruling class interests given their origins and leadership."[20] Policy making was thus strongly or completely dominated by this ruling class. Indian think tanks, often seen as "retirement posts"[21] of the bureaucratic and military elite in India, carrying official baggage and lacking new formulations on foreign policy could be characterised in this way. Such a viewpoint however, tends to undermine the power of the state. The Indian state and both its political leadership and foreign policy establishment are actively involved in foreign policy making, particularly when it comes to a thorny issue as relations with Pakistan as is the focus of this research project.

From their relative position within the power hierarchies, analysis on think tanks has moved into the realm of knowledge and ideas and normative understandings that began to be emphasised by the constructivists and the Neo-Gramscians. The focus was also now on the role

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[15] ibid

[16] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 12

[17] Ibid, pg. 13

[18] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16

[19] Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy 'Software'" *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96

[20] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 16

[21] Dhruv Jaishankar, "Can India's Think Tanks be Truly Effective?" *The Huffington Post India,* April 15, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.in/dhruva-jaishankar/can-indias-think-tanks-be_b_9688434.html; Mohan Guruswamy, "Think Tanks help the nation's intellectual churn" *Rediff,* 19 August, 2014, http://www.rediff.com/news/column/think-tanks-help-the-nations-intellectual-churn/20140819.htm

of research communities"[22] and the recognition of think tanks as ideational actors - bridging the concepts of knowledge and policy and crucial for the generation of ideas and their subsequent adoption into formal policy frameworks. Yet, while dealing with ideational influence too, elite theorists or statists like Donald Abelson identified think tanks as, "but one set of actors competing for power and prestige in the marketplace of ideas, particularly with reference to American think tanks."[23] While their role as policy experts was recognised, Abelson highlighted that often think tank independence is compromised in exchange for securing political influence.[24]

The influence of ideas on politics and the particular role of think tanks has been the considerable focus of researchers like Diane Stone who debate the role of ideas in policy, the particular role of think tanks as "interpretive communities" and their significance to the regional cooperation mechanisms in place within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).[25] With a similar focus on ASEAN, Amitav Acharya stresses on the importance of norm diffusion and congruence building.[26]

While there exists considerable analyses of this kind with respect to the American and European think tanks and their influence on some notable foreign policy decisions - in Asia and in particular in South Asia, think tanks have only begun to be recognised as viable players.[27] It is this gap that this thesis aims to fill by analysing think tanks in India. The central problem that is addressed is the role and relevance of think tanks to policy making in India; through an examination of their relative position in the policy structure. Using the DI-Gramscian model, a crucial element of this research will be a critical analysis of think tanks and their role in articulating new ideas into policy. The theoretical approach is also informed by the study of discourses and the interactive processes by which ideas are conveyed. This will be done through the examination of a key aspect of concern for Indian foreign policy – a test

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[22] Diane Stone, "The ASEAN-ISIS Network: Interpretive Communities, Informal Diplomacy and Discourses of Region," *Minerva,* 49, 2011,pg. 242, 243

[23] Donald E. Abelson, *American think-tanks and their role in US Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, 1996) pg. 2

[24] Donald E. Abelson, "Old World, new world: the evolution and influence of foreign affairs think tanks", *International Affairs,* 90:1, 2014, pg. 129

[25] Diane Stone, "The ASEAN-ISIS Network: Interpretive Communities, Informal Diplomacy and Discourses of Region," *Minerva,* 49, 2011, pg. 242, 243

[26] Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization*, 58, 2004, pp 239-275.

[27] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16; Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy 'Software'" *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96; C. Raja Mohan, "The Making of Indian Foreign Policy: The Role of Scholarship and Public Opinion", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore) 73, July 13, 2009

case of sorts, i.e. India's policy towards Pakistan and particularly the element of structured peacebuilding that was introduced in 2004 through the Composite Dialogue.

The focus on discourse and the discursive processes, has particular significance to the Indian scenario as think tanks hold relatively little political authority and work on the periphery of the political process, making it difficult to establish causal influence. Also relevant to the Indian case, is the role of the elite that inform and guide think tank policy formulations. The proliferation of Indian think tanks, the significant research outputs and the growing number of elites makes it worthwhile to study policy discourse from Indian think tanks. The DI-Gramscian approach also enables a better understanding of the increasing linkages between think tanks and the policy process.

Think Tanks and the Role of Ideas in Policy

The understanding of the impact of ideas on institutions and policy making has evolved and while several theoretical approaches have sought to explain the impact of ideas on policy,[28] the interaction of ideas and policy making is also a common theme running within the more recent literature on think tanks. Specifically, there is a consensus in the literature that the primary role of think tanks is to establish a dynamic between ideas and policymaking through policy relevant enquiry. This is complemented by strategic practices to develop advisory ties to the government, industry or the public.[29] If think tanks are to be understood as ideational actors then, the effect that defining, framing and institutionalising ideas within policy making and the interactive processes and institutional constraints that emerge out of this interaction also become important. The specific argument in support of the relevance of ideas is that

by specifying what kinds of ideas serve what functions, how ideas of different types interact with one another, how ideas change over time, and how ideas shape and are shaped by actors' choices, social scientists can provide greater analytic purchase on the question of exactly how ideas matter.[30]

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[28] Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox (eds.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Andreas Gofas and Colin Hay (eds.) *The Role of Ideas in Political Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology,* 28, 2002, pp. 21-38
[29] Diane Stone, *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process* (London: Frank Cass, 1996)
[30] Jal Mehta, "The Varied Roles of Ideas in Politics – From "whether" to "how" in Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 25

Also central to this analysis are concepts of agenda setting, social movements, institution building and political coalition building.[31]Elaborating further on the relevance of ideas, Blyth draws attention to processes of framing, the "weapons and blueprints that agents use to (re)structure their world and the conventions that agents converge upon that give stability to that world."[32] While ideas are often identified as one concept, Jal Mehta recognises three different levels of ideas that are relevant to the understanding of the policy process[33], an understanding also used by the DI framework that will be elaborated later in this chapter. Thus, ideas can be limited to policies or more complex formulations like programmatic changes and shifts in philosophies. As policy solutions, ideas provide guidelines for solving given political problems and thus become a vehicle for political action and policy making. According to Mehta, "the implication is that the problem is given, the objectives are given, and the idea provides the means for solving the problem and accomplishing those objectives."[34] In the Indian case then, this would include policy ideas by Indian think tanks on dealing with particular conflicts/disputes with Pakistan as identified by the Indian government for instance on Kashmir, or the resolution of the Siachen dispute. Policy changes may also stem from new programmatic ideas which are defined as precise ideas that facilitate policy making among elites by specifying how to solve particular policy problems. These are broader than individual policies and have the ability to provide "focal points around which policy makers can most easily build political coalitions are those that policy makers are likely to adopt."[35] Public philosophies are the final tier and exist at a more fundamental level than either policy or programmatic ideas. These are the most difficult to change. Campbell[36] too argues that "paradigm shifts occur when policy makers suddenly find themselves faced with unusual political economic problems for which the current paradigm offers no clear-cut solutions."

The big question in addition to the nature of ideas themselves, is thus to examine why some ideas become the policies, programs and philosophies that dominate political reality while

[31] ibid
[32] Mark Blyth, "Ideas, Uncertainty and Evolution" in Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 84
[33] Jal Mehta, "The Varied Roles of Ideas in Politics – From "whether" to "how" in Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 27
[34] ibid
[35] John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, pg. 29
[36] ibid, pg. 23

others do not.[37] Within the study of ideas is also situated the ability of think tanks to act as idea brokers and information filters for governments and institutions especially relevant in the light of new security concerns and complex policy problems.[38] New conceptions of security and additional foreign policy concerns have corresponded with "the proliferation, physical expansion and networking of public policy research institutes"[39] thus putting think tanks in a good position to act as ideational agents. Think tanks are increasingly also being seen as an extension of the governmental bureaucracy which lacks resources, and thus possess the capability to invent new ideas.[40] In India too, as will be highlighted in Chapter Three of this thesis, the formal bureaucracy faces new challenges – due to new conceptions of security and India's changing global positions – challenges which the current institutional policy structure is unable to meet. Owing to their assumed independent nature and disconnect from formal structures this adds to think tank potential to introduce new ideas and new narratives to foreign policy. This statement will however be problematized in later sections of this chapter and in other parts of the thesis through a detailed analysis of think tank programmes and discourse.

Think tanks are often identified as organisations/ vehicles for promoting ideas[41], though most of this literature is focused on American think tanks. As such it is argued that they offer a way for ideas to gain supporters and to inform the substantive foundation of policy debates. In addition to their policy inputs directly to the government, several other ways in which think tanks seek to impact policy making include conferences, formal and informal interactions with the policy makers, and through their participation in several multi-track initiatives. The dissemination of policy ideas through the vast range of research publications and the close interaction with the mass media is also an important tool that think tanks use to influence policymaking. In addition, some think tanks are also often invited by the government to organise trainings for government officials. Think tanks also create networks and what is often referred to as "horizontal linkages"[42] with other think tanks – particularly evident from analysis

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[37] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg.307

[38] James McGann and Richard Sabatini, *Global Think Tanks: Policy Networks and Governance Global Institutions* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011) pg. 1

[39] ibid

[40] John J. Hamre, "The Constructive Role of Think Tanks in the Twenty-first Century" *Asia-Pacific Review,* 15:2, 2008, pg. 2

[41] Andrew Rich, "Ideas, Expertise and Think Tanks" in Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 191

[42] Bonnie S. Glaser and Phillip C. Saunders, "Chinese Civilian Foreign Policy Research Institutes: Evolving Roles and Increasing Influence," *The China Quarterly*, 171, September 2002, pg. 600

of think tanks in China, though instances of this phenomenon are rare in India. The creation of think tank networks and a neutral and unofficial political space can nonetheless be an important avenue for the introduction of new ideas with more autonomy. In addition to ideational networks, the question of institutional embeddedness is also important. Thus, the ways in which idea-producing institutions, such as the professions and universities, (and think tanks) are linked to the state helps determine which ideas affect policy making.[43]

Think tank role thus extends to problem framing, agenda setting and formation of ideational networks aimed at introducing the different levels of policy ideas. Arguing in favour of the role of think tanks in creating non-traditional security frames in South East Asia, Zimmerman for instance contends that

the implication is that once a frame has gained a certain level of acceptance, policy actors must engage with the ideas it contains and that by framing information in a certain context, think tanks are able to privilege the desired understanding of an issue.[44]

Once a frame has been established, think tanks are then engaged in pushing ideas into the political agenda. Diane Stone argues for instance that while elected officials are highly visible actors, think tanks are less visible but play a significant role in (re)formulating policy alternatives and are critical in keeping policy proposals alive.[45] The network building potential of think tanks is also examined in the literature in the form of advocacy coalitions; creation of epistemic communities and also the personal networks of think tank personnel.[46] Recognising human agency in policy making, Peter Haas further examines the role that networks of knowledge-based experts – epistemic communities – "play in articulating the cause and effect relationships of complex problems, helping states identify their interests, framing the issues for collective debate, proposing specific policies and identifying salient points for negotiation."[47]

Zimmerman argues that the success of South East Asian think tanks was due to their potential in forging links between actors at all levels of governance, thus creating multiple avenues of

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[43] John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, pg. 31

[44] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016) pg. 31

[45] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg.274

[46] Ibid

[47] Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination" *International Organization,* 46:1, Winter 1992, pg. 2

access available for political influence.[48] The ability of think tanks to establish networks[49] and in particular the potential to exploit the networks of think tank personnel are a very important factor in the case of India as many former bureaucrats and experts are now a part of the think tank machinery with established links with formal structures of foreign policy making. Yet while Indian think tanks are involved in informal Track Two networks and initiatives like the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) established by the IPCS[50], the creation of advocacy networks like the kind in South East Asia is not very visible and will be further investigated in this thesis.

Discursive Institutionalism (DI)

While the literature has considered the influence of ideas on policy, the processes through which ideas are conveyed, accepted and revised and actors that carry these ideas into the policy process are questions that still remain, as also their connection with institutions. This brings the analysis to the concept of discourse and the particular question of agency. Other theoretical traditions like the realist, statist and elitist and even the orthodox Marxists discussed earlier consider the role of the "state" as central in the construction of policy and dismiss private organisations like think tanks with little or no influence. The pluralists on the other hand, relegate the state as a passive force and overemphasise the independence of think tanks. In contrast, the framework provided by the institutionalists offers important insights into the ideational influences and the processes of institutional and policy change. However, the institutionalist approach in itself is divided – into the rational choice institutionalism, the historical institutionalism, sociological institutionalism and the fourth, discursive institutionalism (DI) or what is also often referred to as constructivist institutionalism.[51]

Developed in response to approaches that overemphasise agency without structure, the new Institutionalist approaches developed policy explanations that took account of institutions. The

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[48] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016)

[49] Policy networks based on membership are defined "as a set of relatively stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that cooperation is the best way to achieve common goals. For more, Elena Besussi, "Policy Networks: Conceptual Developments and their European Applications", *UCL Working Paper Series,* Paper 102, March 2006, pg. 2

[50] The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) set up the COSATT in January 2008 with the objective of bringing together some of the leading think tanks in South Asia to foster cooperation in the region. For more, http://cosatt.org/index.php

[51] Colin Hay, "Ideas and Construction of Interests" in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 65

fourth, Discursive Institutionalism or what some have termed "constructivist institutionalism"[52] further introduces the element of discourse and its relationship and interaction with institutions. Identifying discourse as a "more versatile and overarching concept than ideas,"[53]Schmidt argues that it enables an analysis of the different levels and different types of ideas represented in the discourse and also on the interactive processes by which ideas are translated into policies. To conceptions of ideas as policy solutions, programmatic ideas or public philosophies discussed earlier, Schmidt adds two other types of ideas, namely; cognitive and normative ideas.[54] While cognitive ideas (also sometimes referred to as causal ideas) "provide guidelines for political actions and serve to justify policies, normative ideas attach values to political action and serve to legitimate the policies in a program through reference to their appropriateness."[55] The influence of the previous institutionalisms' and their continuing linkages with the DI tradition is visible here.[56]

By introducing the element of discourse and the relationship between structure and agency, DI sets ideas and discourse in an institutional context and addresses explicitly the representation of ideas (how agents say what they are thinking of doing) and the discursive interactions through which actors generate and communicate ideas (to whom they say it) within given institutional contexts (where and when they say it).[57]

Moving beyond a simplistic look at the content of ideas, the attention is on the interactive processes - an approach that is particularly useful when causal links between actors involved in policy construction and policy changes are difficult to ascertain. According to Schmidt, the

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[52] Constructive Institutionalism as defined by Colin Hay, Ideas and Construction of Interests" in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 69 "seeks to identify, detail and interrogate the extent to which – through processes of normalization and institutional embedding – established ideas become codified, serving as cognitive filters through which actors come to interpret environmental signals and in so doing, to conceive of their own interests. Such a formulation implies a dynamic understanding of the relationship between institutions on the one hand, and the individuals and groups out of whose practices they are made up on the other."

[53] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg. 309

[54] ibid, pg. 306

[55] ibid, pg. 307

[56] Rather than advocating for a split with previous institutionalist traditions, Schmidt suggests that they should be considered as inter-related and complimentary and that where they contradict one another should also be seen as their contribution to the knowledge of political social reality. For more see: Vivien Schmidt, "Give Peace a chance – reconciling Four (not three) new institutionalisms", an earlier chapter draft in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

[57] ibid, pg. 309

discursive interactions may involve policy actors in "coordinative discourse" or "communicative discourse".[58]While

the coordinative discourse consists of individuals and groups at the centre of policy construction (civil servants, elected officials, experts and others), the communicative discourse consists of individuals and groups involved in the presentation, deliberation and legitimation of political ideas to the general public (leaders, social activists, think tanks).[59]

The focus on actors at the centre of policy construction also brings into the debate the concept of "epistemic communities" and "discourse and advocacy coalitions."[60]

The discursive process for DI is often a top-down process where discourse is developed by policy elites and communicated to the general public by political elites.[61] However, the role of civil society and social and political activists could also reverse the process of interaction. In addition, this framework provides for the interaction to remain solely at the level of civil society as part of "deliberative democracy" or what is also termed "discursive democracy".[62] Schmidt also accounts for the lack of interaction between the coordinative and communicative discourses when policy ideas remain out of public view in closed debates[63] or if political elites choose to legitimate their policy ideas using arguments other than those used in the coordinative discourse.[64] In the communicative sphere, discursive institutionalists emphasize the use of ideas for public persuasion through processes such as electoral politics, or with more specific deliberations in the policy forums of informed publics about the ongoing policy initiatives of governments.[65]

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[58] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 86
[59] ibid
[60] Vivien Schmidt, "Reconciling Ideas and Institutions through Discursive Institutionalism" in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 56
[61] ibid, pg. 57
[62] John. S. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy and Political Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press, 1995) – Dryzek criticises the dominance of instrumental rationality and objectivism in political institutions and public policy and examines how the political process can be made more vital and meaningful, by stressing on the importance of active citizenship and public discourse.
[63] Like in the case of back-channel diplomacy between India and Pakistan
[64] Vivien Schmidt, "Reconciling Ideas and Institutions through Discursive Institutionalism" in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 57
[65] ibid, pg. 56

Emphasis is also on the specific institutional settings; timing and; the right audience – important elements needed for the discourse to be successful. A distinction is also made on differing governing structures in "simple polities" where governance is channelled through a single authority with little consultation with outside experts, like Britain and France. In this case the communicative discourse tends to be more elaborate than the coordinative discourse. In "compound" polities on the other hand, with multiple centres of power like the federal democracies of Germany and the United States, the coordinative discourse with several policy actors tends to be stronger.[66] A strong bureaucratic society like India would fit well into the "simple" polity classification, particularly when foreign policy formulation is controlled by top leadership and the foreign policy bureaucracy. However, as this thesis will highlight, despite government control, the effect of institutions like think tanks, the media and academic bodies in foreign policy formation and articulation cannot be dismissed.

To investigate the relevant success of a discourse, DI uses methodologies like process tracing; speeches and debates of political elites that lead to political action; opinion polls and surveys to measure the impact of the communicative discourse; interviews and network analysis to gauge the significance of the coordinative discourse and more. The particular institutional context also impacts on the methodologies that can be adopted, for example in simple polities with a strong communicative discourse, the causal influence of discourse can most likely be ascertained in the responses of the general public over time, through election results, opinion polls and surveys. In compound polities in which the coordinative discourse is more elaborate, the causal influence is more likely to be seen in whether or not there is any agreed policy, with empirical investigation focused on interviews, and reports of policy actors.[67]

Discursive Institutionalism and Think Tanks

In developing the DI framework, Schmidt identifies a "discursive sphere" within which "practitioners can discuss, deliberate, argue and contest one another's ideas about ideas and discourse from epistemological, ontological and methodological vantage points."[68] In making the connection between ideas and collective action, Schmidt also foregrounds the importance

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[66] ibid
[67] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg.312
[68] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 87

of agents "who articulate and communicate their ideas through discourse in exchanges that may involve discussion, deliberation, negotiation and contestation." These agents are defined as "sentient (thinking and speaking) beings who generate and deliberate about ideas through discursive interactions that lead to collective action."[69] Here, Schmidt talks about the potential of agents as having both "background ideational abilities" and "foreground discursive abilities." The concept of "foreground discursive abilities"[70]is similar to the concepts of "communicative action" and "deliberative democracy" which are all about the importance of discourse and deliberative argumentation in breaking the elite monopoly while ensuring democratic access to such decision making.

Using DI to conceptualise the role of South East Asian think tanks, Zimmerman broadens the concept to what she calls "discursive spaces", highlighting that "to enhance their discursive ability, think tanks have created unique discursive spaces where they can control the discursive process."[71] Her research identifies these spaces alongside formal governing processes but free from the strict political limitations imposed on governmental venues. This it is argued "provides the opportunity for state and non-state actors alike to discuss delicate security matters in a more flexible environment for instance in think tank organized dialogues, meetings, conferences and networks characterising the Track 2 processes."[72] DI is therefore for this analysis found well suited to studying think tanks because it can analyse their position both within and outside existing governing structures and is able to clarify how by operating in the 'middle' of formal and informal process, think tanks can wield political influence.[73]

Ladi and Medvetz have also analysed think tanks as crucial agents of policy making explained through the institutionalist tradition. While Ladi[74] conceptualises think tanks as carriers in the coordinative and communicative discourse spheres with special emphasis on their role during "critical junctures", Medvetz[75] also credits the institutionalist tradition for explaining think tank involvement during different stages of the policy process. Medvetz argues that, the institutionalist approach allows for a good analysis of think tank influence without locking us

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[69]ibid, pg. 91

[70] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg.315

[71] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016) pg. 29

[72]ibid

[73] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Taking ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth "new Institutionalism", *European Political Science Review,* 2:1, 2010, pp. 1-25

[74] Stella Ladi, "Think tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change" in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Change: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011), pp. 205-220

[75] Thomas Medvetz , *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012)

into a "tautological argument about what a think tank does." It also "does not force us to draw any advance conclusions about a think tank's political or intellectual propensities."[76] While Zimmerman, Ladi and Medvetz analyse think tanks and think tank networks as leading to policy and institutional changes, Hope and Raudla[77] outline how DI can be reconceptualised to understand policy stasis in simple and compound polities using Estonian fiscal policy and the federal climate change policy in the US as comparative case studies.

DI has only recently been applied to the study of think tanks[78] and it has not been used to analyse think tank influence on Indian foreign policy. Work on the institutionalist perspective in India has been limited to research on economic policy and issues of governance.[79] Studies on foreign policy in India often overlook the political processes that translate ideas into policy change – thus a focus on DI will be very useful here. As will be highlighted in the next chapter, research on the discursive practices involved in the formulation and conduct of Indian foreign policy are limited – thus, exploring the coordinative and communicative processes in the creation of discourse in the Indian context will provide important insights. Further limited is a study of the relevance of think tanks to these discursive practices – particularly for an important aspect of foreign policy like the relationship with Pakistan.

Through the examination of policymaking in India particularly the institutional setting it can be argued that there exists space for outside expertise and for policy actors like think tanks to impact the policy process. While informal networks of think tanks as evidenced from back-channel and track two diplomatic efforts often initiated by think tanks are visible – ideas introduced remain unimplemented and think tank influence often remains unrepresented.[80]

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[76] ibid, pg. 13

[77] Mat Hope and Ringa Raudla, "Discursive institutionalism and policy stasis in simple and compound polities: the cases of Estonian fiscal policy and United States climate change policy" *Policy Studies,* 33:5, September 2012, pp. 399-418

[78] For an analysis of think tanks using the DI framework see: Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011), pp. 205-220 and Diane Stone, "The ASEAN-ISIS Network: Interpretive Communities, Informal Diplomacy and Discourses of Region," *Minerva,* 49, 2011, pg. 241-262 and Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016)

[79] See, Sudha Pai and Pradeep Sharma, "New Institutionalism and Legislative Governance in the Indian States: A Comparative Study of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh" *Working Paper Series* (New Delhi: Centre for the study of Law and Governance, JNU, March 2005); Aseema Sinha, "The Changing Political Economy of Federalism in India: A Historical Institutionalist Approach," *India Review,* 3:1, 2004, pp. 25-63

[80] It has been noted that the two countries came very close to resolving the Kashmir dispute in 2007 through what is popularly often called "the back-channel". While this was a secret group, members are known to be sourced from the NSAB in India and the foreign and armed services from Pakistan. The deal however could not be carried forward and with the change in government on both sides and the revival of tensions owing to the Mumbai attacks

When the dialogue process between India and Pakistan peaked i.e. between 2004 and 2008 think tanks appear to enjoy considerable leverage in making policy recommendations. The relevance and position of think tanks within the policy process and their ability to assume importance during what Ladi describes as "critical junctures" is also an important aspect here. Critical junctures as described by Ladi, "refer to particular historical moments that have lasting consequences and can provoke changes in policy."[81] The positive atmosphere of the CD can thus be perceived as one such "critical juncture" wherein avenues for policy change in India's relations with Pakistan were available and active civil society engagement was encouraged. The discourse developed by think tanks during this period will be a significant focus of this study.

Although removed from the formal structures of foreign policy making and significantly different in their influence and resourcefulness, particularly when compared to American think tanks, Indian policy research institutes are now visible players. Yet, rather than establishing causal linkages which are difficult to find, the arguments in this thesis will emphasise the ways in which think tanks attempt to become policy actors. Therefore, the aim is "to illustrate what it is that think tanks did that could have been policy relevant and to make statements about congruence between policy output and policy."[82] With an understanding of think tanks as agents in the political process, this thesis will assess their ability and impact on foreign policy discourse and the generation of new ideas and alternative policy frameworks if any. In addition to policy influence and the capacity to introduce new ideas, the question of institutional embeddedness and the institutional relevance of think tanks themselves needs to be considered particularly when so many of them look to the government for financial support. The representation of think tanks through the DI perspective often disregards their material interests and elite character, particularly visible in India where think tanks represent the intellectual elite composed of retired diplomats, retired Foreign Service bureaucrats and senior members of the Indian academia and civil society. The over-simplification of the ideational role of think tanks also misses out on the research manoeuvring that think tanks often resort to, to please funding bodies and government elites, leading quite often to a benign portrayal of think tanks. The

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in 2008, it has been forgotten. The NSAB as will be highlighted in the next chapter, is a crucial arena for the induction of think tank expertise into formal policymaking in India.

[81] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 208

[82] Hartwig Pautz, *Think Tanks, Social Democracy and Social Policy* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012) pg.4

following section will turn its attention to some of the major critiques of DI and introduce the DI-Gramscian viewpoint to overcome some of these challenges.

Limits and Challenges of DI

While DI offers a middle ground between discourse and institutional analysis and is useful in analysing think tank participation in the policy process, there has been significant criticism of the approach. The major strands of critique have been - its overemphasis on ideas[83] and the missing or underexplored emphasis on the material interests of policy actors, in this case think tanks. Stephen Bell for instance has highlighted the underexplored potential of the ideational approaches in addressing questions regarding the power of business interests, arguing that "while constructivists concede that agency is important for enacting ideas and norms, there has only been limited understanding of how to operationalise this interaction."[84] On similar grounds, Medvetz argues that in looking at the interactive processes of discourse, DI remains restricted to the official political domain alone. He makes the argument that the impact of think tanks extends well beyond the political sphere into other social settings and particularly what he calls the "business activist" movement that has played a leading role in the promotion of premarket ideology since the 1960s.[85] Also identified as a problem is the missing emphasis on interests and the notion that actors in politics have interests that they fulfil through political processes. It is argued that while causal linkages between ideas and policy are difficult to identify, the linkages between interests and policy are more readily demonstrable.[86] On its part, the literature on DI responds to these concerns and argues that "one cannot distinguish interests from ideas"[87] and often ideas are used to justify interests. For discursive institutionalists however, "ideas and values infuse and influence perceptions of position and often give power to actors even when they might lack the power of position as in the case of social movements who set the agenda for reform in policy."[88]

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[83]Todd Landman and Neil Robinson, *The SAGE Handbook of Comparative Politics* (London: SAGE, 2009)

[84] Stephen Bell, "The Power of Ideas: The Ideational Shaping of the Structural Power of Business" *International Studies Quarterly*, 56, 2012, pg. 663

[85] Thomas Medvetz , *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pg. 14

[86] B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)

[87] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg. 306

[88] ibid

At another level, DI is criticised for being overly deterministic or idealistic with regard to the role of ideas and discourse and not account for processes of change that are unconscious, or "critical junctures." Ladi is critical of Schmidt's dismissal of critical junctures and finds discursive institutionalist critique of historical institutionalism too harsh and in need of reconsideration.[89] While DI places emphasis on agency, the particular aspect of time is also relevant and historical moments that can have lasting consequences must be taken into consideration. Ladi highlights that critical junctures, offer opportunities to think tanks to "increase their visibilty as carriers of new discourse and can facilitate change."[90]

The limitations of the DI literature become clear in the Indian context too. The actor-centered approach fails to differentiate the effects of ideas themselves from the effects of the actors who bear them. There is also evidence that the status of actors bearing new ideas affects the odds that policy makers will adopt their ideas.[91] This is particularly relevant to the Indian scenario where the authority to introduce political ideas lies with the political elite and therefore the connections between think tanks and the political elite are extensive and need to be considered in the analysis.

On the aspect of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) in South East Asia, Zimmerman argues that "it is think tanks' control over political spaces" through their specific expertise on NTS that has enabled them to become primary actors pushing NTS ideas into political agendas.[92] Think tanks according to this conceptualisation are "idea brokers" with noticeable "ideational authority" on non-traditional security issues.[93] Yet in India, the policy elite is represented by the formal bureaucracy and the top most foreign policy leadership. Also, the "intricate regional network of think tanks" that exist in the South East Asian countries does not exist in India, where think tanks continue to be rather an informal network of intellectual elites. Also, the focus of Zimmerman's study is on NTS issues whereas here the focus is on a traditional security issue and one with significant political sensitivity. The nature of India-Pakistan relations and its inherent volatility coupled with a focus on traditional security concerns impacts the ability

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[89] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 207
[90] ibid, pg. 208
[91] John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, pg. 31
[92] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016) pg. 41
[93] ibid

of think tanks to exert influence. Zimmerman also argues that because of their close but informal relationships with the governments, think tanks in South East Asia have a distinct advantage when it comes to institutional change in Asia,[94] however, proximity to the government has not provided such a "space" to Indian think tanks and they are seemingly less ideologically driven like those in South East Asia or China.

Schmidt clearly notes that "[t]he 'institutionalism' in discursive institutionalism suggests that this approach is not only about the communication of ideas … but also about the institutional context in which and through which ideas are communicated via discourse." DI articulates that agents operate within institutions that shape the opportunities available to them; at the same time, agents are able to alter institutions through the use of discourse. In essence, agents operate within institutions at the same time that agent behaviour either reinforces or alters institutional structures. It is at this point of discourse (interaction) between agents and institutions, where ideas are transferred and institutional change starts. The research on Indian think tanks however deviates from this point. The interaction between agents and institutions can also consolidate traditional institutions and curtail institutional change in turn impacting the ability of think tanks to exercise influence.

There is truth in Zimmerman's argument that think tanks are more agile and flexible in responding to emerging policy challenges than governmental bureaucracies and this gives them the opportunity to supply the conceptual language and paradigms for emerging security problems facing Asia.[95] However, in India, particularly with respect to foreign and security policy, while think tanks represent a significant forum for policy debates, policy paradigms are instead established by the state and refined by think tank research and analysis. The relationship between the state and independent agents such as think tanks therefore warrants further examination.

Using a Discursive Institutionalist - Gramscian framework

While DI is useful for processual analysis, it does not adequately explain the processes through which think tanks can embed themselves into existing policy institutions to have wider

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[94] ibid, pg. 59
[95] ibid, pg.30

influence on policy change. DI scholars have moved the debate into recognising the ideational and agency role of think tanks through their interactive participation in the policy process. They too, however, over-emphasise ideational influence and leave gaps in the explanation of material conditions in which these non-state actors operate, a challenge that will be addressed through the focus on a DI-Gramscian analysis.

The question of institutional embeddedness is addressed somewhat by the literature on bureaucratic politics and the emphasis on bargaining and a distinction between "embedded institutions"[96] which over time can spread ideas but are more likely to get ideologically absorbed into the stronger bureaucratic frameworks or "insulation" that can reduce the institution's influence over foreign policy. Stone and Higgott also argue that think tanks indulge in "research brokerage" and tend to, "adapt scholarship to forms palatable for decision makers – more so when funding comes from the government."[97]

Perhaps more relevant to this thesis is the Gramscian perspective that appreciates the interdependence of ideas and material conditions.[98] Gramsci provides a theory for state-society relations that goes beyond elites and ideas. In examining the role of intellectuals in society, Gramsci broke down "the superstructure into two great 'floors', which he described as 'civil society' and 'political society.'"[99]The interactions between these elements for Gramsci incorporated "active political strategies that would forge these historic blocs."[100] According to Gramsci,

the ruling class exerts its power over society on both of these "floors" of action, but by very different methods. Civil society is the marketplace of ideas, where intellectuals enter as "salesmen" of contending cultures. The intellectuals succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled, and thereby secure the "free" consent of the masses to the law and order of the land. To the extent that the intellectuals fail to create hegemony, the ruling class falls back on the state's coercive apparatus which disciplines those who do not "consent," and which is "constructed" for all society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command ... when spontaneous consensus declines.[101]

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[96] Daniel Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics and the Crafting of Foreign Policy" *American Journal of Political Science,* 44: 4, October 2000, pg.734

[97] Richard Higgott and Diane Stone, "The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the USA", *Review of International Studies,* 20:1, January 1994, pg. 28

[98] Hartwig Pautz, *Think Tanks, Social Democracy and Social Policy* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012), pg. 7

[99] Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 36:2, 1975, pg. 353

[100] Hartwig Pautz, "Revisiting the Think Tank Phenomenon" *Public Policy and Administration,* 26:4, 2011, pg.425

[101] Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 36:2, 1975, pg. 353

There exists therefore constant negotiations between the civil society and the state and thus the importance of agency in the political struggle and the concept of the intellectual is important.[102] Gramscian and neo-Gramscian analysis it is argued is able to combine a 'constructivist' understanding of the role of ideas with a clear acknowledgement of the importance of their material structure.[103] The emphasis on the "organic intellectuals" playing a central role in hegemonic projects where specific sets of ideas are funded, generated and disseminated by foundations, think-tanks, publishing houses and NGOs is of particular relevance to this thesis. This approach is employed by Inderjeet Parmar in his discussion of American and British think tanks. While Parmar and others have referred to the existence of a formal foreign policy establishment, in the Indian context where think tanks are a relatively new phenomena, Raja Mohan[104] for instance concludes that it is difficult to discern the existence of such a permanent establishment. What may exist instead is an informal network that is led by a small but shifting group of activists within and outside the government. Raja Mohan also talks about the "existence of tiny, informal and consequential networks spanning the full spectrum of the Indian elite opinion and acting as the vanguard of India's new foreign policy"[105] While he insists that this informal network has an impact on vocabulary and concepts of mainstream foreign policy discourse within the nation, the arguments presented in this thesis will contend that it is the "state" that introduces the vocabulary subsequently promoted by this informal network.

Moving away from the orthodox Marxist conception of state as coercive in nature, the Gramscian contention that the state operates through consent will be a useful framework for this thesis. Consent, according to Gramsci "is created and recreated by the hegemony of the ruling stratum in society."[106] This takes place through the "institutions of civil society – the network of institutions that enjoy some autonomy from the state, and through groups and

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[102] Hartwig Pautz, "Revisiting the Think Tank Phenomenon" *Public Policy and Administration,* 26:4, 2011, pg.425

[103] Andreas Bieler, "Questioning Cognitivism and Constructivism in IR Theory: Reflections on the Material Structure of Ideas," *Politics,* 21:2, 2001, pg. 99

[104] C. Raja Mohan, "The Making of Indian Foreign Policy: The Role of Scholarship and Public Opinion", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore) 73, July 13, 2009

[105] ibid, pg. 11

[106] Stephen Hobden and Richard Wyn Jones, "Marxist theories of International Relations" in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.) *The Globalization of World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pg. 236

individuals that organize and represent, and express themselves to each other and to the state."[107]

While pluralists consider the state as a passive player, the Gramscian approach emphasises the power of the state and the private forces – especially intellectuals. Parmar argues that a strong state is required to mobilise strong groups – such as the intellectuals and experts at Chatham House – to legitimise its own foreign policy reform programmes. The Gramscian view also resorts to a traditional focus on the domestic sources of power and political behaviour. Parmar argues that, internal politics, were clearly predicated on recognition of changes in global patterns of power and assessments of Britain's strengths and weaknesses, and new opportunities and threats to her worldwide interests.[108] This is of particular relevance to the India-Pakistan case where much impetus for policy decisions derives from domestic politics rather than changes in global patterns.

This thesis bridges the perspective of the Gramscians with the DI focus on institutions to account for think tank position in Indian policy structures. Gramsci's attention was on private organisations and elites that helped to legitimise the interests of the state. While the elites build consensus on behalf of the state, they embody what Gramsci describes as 'state spirit' and become relevant for some decisions and are used for generating public opinion in others. Parmar[109] argues that both the CFR and Chatham House were interconnected with a broad range of organisations and institutions, and though engaged in opinion mobilisation, engaged in cooperative relations with the state and identified intricately with the interests of the state.

The DI-Gramscian framework analyses think tank interactive processes and identifies the position of think tanks in India as ideational actors. It enables a critical examination of the role of think tanks in building consensus on the government's Pakistan policy and its possible potential in challenging dominant narratives and introducing alternative policy ideas. Through an examination of their discourse on Pakistan and the crucial role in contributing to public opinion, the DI-Gramscian framework enables a look at "both the specific and the general influence on foreign policy…as catalysts and crystallizers of policy thought."[110] Indian think tanks are also closely associated with various committees and institutions affiliated to the state

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[107] ibid
[108] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 107
[109] ibid, pg. 128
[110] Ibid, pg. 119

- if they identify with the broader interests of the state and Gramsci's 'state spirit' is a question this research will ask. Also in cases where think tanks work "independently," in agreement with Parmar, the DI-Gramscian model will permit an enquiry into think tank programmes, developed and conducted in close consultation with the state and benefitting from specific government sanctioned project funding.

While Parmar gives some credence to the corporatist[111] model given its state-private partnership emphasis, it is inadequate for the Indian case because of lack of corporate influence on Indian think tanks. Other than the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) which is sustainably connected with the Reliance group, other corporate and business houses in India are reluctant to invest in foreign policy think tanks.[112] Parmar also makes the contention that the state, is central, and the analysis into think tanks like CFR and Chatham house places its elite at the heart of the process of policymaking, policy-implementation and opinion mobilisation. This also resonates with the analysis on Indian think tanks particularly when dealing with a complex foreign policy issue such as relations with Pakistan. Statist and elitist theories however leave a gap in being unable to explain the "inter-relations and inter-connections between the private organisation [like think tanks] and state, their qualitative relations and the outcomes of genuine cooperation within the genuine division of labour."[113]

Methodology

As elaborated in the previous section, the DI-Gramscian framework is well suited to examine think tank interaction and collaboration with policy elite particularly in the Indian context. However, it is difficult to establish causal links between think tanks and their influence in the policy process, particularly so in a society like India where think tanks appear to be largely unofficial and informal actors. Particularly so when, "they [think tanks] have selective impact according to issue and circumstance and are involved more in the innovation and diffusion of policy ideas than their adoption or implementation by governments."[114] The focus of this thesis is therefore not so much on impact but on the interactive aspects and specific strategies that think tanks use to have impact and establish themselves as significant civil society actors.

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[111] Parmar characterises corporatism as a form of pluralism wherein state is relatively weak vis-à-vis private organised interest represented by big corporations, agri-business and organised labour. For more see: ibid,pg. 13

[112] Sanjaya Baru, "The Growing Influence of Business and Media on Indian Foreign Policy", *ISAS Working Paper, (National University of Singapore)* 49, 5 February 2009

[113] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg.219

[114] Diane Stone, *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), pg.4

James McGann has adopted an impact assessment of think tanks based on resource, demand and impact indicators – focusing on think tank role in issue articulation, policy formulation and policy implementation.[115] In addition, think tank impact is considered through their advisory role to the government. Parmar in his extensive analysis of American think tanks[116] particularly in the early years focused instead on a comparative analysis of each organisation's membership; the social background of the leadership and the worldviews and institutional line that each think tank adopts and an examination of their role in particular foreign policy decisions. This thesis will rely on Parmar's methods of analysis, using the India-Pakistan relationship as a test case both for think tank influence as well as an examination of think tank position and hierarchy in the policy landscape in India. Through an extensive discourse analysis of foreign policy think tanks in India, in particular their discourse on relations with Pakistan, the interactive processes in practice will be highlighted.

The emphasis on the interactive dimension of discourse – both the coordinative and communicative functions operating within specific institutional backgrounds is adopted to understand the processes through which think tanks in India seek policy influence. In addition, the DI-Gramscian framework will allow for an examination of their relationship with the foreign policy bureaucracy and will highlight the symbiotic relationship between knowledge and policy.[117] Using the DI-Gramscian approach, the role of Indian think tanks both in contributing policy inputs on Pakistan in addition to their crucial role in mobilising public opinion on government policy on Pakistan will be examined – thus looking at "both the specific and the general influence on foreign policy."[118] The emphasis will be on a critical examination of think tank discourse on India's Pakistan policy – either endorsing or challenging government narratives.

Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox classify the epistemological challenge of identifying the impact of ideas on political outcomes.[119] For DI scholars too, the main explanatory task is that

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[115] James McGann, *2012 Global Go To Think Tanks Report and Policy Advice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pg. 29

[116] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004)

[117] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg.274

[118] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 119

[119] Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, "Introduction: Ideas and Politics" Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 3-20

of demonstrating the causal influence of ideas and discourse. DI uses tools provided by process tracing to identify the intervening causal process – between an independent variable (foreign policy) and the outcome of the dependent variable (think tanks).[120] The idea is to create a narrative of events to analyse the level of influence of think tanks that may explain "how specific actors carried certain ideas into the policymaking fray and used them effectively."[121] These actors are often academics and other intellectuals (including think tanks) whose claim to knowledge and expertise enables their voice to be heard above others.[122] Zimmerman too, employed process tracing as a methodology to investigate think tank endorsement of the NTS agenda in South East Asia and determined the "causal process between the actions of think tanks, the promotion of the NTS agenda and changes in the institutional structures in the region."[123]Applying this methodology to an examination of Indian think tanks' role in framing of India's Pakistan policy is problematic as policy processes are unclear and the dominance of government narratives makes process tracing inadequate in explaining the particular influence of think tanks. The DI focus on process tracing also insufficiently analyses the composition of the intellectual elite at Indian think tanks and their specific socio-economic and political backgrounds that have an impact on their foreign policy ideas as well as their ability to enable absorption of their ideas into policy frames.

The research design of this project has also developed through the course of the research process and field study in India that brought to light the specific environment in which think tanks operate. Understanding the policy narratives of think tanks and providing insights into their role in policy making is a complex process. It involves a detailed discourse analysis of policy ideas from think tanks; tracing their interaction with policy processes and determining how they seek to introduce these ideas into the policy frameworks on India's Pakistan policy. While process tracing enabled a broader understanding of think tank processes, it did not sufficiently explain the role of the intellectual elite at Indian think tanks.

To incorporate this dimension, case studies were chosen as the most useful way to examine think tank role in foreign policy and both through cross-case comparisons and within-case

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[120] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2005), pg. 206
[121] John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics and Public Policy" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 2002, pg. 29
[122] ibid
[123] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), pg. 62

analysis, the differences in material and structural capabilities to influence India's Pakistan policy were identified. Case study analysis enabled a "detailed consideration of contexual factors" particularly when variables such as "democracy, power, political culture, state strength and so on are notoriously difficult to measure."[124]Particularly relevant to this project, case studies also helped in the empirical identification of "new variables and hypotheses through the study of deviant or outlier cases and in the course of field work – such as archival research and interviews with participants, area experts and historians."[125] The insights from the field work conducted in India brought to light the specific significance of think tank intellectual elite and their informal yet substantial ties with policy elites. The use of case studies in this thesis therefore incorporates the synthesis of the DI-Gramscian approach that allows for the examination of constraints – structural and ideological – that altered the way a particular think tank was situated in the Indian policy making scene.

The three categories that are used examine think tanks on the basis of their funding sources and their proximity to the government of India. They highlight the processes that think tanks are involved in and the articulation of their policy recommendations on Pakistan represented in the research output of some of the major think tanks in India. The first category was Government Think Tanks that are directly funded by the government of India and include the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), National Maritime Foundation (NMF) and Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS). The second case analysed non-government think tanks that have secured private funding but continue to have significant linkages with the government. Think tanks in this category include Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and India Foundation (IF). The third and final case study also examines non-government think tanks but these institutions significantly lack government funding and patronage. These are the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Delhi Policy Group (DPG), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR).

The policy input from think tanks was analysed through their research publications – policy briefs, project reports, conference proceedings – secondary data on the evolving Indo-Pak

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[124] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2005), pg. 19
[125] Ibid, pg.20

policy debates as well as writings of think tank elite in popular media. Research outputs from think tanks on crucial issues of significance between India and Pakistan was examined to investigate the involvement of think tanks in the formulation (coordinative discourse) and the communication of policy deliberations and achievements (communicative discourse). Within the broader narrative of Indo-Pak relations, particular focus was on the period of the Composite Dialogue from 2004 to 2008 and its intensive focus on 8 key issues. This period also reflected a proliferation of foreign policy think tanks in India and a change in conceptions of security with more emphasis on human security concerns as well as active government engagement with the civil society and intellectual elites.

However, think tank engagement with policy issues in India is often not institutionalised and operates at an informal level, leaving their specific involvement in the policy processes undocumented. This gap has been mitigated to the best extent possible through semi-structured interviews conducted between August and October 2015. The interview material provided insights from the personal observations of experts on some of the undocumented aspects as well as an insider perspective into think tank positions. For this purpose, attempts were made to interview senior researchers in leadership positions who could provide insights into organisational goals and decision-making processes. Added attention was given to include researchers who were actively involved in projects related to India's Pakistan policy. The interview process was very beneficial as "interviewing is often the most productive approach when influence over the outcome of interest was restricted to a few select decision-makers, creating a bottleneck of political power that increases the importance of agency in the story."[126] It was also useful to establish structural causes as it helped to "establish whether a political actor felt under pressure from forces beyond his or her control, and what those forces were, particularly when there are multiple independent variables in the theoretical mix."[127]

Between August and October 2015, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 respondents using an open-ended questionnaire (see appendix 2) at 14 think tanks in New Delhi, India (list in appendix 1). In keeping with the research ethics guidelines, interviewees were provided prior information about the project and their consent was taken for recording and attributing their opinions. Contacted electronically, a snowball technique was used to secure appointments. The list is restricted to the National Capital of Delhi as most foreign

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[126] Brian C. Rathbun, "Interviewing and Qualitative Field Methods: Pragmatism and Practicalities" in Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pg. 686
[127] ibid

policy think tanks are situated there and it is also where India's foreign policy bureaucracy is based. To incorporate the government and policy-maker perspectives, some interviews, although limited were also organized with current and former bureaucrats. The interviews were also used as an opportunity to gather think tank research materials not available in the public domain.

Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on the theoretical and methodological arguments that best explain the behaviour and impact of think tanks in the literature. In understanding the role of think tanks within the policy process, it has highlighted the emphasis in the literature on the role of ideas and discourses and the DI focus on policy processes that think tanks are involved in. The interactive processes of policy construction as emphasised by the DI approach both in terms of their potential in creating discursive spaces and their possible contribution as discursive and ideational actors is particularly analysed.

While DI offers a good methodological tool to investigate the involvement of think tanks, the arguments in this chapter also brought into focus the Gramscian model that offers the best explanation of state-society policy interactions. In addition to policy influence and the capacity to introduce new ideas, the question of institutional embeddedness and the institutional relevance of think tanks themselves needs to be considered particularly when many are still reliant on the government for financial support. The synthesis of the DI-Gramscian perspective therefore, was found to be better suited to examine the material interests and the elite character of think tanks, particularly visible in India where they represent the intellectual elite composed of retired diplomats, bureaucrats and senior members of Indian academia and civil society. The DI-Gramscian perspective will also provide an insight into research manoeuvring by think tanks to please funding bodies and government elites, therefore rather than portraying think tanks benignly, it will enable a more critical examination of the nature of interactions between policy elites and intellectual elites.

The role of intellectuals in the making of policy and the importance of 'collective intellectual' narratives is particularly important in the discourse towards Pakistan. It will be argued that the state in India generates popular and elite consensus in conjunction with the actions of private

ruling class forces.[128] Parmar's comparative analysis examining the influence of Chatham House and CFR concluded that

> elite outlook and institutional attitudes were very similar to that of the official makers of policy. Where they differed was generally concerned with tactics, details, timing and emphases, rather than fundamentals…converting Chatham House into an arm of official foreign policy within an agenda largely determined by the state.[129]

The agency role for Indian think tanks is also restricted by funding, the inability to form advocacy coalitions and viable horizontal networks around issue areas and the lack of considerable presence outside Delhi. Think tanks in India represent privileged knowledge – led by political and socio-economic elites. They could therefore be described as "recycling bins"[130] operating at two levels – making/translating academic research into policy relevant ideas and also recycling the experience of practitioners. The latter practice is particularly evident wherein the bulk of organisational capacity derives from retired diplomats, bureaucrats and the retired military personnel especially in the newly established armed forces think tanks - CLAWS, CAPS and NMF. The strength of the DI-Gramscian framework is that it will enable a critical examination of the specific ideas and particular interactions of think tanks, while also explaining their position within state-society structures. Stone argues that "the constant restatement of policy message via different formats and products…broadcasts and amplifies policy research"[131] – a role that Indian think tanks are actively involved with especially through their discourse on Pakistan. They also represent, what Stone identifies as a "blurring of boundaries"[132] between knowledge and policy. Having said that, it is also important to understand the private interests of think tanks themselves and their efforts to maintain their relevance and institutional strength – an aspect that will be highlighted through a DI-Gramscian analysis of think tanks in India.

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[128] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) pg, 219
[129] Ibid, pg. 106
[130] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pp. 259-278
[131] ibid
[132] Ibid, pg. 264

Chapter Three

Think Tanks and Indian Foreign Policy – an Introduction

The preceding chapter has outlined the role of ideas and discourse in the formulation of foreign policy, examining international scholarship on factors influencing foreign policy and identifying think tanks as ideational actors. It also introduced the DI-Gramscian perspective and its reflection on state-society relations; the nature of the foreign policy elite; and its relationship to non-state policy actors such as think tanks. DI provided a methodological tool to examine think tank interactions and interface with policymakers, both through their coordinative and communicative discourse. Yet it was found to be insufficient in explaining the material interests of think tanks and the evident bargaining that think tanks are involved in to retain their institutional relevance. Also problematic was the over-emphasis on ideas and over-simplification of structural constraints curtailing think tank ability in getting involved in the policy process. This was the rationale for the emphasis on Gramsci that enabled an understanding of the nature of interactions between intellectual and policy elites and their symbiotic dynamic. The DI-Gramsican approach was therefore both a reflection of state-society relations and the specific collaboration between state and non-state actors. The chapter also looked at comparative examples of think tanks operating in different state-systems in the US, Europe and the new fledgling think tank scene in South East Asia and China.

An important aspect that emerged from the examination was that think tanks are better defined by taking into account the context in which they operate. For discursive institutionalists thus, "discursive processes help explain why certain ideas succeed and others fail because of the ways in which they are projected to whom and where"[1]and Gramsci appreciates the independence of ideas and material conditions. In the context of India then, the place of think tanks as discursive actors is also a reflection of state-society relations which in turn has an impact on the relevance and acceptance of their ideas.

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[1] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg. 309

Analyses of India's foreign policy, its transitions from idealism to pragmatism[2]; grand strategy[3] and; the role of important personalities,[4] all form a substantial part of the literature on foreign policy. What is however missing is a comprehensive exploration of the policy process, the actors and institutions involved; the path that the policy making process takes. While the relevance and central position of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is clearly articulated, it is not clear how ideas move across the policy process. The literature on Indian think tanks is even more ambiguous. The effort in this chapter will thus be to draw attention to how literature on Indian foreign policy explains the role of think tanks and if they are considered as viable foreign policy actors. Responding to gaps in the literature on think tanks in India, this chapter will consider the trajectory of the foreign policy planning process. It will examine the top-down policy making process and investigate the elite engagement with civil society and grassroots actors.

The comparative analysis of think tanks in India will consider their activities and analyse their discourse highlighting funding patterns and affiliation with the government of India. This will be done by critically evaluating the organisational membership, leadership and worldviews; their institutional association with the foreign policy establishment; their role both as policy actors and for the mobilisation of public opinion. Using the DI-Gramscian framework, think tank discourse on foreign policy issues – particularly India's policy towards Pakistan will be analysed. In addition, Gramsci's analytic tools examining power and policymaking and the 'state spirit' will provide a commentary on state-society relations in India, foreign policy institutions and think tanks within the policy landscape. Analysing literature on policymaking in India and Indian think tanks, this chapter will highlight its inadequacies in accounting for their role in India. The first section will explain the origins and development of think tanks in India and their changing relevance and position as agents within the policy making system. Emphasis will also be on the existing linkages between think tank elite and the foreign policy

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[2] Harsh V. Pant, "A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy", *Orbis*, 53:2, (2009a), pp. 250-254; Sumit Ganguly and Manjeet Pardesi, "Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy", *India Review*, 8:1, 2009, pp. 4-19, C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2003)

[3] Amrita Narlikar, "Peculiar chauvinism or strategic calculation? Explaining the negotiating strategy of a rising India," *International Affairs,* 82: I, 2006, pp. 59-76; Harsh V. Pant, "A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy," *Orbis,* 53:2, (2009a), pp. 250-264; George Tanham*, Indian Strategic Thought- An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1992)

[4] Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Still under Nehru's Shadow? The Absence of Foreign Policy Frameworks in India," *India Review,* 8:3, July-September 2009; Anit Mukherjee, "K Subrahmanyam and Indian Strategic Thought" *Strategic Analysis,* 35:4, 2011, pp. 710-713; Ian Hall, "Is a 'Modi doctrine' emerging in Indian foreign policy?" *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 69:3, 2015, 247-252; Aakriti Tandon, "India's Foreign Policy Priorities and the Emergence of a Modi Doctrine" *Strategic Analysis*, 40:5, 2016, 349-356

elite in India. Taking a cue from DI and their emphasis on discourse, the second part of this chapter will discuss India's foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan, focusing particularly on the structured dialogue process initiated by the CD in 2004. It will also emphasise how this period expanded the space for think tanks in India – particularly those dealing with foreign and security policy, signifying Ladi's "critical juncture". The peacebuilding process also reflected the growth of smaller think tanks with peacebuilding as their focus with substantial attention to issues under consideration within the Indo-Pak dialogue.

Foreign Policy Making in India – key institutions

Dominant scholarship on Indian foreign policy has focused on events, landmarks and India's external relations with its South Asian neighbourhood and its engagement with the global superpowers.[5] More often than not, a study of Indian foreign policy has remained limited to a study of India's bilateral relations, its national security concerns vis-à-vis its South Asian environment and most recently on the economic rise of India and the global interest that it has created. Very few have undertaken a more nuanced understanding of Indian foreign policy[6] that is focused on the making of Indian foreign policy – its institutions, its frameworks, and its leadership. Who makes India's foreign policy? What constitutes what is often referred to as the "policy making establishment?"[7] Who are the actors and agents responsible for formulating foreign policy in India and their relative relevance are crucial questions that this thesis will address.

It is important to shift attention to some of the prominent institutions responsible for the formulation of foreign policy and their engagement with key issues. As Harsh Pant argues, "A

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[5] C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2003); Sumit Ganguly (ed.), *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010); Rajiv Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009); C Raja Mohan and Ajai Sahni, *India's Security Challenges at home and abroad* (Washington: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2012); David M. Malone, *Does the Elephant Dance? Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

[6] Taking an alternative view and providing a broader understanding of Indian Foreign policy moving away from the constricting binary approach are, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Still under Nehru's Shadow? The Absence of Foreign Policy Frameworks in India," *India Review*, 8:3, July-September 2009, pp. 209-233, Priya Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity* (London: Routledge, 2012), Radha Kumar, "India as a Foreign Policy Actor – Normative Redux," *CEPS Working Document*, 285, February 2008; Amitabh Mattoo and Happymon Jacob (eds.) *India and the Contemporary International System* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014); Happymon Jacob, *Does India Think Strategically?* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014)

[7] Parmar identifies with Godfrey Hodgson's definition of an American foreign policy establishment as a "history, a policy, an aspiration, an instinct, and a technique". To this Parmar adds the aspect of "social background". For more see: Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 5

nation's foreign policy flows from several sources—from the international system; to its domestic political imperatives; to the cultural factors that underlie its society; to the personal characteristics and perceptions of individual decision-makers."[8] With both formal and informal linkages, India's foreign policy establishment – key institutions that will be highlighted in the following section form an essential component in the creation of a coherent foreign policy discourse.

Policy planning in India is based on issue areas[9] leading to a subsequent division of authority. Echoing this, literature has agreed that three bodies in the Indian government work together to make foreign policy: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the National Security Council (NSC), led by a powerful National Security Advisor (NSA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), not necessarily in this order.[10] Within all these institutions, the elite from the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) are a significant part. Even though it is argued that the value of the service has declined[11], the MEA continues to be the primary institution responsible for the planning and implementation of India's foreign policy and deals directly with the PMO on crucial matters of concern. The position of the Foreign Secretary is particularly crucial.

There have been debates on the comparative role of this elite in India namely the IFS; the MEA and; the PMO. Much like international scholarship, the relevance of institutions to policy has been considered through a pluralist and statist perspective with varying degrees of state control. The focus has been on leadership and the evolving role and relevance of these institutions to the formulation of foreign policy in India. While some have focused on the dominant role of successive Prime Ministers who have held the portfolio of foreign minister and set the tone for the discourse on foreign policy, others have dealt with the highly-centralized bureaucracy which has made it fairly independent of the electoral process. Nehru held both the foreign and defence portfolio like his successors Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, V.P Singh and P.V.

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[8] Harsh V. Pant, "A Rising India's Search for a Foreign Policy," *Orbis,* 53:2, (2009a), pg. 251

[9] Amrita Narlikar, "Peculiar chauvinism or strategic calculation? Explaining the negotiating strategy of a rising India," *International Affairs,* 82: I, 2006, pg. 61

[10] K P. Saksena, "India's Foreign Policy: the Decisionmaking process" *International Studies,* 33:4, 1996, pp. 391-405; Vipin Narang & Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy" *India Review*, 11:2, 2012, 76-94; Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "India's Feeble Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* May/June 2013, pp. 14-19

[11] Shashi Tharoor, "Our diplomatic deficit", *Indian Express,* August 24, 2012, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/our-diplomatic-deficit/992257/

Narasimha Rao. Furthermore, Rao, I. K. Gujral and Atal Behari Vajpayee, made their mark as foreign ministers before becoming prime ministers.[12]

In contrast, others have argued in favour of the centralized bureaucratic structure and its relative freedom from politicised patronage. The bipartisan nature of bureaucracy has also been highlighted.[13]Arguments have emphasised the significant leeway that bureaucrats in India have in crafting policy. Manjari Chatterjee Miller highlights a lack of top down planning in India about its long term foreign policy goals and argues that it is very often the civil servants who are responsible for convincing the leadership of particular policy decisions.[14] Though convinced of the bureaucracy's prominence in policymaking, Narang however argues that

> unlike other democracies such as the United States, where public opinion and executive bodies such as the State and Defense Departments exert tremendous ideational and bureaucratic gravity in foreign policy, policy formulation in India is restricted to a handful of individuals and, particularly, the Prime Minister, who with a stable government has significant freedom to manoeuvre in international affairs.[15]

There is also emphasis on the dynamics between foreign policy and domestic policy and the specific nature of federal and state politics in India.[16] Other analysis has also considered the civil and military cooperation in the formulation of foreign and defence policy.[17]

The inherently conservative, insular and "closed shop"[18] bureaucracy has been the centre of much controversy and criticism in India. Echoing this sentiment, Raja Mohan and Miller[19] also

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[12] D Shyam Babu, "India's National Security Council: Stuck in the Cradle?" *Security Dialogue,* 34:2, 2003, pg. 219

[13] Vipin Narang and Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy", *India Review,*11:2, 2012, pg. 78

[14] Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "India's Feeble Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* May/June 2013, pg. 16

[15] Vipin Narang and Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy", *India Review,*11:2, 2012, pg. 78

[16] Varghese K. George, "Domestic Politics of India's Foreign Policy Decision-making" in Amitabh Mattoo and Happymon Jacob (eds.) *India and the Contemporary International System* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014), pp. 125-156; Teresita C. Schaffer and Howard Schaffer, "When India's Foreign Policy is Domestic" *The Brookings Institution,* April 2, 2013, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2013/04/02/when-indias-foreign-policy-is-domestic/; Sukhwant S. Bindra, "Domestic Milieu of India and Foreign Policy Making Process: A Theoretical Perspective" *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 65:2, April-June 2004, pp. 245-258

[17] Srinath Raghavan, "Civil–Military Relations in India: The China Crisis and After" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:1, 2009, 149-175; Apurba Kundu, *Militarism in India: The Army and Civil Society in Consensus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 100–21; Harsh Pant, "India's Nuclear Doctrine and Command Structure: Implications for Civil-Military Relations in India" *Armed Forces & Society* 33:2, January 2007, pp. 238-264

[18] Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy Software", *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96

[19] Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "India's Feeble Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* May/June 2013, pg. 16

highlight that the IFS are insulated from outside influences and make little room for other services into its fold. "The monopoly of information on world affairs, and the development of specialists reinforced the condescension in South Block that they had little to learn from outsiders."[20] Refuting this claim, Shashi Tharoor argues that where the situation warranted the need for outside expertise, the IFS doesn't hesitate to consult, for instance, experts on trade issues have been taken on board for short periods.[21] Such interaction however is limited. In addition to their exclusivist attitude and the "culture of security"[22], there is another significant factor i.e. the Official Secrets Act[23] that imposes penalties on former policymakers on public disclosure of information. Due to closed archives, popular histories are penned by retired officials rather than policy analysts or historians.[24] Thus, state control on the policy sphere is emphasised, with information limited to the policy elites.

Yet, despite the "closed shop," "insulated" bureaucracy, there is also emerging a gradual change to accommodate global and regional realities brought about by globalization, the changing nature of conflicts, developments in the field of information and technology and the growing relevance of multi-track diplomacy. These have created what Raja Mohan refers to as a "different template for the South Block to deal with."[25] Thus, in addition to strengthening capacity in foreign policy[26], there have also been calls for a robust national security policy in India. Responding to this, in 1998, the NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee established the National Security Council (NSC) and the post of the National Security Advisor (NSA). The NSA is assisted by a Deputy NSA and a dedicated National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). This has allowed limited involvement of outside experts into the formal

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[20] C. Raja Mohan, "The re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of the International Relations Community," *International Studies,* 46:1 & 2, 2009, pg. 157
[21] Shashi Tharoor, *Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st century* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2012)
[22] Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy Software", *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96
[23] In 2015, a high level government committee was set up to review the Official Secrets Act (1923) in light of the now operational Right to Information (RTI) act. Jatin Gandhi, "Govt. forms panel to review Official secrets Act" *The Hindu,* April 15, 2015, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-forms-panel-to-review-official-secrets-act/article7105495.ece
[24] Several retired officials have recently released their memoirs providing insights into foreign policy decisions taken during their years of service. Some examples include: A S Dulat, *Kashmir:The Vajpayee Years* (NOIDA: HarperCollins, 2015) – Dulat is the former chief of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW); Shyam Saran, *How India Sees the World: From Kautilya to the 21st Century* (New Delhi: Juggernaut, 2017); Maharaja Krishan Rasgotra, *A Life in Diplomacy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2016) – both Saran and Rasgotra are former Foreign Secretaries.
[25] C. Raja Mohan, "The re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of the International Relations Community," *International Studies,* 46: 1 & 2, 2009, 147-63
[26] The comparatively smaller size of the IFS as compared to the diplomatic corps of other countries like China and the US, with fewer than 900 diplomats has led to calls for expansion.

policy making apparatus. Reporting to the NSC is the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) that includes experts from various fields – ex diplomats and foreign and defence service officials, members of the academia, media as well as think tanks and also some representation from the business community.[27]This is also in line with pluralist arguments that point out the wide range of societal actors that together shape policy. The office of the NSA has been considered very crucial – "with unrestricted access to PMO, supervises matters relating to foreign affairs and controls and coordinates MoD and other key departments."[28] Yet, here too, the role of leadership is important, for instance, the NSA under Modi plays a different role to the NSA under Manmohan Singh. Even though, the NSA under Manmohan Singh performed a significant part in decision making[29], reports now suggest that under the Modi administration, NSA Ajit Doval enjoys a very close relationship with the Prime Minister and a more influential role in foreign policy decision making that is now centered in the NSC and the PMO, rather than the MEA.[30]

In addition to these formal governmental agencies, there exist in India an informal and non-governmental network of think tanks that engage with India's foreign policy and strategic doctrines. Since they are relatively new actors, however, research on their role and relevance is limited. While a few identify think tanks as civil society actors[31] playing a role in the policy process, others have referred to them as part of India's foreign policy "software"[32] that needs to be strengthened for a more structured role in policymaking. India's foreign policy it is argued "must be seen as a shared partnership across departments within the government of India, and

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[27] The role of the NSAB has undergone a change under the Modi administration since 2014. A new board was reconstituted in October 2016 after a gap of 2 years. "NSAB reconstituted with ex-envoy P S Raghavan as head" *Indian Express,* 9 October, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/nsab-national-security-advisory-board-p-s-raghavan-3073906/

[28] Rajiv Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009), pg. 264

[29] Prakash Nanda, "Indian Foreign Policy under Modi" *Fearless Nadia Occasional Papers* (Australia-India Institute), 3, Winter 2014, pg. 8

[30] Several analytical reports on the Modi government's foreign policy have indicated this trend. For more see, Suhasini Haidar, "South Block in the shade" *The Hindu,* 13 May, 2016, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/south-block-in-the-shade/article8591271.ece ; Sumit Ganguly, "Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy?", *The Washington Quarterly*, 40:2, 2017, 131-143; Natalie Obiko Pearson, "India's 007, Former Super Spy, Is Shaping Modi's Foreign Policy," *Bloomberg*, 19 September, 2016, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-18/india-s-007-former-super-spy-is-shaping-modi-s-foreign-policy; Praveen Donthi, "Undercover: Ajit Doval in theory and practice" *The Caravan,* 1 September 2017, http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reportage/ajit-doval-theory-practice

[31] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16

[32] Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy Software", *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96

academia and think tanks outside the traditional corridors of power."[33] The following section will highlight the development and evolution of foreign policy think tanks in India and the way the literature has sought to define and position their role.

Think Tanks and Indian Foreign Policy

Reiterating the definition of think tanks as used in the last chapter, the attention here is on institutions that have been focused on research based policy planning and advocacy in India – particularly on foreign policy. The previous segment has highlighted governmental institutions formulating foreign policy and their declining expertise or incapacity to deal with new foreign policy environments. This has foregrounded the need to shift focus to a comprehensive analysis of think tanks in India and their rising relevance to the formulation of discourse.

Over the years, the evaluation of foreign policy institutions has taken into account the role of these non-state actors and intellectual elites associated with them. Alagappa identifies think tanks as an integral part of the architecture of IR studies in India and argues that, "the output of research institutes can contribute to academic inquiry and knowledge accumulation as well as inform public opinion and policy formulation."[34] However, he argues that,

> often government funded and/or staffed by retired diplomats and military officers, the foreign and security policy institutions have by and large followed the government line rather than providing deep analysis of policy alternatives. The interests and priorities of funders appear to have been limiting factors for institutions financed by private sector companies.[35]

Yet, the particular role that think tanks play in the promotion of ideas and policy alternatives in India remains uncertain. Also ambiguous is the changing relevance of think tanks and with it the changing strategies that think tanks have employed in seeking to have an impact on policy.

Within South Asia, India has one of the oldest history of think tanks or policy research institutions, like the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Pune, set up in 1930, the

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[33] Amitabh Mattoo, "A new foreign policy agenda," *The Hindu,* 8 April, 2014, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-new-foreign-policy-agenda/article5883940.ece
[34] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16
[35] ibid

Indian Statistical Institute established in 1931 and the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) established in 1943. Yet, it is argued that in the early years of independence, less attention was paid to policy processes and centralized planning and development goals set by the state were predominantly followed. "Research institutes that emerged during this period supplemented the work of the government by filling gaps in analysis and providing alternative sources of data."[36] This appears to fit in with elite theorists' conceptualisation of think tanks as "instruments deployed in the service of a ruling class political agenda… the actual purpose of think tanks is to assist in the business of top down policymaking."[37]

Thus, while some early think tanks emerged, they remained limited in their scope and the ability to influence discourse, and policy making remained the exclusive domain of the formal governmental machinery. The individualistic style of Nehru has also been linked to the development of policy planning apparatus in India particularly with reference to foreign policy. Arguments focus on Nehru's preference for economic planning[38] rather than planning on foreign policy. It was also a reflection of general goals that favoured economic development over the broadening of external relations. Nehru's perceived preference for handling matters of foreign policy on his own without relying on outside expertise was also linked to the inadequate development of proficiency in the disciplines of international relations and strategic policy. While Nehru was considered responsible for training and inspiring a generation of diplomats who shaped foreign policy, his personalised conduct of foreign policy affected foreign policy institutions and the "personalised basis" was carried forward to other generations of Indian leaders.[39] Thus, while economic planning was opened up for alternative thinking, parallel efforts were not made for foreign and strategic policy. Foreign policy formulation in the formative years of Indian independence was the domain of the MEA led by Nehru himself (from 1947-1964) and influenced by Foreign Service diplomats like Krishna Menon and

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[36] Kuldeep Mathur, *Public Policy and Politics in India: How Institutions Matter* (New Delhi: OUP, 2013), pg. 9

[37] Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pg. 8

[38] According to Mathur, the Planning Commission recognised in its First Five Year Plan that there is – "the need to strengthen capabilities of institutions outside the government in the field of economics in order to provide independent sources of economic data and evaluation of policies."[38] The development of economic planning institutions was visible in the legacy of institution building in the decade of 1956-65 and the establishment of many institutions like the National Council of Applied Economic Research in 1956, Institute of Economic Growth in 1958 and the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in 1962. For this and other research on economic think tanks in India, see: Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore), 67, 16 June 2009; Kuldeep Mathur, *Public Policy and Politics in India: How Institutions Matter* (New Delhi, OUP, 2013)

[39] Rajiv Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009), pg. 260

Vijayalakshmi Pandit who advocated for prominent foreign policy decisions like non-alignment, support for decolonisation and nuclear disarmament.

One think tank that enjoyed Nehru's support however, was the ICWA established in 1943 - perhaps the only policy research institution which focused on international studies and concentrated on building expertise on foreign policy issues at the time. Led by intellectuals like M.S Rajan, A. Appadorai or Tej Bahadur Sapru in 1955, as part of the ICWA, the Indian School of International Studies (later renamed School of International Studies- SIS) was set up which was later incorporated into the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) established in 1970. Bringing together intellectuals, bureaucrats, professionals, businessmen, scholars and journalists, the ICWA continued with its activities in the field of international relations and foreign affairs, experiencing a heyday in its first two decades, with speeches given by the likes of Margaret Thatcher and Kurt Waldheim and patronage from stalwarts such as Sarojini Naidu and S. Radhakrishnan.[40] In 1947, it organized the Asian Relations Conference[41], often perceived as one of the earliest attempts at regional multilateralism initiated by India.

Institutions like the ICWA were seen as a possible arena for mutual cooperation between the MEA and the research community. Debates around that time also advocated for an exchange program between the MEA and academia where roles were reversed and each was given an opportunity to influence policy – through research and practice of foreign policy respectively. There was however, no such provision in the MEA and such a practice was not encouraged.[42] This resonates with the international debate marking think tanks as a bridge between knowledge and policy that has been highlighted in the previous chapter.[43] ICWA however

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[40] Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011) pg. 12

[41] Headed by Nehru, the conference brought together leaders of the other independence movements in Asia,and represented the first attempt to assert Asian unity. With its focus on five major themes concerning Asia i.e. national freedom movements, racial and migration related issues, socioeconomic development, culture, and women's issues, it established the Asian Relations Organisation as a permanent secretariat in New Delhi. The goals of Asian unity however could not move forward owing to cold war dynamics, placing newly independent Asian nations in contesting alliances. For more: Sankalp Gurjar, "Time to Resurrect the Asian Relations Conference" *The Diplomat,* 18 April, 2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/time-to-resurrect-the-asian-relations-conference/

[42] A. Appadorai, "International and Area Studies in India," *International Studies (*JNU), 24:2, 1987, pg. 142

[43] For a discussion on the role of think tanks as bridges see, Matthew Taylor, "Think tanks, public policy and academia", *Public Money & Management*, 31:1, 2011, pp. 10-11; Donald E. Abelson, "Old world, new world: the evolution and influence of foreign affairs think-tanks" *International Affairs,* 90: 1, 2014, pp. 125-142; Stella Ladi, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011); Andjelkovic Branka. "A limited dialogue: Think tanks and the policy making process in Serbia", in UNDP (ed.) *Thinking the Unthinkable* (Bratislava: UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2003)

remains one of the key foreign policy think tanks in India and its interactions with the policy process and relevance have evolved through the years – details of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The development of policy research institutes also received an impetus in the 1960s. The absence of Nehru, India's defeat by China and the Indo-Pak war of 1965 in addition to intensification of cold war politics, created an interest in research on defence and strategic studies. In 1965, therefore, the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) was set up by the MoD headed by K Subrahmanyam and his acknowledged expertise in strategic affairs. In addition, recognising the need for research expertise in other parts of the country, the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) was established in 1969 to promote and develop regional institutions.[44]

The creation of IDSA and institutions in other states, along with the development of an independent media, "offered a nucleus around which a strong and influential community of IR professionals might have been built."[45] In addition, it was argued that the Indian elite were plugged into the IR community around the world, published in international journals, and hosted research scholars from abroad. Whether or not it influenced early India's external relations, literature has focused on the dynamism of India's intellectual discourse on world affairs during the 1950s and the 1960s.[46] IDSA's influence on policy, particularly the high profile leadership of Subrahmanyam form a significant part of the scholarship on think tanks.[47] While the debate until then had focused on the dominating influence of the MEA and the Prime Ministerial leadership on foreign policy; the literature gradually began to take notice of these "policy experts". Yet, the role of the "state" remained central to the construction of foreign policy.

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[44] Through its grant-in aid, ICSSR has supported 27 think tanks across India. These are located in only 12 states and 2 union territories (of 28/7). Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011), pg. 14
[45] C. Raja Mohan, "The re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of the International Relations Community," *International Studies,* 46: 1 & 2, 2009, 147-63
[46] ibid
[47] Muthiah Alagappa, "Galvanising International Studies," *Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review,* 30, September 2009, pp. 11-16; Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper* (National University of Singapore), 67, 16 June 2009

The next phase of think tank development, one that has been described as that of "second wave institutes"[48] appeared in the 1980s with an increase in funding – both governmental and external – as India began to bring down the barriers on external funding. Thus, the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) was established in 1973, the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) in 1981, and the Research and Information Systems (RIS) which was the think tank set up by the MEA in 1983. However, while new organisations continued to emerge, the domestic political discourse became more centralized under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and according to Raja Mohan, "foreign policy began to acquire a monochromatic hue and there was a general disempowerment of the older centres of foreign policy discourse in the region."[49]

The development of India's nuclear weapons program however stands out as an exception to this disempowerment and think tanks like IDSA, CPR and the "advocatory role"[50] of analysts like K Subrahmanyam and Brahma Chellany to name a few has often been emphasised. They have been accredited to suggesting an alternative policy discourse especially with regard to debates on disarmament versus development of weapons, rejecting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty and proposing testing. With little access to official information and communiques however, the accounts on the nuclear debate tend to derive more from personal interpretations and reflections of those involved, thus making it difficult to ascertain concrete influence in policy making. It does however indicate the changing policy landscape in India as ideas from private organisations outside of government began to be acknowledged and appreciated. Subrahmanyam is credited to making 'policy-relevant research' a goal worth pursuing for many younger researchers. Also, with the absence of common knowledge on military and strategic affairs, Subrahmanyam's writings in the media contributed to the shaping of public discourse as well as "a tool to mobilize pressure on the politicians and bureaucrats deciding on foreign and national security affairs."[51]

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[48] Contributing to this growth of "second wave institutes" was the "availability of a generation of Indians who had been involved in policy making by post-independence governments. Kuldeep Mathur, *Public Policy and Politics in India: How Institutions Matter* (New Delhi: OUP, 2013), pg. 86
[49] C. Raja Mohan, "The re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of the International Relations Community," *International Studies,* 46: 1 & 2, 2009, pg. 152
[50] Constantino Xavier and Stephen Cohen, "The Career and Ideas of K. Subrahmanyam," *Event Summary Brookings Institution,* February 2011, http://www.brookings.edu/events/2011/02/18-india-subrahmanyam, accessed on March 5, 2015
[51] C. Raja Mohan, "The re-making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of the International Relations Community," *International Studies,* 46: 1 & 2, 2009, 147-63

With the economic liberalization of India and the global shift in power, demands for expertise of a new foreign policy, articulating the interests of India's changing global and regional position emerged. New institutions like Bangalore's National Institute of Advanced Studies set up in 1988, Centre for Contemporary Studies in 1990, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in 1990 and the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) in 1994 were established. In addition, due to the increasing interest in South Asian neighbours and new possibilities for peace and cooperation, a number of think tanks focused on conflict and peace studies also developed. This can also be seen as reflection of the changing nature of conflict globally and the development of new formulations on security policy and a new-found focus on non-traditional aspects of security. Some of the noteworthy research institutions in this regard were the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) established in 1996, the Institute of Conflict Management in 1997, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) in 2000, Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) in 1999. Not limited to the national capital, new think tanks also sprang up in other parts of India like the Centre for Security Analysis (2002) and the Takshashila Institution (2009) in Chennai. In addition to this, the armed forces also set up their own specialised think tanks namely the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) in 2001, the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in 2004 and the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) in 2005.

To this growing landscape, a new crop of think tanks supported by political parties also emerged. Thus, while the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies was affiliated to the Congress Party, the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and the India Foundation (IF) are noticeably connected with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Further, new US-styled think tanks also began to appear on the scene. Thus, the Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations was set up in 2009 inspired by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in the US; Brookings Institution and Carnegie Endowment - both well-known American think tanks also established their branches in India. Recognising the growing strength of Indian think tanks, in January 2016, 10 Indian think tanks featured on the list of top 150 non-US think tanks in the *Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* published by the University of Pennsylvania. At rank 30 was IDSA, 50- ORF, 54 - ICRIER, 69 - the Centre for Civil Society, at 90 - The Energy

and Resources Institute, 123 – Brookings India, followed by Gateway House at 130, USI at 135, VIF at 137 and CLAWS at 150. [52]

The literature has attributed this growth in the number of think tanks to several factors. While the need to engage with new issues of foreign policy required an increase in knowledge and expertise – a service that this growing number of think tanks provided; liberalisation and the increased interest of international agencies in policy research made the institution of these civil society and advocacy groups possible.[53] Weaver and Stares[54]suggest that this also reflected the changing nature of representative governments and the rise of coalition governments which led to the fracturing of democratic processes and an increasing demand for alternative policy advice. The cumulative effect of a class of leadership "non-dynastic" in nature - leaders like Narasimha Rao, I. K Gujral, Vajpayee, and Manmohan Singh, has also had an impact. Their tenures it was argued moved India towards a more academic and structured approach to foreign policy.[55]

While leadership changed, the funding structure for think tanks also transformed. While many were still funded by the government, others found sources of substantial foreign contributions thereby reducing their dependence on government funding. Yet, the government also played an indirect enabling role here, by relaxing rules regarding international partnerships and the receipt of foreign contribution. It retained control on the regulation of foreign funding through the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (1976) (FCRA). The FCRA and its application has been known for its "arbitrariness of procedure."[56] Further, other ways in which the government exercises what is termed "despotic influence" is the donation of land or sale of land at concessional rates for the construction of think tank offices and income tax exemptions.[57] For instance, the offices of IDSA and the other three defence policy think tanks (CLAWS, CAPS and NMF) are located on land under the jurisdiction of the MoD.

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[52] James G. McGann, "2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", *TTCSP Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports,* 12, 2017 http://repository.upenn.edu/think_tanks/12
[53]Kuldeep Mathur, "Policy Research Organizations in South Asia," *Working Paper Series – Centre for the Study of Law and Governance* (New Delhi: CSLG, April 2009)
[54]Kent R Weaver and Paul B Stares (eds.) *Guidance for Governance Comparing Alternative Sources of Public Policy Advice* (Tokyo: Japan Centre for International Exchange, 2001)
[55] Suhasini Haider, "Foreign Policy Making in India: An Institutional Perspective" in Amitabh Mattoo and Happymon Jacob (eds.) *India and the Contemporary International System* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014), pg. 102
[56] Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface,* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011), pg. 19
[57] ibid

Thus, by control of funding, the influence of the government on the ideology and impact of think tanks is debatable in India.[58] Also while economic research has benefitted from foreign funding, the argument is that by their very nature, the Indian foreign and strategic policy establishments would be wary of externally-funded study and the avenue of external capital is thus not an easy option for international relations and strategic affairs institutions.[59] Further, while liberalisation and privatisation policies in the 1990s improved private donor involvement in think tanks, they also raised crucial concerns regarding independence of thought and objective analysis. Though they occupied the space freed by the state in supporting think tanks, the grants were often project-driven and the limited research agenda, it is argued "obstructed the emergence of an independent and critical research agenda."[60] The sponsors' direction of research agendas was also a factor irrespective of whether they are public agencies, private foundations or international organisations.[61] Though foreign contributions can be controlled by government regulation, domestic private sector funding for research is also a new phenomenon in India. It is however pointed out that the "private sector is yet to make any serious long-term investment in developing think tanks and research institutions in the field."[62]

Theorising Think Tanks in India

The section above has highlighted the emergence of think tanks into the foreign policy making landscape, demonstrating that their development has followed crucial transitions in India's domestic and foreign policy directions. So far, the literature examining think tanks in India takes a statist and elitist position and seems to place think tanks as secondary actors in the policy process. Indian think tanks are represented as a part of the foreign policy machinery;

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[58]For instance think tanks like IDSA are funded primarily by the MoD thereby raising questions about the independent nature of its research programs. In addition, new names like the VIF face allegations regarding their allegiance to Hindu nationalist groups like the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) known to be a key ally of the current government at the centre. It is due to VIF's affiliation with the Vivekananda Kendra set up by RSS ideologue Eknath Ranade that leads to claims of proximity to the BJP-RSS agenda. For more see: "From Vivekananda to PMO stars: Meet Modi's favourite think tank" *Firstpost,* 17 June, 2014, http://www.firstpost.com/politics/from-vivekananda-to-pmo-stars-meet-modis-favourite-think-tank-1574369.html ; Lola Nayar, "Those Hard Thinking Caps Realigned" *Outlook,* 9 June, 2014, https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/those-hard-thinking-caps-realigned/290876

[59] Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore) 67, 16 June 2009

[60] T. S Papola, "Social Science Research in Globalising India – Historical Development and Recent Trends", *ISID Working Paper,* (Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, Delhi), May 2010, pg. 9

[61] ibid

[62] ibid

however, focus has remained on formal institutions and their centrality to policymaking. The literature lacks a detailed analysis of think tank actors' and their institutional as well as informal linkages with the policymaking elite in India. Chapter Two has highlighted the theoretical arguments that focus mainly on American and European think tanks and are weak in explaining think tank relevance to foreign policy in India. The particular aspects that will be introduced through this thesis will be to critically examine think tank membership in India and the institutional positions/worldviews adopted towards foreign policy, particularly towards Pakistan. The DI-Gramscian framework will highlight the interactive processes, think tank elite membership and worldviews and a better understanding of linkages between think tanks and official policy elites in India. These will essentially be examined through think tank role in two key areas namely their discourse and policy ideas and role in public opinion mobilisation.

Examining broader institutional positions and worldviews first, think tanks in India are found to focus on a variety of issues ranging from social and political policy, issues of the environment; environmental pollution; climate change; socio-economic development and political participation. Think tanks focusing on foreign and security policy in India have commissioned a broad range of research studies – examining India's geostrategic position, bilateral relations with South Asian neighbours; international trade and development and; India's multi-lateral engagements. In addition, non-traditional security issues related to drug and human trafficking, terrorism, and other human security issues are also now being increasingly researched.

In terms of membership, much like the MEA, while "first-hand" policy making expertise is plentiful in India, such expertise is possessed almost exclusively by retired ambassadors and other post-career government officials. Indian think tanks, it is argued, are "characterised by a sharply bifurcated personnel structure that privileges senior staff and does not offer younger scholars a ready path for career advancement, through either government service or research."[63] Though many employ fresh graduates, the hierarchical structure is very similar to the Indian bureaucracy. Critics calling for capacity building within think tanks have also highlighted the elite privileged backgrounds of retired public and military officials and the lack of full time research staff with strong applied theoretical and methodological skills in international

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[63] Daniel Markey, "Developing India's Foreign Policy Software", *Asia Policy,* 8, July 2009, pp. 73-96

studies.[64] There has also been a trend of prominent personalities with good official linkages that have helped to raise the profile of some of these think tanks, for instance like K Subrahmanyam (IDSA), Brahma Chellany (CPR), Pratap Bhanu Mehta (CPR), retired army officials like V R Raghavan (DPG & CSA), Jasjit Singh (IDSA & CAPS) and Dipankar Banerjee (IPCS) to name a few. In addition to their intellectual capability, these elite also represent a privileged socio-political background and have held senior positions in their specific spheres of expertise.

Debates regarding membership however do not consider effectively the linkages that these knowledge elites build with policy elite – both in the MEA and in the PMO. The arguments continue to reflect the disconnect between policy making and research.[65] Yet, the way this elitist composition of think tanks benefits or challenges its capacity to impact policy is not considered. This thesis will examine think tank leadership and membership in detail to bring out these points detailing the manifestation of the "knowledge/power nexus"[66] between think tanks and policy elites. It will also examine the involvement of think tanks in the policy formulation process focusing specifically on think tank policy ideas and creation of discourse on Pakistan. For DI, two elements that highlight think tank influence are the coordinative and communicative discourse and the ability of think tanks to "transfer knowledge to discourse and act as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse."[67] Think tanks can also "promote specific ideas, specific framing of policy issues and provide arguments for the debate by participating in advocacy coalitions."[68]

Previous sections of this chapter have highlighted that scholarship on Indian think tanks has considered them to have limited political power or authority, working primarily as experts offering second opinion or specialised knowledge. The highly bureaucratic and exclusive political culture in India has been blamed for limited avenues for think tank involvement. In the absence of causal links, particularly in India where think tank involvement is not institutionalised, their precise role as knowledge elites will be analysed. The policy relevant

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[64] Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore), 67, 16 June 2009, pg. 7
[65] ibid
[66] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, June 2007, pg. 276
[67] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change" in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 212
[68] ibid

ideas put forward by think tanks have often been found to be too theoretical in their scope. As Sanjaya Baru maintains, "officials in government argue that the so-called experts are far too theoretical in their approach, unwilling to be realists and that area studies have very little ground level understanding of their areas."[69] From the perspective of think tanks though, K Subrahmanyam argued that,

in foreign and strategic affairs, bureaucrats continue to retain their relevance and power by withholding information to outside scholars and experts. Consequently, when a non-governmental analyst comes up with a viewpoint unacceptable to the government, the bureaucracy dismisses it merely on the grounds that the viewpoint is not grounded in reality.[70]

It has also been argued that still perceiving them as an American conception, bureaucrats restrict think tank influence and do not build viable networks with them.[71] However, while the literature has treated policy elites (such as bureaucrats) and knowledge elites at think tanks as mutually exclusive entities, this thesis will explore their symbiotic relationship. It will investigate if policy elites in the government use the resources of think tanks – their discourse and their ability to generate public opinion – to privilege a particular understanding of a foreign policy issue. Inversely, it will examine adjustments made by think tanks to maintain their research relevance to suit government policy directions and balance their research autonomy by offering new policy ideas.

In recent years, the capacity of think tanks to offer policy relevant research has begun to be recognised and the government has invited the expertise of some of these organisations. For instance, as the designated Indian Track II coordinator for BRICS and a member of the BRICS Think Tanks Council, ORF has provided knowledge inputs and helped to strengthen research collaboration with the other nodal BRICS coordinating institutions in the member countries.[72] Similarly in March 2013, CPR, in collaboration with Brookings Institution and the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, hosted a Track-II Trialogue between India, USA and China in New Delhi. The conference was the third in a series of meetings that had

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[69] Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore) 67, pg. 8
[70] ibid
[71] A Participant Interview with senior academic at WISCOMP in New Delhi on 7 September, 2015
[72] ORF also hosted the BRICS Academic Forums in 2009 and 2012 and helped in the drafting of a Long Term Vision for BRICS along with several relevant research publications. It coordinates with the other Track II partners to inform the wider research community and key stakeholders on the relevance, significance and expected output from BRICS. For more see, *The ORF BRICS Compilation* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2013) www.orfonline.org

been initiated in 2012. New developments in the region and the need for alternative research have also prompted several new initiatives. Thus, in May 2013, an ORF commissioned project on the 'Future of Afghanistan Post-NATO Withdrawal and its Implications for India,' presented its research to the MoD. Similarly, DPG's "Afghanistan-India-Pakistan trialogue" initiated in 2009, brought together policymakers, analysts and Track II representatives from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, to review changes and progress in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan relations, and to see whether there were new opportunities for the three countries to work together trilaterally, or in parallel bilaterals, to spur stalled and/or obstacle-strewn peace processes between them.[73]

Working closely with government ministries on particular issues has broadened the scope of the "coordinative discourse" of Indian think tanks. These dialogue forums and focused research on new issues concerning Indian foreign policy have provided think tanks an opportunity to interact with actors at the centre of policy construction. However, as has been highlighted in the previous chapter, in a polity like India, foreign policy formulation is controlled by top leadership and the foreign policy bureaucracy. The broader literature above has also indicated this trend. What opportunities then do think tanks in India have to act as foreign policy actors? Are Indian think tanks able to transform into "sentient agents" of Schmidt's understanding, "who articulate and communicate their ideas through discourse in exchanges that may involve discussion, deliberation, negotiation and contestation."[74]

It is also important here to mention DI's emphasis on the potential of agents as having both "background ideational abilities" and "foreground discursive abilities." The concept of "foreground discursive abilities"[75] refers to the importance of discourse and deliberative argumentation in breaking the elite monopoly on national and supranational decision making while ensuring democratic access to such decision making. Only a very detailed analysis of the discourse developed by Indian think tanks would be able to provide evidence of their foreground and background ideational abilities, something that the current literature on think tanks does not tell us.

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[73] www.delhipolicygroup.com

[74] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 91

[75] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg.315

Another component for DI is the "communicative discourse perpetuated by individuals and groups involved in the presentation, deliberation and legitimation of political ideas to the general public (leaders, social activists, think tanks)"[76] The emphasis here is on the use of ideas for public persuasion through deliberations in policy forums of informed publics about the ongoing policy initiatives of governments.[77] As carriers of communicative discourse, think tank research on government policies; meetings and; conferences completes the cycle – disseminating government policy to the wider public arena. Think tanks in India have been argued to have influence in shaping/gauging public opinion.[78] Also, while it is claimed that they serve a purpose in transactional issues, think tanks are involved in preparing the ground for public opinion for paradigmatic changes to policy.[79]

Yet, while a preliminary analysis might give evidence of think tank role in both "coordinative" and "communicative" discourse in India, the particular linkages between think tank research and their policy impact is unclear. While informal linkages are evident, the institutional role of think tanks is uncertain owing to the structure of policymaking in India. This is particulary relevant in the light of think tank financial dependence on the government and the inability to disassociate government discourse from alternative discourse from think tanks. While elitists argue for state control over the conduct on foreign policy, the constructivist understanding of "research communities" and "interpretive communities"[80] are also not visible in India.

The DI approach used elsewhere has highlighted the creation of ideational networks and their transformative influence on policy. In South East Asia for instance, Zimmerman has highlighted the agenda-setting and problem framing role of think tanks in placing the NTS agenda on to the official policy frames.[81] In India however, these institutional networks are not visible and the aspect of influence on policy is even murkier. The relationship between think

[76] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 86
[77] Ibid, pg. 56
[78] A Participant Interview with senior researcher and former Diplomat at VIF in New Delhi on 14 October 2015
[79] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at VIF in New Delhi on 5 October, 2015
[80] Diane Stone, "The ASEAN-ISIS Network: Interpretive Communities, Informal Diplomacy and Discourses of Region," *Minerva*, 49, 2011,pg. 242, 243
[81] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016)

tanks and policymakers has been described as "informal" and "un-institutionalised"[82]. While the MEA and MoD have been known to support a handful of think tanks and sometimes contract policy studies from think tanks, universities, and individuals, this is done on an adhoc basis rather than as part of a systematic programme.[83] It has also been argued that in the Indian system, "foreign and security policy are the government's domain"[84] and funded primarily by the government, think tanks are perceived to be "an extension of government thinking."[85]

Yet, while policy impact is difficult to ascertain, think tanks in India are notable for their knowledge elites. As argued,

> Indian foreign policy is dominated by a small strategic elite concentrated in New Delhi. Combining elected politicians (though not many), bureaucrats trained in the state apparatus, and journalists and analysts drawn from academia and the government, this strategic enclave dominates foreign policy.[86]

The role of experts like K Subrahmanyam often credited to having produced a Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) and his crucial involvement in the Kargil Review Committee (KRC) has often been recognised. Others such as Shyam Saran (former Foreign Secretary) has been involved in the policy process through his various institutional engagements, as a Research Fellow at CPR, as the Chairman of the RIS. Saran is also co-chairman of the India-ASEAN Eminent Person's group established to review the ASEAN-India dialogue and explore ways to widen and deepen existing cooperation towards a long-term strategic partnership between ASEAN and India.[87] Others at CPR including until recently Pratap Bhanu Mehta[88] and Srinath Raghavan have also been involved with the NSAB that offered a key interface between policy makers and experts from beyond the bureaucratic set up.[89] Key policy positions at the official level are now

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[82] A Participant Interview with Senior Member and a former bureaucrat at Research and Information Systems (RIS) in New Delhi on 4 September, 2015

[83] Rajiv Sikri, *Challenge and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009), pg. 275

[84] A Participant Interview with senior member at ORF, New Delhi on 9 September, 2015

[85] A Participant Interview with senior member and former defence personnel at IPCS, New Delhi on 29 September, 2015

[86] Vipin Narang & Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy" *India Review*, 11:2, 2012, 76-94, pg. 80

[87] *ASEAN-India Eminent Persons' Report to the Leaders* (Indonesia: ASEAN Secretariat, 2012)

[88] Former President of CPR for nearly a decade, Mehta is currently Vice Chancellor of the newly established Ashoka University in Haryana, India. https://www.ashoka.edu.in/

[89] The NDA government led by PM Narendra Modi has significantly reduced the NSAB. A new board was reconstituted in October 2016 after a gap of 2 years. "NSAB reconstituted with ex-envoy P S Raghavan as head" *Indian Express,* 9 October, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/nsab-national-security-advisory-board-p-s-raghavan-3073906/

occupied by Ajit Doval (NSA) and Arvind Gupta (Deputy NSA), both closely associated with think tanks. The role of these knowledge elites within the think tank community has often come under critical scrutiny for providing a narrow and limited engagement. It has also been argued that the relevance of the institution is linked to the current relevance and linkages of the elites themselves – thus both the IDSA and ICWA declined in their influence under new leadership.

Yet, even though expertise on foreign policy exists in abundance in India, the arguments in favour of a so called disconnect between an 'ivory tower' academia and the 'real world' of public policy making and discourse persists. It can also be observed that think tanks in India reflect some of the predicaments of the Indian bureaucratic structure such as under-staffing, over-reliance on senior researchers and a high profile leadership, the importance of personal linkages and, issues related to the declining quality of research on international relations. If a brief comparison is undertaken between think tanks in India and their counterparts in China and South East Asia, though some aspects of informal and positional influence are similar, a crucial aspect found missing is that of "horizontal linkages"[90] or "horizontal communications."[91]

With limited political authority and significant lack of access to official documents, the policy impact of Indian think tanks remains questionable. There is however, a general recognition in India that the growing numbers of Indian think tanks strengthen India's strategic discourse and thus increase the quality and effectiveness of the policymaking process. The role of intellectual capital at Indian think tanks is also important. There have been some arguments about a possible division of labour wherein,

> while decision makers behave along an established pattern without necessarily realising that their behaviour conform to a certain pattern, it is researchers and academics who often uncover these patterns, or say, provide a certain big picture argument to their actions.[92]

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[90] Bonnie S. Glaser and Phillip C. Saunders, "Chinese Civilian Foreign Policy Research Institutes: Evolving Roles and Increasing Influence," *The China Quarterly*, 171, September 2002, pg. 600

[91] David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *The China Quarterly,* 171, September 2002, pg. 580

[92] Happymon Jacob, *Does India Think Strategically?* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014), pg. 14

In addition, it is argued that "at their best, they can play a big role in advising governments on sound policy, enabling increasingly important dialogue with a variety of stakeholders and interpreting obscure policy issues for the broader public."[93]

The public opinion mobilisation role played by think tanks is also in line with Gramsci's focus. For Gramsci, the state uses,

> private organisations [in this case think tanks] to mobilise, to advance its own causes, to legitimise and promote its own interests. The elites for their part, embody what Gramsci describes as 'state spirit' and become relevant for some decisions and are used for generating public opinion in others.[94]

This aspect of state-think tank cooperation will be expanded in later chapters through examination of think tank linkages with the foreign policy establishment in India. This will be done through an examination of the role of think tanks in perhaps one of the most recurrent and problematic issues of India's foreign policy – that is, its relations with Pakistan. Think tanks have devoted significant attention to the dynamics of the Indo-Pak conflict and have been active participants in the development of the peace process and India's Pakistan policy. In providing a neutral space for the articulation of ideas on contentious issues like Kashmir and supporting the CD process initiated by the two governments, think tanks have engaged with the element of incrementalism to Indo-Pak peacebuilding and been influential in the track two dialogue processes, that are crucial for the sustainability of the peace process.

The India-Pakistan Dialogue – a test case for Think Tank Influence

While clearly a crucial concern for Indian foreign policy, relations with Pakistan also represent a significant area of interest for Indian think tanks. As mentioned earlier, the security dynamics in the 1960s and the Indo-Pak War in 1965 in particular, prompted an emphasis on research on security and strategic policy. The IDSA was also established in 1965 and continues to be a key forum for research and policy relevant analysis on India's security concerns. India's Pakistan policy has prompted significant research both in official and unofficial circles and this would be a good test case for the interaction between think tank and policy. This thesis will critically

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[93] Dhruv Jaishankar, "Can India's Think Tanks be Truly Effective?" *The Huffington Post India,* 15 April, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.in/dhruva-jaishankar/can-indias-think-tanks-be_b_9688434.html
[94] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 128

examine think tank discourse on Pakistan as well as mobilisation of public opinion in support of the dialogue with Pakistan. The analysis of think tank discourse on Pakistan and its articulation of Indian concerns will be particularly helpful given the absence of causal connections between policy ideas from think tanks making their way into formal policy.

A comprehensive analysis of the nuanced nature of India-Pakistan relations is beyond the purview of this research project; however a historical backgrounder is of necessity here. Since 1947, Indo-Pak relations have been characterised by several disputes and differing consensus on some key issues; the two most often disputed elements being, the struggle over Kashmir and the contested borders, complicated further by four wars fought in 1948, 1965, 1971 and most recently in 1998 in Kargil. Pakistan's support to extremist and separatist groups in Kashmir which have allegedly carried out acts of terrorism in India and have strengthened the secessionist elements in Indian Kashmir, are a big concern for India. In addition, other problems like the sharing of river waters; drug trafficking; territorial disputes in Sir Creek and Siachen; disagreements regarding the economic arrangements required for trade cooperation and above all a general perception of mistrust on both sides of the border owing to a troubled history continue to be crucial.

While resolution of some operational issues like the advance notification of military exercises, non-violation of each other's air spaces, a formal agreement on exchange of information regarding nuclear power research facilities and a commitment not to attack each other's nuclear installations and a hotline between the Indian and Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs) were established in 1990; relations have remained troublesome. The longest sustained and institutionalised effort at peace between India and Pakistan was the Composite Dialogue (CD) which was formalised in 2004 and continued till 2013 with some periods of disruption. The CD framework comprises discussions on the following issues;

1. Peace and Security
2. Jammu and Kashmir
3. Sir Creek
4. Siachen
5. Terrorism
6. Drug Trafficking
7. Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation project
8. Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields.

The dialogue was structured on an incremental approach - a "two plus six formula".[95] With working groups constituted for each of the issues, the Kashmir issue and; peace and security were to be handled at the level of foreign secretaries while the rest of the six issues would be handled by other relevant secretaries and technical committees. The CD also represented a significant step towards normalization of Indo-Pak relations and it was argued "provided the framework within which it became possible for the first time to talk about a 'peace process' between India and Pakistan."[96] It is further reasoned that, "as a mechanism for conflict management/resolution, it was unprecedented. From India's perspective it reflected the decision to move from tactics and brinkmanship towards a decisive strategy for productive engagement with Pakistan."[97] The CD also highlights the different levels at which the peace process operated. Underlining the importance of political will, Gopinath writes

the political leadership in this instance was ahead of their security and foreign policy establishments to grapple with the 'trust deficit' between the two countries, stake their reputations, and take on the ire of the recalcitrant domestic communities and critics to invest in peace.[98]

India's foreign policy regarding Pakistan has generated both official and unofficial interest and while governments and bureaucracies have dealt with the conflict at an official level, research institutions and think tanks have also taken a keen interest. Most foreign and security policy think tanks in India have an active research and advocacy component centred on policy towards Pakistan. The initiation of the formal dialogue and the nuances of Indo-Pak relations created further interest in the research community and in addition to providing research insights, think tanks have interfaced with the formal dialogue processes from time to time – both in providing advisory policy ideas and by becoming active participants in the track two and track three initiatives. Along with a significant collection of research publications, interviews conducted at 14 think tanks in Delhi further highlighted the think tank interest in Indo-Pak relations. Further chapters in this thesis will assess the think tanks' individual interpretations of India's relationship with Pakistan, the next section however will highlight how developments at the dialogue front also reflected a growth in think tanks in India at the same time.

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[95] SumonaDasGupta, "Kashmir and the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue Process", *RSIS Working Paper,* 291, 21 May 2015, pg. 2
[96] Meenakshi Gopinath, "Processing Peace: To Speak in a Different Voice", *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 4:2, Winter 2012 pg. 4
[97] ibid
[98] ibid

Think Tank Evolution and the Indo-Pak Peace Process

The period when the CD was most active created new spaces for out of the box thinking on Indo-Pak relations and also created an atmosphere conducive for new think tanks and research organisations to emerge, concurrent with a more liberal funding structure that enabled more foreign funding. The process itself, from the perception of the Indian government,

aimed at moving away from a purely state-centric approach; involved steps that have never been taken before like, the opening up of the LoC or the traditional trade routes; in terms of stakeholders it was both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' process – involving for the first time, the people of India and Pakistan with an orientation to work at all different levels of state and civil society and; it focused on stabilising the relationship even when threatened by spoilers.[99]

As representatives of civil society, the dialogue provided Indian think tanks an opportunity to engage with the policy debates and possibilities for resolution of the conflict with Pakistan. Think tank interpretation of the Indo-Pak relationship is reflected in their adopted agendas and institutional positions; their specific peacebuilding related research projects and in their research outputs – publications; policy recommendations and particular policy briefs to the MEA and MoD. In addition to developing discourse, think tanks like the IDSA[100] and ORF have conducted feasibility studies of key governmental initiatives. Think tank elite have also been involved in multi-track processes initiated between the two countries.

It was argued earlier that think tanks that developed in the 1960s and 1970s focused on India's strategic narrative, its defence preparedness and the challenges of a turbulent neighbourhood.[101] The CD however created the space for think tanks with peacebuilding as their focus to emerge. This was reflected in the establishment of the IPCS, DPG, ORF, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) and the specific defence policy think tanks, the NMF, CAPS and CLAWS. Their research agendas display a focus on subjects with specific bearing on Indo-Pak relations such as the dispute in Kashmir, trade relations between India and Pakistan, examination of causes of militancy and extremism and options for counter-terrorism, strategic

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[99]Comments made by Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon at a think tank event in New Delhi in October 2006. For the report of the event see: Stuti Bhatnagar, Deepti Mahajan and Manjrika Sewak, *Collaborative Explorations: Fifth Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop Report* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2007) pg. 38

[100] Given the need for better understanding of developments in Pakistan, IDSA launched its Pakistan Project in the year 2009. The report was reviewed by a panel of experts in January 2010 and finalized with their inputs and suggestions. The fact that the report was prepared under the leadership of Arvind Gupta is significant as he is the current Deputy NSA in India. Further, initiated by the MEA, in 2009, a field study in J & K evaluated progress on cross LoC CBMs adopted as part of the CD

[101] A Participant interview with a senior academic and strategic analyst in New Delhi on October 7, 2015

military relations with a very specifically defined focus on nuclear security issues.[102] The dialogue process also echoed a focus on people's security, strengthening people to people contact and working specifically to address the trust deficit between the people of India and Pakistan. Therefore, many of these think tanks ran programmes on youth exchanges; interactive workshop formats for civil society participants and small peacebuilding training modules.

The relevance and position of think tanks within the policy process and their ability to assume importance during "critical junctures" is an important aspect here. Critical junctures as described in the previous chapter "refer to particular historical moments that have lasting consequences and can provoke changes in policy."[103] The positive atmosphere of the CD can thus be perceived as a "critical juncture" wherein avenues for policy change in India's relations with Pakistan were available and active civil society engagement was encouraged. Further, on the relevance of think tanks as actors in the formulation of India's Pakistan policy, this thesis will critically examine the way in which think tanks – both governmental and non-governmental expand on the agenda of India's Pakistan policy independent of their funding concerns. Do they seek to set the agenda by introducing new interpretations of the India-Pakistan conflict or do they reproduce the government's assumptions and strategies? While Zimmerman and others have highlighted think tank potential in responding to emerging policy challenges and giving them the opportunity to supply the conceptual language and paradigms for emerging security problems facing Asia,[104] this thesis will argue differently. In India, as the evidence presented in this thesis will show, particularly with respect to India-Pakistan relations, paradigms are established by the state and are subsequently adopted, refined and articulated by think tank research and analysis. This is despite the new avenues made available by the CD process and reflects the Indian state's continued influence on policy directions.

The aspect of think tank relevance and capacity to work within structural constraints visible in India's policymaking apparatus, has also involved the specific position and significance of intellectual elites within think tanks. While DI will provide key tools to analyse discursive

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[102] Karthika Sasikumar has identified that the Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) created by the NSAB after the Kargil war was the beginning of India "seeking to change its informal strategic culture to a more institutionalised one." The NSAB was a crucial forum where think tank elite could interact directly with the policy processes. Karthika Sasikumar, "Learning to Play the Game: Strategic Culture and Nuclear Learning" in Happymon Jacob (ed.) *Does India Think Strategically?* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2014) pg. 34

[103] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change" in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities,* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 208

[104] Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), pg. 30

processes to problematize the relationship between the state and independent agents such as think tanks, Gramsci's emphasis on the "organic intellectuals" in hegemonic projects where specific sets of ideas are funded, generated and disseminated by foundations, think-tanks, publishing houses and NGOs is of particular relevance to this thesis. The examination of Indian think tanks through DI-Gramscian analysis will also respond to the criticism of DI and its over-emphasis on ideas and under-emphasis on material conditions. Structural and material constraints are particularly visible in Indian think tanks, curtailing their ability to impact policy and create viable ideational networks towards institutional change. Thus, a focus on Gramsci will help to take into account think tank proximity to the government in terms of funding as well as the aspect of autonomy and independence of think tank ideas.

Conclusion

To summarise, the literature on Indian think tanks so far has examined their bridging role in providing policy analysis, and while think tanks have been identified in the policy space, their discourse is seen to be lacking in applicability to policy. Further, Indian think tanks are seen as secondary actors and the state-centric foreign policy making structure has been emphasised. There has also been an emphasis on structural and financial constraints on think tanks thereby curtailing their foreign policy role. What has also come to light is the unique role of the intellectual elite in India – represented both in their proximity to formal government structures as well as their role in articulating think tank policy positions. It is this aspect of state-elite collaboration that provides a better understanding of think tank place in policy structures while also accounting for their structural challenges. The emphasis on examining discourse on India's Pakistan policy will provide further clues into this collaborative and symbiotic relationship.

This chapter has highlighted the trajectory of the foreign policy planning process in India and the engagement with civil society and grassroots actors. In elaborating on the structure of policy making, it has taken into account the origins and development of think tanks in India and their changing relevance and position. Furthermore, the chapter has discussed India's policy discourse towards Pakistan, focusing particularly on the structured dialogue process initiated by the CD in 2004. The emphasis has been on the period of the CD as a 'critical juncture' that enabled an expansion of the space for think tanks in India – particularly those dealing with foreign and security policy. From the general, the discussion on Indian think tanks will now move into the particular. The following chapters will provide a comparative analysis of Indian

think tanks through case studies demarcated on the basis of think tank affiliation and support from the Indian government. The analysis will entail comparison of each organisations' membership, leadership and worldviews in addition to comparing their policy ideas and the specific role in generating public opinion on key policy changes. It will be argued that the atmosphere created by the CD represented a "critical juncture" and helped in a broader expansion of India's policy landscape. Using the DI-Gramscian framework, discursive processes – both coordinate and communicative will be highlighted, and the role of the intellectual elite will be analysed.

Chapter Four

Government Think Tanks – Promoting security centred government narratives on Pakistan

The analysis so far has considered the merits of using Gramsci's examination of intellectual elites and DI's emphasis on think tanks as discursive actors. While DI provides a methodological tool to examine think tank interactions, Gramsci enables an understanding of the nature of interactions between intellectual and policy elites and their symbiotic dynamics highlighting the specific collaboration between state and non-state actors like think tanks. In bringing these arguments to the literature on Indian think tanks and its attention to their bridging role in providing policy analysis, chapter three has highlighted the dominant arguments regarding think tanks as actors in the policy space. The discourse at think tanks however, has largely been seen to be lacking in policy relevance and though increasingly perceived as secondary actors, the state-centric foreign policy making structure has been emphasised in India. This chapter and the following two will problematize the role of Indian think tanks further – by critically analysing their role and influence on policymaking and public opinion mobilisation, particularly towards their discourse on Pakistan.

As the evidence in the following sections will indicate, the establishment of these think tanks and the Indian government's support to a body of elites with similar worldviews represents an effort to create consensus on policy directions. This is reminiscent of Gramsci's emphasis on the state's ideological and political power to construct and reconstruct society, politics and economy in the light of changing conditions and crises of social order.[1] In the Indian case too, the need for sustained research on security and strategic studies motivated the institutionalisation of these think tanks. Further, the Indian state has collaborated with these private-non-state entities to create consensus on its policy directions towards Pakistan. This however, differs from state control as understood by elitist or statist conceptions. The discursive interactions between these think tanks and the Indian government indicate that think tanks also benefit from this collaboration - to promote their interests and retain their institutional relevance as outside policy actors. Also of particular significance is the nature of intellectual elites at these government sponsored think tanks. Displaying a certain fluidity, as they move from one think tank to the other, shaped by their need to retain their research and

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[1] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 18

policy relevance, this elite see themselves as part of the state itself, embodying Gramsci's "state sprit".

The element of policy relevance and the construction of popular consensus is also exhibited in think tank discourse on India-Pakistan relations. Research interests and policy outlooks exhibited by these think tanks reflect dominant state narratives on Pakistan, particularly those held by India's defence community and the Foreign Ministry. Government funding sourced from the MEA and the MoD assures close interaction with policymakers and practitioners. Further, think tanks in this category namely - the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA); Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA); Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS); Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) and; National Maritime Foundation (NMF) are staffed by serving officers from each of the three forces and former bureaucrats from the MEA and MoD. Thus, both membership and source of funding comes directly from the government. While government funding addresses resource limitations, it raises questions regarding research autonomy and the expansion of government agendas. Furthermore, it will be questioned if these think tanks break the barriers that government bureaucracies create owing to their futuristic approach, introduce fresh policy agendas and enable better collaboration and dissemination of relevant policy research to policy elites, media and the public?[2]

The analysis of IDSA, ICWA, CAPS, CLAWS, NMF will begin with a focus on the nature of the intellectual elite through a closer examination of membership patterns and institutional worldviews. Elite composition will highlight partnerships and networks, indicating inroads into formal policy making as well as government influence on think tank institutional agendas. It will highlight in detail, the exchange of ideas on India's short and long term policy goals towards Pakistan, between policy elite and think tank intellectual elites and the presence of overlapping ideas centred on national security. Further, through a critical examination of policy discourse on Pakistan, dominant narratives on key issues identified within the CD will be considered. The enquiry into discourses will also bring to light think tank contribution as communicative actors, generating public opinion on prominent issues by critically analysing and popularising significant government initiatives.

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[2]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Role of think tanks in national security" *Forum for Strategic Initiatives,* 12 January, 2015, www.fsidelhi.org

Nature of Intellectual Elite – Patterns in Institutional Worldviews and Collaborations with the State.

The literature as elaborated in Chapter Three provides evidence of the opening up of the Indian policy space to accommodate sustained research on new security concerns particularly after the Indo-Pak war of 1965. The first such attempt was to support the institution of new think tanks that addressed India's lack of focus on strategic affairs and security policy. The following section will provide insights into the institutional worldviews and membership patterns of these think tanks highlighting first the creation of these think tanks with government support and the continued partnerships with the MEA and the MoD – their principal financial sponsors. Secondly, through an examination of the nature and composition of intellectual elites, the similarities in training and intellectual viewpoints will be addressed.

Though operating within their own institutional worldviews and agendas, there does exist an overlap in discourse at government think tanks as will be highlighted in later sections of this chapter. While a common funding agency i.e. the MoD could be a cause, another contributing factor is the similarity in membership patterns visible when the nature and composition of intellectual elite is examined. Intellectual elite at government think tanks come from similar professional backgrounds and have experienced common training methods. The government's role in supporting these elites and institutionalising foreign policy think tanks is also visible. With active interest from Prime Minister Nehru, as early as the 1950s, there was "an attempt to structure a loose foreign policy establishment that sought to bring together public intellectuals, bureaucrats, professionals, businessmen, scholars and journalists under the rubric of ICWA in New Delhi."[3] Members of ICWA Governing body have included former Vice Presidents, Foreign Ministers and senior members of India's bureaucracy. The body of intellectual elites like Tej Bahadur Sapru, H N Kunzru, Sardar Swaran Singh, Jaswant Singh, M S Rajan and A Appadorai have been notable for their contribution to India's foreign policy in the early years. While initially an active forum for debate on foreign policy issues, ICWA declined in influence after Kunzru's death in 1978 and while attempts to revive the institution continued through the 1980s, it did not return to its predominant place.[4] The council was taken

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[3] C. Raja Mohan, "The Making of foreign policy: The Role of scholarship and public opinion", *ISAS Working Paper* (National University of Singapore), 73, 13 July 2009, pg. 5
[4] B Vivekanandan, "A Tribute to life and work of Professor M S Rajan" *International Studies,* 47:4, 2010, pg. 103

over by the MEA in 2001[5] and now serves as a platform for the MEA to host foreign dignitaries in addition to involvement in several initiatives.[6] Its association with the MEA assures regular interaction with the foreign policy machinery and on the other hand, ICWA continues to have a close relationship with the Jawaharlal Nehru University[7] with academic staff predominantly sourced from there.

The Defence Ministry took a similar initiative and the IDSA was established in 1965 with then Defence Minister Yeshwantrao Chavan as one of its founding members. Unlike ICWA, IDSA funding comes from the MoD and the President of the Institute is the Defence Minister himself. Initially ambivalent about including active serving officers, retired armed forces personnel and civil servants associated with the defence ministry were inducted into the new organisation to be joined later by active service officers when the ban was lifted.[8] "In a mutually beneficial arrangement, the armed forces now send three to four research fellows every year to IDSA and the civil services are following suit."[9] The induction of serving officers from the armed forces helped to bridge the gap between a theoretical understanding of security and practitioner experience. Former Director K Subrahmanyam for instance, "combined civil service, journalism, government consulting, and think tank analysis to become a hugely influential figure over decades,"[10]while Jasjit Singh and Uday Bhaskar brought their military experience on board.

At IDSA, the role of this "elite," capable of providing thinking on defence and security issues was important from the beginning. The personal commitment of Chavan, K C Pant and other bureaucrats was also seen responsible for procuring annual grants from the government.[11] The prominence of intellectual elite has been important for IDSA's evolution and credibility as a think tank and represented by former Directors Subrahmanyam, Jasjit Singh, P R Chari, N S

[5] Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface,* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011), pg. 31

[6] It serves as the Secretariat of the CSCAP India Committee (Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific); leads the Delhi Dialogue with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a track 1.5 dialogue between India and ASEAN. Since 2015 it has also been recognised as a member by the UN Academic Impact. https://academicimpact.un.org/sites/academicimpact.un.org/files/Newsletter%20january%20.pdf

[7] The School of International Studies that later merged with JNU was established in Sapru House, under the administration of ICWA.

[8] K Subrahmanyam, "The Birth of the IDSA and Early Years" in N S Sisodia and Sujit Datta (ed.) *India and the World,* Vol. 1 (New Delhi: IDSA, 2005), pp. 1-38

[9]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Role of think tanks in national security" *Forum for Strategic Initiatives,* 12 January, 2015, www.fsidelhi.org

[10]Vipin Narang & Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy", *India Review*, 11:2, 2012, pg. 80

[11] K Subrahmanyam, "The Birth of the IDSA and Early Years" in N S Sisodia and Sujit Datta (ed.) *India and the World,* Vol. 1 (New Delhi: IDSA, 2005), pp. 1-38

Sisodia, K Santhanam, Uday Bhaskar, Arvind Gupta and Jayanta Prasad to name a few, these elites have been known to be involved in shaping defence policy in India.[12] Subrahmanyam's important place in lifting the profile of IDSA has been highlighted very often[13] and his potential in being "able to open the doors for what is now called 'policy-relevant research' and make it a goal worth pursuing for many younger researchers"[14]is also appreciated in the dominant literature. This also resonates with the larger understanding of think tanks as actors bridging knowledge and policy as discussed in previous chapters.

Unlike Subrahmanyam, Jasjit Singh's background was from the Air Force and has often been credited to have given the IDSA a strong international profile in addition to a focus on national security structures in India.[15] Michael Krepon for instance has argued that, Singh was "a rite of passage for US strategic analysts venturing into the subcontinent."[16] Further,

during his last few years at IDSA, he instituted the Asian Security Conference[17], an annual gathering of national and international security experts from all over the world, deliberating on the role of Asia in the changing global order.[18]

While it has been suggested that the concept of a revolving door, i.e. the appointment of think tank staff into the policy administration, of the kind that is visible in American think tanks

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[12] It has been argued that "the IDSA, under his [Subrahmanyam's] leadership, was able to launch a national debate on nuclear policy at a time when the subject seemed so forbidding." Uday Bhaskar for instance has further argued that "through seminars, workshops, lectures and his steady stream of newspaper articles, K Subrahmanyam (KS) shaped the Indian response to the nettlesome nuclear issue and the media became a contested domain." For more on Subrahmanyam's role in India's nuclear debate see: C. Uday Bhaskar, "KS: Vamana of Indian Nuclear Theology?' in C. Uday Bhaskar (Ed.) *Subbu at 75: A Bouquet of Tributes,* (New Delhi: Shri Avtar Printing Press, 2004); C. Raja Mohan, "The Making of foreign policy: The Role of scholarship and public opinion", *ISAS Working Paper* (National University of Singapore) 73, 13 July, 2009, pg. 8

[13] Subrahmanyam was a member of several key governmental committees and a member of a non-hierarchical 'think tank' of officials and non-officials that Verghese had put together as the Information Advisor to PM Indira Gandhi to devise India's response to China's nuclear tests in 1966. Even after retiring as Director, he continued to serve on several committees notably as Chairman of India's Joint Intelligence Committee and Kargil Review Committee (KRC) constituted for reforming India's national security and defence structures in the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil War. For more, Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutions Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research?" *ISAS Working Paper* (National University of Singapore) 67, 16 June, 2009, pg. 6

[14] Vipin Narang & Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews in Indian Foreign Security Policy", *India Review*, 11:2, 2012, pg. 80

[15] Singh was one of the members of the K C Pant committee that visualised a robust national security structure for India. In addition, as a member of the first NSAB, Singh made important contributions to the national defence and national security reviews as well as to the DND for India. He was also involved with the Ministry of Human Resource Development to strengthen teaching of national security in Indian universities.

[16] Michael Krepon, "Jasjit Singh," *Arms Control Wonk,* 12 August, 2013, http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/403863/jasjit-singh/

[17] Conducted every year since 1999, the Conference has emerged as an important platform for debating issues relating to Asian Security. http://www.idsa.in/event/asc

[18] Arvind Gupta "R.I.P. Air Commodore Jasjit Singh AVSM, VrC, VM, IAF (Retd) (1934–2013)", *Strategic Analysis*, 37:6, 2013, pg. 765

needs to be encouraged in India,[19] membership patterns and the trajectory of think tank elites presents evidence of such a practice already in place. IDSA leadership patterns provide proof that a non-institutionalised revolving door exists as several members have held senior government positions subsequent to their engagement with the Institute. Its current DG, Jayanta Prasad appointed in 2015 has held key diplomatic positions and has been a part of the Indo-Pak Chaophraya Track II dialogue.[20] In addition, serving MEA officials have served on deputation at the IDSA and have been at senior leadership positions.[21] Further, experts like K Santhanam[22] who directed the IDSA from 2001-2004, continued to provide scientific inputs as Scientific Advisor to the MEA and as Additional Secretary of the newly constituted NSCS. Former Director N S Sisodia was also closely associated with the NSC, the Strategic Policy Group & the NSAB. More recently, Arvind Gupta who headed the South Asia and Internal Security Centres at IDSA was appointed as the Deputy NSA in PM Narendra Modi's administration.

The IDSA was instituted during a phase when a need for defence and strategic planning was emphasised, particularly after the 1962 and 1965 wars. While it provided a broad understanding of India's national security concerns, there was also a developing need for specialised research on military strategy. To fulfil this, each of the armed forces in India, set up their own think tanks with a specialised and limited agenda. The first among these, CAPS was established in 2001 as an autonomous defence research and analysis body focusing particularly on aerospace and airpower. Run by a trust, CAPS receives funding from the IAF and the MoD and also conducts research projects for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) e.g. on UAVs, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. Its board members include former bureaucrats and retired and serving air force officers with "50 percent of the research staff comprising serving IAF officers thereby creating a good mix of research and operational experience."[23] This is true for CLAWS and NMF as well. The initiative to create CAPS came from Jasjit Singh, former Director at IDSA and it flourished under his leadership and the support of the IAF. As a prominent representative of India's intellectual elite, it has been argued

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[19] A Participant Interview with a senior researcher and Defence Personnel at IDSA, New Delhi on 26 September, 2015

[20] They began in 2009 with three meetings occurring each year. Islamabad based Jinnah Institute and Melbourne based Australia India Institute support the two day meetings which take place at neutral locations including Sri Lanka and Thailand. Each track two meeting culminates in a joint declaration with policy recommendations on specific issues. http://www.chaophrayadialogue.net/

[21] For example, ambassador Virendra Gupta was Deputy DG at IDSA on deputation from 2006-2007

[22] He was conferred the Padma Bhushan award in recognition of contributions to the Shakti-98 series of nuclear tests conducted in Pokhran in May 1998.

[23] A Participant Interview with a Senior Researcher at CAPS, New Delhi on 21 October, 2015

that, "his writing on Joint Operations in the 1980s and 1990s exhorted the Indian Army to understand air power better and recognise its war-winning potential in battles of the future."[24] Further leadership[25] also came from within the Air Force.

CLAWS was similarly led by Vijay Oberoi, former Vice Chief of the Indian Army with operational experience and a distinguished military career. Senior researchers at CLAWS like Gurmeet Kanwal,[26] Dhruv Katoch[27] and the current director B S Nagal[28] have a similar professional background. Affiliated with the Indian Navy, NMF board and staff are also predominantly serving or retired naval officers, with research staff consisting of students and young researchers with a varied profile, specialising in different aspects of India's maritime policy. While Director Vijay Sakhuja is a former navy officer and was Director (Research) at the ICWA from 2009-2014,[29] Executive Director, Gurpreet Khurana, a missile specialist at the Indian Navy was also associated with the IDSA.[30] In the past, strategic experts like C Uday Bhaskar - a prolific writer and commentator on nuclear, maritime, and international security related issues have also been associated with the NMF.[31]

As the older organisation in the group, IDSA has contributed significantly to the evolution of this body of elites and security analysts. The fluidity of the elite in moving from one think to another has often involved an association with IDSA, the first of its kind to encourage sustained

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[24] Arjun Subramaniam, "Warrior, pilot, strategist, scholar" *The Hindu,* 7 August, 2013, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/warrior-pilot-strategist-scholar/article4996360.ece

[25] The current Director General is Air Marshal Vinod Patney, a decorated Air Force officer, awarded the Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal (SYSM) for leading the IAF in the Kargil war, which ultimately proved to be the turning point in Operation Vijay.

[26] Prior to joining CLAWS, Kanwal had operational experience in counter-insurgency in Kashmir and research experience from his work at IDSA, ORF and CAPS

[27] Dhruv Katoch who succeeded Kanwal also has vast experience in sub-conventional conflict, having taken part in Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in Sri Lanka and against terrorists and insurgents in J&K and various states of North East India. He was awarded the Sena Medal while in command of his battalion in active operations on the LoC in J & K.

[28] With 40 years of experience in the Army and two years at the PMO, Nagal is a war veteran of the 1971 Indo-Pak war and his specific areas of interest include Nuclear deterrence, doctrine, strategy and policy. At the PMO, Nagal was known to head a nuclear cell, an Indian version of the Pakistani nuclear secretariat – the Strategic Plans Division. For more see: http://www.claws.in/director.php; Bharat Karnad, "Dedicated Nuclear Cadre" *Security Wise,* 16 August, 2012, https://bharatkarnad.com/2012/08/16/dedicated-nuclear-cadre/

[29] He also has research experience at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore (2006-2014), CAPS, ORF, USI and IDSA.

[30] Khurana is accredited with the first use of the term 'Indo-Pacific' (in 2006-07) in context of strategic/ geo-political academic discourse in India. In early 2009, he joined the Maritime Doctrine and Concept Centre (MDCC) at Mumbai and was awarded the Naval Chief's Commendation for revision of Indian Maritime Doctrine (2009). At MDCC, he compiled the first ever Handbook on the Law of Maritime Operations for the Indian Navy in three volumes.

[31] Bhaskar served in the navy for 37 years and was also Deputy Director at IDSA from 1996-2004. He was later appointed as secretary to the GOI's task force on *Global Strategic Developments*. He is currently Director, Society for Policy Studies, a new think tank in Delhi. http://spsindia.in/

policy relevant research. The attention to developing specialised policy research capacity also encouraged the institution of CAPS, CLAWS and NMF and the presence of serving defence service professionals provided inroads into contemporary policy frameworks with an understanding of operational and ground realities. The institution of these think tanks therefore represented the Indian government's efforts to create consensus on defence policy. The Indian state's collaboration with private forces is also reflective of "Gramsci's notion of 'state spirit' - of a feeling among certain leading private figures and organisations that they bear a grave responsibility to promote a historical process through positive political and intellectual activity."[32] The element of policy relevance and the construction of popular consensus as exhibited in think tank engagement with India-Pakistan relations – one of the most important foreign policy concerns for the Indian state will be considered in further sections of this chapter.

Think Tank Contribution to Policy Discourse

While funding and membership patterns are similar, a closer look at the discourse emerging from these think tanks is also important – particularly with regards to India-Pakistan relations. Dominant discourse, reflected in research projects and policy recommendations centres on national security with a focus on threats from a failing Pakistani state with basic irreconcilable ideological differences with India. The interest that each think tank displays towards relations with Pakistan is also based on their specialised research agendas and the interest of their donors. It is also reflective of the similarity in viewpoints with the defence and foreign policy community in India from which these government think tanks receive their funding and patronage. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the structure of the CD provided space for alternative thinking on Pakistan, creating the opportunity to expand on government agenda. Government-affiliated think tank discourse however as the evidence will point out perpetuates security centred narratives on Pakistan, side-lining and under-emphasising alternative conceptualisations on resolution of key conflicts. Government think tanks have also not engaged substantially with issues of trade, people to people contact or the Sir Creek dispute, even though it concerns India's maritime borders – a key security focus particularly since the Mumbai attacks – reflecting again their dependence on cues from funding agencies. The following sections will critically analyse policy discourse from these think tanks elaborating on policy ideas and dominant narratives on the basket of issues under consideration in the CD. Significant issues under consideration have been the debate on nuclear doctrines; the conflict

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[32] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pg. 18

in Jammu and Kashmir including but not limited to ideas on political status and the specificities of the dispute regarding Indus Waters; Siachen and the recurring problem of cross-border terrorism – a considerable issue of concern between India and Pakistan.

Nuclear Security – IDSA, CAPS and NMF have considered the debate on India's national security doctrine and the dominant arguments focus on the predominant and detrimental role played by the Pakistan army and doctrinal and operational distinctions between India and Pakistan's nuclear doctrine that has the potential to negatively impact the nuclear CBMs proposed within the CD. The discourse that emerges perpetuates dominant state narratives of a nuclear threat from Pakistan and while critical of any dilution of India's position and its nuclear capabilities, does offer some suggestions for the expansion of the dialogue agenda on nuclear issues. Intellectual elite, particularly Subrahmanyam and Jasjit Singh were involved in debates on India's acquisition of nuclear weapons, and the concept of 'minimum credible deterrence' as a viable nuclear policy alternative for India was advocated extensively by IDSA.[33]

The subversion of India's nuclear deterrence doctrine to Pakistan's use of proxy wars and sub-conventional warfare is also amply highlighted in the discourse in addition to narratives that highlight Pakistan's use of nuclear weapons as a strategy of "offensive-defence."[34]Nuclear threats from Pakistan and linkages between terrorism and nuclear weapons is further emphasised in CAPS discourse. It is argued that Pakistan's policy of "terrorism under a nuclear umbrella" is further "legitimised in Pakistani military as sanctioned by religion."[35]The fact that this viewpoint comes from the founder of the organisation is notable. Further arguments have highlighted Pakistan's strategy of "using its nuclear weapons for decades – but in a covert, politico-diplomatic manner against the whole world - and India in particular,"[36]while India's 'no-first use' doctrine has led to a dilution of its strategic advantage.

Discourse has also elaborated on the nuclear CBMs adopted within the CD and has articulated the reframing of the nuclear dialogue to include "appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure implementation of CBMs" and to establish a strategic dialogue

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[33] For more see, Anit Mukherjee, "K. Subrahmanyam and Indian Strategic Thought" *Strategic Analysis*, 35:4, 2011, pp. 710-713 and Gurmeet Kanwal, "Role of think tanks in national security" *Forum for Strategic Initiatives,* 12 January, 2015, www.fsidelhi.org

[34]Shalini Chawla, "How do we deal with Pakistan?" *CAPS Issue Brief,* 93: 13, 13 August, 2013, pg. 3

[35] Jasjit Singh, "War through Terror under the Nuclear Umbrella," *CAPS Issue Brief*, 1: 2, 5 December, 2008, pg.1

[36]C. Uday Bhaskar, "No Snakes in the Backyard: Clinton to Kayani", original article in Hindi in *Dainik Jagran,* 22 October, 2011, http://post.jagran.com/no-snakes-in-the-backyard-1320489442

mechanism.[37] Further, Indian policy should also, it is argued take, "immediate measures at least in the sphere of short-range and tactical ballistic missiles"[38] both as a diplomatic strategy as well as levelling the lacunae in the nuclear doctrines between India and Pakistan. Policy recommendations also stressed on the need to amend the "massive punitive retaliation" clause in the nuclear doctrine review of 2003 to one of "flexible punitive retaliation" keeping in mind the "failed state" status of Pakistan and its implications on India's security."[39]

A noteworthy idea that has been popularised in the think tank discourse is the connection between China and the development of Pakistan's nuclear programme – an aspect that has gained significant traction in Indian policy narratives. A strategic dialogue with Pakistan and China is thus recommended for clarity on concepts of nuclear deterrence.[40] The expansion of the nuclear dialogue to a trilateral India-Pakistan-China level is also recommended keeping in mind China's nuclear weapons/missiles related assistance to Pakistan.[41] Similar to assertions at IDSA and CAPS, China's nuclear capability is also of interest to NMF particularly its assistance to the Pakistan navy and its "plans for getting a nuclear submarine capability."[42] Thus, while NMF and CAPS stress on the relevance of the nuclear dialogue to its funding agencies, the Indian Navy and IAF respectively, the IDSA affiliated with the MoD has taken a broader perspective aimed at strengthening the government's formulations on nuclear CBMs with Pakistan.

Kashmir – The CD approach to resolution of the Kashmir conflict was essentially two-pronged. It first sought to address the cross-border element of the conflict exacerbated by Pakistani support and secondly, aimed to tackle the considerable human security concerns within Kashmir and to rebuild trust and reconciliation with the people. Think tank discourse has adopted this dual formulation but continues to reflect the dominant policy narratives – thus the conflict in Kashmir is perceived first and foremost as a law and order situation that must be resolved primarily by continued Indian government and military control. There are suggestions that focus on humanitarian efforts yet the predominant arguments are based on the politics of

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[37]Ali Ahmed, "Reconciling Doctrines: Prerequisite for Peace in South Asia," *IDSA Monograph Series*, 3, September 2010
[38] Abhijit Iyer Mitra, "Long-Term Gain must be the aim" *Nuclear Newsletter*, (CAPS) 7: 17 July, 2013
[39] Ali Ahmed "Pakistani Nuclear Use and Implications for India", *Strategic Analysis*, 34:4, 2010, pp. 531-544
[40]Ali Ahmed, "Reviewing India's Nuclear Doctrine", *IDSA Policy Brief,* 24 April, 2009
[41]Sheel Kant Sharma, "Strategic Situation: India Pakistan" *CAPS Issue Brief,* 86: 13, 28 February, 2013, pg. 1
[42]Abhijit Singh, "Pakistan Navy's 'Nuclear' Aspirations" *IDSA Comment,* 29 June, 2012, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/PakistanNavysNuclearAspirations_AbhijitSingh_290612

the conflict – both within Kashmir and with Pakistan. As the two think tanks directly associated with the Indian Army, discourse at CLAWS and IDSA has engaged significantly with the debates on the army's role in maintaining law and order in Kashmir. In addition to focusing on Pakistan's motivations for escalating the conflict in Kashmir, opinions at CLAWS have reflected a negative opinion on back-channel diplomacy explained by the lack of control the government in Pakistan has over its foreign policy. CLAWS discourse has therefore focused significantly on the "deep state"[43] in Pakistan that exists beyond the civilian government and one that India needs to engage with, keeping lines of communication open.[44] On the political status of J & K and internal dissent, viewpoints at IDSA too, remain firmly in support of the Indian government's policy arguing that any concessions on *Azaadi* in Kashmir "will have a domino effect on other states seeking secession from the Indian state."[45] Other policy debates at IDSA have focused on Article 370 and its impact on integration in J & K; the use of force by the Indian government and possible attempts towards decentralization through strengthening of local government institutions in the region. While implementation of CBMs with Pakistan was favoured, caution with regards to the pursuit of a soft-border policy was advised.[46]

The contact with the MoD and the army presented to both IDSA and CLAWS the ability to critically examine Kashmir CBMs with insights from the field. IDSA research for instance has elaborated on the relevance of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and other counter-insurgency strategies, adding significantly to the public discourse on these complicated issues. The AFSPA study[47] expands on the debate from the human rights and international humanitarian law perspective and also offers policy recommendations on addressing grievances and improving available safeguards against misuse.[48] IDSA also conducted a feasibility study on the adopted Cross LoC CBMs at the MoD and MEA's behest. Based on extensive field work in J & K, it evaluated progress and argued that "the benefits of cross LoC

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[43] The deep state in Kanwal's definition is the collective action of the Pakistan army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). For more see, Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's 'Deep State' continues to Sponsor Terrorism" *CLAWS Article,* 1417, 9 August, 2015, http://www.claws.in/1417/pakistans-deep-state-continues-to-sponsor-terrorism-brig-gurmeet-kanwal.html

[44] Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistani army firing across LoC: raising the Ante in Kashmir" *CLAWS Article,* 1271, 18 October, 2014, http://www.claws.in/1271/pakistan-army-firing-across-loc-raising-the-ante-in-kashmir-brig-gurmeet-kanwal.html

[45]Roundtable on "Current Developments in J & K" organised by IDSA, New Delhi, 28 August, 2008

[46]"Internal Security," *IDSA Policy Brief*, June 2009

[47]Vivek Chadha (ed.) "Armed Forces Special Powers Act- The Debate," *IDSA Monograph Series*, 7, November 2012

[48] ibid

CBMs outweigh the costs and there is need to improve existing mechanisms and increase opportunities for more cross-LoC contacts."[49] Spanning all three regions of the state, the study was aimed at acquiring regional perspectives on the cross-LoC interactions and evaluating problems and prospects regarding its implementation. It also sought opinions on other proposed routes under consideration.[50] Thus, the government in this particular case, used the IDSA as a tool to gather public opinion on a key policy.

The report also highlighted that the initiative achieved the humanitarian objective of enabling divided families to travel and visit each other but also served an "unintended purpose," of changing and demystifying perceptions about "bad India" and "good Pakistan"[51] making "Pakistani propaganda untenable". The "continued need for stringent security measures to ensure that the LoC does not compromise India's security"[52] was also reiterated.

While AFSPA is considered crucial, there have been recommendations on reduced visibility of security forces and penalty against human rights violations. The army's humanitarian position has also been popularised by CLAWS through promotion of the WHAM (Winning Hearts and Minds) strategy that uses a "human-centric" approach[53] and has "enabled conflict zones to return to an environment where the political process can lead to conflict resolution and enablement of the civil administration to carry out its functions."[54]CLAWS research has also highlighted the role played by Operation *Sadhbhavana*[55] initiated by the army in 1998. IDSA discourse too has paid attention to both WHAM[56]and Op *Sadhbhavana* as important for the promotion of goodwill for the army and reduce hostility towards the counter-insurgency operations.[57]

Even though policy discourse at both CLAWS and IDSA considered the army's role as essential in Kashmir, there are differences in their perspectives on the dialogue process. While

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[49]Arpita Anant and Smruti Pattanaik, "Cross-LoC Confidence Building Measures between India and Pakistan: A Giant Leap or a Small Step towards Peace?" *IDSA Issue Brief,* 12 February, 2010, pg. 1

[50] ibid

[51] ibid

[52] ibid

[53] WHAM is described as a process of seeking the consent of the population for armed forces presence by accepting its necessity due to disturbed conditions in the area. Rahul K Bhonsle, "Winning Hearts and Minds: Lessons from Jammu and Kashmir" *Manekshaw Papers* 14 (New Delhi: CLAWS, 2009)

[54] ibid

[55] Through Operation *Sadhbhavana*, the army provides health care to remote and inaccessible areas, conducts medical camps, run forward medical centres, Remote Area Support Posts, mobile medical teams.

[56] Vivek Chadha, "Heart as a Weapon': A Fresh Approach to the Concept of Hearts and Minds," *IDSA Policy Brief,* 16 November, 2011

[57]Arpita Anant, "Counter-insurgency and "Op Sadhbhavana" in Jammu and Kashmir," *IDSA Occasional Paper,* 19, October 2011

official dialogue too played with the idea of involving separatist leadership in Kashmir, perspectives from CLAWS called for restricting access of separatist leaders to meet with Pakistani officials. IDSA however has recommended track two talks in the spirit of 'insaniyat' as indicated by Vajpayee and maximum autonomy by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. The role of the Hurriyat conference too, in contrast to CLAWS's position is considered crucial to ensuring a lasting settlement. It is argued that bridging the psychological and emotional disconnect, "central and state leadership must take back the space that has been occupied by hard-line elements."[58] Discourse at IDSA reflects a sustained engagement with the nuanced nature of civil-military dynamics in Kashmir and has called for an all-party consensus on issues like terrorism, in the national interest, without the interference of local politics.[59] In addition, the support to militants from the Kashmiri population is considered "a reality check both for the administrative machinery of the state and security forces"[60]and considered crucial for the military response. The changing dynamics after the Amarnath agitation[61] in 2008 further opened up the discourse with policy ideas calling for "the revisiting of New Delhi's relationship with the Kashmir valley"[62] and adopting new policy directions on Kashmir. Policy ideas included –

initiating less restrictive security policies, bettering human rights record of the security forces, ensuring that funds given to the state are utilised in a manner that improves the standard of living of the common people, improving the connectivity of the state with India and with PoK and implementing the recommendations of the various working groups set up by the Prime Minister.[63]

The proximity to the MoD has however assured an extensive focus on the security situation in Kashmir as well as military responses to "proxy war" by Pakistan. Policy recommendations have argued for possible military retaliation "through selective elimination of terrorist leaders

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[58]Vivek Chadha, "Kashmir: Finding Lasting Peace," *IDSA Policy Brief,* 26 June, 2014, http://www.idsa.in/policybrief/KashmirFindingLastingPeace_vchadha_260614
[59]Vivek Chadha, "Security situation in J & K: A Reality Check", *IDSA Comment*, 28 June, 2013, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/SecuritySituationinJandK_vchadha_280613
[60] ibid
[61] In 2008, the decision of the GOI and the state government of J & K to allocate land to the Amarnath Shrine Board was met with protests from the valley. The plan to allocate land to build temporary shelters for pilgrims to the Shrine was however supported by populations in the Jammu region of the state. The mass protests brought out the difference in perceptions between the two regions and reignited debates on the political status of Kashmir.
[62] "Internal Security" *IDSA Policy Brief* , June 2009
[63] ibid

across the border" and "maintaining the right of hot pursuit" and "destruction of terrorist launch pads in PoK."[64]

Disputes around Indus Waters - The dispute over Indus Waters has several layers of complexity. While essentially an issue of resource politics, dominant perspectives have connected the debate with the political conflict in Kashmir. There is however a presumption that the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) represented a success story in Indo-Pak negotiations – a basis for resolution of disputes like the Wullar Barrage.[65] This aspect of successful negotiations was seen to be replicated within its inclusion into the CD. At defence policy think tanks however, the debates around the IWT centred around water as a political tool and the linkages with the Kashmir conflict took prominence.[66]

It was only at IDSA that significant interest was taken in the provisions of the IWT and its utility considering changed hydrological circumstances and possibilities for renegotiation. This was motivated by IDSA's researchers with specific expertise on South Asian water conflicts and their involvement in several government initiatives.[67]While the primary position is that the treaty provisions are more advantageous to Pakistani concerns as a lower riparian state, the terms for the modification of the treaty however are not implicitly addressed[68] in the discourse. Yet, the discourse has emphasized that "given the nature of sub-continental politics, there will be an increasing use of water as a 'tool and a bargaining instrument' in the larger politico-strategic objective."[69] Indian policy directions therefore should include "inventive diplomacy based on linkages, trade-offs, bargains and delaying tactics"[70] and in renegotiating the IWT, a

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[64]Ashwani Gupta, "Ballot bites the bullet: Pakistan's desperate tactics in Kashmir" *CLAWS Article,* 1300, 9 December, 2014, http://www.claws.in/1300/ballot-bites-the-bullet-pakistans-desperate-tactics-in-kashmir-ashwani-gupta.html

[65] The dispute was over a barrage or dam that India wanted to construct on the Jhelum River just below the Wullar Lake. Pakistan's contention is that the lake is not suitable for a dam of any size as it would inundate Srinagar and the valley. The Indian argument is that it would be used to maintain navigability in the Jhelum River during lean months. The construction was abandoned once the dispute started and ten rounds of talks have been held but with little progress. Pakistan has argued that India violated Article I (II) of the IWT which prohibits both parties from undertaking any "man-made obstruction" that may cause change in the volume of the daily flow of waters unless it is of an insignificant amount.

[66] Uttam Kumar Sinha "Water a Pre-eminent Political Issue between India and Pakistan," *Strategic Analysis*, 34:4, July 2010, pg. 483

[67] Uttam Kumar Sinha has conducted significant research on the IWT. In addition, he is currently on the technical advisory board of the South Asia Water Governance Programme and a policy advisory role to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in Kathmandu. He was also India's representative to the CSCAP Working Group on Water Resources Security and Chaired the Working Group on Water Dispute Resolution Mechanism of the Strategic Studies Network, National Defense University, Washington DC.

[68] Uttam Kumar Sinha, "India and Pakistan: Introspecting the Indus Treaty," *Strategic Analysis*, 32:6, November 2008, pp. 961-967

[69]ibid, pg. 962

[70]ibid, pg. 966

potential "joint mechanism to study the actual flow of water and an assessment of the impact of climate change on the scarcity" was recommended.[71]

Siachen - In addition to Sir Creek, the CD process also regarded the Siachen dispute as a "low hanging fruit" owing to the grave humanitarian costs of sustaining military deployment in the area. Yet, while the official dialogue failed to achieve a consensus on demilitarisation, discourse at think tanks also remained sceptical with some debate on the humanitarian aspect of the dispute. The humanitarian aspects and the options for possible withdrawal are however not encouraged as they go against the dominant perspectives on Siachen seen primarily through a national security lens. Early writing at IDSA refuted the Pakistani claims on Siachen and justified Indian military action in 1984 as a reaction to the Pakistani decision to send military patrols to the east of the Saltoro Ridge and on to the Siachen glaciers.[72] Its proximity to the MoD and the army viewpoints are also reflected in the institutional discourse. Broad perspectives identify Siachen as an issue of national security – ideational, cartographic and intimately linked to the unresolved issue of J & K. In addition, it is argued that while ecological and human security threats are real and could create incentives for resolution, "it is unlikely that policy elites will make any concession"[73]on the dispute. For dominant opinion at CLAWS too, a withdrawal from Siachen represents a weakening of India's strategic and political position on Kashmir.

While the dispute remains unresolved after several rounds of negotiations, the 2012 Gayari avalanche reiterated the human cost arguments and indicated a softer stance from Pakistan with the Army Chief Kayani's emphasis on demilitarisation. Opinions at IDSA appeared split on the possibility of demilitarisation. One view perceived it as an opportunity to "re-evaluate national security, ecological security and human security" and recommended for India and Pakistan "to conduct more joint scientific studies and without any loss of face on either side, put in place an AGPL [Actual Ground Position Line] agreement within a reasonable time frame."[74] The opposing perspective, relying primarily on Pakistani vernacular media reports,

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[71]Uttam Kumar Sinha "Water a Pre-eminent Political Issue between India and Pakistan," *Strategic Analysis*, 34:4, July 2010, pg.485
[72]Jasjit Singh (ed.) *Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – Under the jackboot* (New Delhi: Siddhi Books, 1995)
[73]P K Gautam, "Issues of National, Ecological and Human Security in the Siachen Glacier Region," *IDSA Comment,* 25 April, 2012,
http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/IssuesofNationalEcologicalandHumanSecurityintheSiachenGlacierRegion_pk gautam_250412
[74]ibid

argued that the Pakistani intent is questionable and the onus "is squarely on Indian shoulders"[75] to enable an environment suitable for resolution of thorny issues. Further apprehensions characterised the Siachen issue as a "legacy of Partition and Pakistani aggression"[76] and was critical of the UPA's decision to resume dialogue with Pakistan in early 2012. This argument based on Pakistani objectives in the war effort in Afghanistan, upheld the continued need for India to maintain military presence and not "throw away the strategic gains"[77] in Siachen. This viewpoint is also endorsed by CLAWS that expands on the ramifications of a possible withdrawal on cross border infiltrations on the LoC and the prevalence of terrorist infrastructure in PoK which is likely to become more emboldened with the changing political situation in Afghanistan.[78] Offering a nuanced perspective yet one that has not gained traction, former director at CLAWS Gurmeet Kanwal is one of the few who has highlighted that opposition and criticism to prospects for withdrawal have not been understood and that since verification and monitoring will be jointly conducted, there are significant merits to such a policy.[79] Thus, even though there are dissenting voices both from IDSA and CLAWS calling for a studied understanding of a possible withdrawal, keeping in mind vigilant monitoring – these are not incorporated into the discourse as squarely.

Terrorism – The analysis of Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir and the use of terrorism as a political tool is a common yet predictable thread within think tank discourse particularly when funding comes from the MoD and the MEA. There was no space in the discourse to refute this claim but policy ideas instead engaged with possible responses from India. Analysing Pakistan's "deep state" for instance, CLAWS discourse makes a distinction between 'good terrorists' who are considered 'strategic assets' and are employed to destabilise neighbouring countries such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the Haqqani network and the 'bad terrorists' like the Tehrik-e-Taliban who are enemies of the state. It has been asserted that "the roots of the conflict and insurgency in J & K are in PoK and India must be pro-active in launching trans-LoC operations against them."[80] IDSA

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[75]Ashok Behuria, "Deciphering Kayani-speak: One Avalanche leads to Another?" *IDSA Comment,* April 20, 2012
[76] Ramesh Phadke, "A Siachen Resolution: Why Now?" *IDSA Comment*, 8 November, 2012, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/ASiachenResolutionWhyNow_rphadke_081112
[77] ibid
[78] Rahul Singh, "Action Please not words", *CLAWS*, 21 June, 2012, http://www.claws.in/855/action-please-not-words-rohit-singh.html
[79]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Demilitarisation of the Siachen Conflict Zone: An Idea whose Time has Come" *CLAWS Journal,* Winter 2012, pg. 85
[80]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's 'Deep State' continues to Sponsor Terrorism" *CLAWS Article,* 1417, 9 August, 2015, http://www.claws.in/1417/pakistans-deep-state-continues-to-sponsor-terrorism-brig-gurmeet-kanwal.html

engagement too, highlighted PoK as a safe haven for "a vast network of terrorist training camps, religious centres and schools and weapons stores."[81]It is also argued that the region is likely to emerge as what is referred to as "the epicentre of Global Jihad"[82] particularly with regards to developments in Afghanistan.

As the formal dialogue process took a turn for the worse after the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the efficacy of engagement with Pakistan and emphasis on tackling terrorism became pronounced. As public opinion shifted, in IDSA discourse too, the resumption of the CD was perceived as "counterproductive if undertaken before it [Pakistan] has shown an inclination to wind down the infrastructure of terror."[83] It was recommended that,

India should remain in touch with various constituencies in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh and Balochistan; develop long term contacts with *Shias, Ismailis, Barelvis, Sindhis and Mohajirs* to encourage them to take a firm stand against the Taliban; involve Indian Muslims, particularly the Barelvis and Shias to establish contacts in Pakistan.[84]

Additionally it was recommended that India should retain its "leverage particularly in the context of water and cyber issues and not give in to Pakistani blackmail on water and instead propose re-negotiation of the Indus Water Treaty."[85] Although IDSA discourse became critical of the efficacy of the promotion of people to people contact, its association with the MoD prompted suggestions for an engagement with Pakistan's military leadership.[86] It argued for the need,

to adopt a multi-track approach, a sort of 'composite back-channel' in which the intelligence agencies comprise one track, the military leaders another track in which they discuss military and security related matters, while a third track can discuss larger strategic perceptions, outlooks and assessments. All these various tracks can then provide inputs to the political back-channel.[87]

In addition, the use of military force against further terrorist attacks coming from Pakistan was recommended even if - "merely symbolic, a quick and 'declared' limited response against the

[81] Wilson John, "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir: An Emerging Epicentre of Global Jihad" in K Warikoo (ed.) *The Other Kashmir- society, culture and politics in the Karakoram Himalayas* (New Delhi: IDSA, 2014), pg. 307
[82] ibid
[83] "Brief on India's neighbourhood," *IDSA Policy Brief*, 28 May, 2009, pg. 2
[84] ibid
[85] ibid
[86] Sushant Sareen, "Need for a composite back-channel with Pakistan Army" *IDSA Comment*, 7 January, 2011, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/NeedforacompositebackchannelwithPakistanarmy_ssareen_070111
[87] ibid

terrorist infrastructure within Pakistan."[88] Recommendations also suggested a "tactically agile diplomatic offensive" that should also "encompass the Track II realm, where the services of the retired government officials as well as that of academics and think tanks could be utilised."[89]At CLAWS too, the military option as well as a focus on rising fundamentalism in Pakistan and its repercussions on India were articulated.

Policy inputs discussed in this section hence indicate that the focus at these think tanks has been on dominant state narratives on Pakistan. Even though some alternate and new policy ideas have come forward, dominant discourse has preferred to set them aside and any paradigmatic change in India's policy towards Pakistan is not articulated. The proximity to funding bodies namely the MoD and the MEA has meant that research agendas continue to be informed by sponsors. This is also due to similarities in membership patterns and institutional worldviews analysed in previous sections. The government in India has therefore, as argued by DI-Gramscian perspective attempted to create a consensus on policy directions on Pakistan. Yet, close cooperation with government thinking is also in the self-interest of these think tanks who need to hold on to their linkages and patronage from the government – to retain their policy relevance. Another critical aspect of policy making that these think tanks are involved in is the promotion of government policy which will be highlighted in the next section through the consideration of their role as communicative actors that work in collaboration with the state.

Think Tank Contribution as Communicative Actors

In addition to policy recommendations, the close proximity to policy makers means that government think tanks also contribute to mobilisation of public opinion, particularly on India's policy towards Pakistan. Further, practitioner experience and the role of the intellectual elite also enables a close relationship with policymakers and an insight into government policy that is not commonly available. There is also an exchange of policy ideas through research publications in addition to classified policy inputs relayed directly to the Policy Planning Division of the MEA. The government on its part has also used the research expertise from these think tanks to garner public opinion on new policy initiatives that were introduced as part of the CD.

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[88]Arvind Gupta, S. Kalyanaraman & Ashok K. Behuria, "India–Pakistan Relations After the Mumbai Terror Attacks: What Should India Do?" *Strategic Analysis*, 33:3, May 2009, pg. 322
[89]ibid

The role of IDSA is particularly significant in this regard. The specific studies on AFSPA and Cross-LoC interactions that were highlighted in the previous section were initiated by the MEA and in addition to generating a public debate on government policy, also enabled the government to gain insights from public discourse. IDSA discourse thus contributed to the public understanding of debates on strategic issues, nuclear weapons doctrines as well as the finer points of the Siachen conflict. This role was particularly useful as there are limited avenues for insights into government policy in India, particularly on issues of defence policy. IDSA's role, first visible in popularising the debate on nuclear weapons particularly by Subrahmanyan has been discussed earlier. On the Indo-Pak dimension, IDSA contributed to generating public opinion with comprehensive research projects that focus on the nature of the Pakistani state, its power structure, role of the military and religion in Pakistani politics and the political dynamics in PoK. To this end, IDSA launched its Pakistan Project in the year 2009. The report of the project was prepared under the leadership of Arvind Gupta, then Director of the Institute and currently Deputy NSA. The report titled *Whither Pakistan? Growing Instability and Implications for India* finalised in 2010 and subsequent follow up reports titled *Pakistan on the Edge* (December 2012) and *Unending Violence in Pakistan: Analysing the Trends, 2013-14* served a particular purpose. These studies generated significant interest in the internal dynamics in PoK - an aspect that previously remained out of popular opinion. The research and its wide dissemination elaborated on PoK's constitutional and political status and highlighted particularly the lack of human rights and ethnic tensions in the area. The public discussion around these reports helped to popularise the Indian government's position and the emphasis on the area as occupied Indian territory and gave support to arguments that called for highlighting human rights violations and the lack of democratic and political rights in the region.[90] IDSA has been a forum for debates on this issue as far back as 1995 reiterating the accepted government position on Kashmir.[91] In addition to the focus on Pakistan's proxy war,[92] attention has been drawn towards new negotiating patterns with "the new Indian focus on Gilgit and Baltistan and 'Azad Kashmir'[93]

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[90] "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – changing the discourse," *PoK Project Report*, (New Delhi: IDSA, May 2011), pg. 37
[91] Jasjit Singh (ed.) *Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – Under the jackboot* (New Delhi: Siddhi Books, 1995)
[92] Alok Bansal, "The Growing Alienation in Gilgit-Baltistan: the Future Portents" in Virendra Gupta and Alok Bansal, *Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – an untold story* (New Delhi: IDSA, 2007)
[93] ibid, pg 224

These debates were also initiated to bring attention to government programmes as part of the Kashmir CBMs, such as the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Kargil-Skardu bus routes. The narratives adopted appreciated these new policies but also highlighted that these initiatives have the potential to "expose the population of the region [PoK] to the freedom and democratic rights enjoyed by their ethnic kin across the Line of Control in Ladakh and Kargil."[94] The growing alienation within PoK was thus promoted as "valuable leverage"[95] for India in negotiating with Pakistan. Discourse popularised the idea that "the people of PoK should be regarded as citizens of India and special documents should be issued to them in this regard. They may be allowed to visit India after proper check of their antecedents."[96]The report was shared publicly in a roundtable[97] and further recommended that "India must engage the new emerging political leadership in PoK which is disillusioned with Pakistan's approach and is demanding genuine representation and a popular system of governance."[98] A similar position was taken at CLAWS citing videos and information regarding resistance within PoK and the demand for "Balawaristan" by the Balawaristan National Front which is a coalition of influential leaders in the northern Areas.[99]

While reaching out to PoK/Gilgit Baltistan, the discourse reiterated the government's approach that regarded the subject of Indian Kashmir as an internal matter and emphasised the distinction between the problem 'in' Kashmir and the problem 'of' Kashmir.[100] This also created support for the Kashmir roundtables initiated by Manmohan Singh in 2006 that were seen to "trash General Musharraf's idea of 'self-governance' and 'demilitarisation.'"[101]

IDSA and other think tanks also popularised the idea of "precision military strikes"[102] to neutralise suspected terrorist threats from across the LoC. Policy options for India coming from

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[94] Ibid, pg. 225

[95] Ibid, pg. 226

[96] ibid

[97] *IDSA Roundtable* on "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – changing the discourse", 19 August, 2010

[98] "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – changing the discourse," *PoK project report* (New Delhi: IDSA, May 2011), pg. 38

[99] Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan atrocities in PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan" *CLAWS Article,* 1449, 9 October, 2015, http://www.claws.in/1449/pakistan-atrocities-in-pok-and-gilgit-baltistan-brig-gurmeet-kanwal.html

[100] Ashutosh Misra, "Unfazed New Delhi continues the Dialogue despite Hurriyat's absence," *IDSA Comment*, 3 March, 2006, http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/UnfazedNewDelhiContinuestheDialogueProcessDespiteHurriyatsAbsence_AMisra_030306

[101] ibid

[102] ibid

CLAWS were also in favour of "covert action inside Pakistan to target terror leadership"[103] and further argued that ceasefire at the LoC has been advantageous to Pakistan and "has negated whatever little military dominance and advantage the Indian army had."[104]These ideas became more popular after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks that also brought attention to the need for an assessment of India's maritime and coastal security arrangements– with recommendations for improved infrastructure for the Border Security Force and Coast Guard.[105] Coastal security and maritime terrorism for instance was a subject of interest for the NMF and the emerging nexus between maritime terrorism and drug cartels, further accentuated by the presence of transnational criminal groups headed by Dawood Ibrahim for instance was recognised.[106] NMF has also done substantial work on High Risk Area piracy and has argued for the strengthening India's strategic outlook.[107] Popularising the concept of 'active' deterrence, the NMF has highlighted the capability of the Indian navy to operate in international waters "by virtue of its inherent attributes of flexibility and poise offering a viable option to the political leadership shift from 'deterrence by denial' against Pakistan to deterrence by punishment."[108]

The focus once again has been on niche areas of concern, thus while NMF gives emphasis to the role of the Indian navy, CAPS discourse has highlighted the need to augment IAF capabilities to take into account the evolving cooperation between Pakistan and China and to "build adequate force levels to possess the capability and counter the adversaries in a two-front scenario for India."[109] Its close proximity to the MoD and MEA meant that IDSA engagement with matters of coastal security coincided with government thinking at the time. While, it cannot be ascertained if ideas put forward by IDSA and NMF contributed to policy, significant public opinion was built on the need to strengthen coastal security, and the GOI announced

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[103] Seminar on *Terrorism in the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Linkages and Responses* organised by CLAWS, 17 February, 2009, http://www.claws.in/event-detail.php?eID=220
[104] Seminar on *Situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Contours of Future Strategy* organised by CLAWS, 2 January, 2008, http://www.claws.in/event-detail.php?eID=177
[105] Pushpita Das, "Securing the Northern Coast of Gujarat: Challenges and Responses", *IDSA Fellows Seminar,* 28 November, 2008 http://www.idsa.in/event/indiancoastline_pushpitadas_281108
[106]Alok Bansal, "Maritime Threat Perceptions: Non-State Actors in the Indian Ocean Region" *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 6:1, Summer 2010, pg.15
[107]A Participant Interview with senior member and defence personnel at NMF in New Delhi on 17 October, 2015
[108]Gurpreet Khurana, "India Needs Sea-based 'Active' Deterrence against State-Sponsored Terrorism" *NMF Commentary,* 25 March, 2015**,** *http://www.maritimeindia.org/CommentryView.aspx?NMFCID=8397*
[109]Vikram Munshi, *Wars by Pakistan*, (New Delhi: CAPS, 2014)

several measures to strengthen coastal and maritime security.[110] At CAPS too, while limited, engagement with Indo-Pak issues has been critical of dialogue and has emphasised the need to strengthen India's air-supremacy. In the absence of policy inputs that are not available in the public domain, it is difficult to judge CAPs' interactive discourse yet its proximity to the MoD and IAF is fairly evident.

Government Think Tanks and India's Pakistan Policy: A Summary

A critical examination of policy discourse from government think tanks thus provides evidence that the emphasis of policy ideas has been to highlight the dominant viewpoints of each of the defence forces from where these think tanks receive patronage and institutional relevance. On specific policy direction towards Pakistan therefore, owing to the proximity to the Army and the MoD, both IDSA and CLAWS research has highlighted issues of law and order, particularly on counter-insurgency in Kashmir. On the other hand, NMF and CAPS have focused on accentuating India's naval and air supremacy – key policy parameters of the Indian Navy and the IAF. The membership of serving and retired officers further indicates a balance of theory and practice, and research agendas informed by the MoD indicate a discursive process. There is also visible a role in generating public opinion, specifically on the nuclear doctrine debate and the army's counter-insurgency programmes in J & K as well as the Indian position on other crucial Indo-Pak issues. In all of these think tanks then, practitioner experience and role of the intellectual elite points to a close relationship with policymakers. There is also an exchange of policy ideas through research publications and classified policy inputs relayed to the Policy Planning Division of the MEA.

Linking this to Gramsci then, the state, as Gramsci contends, tries to educate and mobilise the people in a variety of ways, often through collaboration with other social forces in order to construct a historic bloc. While this permits the state a high degree of autonomy, the arguments differ from the absolute exercise of power of the state as prescribed by statism. In India, while

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[110] Following the attack, the Indian Navy was designated as "the authority responsible for overall maritime security which includes coastal security and offshore security," effectively relegating the Coast Guard from its primary coastal security role. Organisationally, a series of Joint Operations Centers were established with responsibility over the various coastal regions. The Navy and Coast Guard acquired hovercrafts and surveillance aircraft and the Navy also set up a new coastal security unit, the Sagar Prahari Bal, with the mission of day/night operations and "seaward anti-terrorist patrols." For more see, Marc Munson, "Indian Maritime Security after Mumbai" *Capability Analysis,* (Center for International Maritime Security), 2 July, 2012, http://cimsec.org/indian-maritime-security-after-mumbai/1634

the government is creating consensus on its policy directions on Pakistan through their support to this body of elites, close cooperation with government thinking is also in the self-interest of these institutions. As argued,

> In building hegemony, the state brings into closer cooperation with itself a whole range of interests, including expert elites that neither accept state dictates nor make excessive demands on the state. They see themselves as part of the state itself, sharing its problems, burdens, goals and achievements embodying what is called 'state spirit'.[111]

Research interests at these think tanks therefore reflect the interests of India's defence community as well as the Foreign Ministry. While they may differ on specific operational details (like withdrawal from Siachen) or timing (post 26/11 dialogue) or tactics (use of force as a tool against counter-insurgency), policy outlooks coming from these think tanks are similar to official policy. They perpetuate dominant state perspectives centred on security and dissenting voices are sidelined, for instance those that argue in favour of demilitarisation in Siachen. Government think tanks in India therefore expand on state-led agendas, popularise them by generating opinion and also conduct a critical appraisal of government policy. They do not however effectively challenge government narratives or introduce new ideas into the discourse that could transform India's policy towards Pakistan – away from a merely security centred understanding.

Conclusion

The attention in this chapter was on Government Think Tanks in India, their specific interactions with policy makers and their policy discourse on India's Pakistan policy. Through the analysis of five government think tanks namely IDSA, ICWA, CAPS, CLAWS and NMF, using the DI- Gramscian approach, the chapter has highlighted membership patterns, funding arrangements and the nature and prominence of the intellectual elite in building significant institutional linkages with policy structures. The evidence presented in the sections above has highlighted that think tanks supported financially by the MoD or the MEA have a direct connection with policymakers and there exists close interaction represented in an exchange of ideas on India's foreign policy goals towards Pakistan. The membership pattern at these think tanks also indicates common training, similar professional backgrounds and similar

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[111] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 128

worldviews in addition to an active component of fluidity. In addition, research agendas at these think tanks are also provided guidance and direction by the foreign policy bureaucracy, providing sufficient evidence of partnerships and networks indicating inroads into formal policy making. The institutionalisation and government patronage to these think tanks has therefore enabled the Indian government to build consensus on policy directions on Pakistan, further aided by similarities in membership and close collaboration with think tank intellectual elites. The direct support by the government has therefore created a discourse that perpetuates government thinking on Pakistan, leaving little room for alternative perspectives.

Chapter Five

Non-Governmental Policy Think Tanks

Government think tanks examined in the previous chapter do not lack financial resources and have easy access to policymakers – the discursive interactions remain strong and substantive. While their ideational independence could be questioned and there is a similar political narrative, policy inputs are clearly visible due to direct connections with the government. Both examples of coordinative and communicative discourse can be found in their engagement with foreign policy issues. On the other end of the spectrum are non-governmental think tanks that are not dependent on government sources for funding alone and have managed to establish networks with international funding organisations. While funding is diversified, this chapter will seek answers to crucial questions like – does their relative independence from government funding enable independent thinking? how do they engage with formal policy making mechanisms in India? what is their level of access to policymakers? are these non-governmental think tanks conditioned by the research agendas of donor organisations, particularly on India-Pakistan relations?

Like in the previous chapter, this chapter will also emphasise the role of intellectual elites and their role in generating public opinion and interacting with policy making mechanisms particularly with the discourse on India -Pakistan relations. This chapter and the next are linked. While one part will cover some of the big players in this category like the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and India Foundation (IF) with broad research agendas; in the second part the focus will be on non-governmental think tanks with research agendas specifically focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation like the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), Delhi Policy Group (DPG), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR).

It was argued in the previous chapter that the creation of think tanks and support to intellectual elites was an attempt by the government of India to institutionalise consensus on policy directions. This was reflective of the Gramscian notion of "state spirit" where intellectual elites at government think tanks created consensus for government policy on Pakistan, highlighting dominant government narratives focused on national security and strategic strength. This chapter will take this argument further through an analysis of the intellectual membership and policy discourse of non-governmental think tanks. With relative freedom from government

funding brought about by India's liberalisation process, these think tanks were able to expand the scope of ideas on Pakistan. Yet, access to funding is also enabled by government support and is a reflection of India's expanding international interests and the need to enhance the bureaucracy's capacity in dealing with new security issues.

The tools provided by DI have been useful to highlight the interactive processes that have enabled ORF, VIF, IF and CPR to be actors within the foreign policy process. The involvement of elites in government committees and specific project funding aimed at providing policy expertise in areas where the MEA lacks capacity are indications of their interactions and the creation of a "discursive sphere"[1]. Through their research outreach they have thus been involved in the promotion, advocacy and articulation of foreign policy towards Pakistan particularly during the CD period.

Yet, the place of non-governmental think tanks within policy structures is something that DI doesn't adequately explain. Several viewpoints expressed in the interview process highlighted that in a restrictive and bureaucratic set up like in India, think tank involvement seems to be limited to suggesting policy options and adding to public discourse on foreign policy, rather than a direct involvement in policy formulation processes. Further, it was argued that the "adoption of think tank ideas on Indo-Pak relations depends on the particular political atmosphere,"[2] and think tanks are better on "functional issues"[3] and not as relevant to "bilateral issues" or "paradigm issues"[4] like the relationship with Pakistan. It was also claimed that "the India - Pakistan relationship is not a foreign policy issue but a domestic political issue in both countries."[5] Resolution of the conflict is therefore dependent on the equation between various power centres in both countries – the army in Pakistan and political leadership in India. The Foreign ministry and diplomats are argued to have no role. Within this scenario then, policy ideas from non-governmental think tanks communicated to the foreign ministry would presumably have no role.

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[1] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 87
[2] A Participant Interview with former diplomat in New Delhi on 13 October, 2015
[3] A Participant Interview with Senior member and former bureaucrat at Research and Information Systems (RIS), New Delhi on 4 September, 2015
[4] A Participant Interview with senior researcher and former diplomat at VIF, New Delhi, on 5 October, 2015
[5] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at CPR, New Delhi on 26 September, 2015

There do exist contrary opinions as well, that argue that, "think tanks are useful when government wants to mould or inform public debate."[6] They also "gauge public opinion,"[7] thus fulfilling their role as a bridge between policymaking and civil society. There is very little evidence of specific inputs that have been implemented as policy. There is however an evolving consultative role for think tanks in India that will be highlighted in the following chapter. Think tanks create an avenue for "more informed public debate"[8] on key issues. As a former diplomat noted, "I have done much more in the past 15 years since retirement in influencing the public discourse than I did in 36 years in the government."[9] Government funding indicates a significant interest in a broader research agenda by the government seeking specific research expertise from non-governmental think tanks such as ORF and CPR.

Notwithstanding broad opinions, non-governmental think tanks have engaged considerably with the policy debate on Pakistan as the evidence in the following sections will show. They have offered policy recommendations in addition to promoting the dialogue and debating the various formulations for resolution of key disputes. There was however a change in the interest on Indo-Pak issues particularly after the suspension of the CD with policy ideas becoming restricted and less amenable to dialogue. While this reflected the changed geopolitical and bilateral relationship with Pakistan, it could also be explained by the process of bargaining and "research brokerage"[10] that think tanks practice to maintain their policy relevance and remain viable actors. Non-governmental think tanks analysed in this chapter could be described as "embedded institutions"[11] which over time can spread ideas but are more likely to get ideologically absorbed into the stronger bureaucratic frameworks. Drezner for instance argues that the "placement of institutions vis-à-vis the rest of the foreign policy apparatus determines the ability of these institutions to survive and thrive."[12]

Examining think tank policy narratives on Pakistan, this chapter will therefore make the argument that even though non-governmental think tanks are funded externally, there continues to be a certain dependence on government narratives and investment in the dialogue process owing to project funding. However, differences in the nature of the intellectual elite and

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[6] A Participant Interview with former diplomat in New Delhi on 13 October, 2015
[7] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at VIF, New Delhi on 14 October, 2015
[8] A Participant Interview with former diplomat in New Delhi on 13 October, 2015
[9] ibid
[10] Richard Higgott and Diane Stone, "The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the USA", *Review of International Studies,* 20:1, January 1994, pg.28
[11] Daniel Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics and the Crafting of Foreign Policy" *American Journal of Political Science,* 44: 4, October 2000, pg.734
[12] ibid, pg. 746

institutional agendas that focus more on academic research have also expanded the academic understanding of Indo-Pak issues. This has also contributed to their evolving role in the development and mobilisation of public opinion. The first section of this chapter will look at the diversity of intellectual elites and worldviews at non-governmental think tanks and their linkages with policy making. While drawing comparisons with government think tanks examined earlier, later sections will look at policy discourse on Pakistan as well as the role of these think tanks as communicative actors relaying information on government initiatives through their contribution to public discourse.

Nature of Intellectual Elite – Patterns in Institutional Worldviews and Collaborations with the State

Institutional structures at government think tanks closely resembled the government and the presence of former bureaucrats and retired armed forces personnel while providing access to policy makers also created a replication of official policy narratives. However, at non-governmental think tanks, while linkages with policymaking become unclear, there is a broader academic understanding of Indo-Pak issues. While former bureaucrats and military practitioners continue to make up the intellectual elite, CPR, ORF, VIF and IF also encourage academic expertise. The following section will detail the professional background of the intellectual elites at these think tanks, highlighting linkages with official policy making bodies as well as their crucial role in shaping public discourse on Pakistan. The aspect of diversified funding will also be considered yet it will be shown that there is implicit government support to these think tanks – if not directly then through the approval of external funding and limited project funding. The government in India also plays a crucial part in the regulation of foreign funding through the FCRA known for its "arbitrariness of procedure."[13]

The oldest in this ilk is the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), one of the "second wave institutes"[14] that appeared with an increase in funding - both governmental and external – as India began to bring down the barriers on foreign funding. With a particular focus on academic research, CPR's evolution in 1973 began with government funding primarily from the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), and project specific funding from the MEA, yet, sources of funding have since been diversified to include foreign donations/project funding

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[13] Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011), pg. 19

[14] Contributing to this growth of "second wave institutes" was the "availability of a generation of Indians who had been involved in policy making by post-independence governments. Kuldeep Mathur, *Public Policy and Politics in India: How Institutions Matter* (New Delhi: OUP, 2013), pg. 86

from the World Bank, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada, Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to name a few.

The inclusion of business funding and corporate interest in policy making is perhaps more easily visible in the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) established in 1990 with close linkages to the Reliance group of companies.[15] ORF's establishment was also supported by government leadership particularly PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee with research agendas aimed at encouraging the liberalisation process in India.[16] Focus has since expanded to subjects such as climate change, global governance, strategic studies, national security and space studies. According to the declaration of contributions, core funding continues to come from Reliance Industries along with significant project funding from the MEA.[17] Funding from Reliance accounts for around 65% with the foundation diversifying its sources to include support from the government, private corporates, foreign foundations and others.[18]

While the source of funding is very clear in the cases of both CPR and ORF, in the other two cases in this category, the lines blur. Formed in December 2009, the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) identifies itself as "an independent, non-partisan institution" focused on academic research and additionally as a "platform for dialogue and conflict resolution."[19] Recognised as a Trust affiliated with the Vivekananda Kendra, VIF funding supposedly comes from the trust fund though the official documents (annual reports, website) do not provide a detailed account of donations received and their allocation to specific projects and programmes. There is very little evidence also on the funding patterns of the India Foundation (IF) established in 2000.

While funding forms one part of the story, the nature of intellectual elites at think tanks is also relevant here. The previous chapter found evidence of an overlap in membership patterns and political narratives on Pakistan based on similarities in funding, professional backgrounds of the elite and fluidity in the movement of these elites both within think tanks as well as the revolving door between think tanks and policy elites. The membership pattern in ORF, CPR,

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[15] Reliance Industries is an Indian conglomerate with businesses engaged in energy, petrochemicals, textiles, natural resources, retail, and telecommunications. http://www.ril.com/
[16] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at ORF, New Delhi on 9 September, 2015
[17] *Declaration of Domestic Contributions,* (New Delhi: ORF, 2017), http://www.orfonline.org/declaration-of-contributions/
[18] Prashant Jha, "India's Most influential think tanks" *Hindustan Times,* 16 August, 2015, http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/india-s-most-influential-think-tanks/story-emb0db2lmqltL8pKeYuZiL.html
[19] More on VIF's official webpage- http://www.vifindia.org/AboutUs1

VIF and IF is also similar, yet there is an increased attention to academic research. There are also linkages to business interests particularly at ORF reflected both in affiliations and research focus on India's economic policy. The initiative to form ORF came from R K Mishra, a former journalist with close linkages with policy makers and former PM Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. Mishra along with Vivek Katju (Head- PAI division, MEA) and Brajesh Mishra (NSA) was also involved in the back-channel negotiations with Pakistan at the behest of Prime Minister Vajpayee during the Kargil war.[20] This role was acknowledged by the MEA[21] and his close relationship with key policy makers and with Vajpayee himself also provided early support for the ORF.[22] Mishra was also able to secure financial support for ORF from the Reliance group in perhaps the first instance of corporate interest in Indian think tanks.

ORF is currently led by Sunjoy Joshi, a former bureaucrat and Samir Saran, a former employee of Reliance Industries. In addition, ORF's membership has been a mix of former government and defence officials like General V P Malik (former Army chief), former foreign secretary M K Rasgotra, former chief of RAW Vikram Sood as well as academic and media specialists like C Raja Mohan[23], Manoj Joshi, Rajeswari Rajagopalan reflecting a combination of academic and practitioner knowledge. Younger researchers, among them students of international studies from leading universities add to the component of academic research, building capacity for IR research in India. ORF's Mumbai chapter is led by Sudheendra Kulkarni, who served as a special aide to Vajpayee between 1998 and 2004. Apart from serving as Vajpayee's speech-writer, Kulkarni is known to have played an active role in conceptualising and driving several landmark initiatives of the Vajpayee government.

ORF elites' linkages with the foreign policy establishment are also visible. For instance, in addition to adding to public discourse through his journalistic writings on Kashmir, Pakistan and Siachen, Manoj Joshi has served on the Naresh Chandra Committee to propose security reforms; Rakesh Sood set up the Disarmament and International Security Affairs Division in

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[20] The role of this back-channel is known to have been instrumental in working towards a resolution of the Kargil crises in 1999.While the Indian side remained tight-lipped about the details of the discussions, disclosures by the Pakistani negotiator Niaz Naik also indicated a possible deal towards resolving the Kashmir dispute which could have included converting the LoC into an international border and the establishment of the two sides of Kashmir into an autonomous zone. For more: Seema Mustafa, "Sharif-Vajpayee together in a secret Deal" *The Asian Age,* 15 September, 1999, http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/archives/archives1999/99september15a.html
[21] "Back-channel: the promise and peril" *Ministry of External Affairs,* May 20, 2003, http://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/13817/Back+channel+the+promise+and+peril
[22] "R K Mishra passes away" *The Hindu,* 10 January, 2009, http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/R.K.-Mishra-passes-away/article16349286.ece
[23] Since 2015, C Raja Mohan is Director, Carnegie India, http://carnegieindia.org/

the MEA which he led for eight years till the end of 2000; Brajesh Mishra, India's first NSA and later trustee at ORF has often been credited with influence on India's policy towards Pakistan in the Vajpayee years. Mishra's diplomatic imprint on India's Pakistan policy was seen in the Agra summit (2002) and gaining President Musharraf's commitment that Pakistan will not allow the use of its territory for terrorist activity (2004). [24]

Former bureaucrats, in addition to expertise on economics and politics also form the core of intellectual elites at CPR. The bureaucracy is represented by experts like former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran who in addition to being a Senior fellow at CPR is Chairman of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) - the think tank of the MEA. Seasoned diplomats like G Parthasarathy, with considerable experience in Indo-Pak issues and a member of several Indo-Pak track two initiatives also add to CPR's discourse. There is a significant focus on academic research at CPR led until recently by President, Pratap Bhanu Mehta[25] who in addition to being a prolific writer, has contributed significantly to public discourse on Indian foreign and domestic policy and has also served on many central government committees.[26] CPR elite like Bharat Karnad and Brahma Chellaney as described by Mehta

continued to lend their weight to CPR's status as one of a handful of modern think tanks steeped in the realist tradition, while Nimmi Kurian and Bibek Debroy provided the perfect counter balance through their focus on conflict resolution, sub-regional issues, trade and political economy.[27]

Chellaney who until January 2000, was an advisor to India's NSC and convener of the External Security Group of the NSAB has been notable for his advocatory role along with K Subrahmanyam in the drafting of India's nuclear doctrine.[28] Bharat Karnad too was a member of the first NSAB, where he participated in the Nuclear Doctrine Drafting Group and the external security and the technology security groups of the Strategic Review. In addition, Karnad has been commissioned by the Headquarters of the Integrated Defence

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[24] Arvind Gupta, "Brajesh Mishra's legacy to National Security and Diplomacy" *IDSA Comment,* 30 September 2012, http://idsa.in/idsacomments/BrajeshMishrasLegacytoNationalSecurityandDiplomacy_agupta_300912

[25] Former President of CPR for nearly a decade, Mehta is currently Vice Chancellor of the newly established Ashoka University in Haryana, India. https://www.ashoka.edu.in/. The current President and Chief Executive of CPR is Yamini Aiyar, who assumed charge in August 2017.

[26] Some of these include the NSAB, India's National Knowledge Commission, and a Supreme Court-appointed committee on elections in Indian universities.

[27] *Annual Report – 2010-2011* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2011)

[28] Constantino Xavier and Stephen Cohen, "The Career and Ideas of K. Subrahmanyam" *Event Summary Brookings Institution,* February 2011, http://www.brookings.edu/events/2011/02/18-india-subrahmanyam

Staff to conduct a strategic nuclear orientation course for senior military officers, and to conceptualise and conduct a series of inter-agency wargames on the nuclear tripwire.[29]

While funding for all of these think tanks is diversified, there are visible linkages with the policy establishment, both direct and indirect. As argued earlier, each was established at a particular time in India's growing economic and political trajectory, thus both ORF and CPR receive project-specific funding from the MEA. Therefore in addition to enabling foreign contributions, the government of India has also involved these think tanks for specific policy initiatives. For instance, ORF is the official Track II Research coordinator for India at BRICS. It is also a member of the BRICS Think Tanks Council set up in 2013.[30] CPR too in 2008 organized with the MEA the 3rd IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Editors' Conference. In addition, ORF programmes on climate change and Indian Ocean[31] security have captured the attention of the government and in October 2014, ORF became a partner organisation for the 6th Core group meeting of the Munich Security Conference with the MEA.[32] In March 2016, ORF launched the Raisina Dialogue in collaboration with the MEA – "an annual conference serving as a platform for multi-stakeholder interactions on foreign policy in keeping with the MEA's approach to seek wider inputs for policy making."[33]

Thematic clusters at CPR have undertaken both research and advocacy and some of the specific research initiatives with active components of policy interface, demonstrating coordinative discourse among policy elites, have been the first of its kind in India. Notable among these was the Parliamentary Research Service initiated in 2005 aimed at establishing linkages with legislative processes. The MP Policy Dialogue series initiated in 2009 is also a novel initiative envisaged as "a forum for Members of Parliament to discuss topical policy-related issues with

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[29] http://www.cprindia.org/people/bharat-karnad

[30] Further in 2014, the Indian Ministry of Finance, asked ORF to draft strategy papers for India's position in the G20 on BRICS. In addition, ORF hosted the 4th BRICS Academic Forum in New Delhi in March 2012. The recommendations that emerged from the deliberations were submitted to the Heads of States of BRICS nations who met later that month in New Delhi. Puja Mehra, "G20: Finance Ministry asks ORF for stance on BRICS bank" *The Hindu,* 8 January, 2014, http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/g20-finance-ministry-asks-orf-for-stance-on-brics-bank/article5554469.ece

[31] In September 2014, ORF Maritime Initiative with support from the MEA held the Indian Ocean Dialogue in Kochi with representatives from think tanks and civil society from 24 Member Nations and Dialogue Partners of the Indian Ocean Rim Association. *ORF Annual Report 2015,* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2016)

[32] It also organises Indian Ocean dialogue with the MEA and in January 2015 hosted the first India Global Forum with the International Institute of Strategic Studies that allowed newly appointed Cabinet ministers to engage with global audiences. *ORF Annual Report 2015* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2015)

[33] *Raisina Dialogue – Conference Booklet* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation and Ministry of External Affairs, 2016)

an academic expert."[34] Other research initiatives include the Climate Change Initiative (2009) funded by the MacArthur Foundation with policy interface at several levels with the UNFCC and the Copenhagen process and with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Planning Commission task force for low carbon growth. In addition to policy relevant research, policy promotion is also a key element represented in the wide array of published research reports and other policy relevant writing. In 2012, CPR faculty members, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Shyam Saran and Srinath Raghavan participated in the preparation of a document titled *Non Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*. The document was the product of collective deliberation and was released at CPR in 2012 by NSA, Shiv Shankar Menon.[35] In 2013, with funding from the Asia Foundation, CPR also launched its online portal -the SARCist[36]—South Asia Regional Cooperation, with special focus on trade and investment issues. ORF's Raisina Dialogue modelled along Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue is also a platform for policy promotion with the involvement of senior policy elites from the MEA.

Known to be ideologically close to the BJP-RSS, a key objective identified at VIF is to "reassess, formulate and develop India's civilizational and cultural imperatives."[37]The organisational impetus was provided by Ajit Doval, the former Intelligence Bureau Chief and Founder Director from 2009-2014. Doval was also one of the negotiators during the Kandahar hijacking case in 1999 and has considerable experience with militancy in the Kashmir valley. In 2014, Doval was appointed as India's NSA by the Modi government. Much of the initial policy direction at VIF is known to have been the brainchild of Doval and his induction into the prime position of foreign policy making in India, makes this a unique characteristic of the revolving door policy. It has also significantly enhanced VIF's coordinative discourse with direct and sustained linkages with the foreign policy establishment in India. In addition to Doval, other VIF members include Nripendra Misra (now Principal Secretary to PM Modi) and Ata Hasnain who retired as GOC in Kashmir and has significant field experience working on the LoC. Hasnain has also been credited for having conceived and operationalised the "Hearts Doctrine" in J & K as an effort towards perception management regarding army

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[34] Some of the topics that have been addressed by these dialogues have included: "Recent Developments in India-Pakistan Diplomatic Ties" by G. Parthasarathy in 2009; discussions on "Af-Pak issue" by Shyam Saran in 2010; discussions on Kashmir led by Amitabh Mattoo; "a look at the current Situation in Jammu and Kashmir". For more see, *Annual Report – 2009-2010* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2009)

[35] *Annual Report – 2011-2012* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2012)

[36]http://thesarcist.org/index.aspx

[37] *Annual Report – 2011* (New Delhi: Vivekananda International Foundation, 2011)

operations in the valley.[38] Other members on VIF's advisory board and executive council include senior bureaucrats like former Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal (member NSAB 2008-2010); former Secretary RAW A K Verma; former Cabinet Minister Arif Mohammad Khan; former Defence officials like Shankar Roy Chowdhury, V N Sharma, N C Vij (all former Chiefs of Army staff), senior diplomat Satish Chandra to name a few. Vij, the current Director was DGMO during the Kargil War and briefed Vajpayee at the BJP National Executive Meeting on the progress of operations, breaking from military tradition.[39]

While the VIF is known to be close to the BJP, IF on the other hand has direct linkages with the current Modi government. Several members of the IF board of Directors such as Nirmala Sitharaman (Minister of Defence), Suresh Prabhu (Minister of Commerce and Industry), Jayant Sinha (Minister of State for Civil Aviation) are cabinet members in the Modi administration. In addition, Ram Madhav, the National General Secretary of the BJP is one of the leading voices of the IF. Madhav has been a Member of the National Executive and in charge of the media and public relations of the RSS. The research component within the IF comes from Alok Bansal, a former Naval officer with research experience on India's strategic security and formerly associated with the IDSA and the NMF. Prominent political columnists Ashok Malik and Swapan Dasgupta are also affiliated with the IF, in addition to research staff composed of university students and researchers.

Thus, even though funding for non-governmental think tanks is diversified and there is distance from official policy making, there exist significant linkages with the policy establishment. These are both official and unofficial, yet relatively less institutionalised like in the case of government think tanks. The nature of intellectual elites however is more diversified with an additional emphasis on academic research. How this translates into policy ideas on Pakistan is the focus of the following sections. It will also elaborate on the influence of elites in framing and mobilising public opinion and awareness on elements of dialogue with Pakistan.

Think Tank Contribution to Policy Discourse

Similarities in the policy discourse adopted by government think tanks were found to be due to similar membership styles and institutional worldviews derived from patronage from the

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[38]   Muzamil Jaleel, "A People's General" *The Indian Express,* 17 April, 2011, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/a-people-s-general/777108/
[39]   Praveen Swami, "Now, the cover-up" *Frontline,*16:16, July 31-August 13, 1999, http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1616/16160220.htm

government. Political narratives on Pakistan emphasised national security as the predominant theme in the Indo-Pak relationship and prevailing narratives on Pakistan were encouraged while dissenting voices (particularly those calling for concessions to Pakistan) were undermined or ignored. This chapter will highlight if there is any deviation from that trend at non-governmental think tanks. When think tanks are able to supplement government funding through reliance on private donors, does the nature of discourse undergo a change? Are think tanks then able to expand on the agenda and ideas beyond government narratives on relations with Pakistan? Further, the oft-argued "consultative role"[40] in policy formulation will be explored with a particular focus on "orienting public opinion."[41]

Reliance on private sources for funding also raises questions about the relative independence of research agendas. In addition, "by their very nature, the Indian foreign and strategic policy establishment would be wary of externally-funded research and the avenue of external funding is thus not an easy option for international relations and strategic affairs institutions."[42] Sponsors too are in a position to dictate their own research agendas irrespective of whether they are public agencies, private foundations or international organisations.[43] Saran from ORF for instance argues that,

> we are acutely aware of the need to balance a proximate relationship with the government that would allow enough distance to be able to conduct research freely and yet be cordial enough so that we would be able to share insights and ideas with institutions that are best placed to make use of them.[44]

This need to balance the sharing of policy ideas while striving to maintain independent research agendas becomes further complicated in the case of a high profile and highly volatile relationship as with Pakistan. Policy inputs into India's relations with Pakistan are curtailed by the continually changing bilateral relationship and primacy of political will as the main driving force for change. It is within this dynamic, that the CD process provided a "critical juncture"[45] – thereby offering space and power to think tanks – to transfer knowledge [in this case on

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[40] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at ORF, New Delhi on 22 September, 2015

[41] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at ORF, New Delhi on 14 September, 2015

[42] Sanjaya Baru, "Can Indian Think Tanks and Research Institutes Cope with the Rising Demand for Foreign and Security Policy Research", *ISAS Working Paper,* (National University of Singapore), 67, 16 June 2009

[43] T. S Papola, "Social Science Research in Globalising India – Historical Development and Recent Trends", *ISID Working Paper,* (Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, Delhi) May 2010, pg. 9

[44] Prashant Jha, "India's Most influential think tanks" *Hindustan Times,* 16 August, 2015, http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/india-s-most-influential-think-tanks/stoFry-emb0db2lmqltL8pKeYuZiL.html

[45] Stella Ladi, "Think tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change" in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Change: Democracy, Values and Capacities* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011), pp. 205-220

specific Indo-Pak issues] and then act as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse. Think tank traction on "functional issues"[46] and mobilisation of public opinion in support of government policy on Pakistan will thus be crucial to understanding their place in the policy process.

Non-governmental think tanks namely – ORF, CPR, VIF and IF have all engaged with the Indo-Pak dynamic, however to varying degrees. Research agendas at ORF are comprehensive and the engagement with India-Pakistan relations represents just one aspect. Discourse on Indo-Pak relations was strongest in the period while the official dialogue was progressing and there was focused attention on issues like Kashmir, Siachen and terrorism. What is surprising though is that being an organisation with an articulated focus on India's economic policies, ORF engagement on aspects of Indo-Pak economic cooperation has been very limited.

At CPR too, research on Indo-Pak dynamics is undertaken within the thematic cluster of International Relations and Security. Intellectual elite like Brahma Chellaney, Bharat Karnad, G. Parthasarathy, B G Verghese and Ramaswamy Iyer have contributed to discourse on issues like nuclear security, Kashmir and the position on river water disputes. There has also been an engagement with dialogue on Kashmir at the Track II level with participation in the Neemrana Dialogue, Pugwash initiatives and Chaophraya dialogues. As early as 2003, Verghese was associated with the Task Force on Inter-Linking of Rivers[47] and later between 2013-2014, he was a part of three World Bank study groups working on resolving conflicts in the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra basins.

Initiated in 2009, VIF arrived on the think tank landscape during a crucial phase for Indo-Pak relations. The formal CD was suspended and the post-Mumbai scenario was very different to the years preceding it. Most of the issues under consideration in the CD had collapsed by 2009 and VIF viewpoints have often reflected this cynicism and futility of a comprehensive dialogue process and focus has been squarely on the dispute in J & K and terrorism. IF's policy discourse on the other hand is difficult to gauge as they "provide inputs directly to the government through policy briefs that are classified"[48] and other research outputs are limited even though

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[46] A Participant Interview with senior member and former bureaucrat at RIS, New Delhi on 4 September, 2015
[47] The association ended in mid-2004 as the new UPA Government decided to review the programme and pursue it departmentally. *Annual Report – 2003-2004* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2004)
[48] A Participant Interview with senior researcher and former defence personnel at IF, New Delhi on 19 October, 2015

it is often a forum for discussions on foreign policy.[49] This section will highlight think tank policy discourse on key disputes between India and Pakistan, as addressed in the CD. It also reflects the government's collaboration with think tanks to build consensus on its official positions.

Kashmir: Expanding the debate - Much like narratives of government think tanks that analysed the conflict in Kashmir primarily through the national security paradigm, non-governmental think tanks also highlight the necessity of maintaining law and order in the state. They do however expand the scope of their policy ideas with an increased focus on civil society engagements in Kashmir as well as additional policy ideas on AFSPA and water conflicts impacting the dispute. Substantial attention in the discourse is on the delineation of the dispute first as a problem 'of' Kashmir which relates to the relationship with Pakistan and secondly on the problem 'in' Kashmir which refers to the internal dynamics within the Indian state of J&K. This approach resonates with the direction of dialogue adopted by the Indian government. In his closing remarks at the 2nd Jammu and Kashmir Roundtable in May 2006, Manmohan Singh reiterated that the dispute in J & K has two dimensions – "one being the relationship between Delhi and Srinagar and the other, the relationship between Delhi and Islamabad".[50] Policy ideas from think tanks popularised this argument and further expanded it through their policy recommendations.

While attention to Kashmir was limited in ORF discourse prior to the ceasefire in 2003, government initiatives through L K Advani's talks with separatists[51] and Vajpayee's new peace initiatives with Pakistan were appreciated[52] as a move beyond "traditionally stated positions."[53]As highlighted earlier, ORF's R K Mishra and Brajesh Mishra were closely involved with Vajpayee's agenda in Kashmir. Opinions at ORF in the early stage of the process did however warn about the volatility of the issue and the "divergent" and "seemingly

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[49] The India Foundation conducts several events related to India's foreign policy concerns. Notable among them are the annual Counter-Terrorism conference and the Indian Ocean Conference conducted in partnership with the MEA. For more on IF's events see: https://www.indiafoundation.in/

[50] This argument was repeated again in his statement in April 2007 addressing the Third Roundtable Conference on J & K. This argument is also made in Ashutosh Misra's analysis of the dispute. For more see, Ashutosh Misra, *India-Pakistan: Coming to Terms* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010)

[51] Avanti Bhati, "Kashmir: New Hope?" *ORF Commentaries,* 23 October, 2003, http://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-new-hope/

[52] "Pakistan's new Kashmir offensive" *ORF Commentaries*, 17 September, 2003, http://www.orfonline.org/research/pakistans-new-kashmir-offensive/

[53] Sushant Sareen, "Running faster to Maintain Status Quo? *ORF Commentaries,* 6 October, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/running-faster-to-maintain-status-quo/

irreconcilable" positions of India and Pakistan as a deterrent to the larger process.[54] However, reflecting the organization's practice where research opinions are "not reconciled"[55] into a common institutional position, the CD's engagement with Kashmir was understood in various ways at ORF. While one opinion argued that the CD approach worked in "keeping Pakistan engaged on all matters except Kashmir,"[56] a differing perspective was that the unilateral ceasefire at the LoC was "inconvenient for the Indian army" and allowed the Pakistan army "the freedom to continue its nefarious activities in Kashmir without fear of Indian retribution,"[57] enabling Pakistan to "continue its low-cost, low-risk, high-payoff option of waging a proxy war against India."[58]

The "historical continuity"[59] in Pakistan's Kashmir policy and the military-militant connection within Pakistan as a deterrent for peace was a dominant focus of the discourse. Musharraf's proclaimed commitment to destroy terrorist infrastructure within Pakistan, was welcomed by the government but opinions at ORF argued that it was also "a conscious decision on the part of his government to keep the Jihadi infrastructure alive as an insurance policy on Kashmir in case the peace process, especially the dialogue on Kashmir gets mired in bickering and protests, and fails to yield any tangible results for Pakistan."[60] Musharraf's Kashmir proposals[61] were also considered to be a "well-crafted and cleverly worded war game,"[62] – a perspective similar to CPR's where they were seen as "public rhetoric" for domestic consumption.[63]

However, even though there was some scepticism regarding the direction of the dialogue, the disagreement was mostly on the need for caution rather than a complete disregard for the process. Think tank discourses at this stage played a role in highlighting the nature of the dialogue as well as significant government initiatives and proposals on Kashmir, particularly

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[54] ibid

[55] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at ORF, New Delhi on 9 September, 2015

[56] Avanti Bhati, "Kashmir: New Hope?" *ORF Commentaries,* 23 October, 2003, http://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-new-hope/

[57] Gurmeet Kanwal, "Strategic stalemate in Kashmir" *ORF Commentaries,* 23 January, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/strategic-stalemate-in-kashmir/

[58] ibid

[59] Wilson John, "The Jihadi factor in India-Pakistan Peace Process" *ORF Issue Brief,* 6, May 2006, pg. 3

[60] ibid

[61] Reiterated in a TV interview during his visit to New Delhi in April 2005, Musharraf's four point formula sought a phased withdrawal of troops; local self-governance; free movement of Kashmiris across the LoC and; a joint supervision mechanism in Jammu and Kashmir involving India, Pakistan and Kashmiris. Nasim Zehra, "Musharraf's Kashmir Policy" *The News,* 18 December 2006, https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/35741-musharrafs-kashmir-policy

[62] Wilson John, "Checkmating Musharraf's plan" *ORF Commentaries,* 24 November, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/checkmating-musharrafs-plan/

[63] B. G Verghese, "A vision for J and K- Internal settlement unavoidable for India" *The Tribune*, 14 April, 2005, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050414/edit.htm#4

those set forth by Musharraf, were analysed in depth and introduced into the public domain. CPR opinion conceded that the four-point proposal signified a change in Pakistan's position of claiming "J&K by virtue of the two-nation ideology"[64] and resembled the concept of a J&K with soft borders leading to some kind of "confederation" that was canvassed with President Ayub and Abdul Qayyum Khan by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah as far back as 1964. The idea of a "non-territorial" settlement aimed at "transforming the relationship across the LoC" was recommended as an advisable policy direction.[65] A more vigorous understanding of Musharraf's Kashmir proposals was also emphasised particularly the concept of "self-governance", that brings to light the stark contrasts in the political and social realities between Indian Kashmir and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).[66] The government's focus on cross LoC interactions also found attention in think tank discourses with recommendations to open up other cross border routes like Jammu and Sialkot, Kargil and Skardu, Poonch and Rawalkot, Rajouri and Mirpur[67]and; for travel between Kashmir to be used as an opportunity to build on the coordination and communication and conceive of an "informal co-federal relationship."[68] Think tank elite at this stage were also directly engaged with the dialogue, for example, M K Rasgotra headed the working group on Strengthening Cross LoC Relationships set up by the UPA government and Verghese at CPR was a part of the Neemrana Track Two which is known to have contributed to the operationalities of cross-border travel.

In addition to a mere promotion of government policy, think tanks like the ORF and CPR also became a forum for a studied critique of the initiatives in Kashmir. The academic discourse focused on the state of human rights in PAK often as a counter-tool to Pakistan's attention on Indian Kashmir. There was significant effort at think tanks to highlight conditions in PAK particularly after the Kashmir earthquake in 2005 that provided space to extremist organisations like the "Jamaat-ud Dawa (JuD), the parent organisation of terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)"[69] in addition to a "coalition of various religious, secessionist and terrorist groups coming together in the aftermath of the earthquake."[70] In terms of policy implications, this collusion between various groups it was felt, would

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[64]B G Verghese, "A bit of Musharraf-speak" *The Tribune,* 22 December, 2006, *http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061222/edit.htm*

[65] B G Verghese, "A Vision for J & K - 2015: Local and national consensus will help" *The Tribune,* 15 April, 2005, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050415/edit.htm#4

[66] ibid

[67] ibid

[68] ibid

[69]"General's losing battle" *ORF Commentaries,* 7 December, 2005, http://www.orfonline.org/research/generals-losing-battle/

[70] ibid

increase India's vulnerability at a time when the government was considering opening additional routes along the LoC.[71] Questions were also raised on reconciling these new ideas with India's position on Kashmir adopted in the resolution of the parliament in 1994 and aspects of the 1972 Simla agreement.[72]

There has also been a focus on evolving a military strategy with pro-actively aggressive trans-LoC operations in response to violations of ceasefire and infiltration attempts.[73]The articulation of such a strategy gained momentum after 26/11. VIF for instance was incessantly critical of Manmohan Singh's policy of engagement with Pakistan and argued that it failed to reduce the trust deficit and the continued LoC infiltrations, terrorist attacks, movement of counterfeit currency and Pakistan's inactions against those involved in the 26/11 attacks were all a manifestation of this policy of appeasement. Policy ideas at this stage were also a reflection of the changing public opinion and the possible loss of the "critical juncture". Reflecting the growing cynicism with dialogue[74], recommendations from VIF therefore included abandoning the CD; making trade liberalisation with Pakistan contingent upon the Most Favoured Nation status to India; curtailing visas till concerns related to terrorism are addressed. In terms of offensive diplomatic action, recommendations suggested exploiting "Pakistan's faultlines" in Balochistan and cases of human rights violations and nuclear proliferation in addition to covert and focused strikes against terrorists.[75]Any attempts by the foreign policy establishment under Manmohan Singh to resume dialogue with Pakistan were seen through this critical lens whether it was the meeting between foreign ministers S M Krishna and Hina Rabbani Khar in 2012[76] or Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik's visit to India in 2013.[77]

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[71] ibid

[72] G Parthasarathy, "India can't pull out troops" *The Tribune,* 28 December, 2006, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061228/edit.htm

[73]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Strategic stalemate in Kashmir" *ORF Commentaries,* 23 January, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/strategic-stalemate-in-kashmir/

[74] This cynicism was reflected in the PEW Research Center survey where terrorism and its linkages with Pakistan were perceived as major problems expressed by Indian respondents. For instance, 81% of Indians expressed a negative opinion of Pakistan. The survey however did reflect some hope for the process of dialogue (63%) stressing particularly on Indo-Pak trade to act as a peacemaker. "Indian See Threats from Pakistan, Extremist Groups" *Pew Research Center,* October 20, 2010, http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/10/20/indians-see-threat-from-pakistan-extremist-groups/

[75] Satish Chandra, "Stop appeasing Pakistan" *VIF Article,* 4 February, 2013, http://www.vifindia.org/articles/2013/fedruary/04/stop-appeasing-pakistan

[76]Satish Chandra, "Genuflecting before Pakistan" *VIF Article,* 12 September, 2012, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/september/12/genuflecting-before-pakistan

[77] Kanwal Sibal, "Nettlesome Neighbour" *VIF Article,* 26 January, 2013, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2013/january/26/nettlesome-neighbour

Think tank discourse also contributed to debates on resolving the internal conflict in Kashmir through specific discussions on maintaining law and order within the state; evaluating the presence of the Indian army and the execution of AFSPA and the role of the separatists particularly the Hurriyat. Additionally, efforts to work with civil society within Kashmir to address the alienation of populations is also a significant factor addressed in the discourse. Perspectives on these issues also reflected the difference of opinion between think tank elites. At ORF for instance, while some arguments considered the Hurriyat a "marginal player,"[78]a nuisance value"[79] that would create domestic dissent, making it diplomatically easier for Pakistan to gain the upper hand, other opinions appreciated Manmohan Singh's invitation to the Hurriyat to be a part of the Roundtable Conferences and considered it "as a counter strategy[80]to keep the Hurriyat from playing the role of a spoiler.

At CPR too, the Hurriyat's assumption as the "sole" representative of Kashmiri public opinion and its support for the Pakistani position on J & K was criticised.[81] The Prime Minister's roundtable it was argued was an opportunity for the government to keep the Hurriyat in check."[82] The UPA's initiatives on Kashmir were however given considerable value within the narratives. In considering the proposals on Kashmir, a policy option for instance recommended the creation of a "Union Territory comprising Srinagar, Baramullah, Anantnag, Kupwara, Pulwama and Budgam and giving it a semi-State status, much like what Delhi once had."[83]This it was argued would take into account the claims of all three regions of the state namely – Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and, "would give ample measure of autonomy to the six districts and will, therefore, be better governed. The remaining part of the State will remain as one, with winter capital in Jammu and summer capital in Leh."[84] Arguments at CPR also stressed on the need for Indian public opinion to be made aware of the interests of the Indian government in giving concessions to J & K as was articulated – "from a position of moral strength and not be seen as shabby compromises that

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[78]"Pointers to Pakistan's Startegy" *ORF Commentaries,* 14 September, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/pointers-to-pakistans-strategy/

[79] "Take it Along" *ORF Commentaries,* 6 March, 2006, http://www.orfonline.org/research/take-it-along/

[80] "The Process is Unwinding" *ORF Commentaries,* 12 July, 2005, http://www.orfonline.org/research/the-process-is-unwinding/

[81] G Parthasarathy, "Hurriyat role in J & K" *The Tribune,* 8 February, 2007, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070208/edit.htm

[82] ibid

[83]Wilson John, "High resolution picture in Kashmir" *ORF Commentaries,* 1 February, 2006, http://www.orfonline.org/research/high-resolution-picture-in-kashmir/

[84] ibid

gloss over past guilt."[85] In addition to welcoming the PM's decision to meet with the Hurriyat, recommendations were made to consider "a round-table conference to clinch the issues of autonomy, alienation and return of the Pandits."[86] The underlying understanding was that "this can be a part of an overdue internal settlement in parallel with a settlement with Pakistan. The first will catalyse the second. But none need wait for the other."[87]

For VIF however, the dominant opinion has been that separatists in Kashmir should not be allowed political space or the freedom to meet "external adversaries" for political or financial support and their "open alignment" with Pakistan should not be tolerated.[88]The criticism of India's Kashmir policy is not however limited to the initiatives of the Manmohan Singh government, earlier attempts by Vajpayee like the Lahore visit, failure to "escalate" the Kargil conflict or the over-arching decisions to seek a "political" resolution of the Kashmir conflict are also critiqued.[89]

Changing dynamics in Kashmir visible after the Amarnath agitation in August 2008 brought to light the continued concerns of the Kashmiri youth. Policy recommendations coming from think tanks for instance, articulated reaching out to disgruntled groups, including the APHC; generating new employment opportunities and initiation of a direct dialogue with the people.[90] Discussions at think tanks underlined "the need for sustained dialogue representing all stakeholders in Kashmir and underscored the criticality in maintaining law and order in the state and possible reduction in CRPF deployment in residential areas."[91] Introspection into government policy and highlighting significant shortcomings in the government's approach to internal dialogue was considered at think tanks. Ideas ranged from identifying underlying causes for mistrust in the Indian state[92] to attributing this to the UPA's policy of appeasement of the separatists; "pampering the Kashmir valley with

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[85]B G Verghese, "Gambols and Gambits in Kashmir" *The Tribune,* 20 January, 2006, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060120/edit.htm
[86] ibid
[87] ibid
[88]Kanwal Sibal, "Soft State Style Won't Work in J & K" *VIF Article,* 21 September, 2010, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2010/september/21/Soft-State-Style-Won-t-Work%20In-J-K
[89]ibid
[90]Amit Kumar, "Time for Dr. Singh to Step in" *ORF Commentaries,* 9 August, 2010, http://www.orfonline.org/research/time-for-dr-singh-to-step-in/
[91] "Kashmir, a systemic failure; dialogue a must" *ORF Event Report,* 20 August, 2010, http://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-a-systemic-failure-dialogue-a-must/
[92] Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "The question in Kashmir" *The Indian Express,* 19 August, 2008, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/the-question-in-kashmir/350345/

economic packages"[93] and ignoring Pakistan's continued support to the insurgency which was a significant cause for the disturbance.

The fall-out of the Amarnath agitation was to redirect attention to the debate on Indian military presence in J & K, in particular the focus on AFSPA. AFSPA as argued in ORF discourse, represented "a legal protection to conduct effective operations"[94] and focus has remained on the need for the central government to undertake "counter alienation" policies to address concerns of human rights violations. Yet, for VIF, any dilution of the power wielded by state security forces in Kashmir is not recommended. One opinion for instance states that, "to utilize this public hyperventilation against localized perceptions of security forces' excesses, to justify and legitimise the separatist agenda in J&K is a serious and tragic mistake."[95] It is recommended that there needs to be a "bipartisan consensus" in J & K, although what this bipartisan consensus entails is unclear. On AFSPA, there is no viable basis for dilution of the act according to NC Vij, emphasising instead on the return of Kashmiri pandits to the valley.[96]In addition, research has analysed the changing trends within militancy in Kashmir and policy options include counter-infiltration strategies.[97] Small trans LoC strikes were thus recommended given the restrictions of waging conventional war in conjunction with perception management exercises conducted internally to demonstrate the Indian army's stronger position.[98] These ideas represent a very visible change in dominant government narratives after the suspension of the CD.

Siachen – from strategic value to International Peace Park - Government think tank discourse on Siachen was fairly split – between demilitarisation or the insistence on Siachen's strategic value for India. A similar perspective is visible in non-governmental think tanks, however much like formulations on Kashmir, policy ideas are expansive and more detailed. Ideas suggest caution yet have recommended a phased demilitarisation from a 5-10 year period; going to a third party to secure guarantees against any possible Pakistani incursion; preparation

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[93]G Parthasarathy, "Separatism needs firmness" *The Tribune,* 4 September, 2008, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2008/20080904/edit.htm
[94] V P Malik, "Revisiting AFSPA – Don't blame it for Kashmir problems" *ORF Commentaries,* 20 September, 2010, http://www.orfonline.org/research/revisiting-afspa-dont-blame-it-for-kashmir-problems/
[95]"J & K: Need for a bipartisan consensus" *VIF Article*, 7 February, 2011, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2011/february/7/J-K-Need-For-a-Bipartisan-Consensus
[96]N C Vij, "Kashmir – Dilution Is No Answer" *VIF Article,* 5 February, 2014, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2014/february/05/kashmir-dilution-is-no-answer
[97]S A Hasnain, "The Ins & Outs of Infiltration: The Real Challenge in J&K - Part 2" *VIF Article,* 16 June, 2016, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2016/june/16/the-ins-and-outs-of-infiltration-the-real-challenge-in-j-and-k-part-2
[98]S A Hasnain, "The current LoC narrative and India's response" *VIF Article,* 19 August, 2015, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2015/august/19/the-current-loc-narrative-and-india-s-response

of detailed maps by the MEA showing present positions and sharing them publicly.[99] Other tangible policy suggestions include the creation of a joint monitoring system. The viewpoint of the think tank elite is also relevant here. Gurmeet Kanwal, Senior Fellow with ORF at the time, also positively perceived the demilitarisation of the region. Kanwal maintained this position later during his association with CLAWS and CAPS, highlighted in the previous chapter. According to his arguments, a national consensus needed to be built around this issue and that "the demilitarisation of Siachen is a low-risk option to test Pakistan's long-term intentions."[100] Similarly at CPR, B G Verghese advocated for the establishment of an International Peace Park covering the entire region from the west of the Karakoram Pass up to K2 under joint Indo-Pakistan management.[101] Subsequently, the Shaksgam region under Chinese control could also be included in the park. Verghese continued to support the recommendation of a peace park in 2007 and added further that

licensing a trekking expedition to Siachen, against Pakistan's hollow protest, could mark the beginning of converting the NJ 9842- Baltoro-Siachen triangle (or a wider arc extending to K2 in the northwest and the Pakistan "claim line" in the northeast) into a jointly controlled, demilitarised Peace Park.[102]

While the army's presence in Siachen forms one part, another part of the Siachen debate is the dispute regarding the AGPL. On this aspect too, opinions were divided. For Verghese (CPR) this could be easily resolved, through "a quiet authentication of the AGPL, if necessary through an annexed exchange of letters.[103] For sceptics however, any kind of scaling back from India's strategic advantage in Siachen was not recommended[104] "without an exchange of authenticated documents and carefully delineated positions."[105]These opinions found a further voice in the post 26/11 environment and a faltering peace process. In response to Kayani's calls for demilitarisation in 2012, opinions at ORF also remained divided. For

[99]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Demilitarisation of Siachen" *ORF Event Report,* 5 April, 2005, http://www.orfonline.org/research/demilitarisation-of-siachen/

[100]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Siachen: National Consensus Needed" *ORF Commentaries,* 30 May, 2006, http://www.orfonline.org/research/siachen-national-consensus-needed/

[101] B G Verghese, "A Vision for J & K - 2015: Local and national consensus will help" *The Tribune,* 15 April, 2005, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050415/edit.htm#4

[102]B G Verghese, "60 years of accession - It's time to fulfil promises" *The Tribune*, 1 October, 2007, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20071001/edit.htm

[103] B G Verghese, *Siachen Follies: Defining Facts and Objectives* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2012), pg. 17

[104]Vikram Sood, "Why India cannot afford to give up Siachen" *ORF Commentaries,* 16 April, 2012, http://www.orfonline.org/research/why-india-cannot-afford-to-give-up-siachen/

[105]Vikram Sood, "Height of folly" *ORF Commentaries,* 15 May, 2006, http://www.orfonline.org/research/height-of-folly/

some like Vikram Sood, the "strategic advantage in Siachen should not be given up for apparent short-term political gains."[106]While Verghese pushed for demilitarisation, the strategic value of the Siachen region was also emphasized at CPR and other opinions centered on Pakistani renouncement of terrorism and authentication of ground positions. A resolution of the Siachen region was also linked to an agreement on the resolution of the larger Kashmir dispute. It was therefore argued that any kind of demilitarisation or troop withdrawal from the glacier heights would put India at a strategic disadvantage.[107]

The strategic asset argument was also predominant at VIF and any kind of relinquishing of control was argued to be detrimental to Indian interests. Discourse also urged that in the absence of Pakistan's redressal of terrorism concerns, any negotiation on Siachen is a moot point and hence no policy recommendations for resolving Siachen were offered. Further it was stressed that India's strategic advantage in Siachen is also important for its relationship with China.[108]Any demilitarisation of the region, must therefore precede demarcation of the AGPL and should ideally consider Siachen as a part of the "overall settlement of the J & K issue."[109] It is argued that it is in India's interest to maintain its strategic presence in Siachen to circumvent any Kargil like attack from Pakistan which is highly likely owing to the trust deficit between the two.[110]

Nuclear Security – moving the discourse from doctrines to risk reduction measures - While a significant area of interest for non-governmental think tanks, the discourse went beyond an academic understanding of nuclear positions and doctrines to make policy recommendations, for instance on nuclear deterrence and risk reduction even though an argument for discussions on Pakistan's nuclear 'first use' was recommended in the dialogue agenda. As early as June 2004, policy recommendations from ORF suggested a possible agreement on "de-mating nuclear warheads from their delivery systems and storing warheads in a disassembled form."[111] Such a measure it was emphasised would

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[106]Vikram Sood, "Story of Saltoro: From Ababeel to Meghdoot" *ORF Commentaries,* 27 April, 2012, http://www.orfonline.org/research/story-of-saltoro-from-ababeel-to-meghdoot/
[107] G. Parthasarathy, "The Saltoro Range: Pullout will be a Himalayan blunder" *The Tribune,* 4 May, 2006, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060504/edit.htm
[108]Satish Chandra, "Why a Siachen settlement should be a non-starter", *VIF Article,* 14 May, 2012, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/may/14/why-a-siachen-agreement-should-be-a-non-starter
[109] Kanwal Sibal, "No ground to vacate Siachen", *VIF Article,* 8 May, 2012, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/may/08/no-ground-to-vacate-siachen
[110] Sushant Sareen, "Steadfast in Siachen," *VIF Article,* 22 February, 2016, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2016/february/22/steadfast-in-siachen
[111]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Indo-Pak Nuclear CBMs: Time to move forward" *ORF Commentaries,* 16 June, 2004, http://www.orfonline.org/research/indo-pak-nuclear-cbms-time-to-move-forward/

reduce the risk of inadvertent or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons. In addition, "a possible agreement could be signed on the non-use of short-range ballistic missiles for nuclear deterrence."[112] During this time, ORF also secured MEA funding for a Project titled India's Nuclear Diplomacy after Pokhran-II: its government and New Delhi[113] and thus became directly invested in the nuclear dialogue. This also enhanced the possibilities of ORF's policy narratives to make way into official discourse on the nuclear issue.

At VIF however, the increased asymmetry between India and Pakistan's nuclear doctrines was emphasised and the need to enhance and upgrade India's nuclear weapons arsenal in the light of possible collusion between Pakistan and China was given prime place. There has been considerable interest in the acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons by Pakistan and its challenges to India. However, India's recourse to Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) is not recommended.[114]VIF discourse also recommended the creation of a Chief of Defence Staff position to provide guidance particularly in the event of nuclear crises. One of the key recommendations in terms of reforming India's nuclear doctrine has been to include a retaliatory second strike against an "abetting nuclear weapon state", once again with direct reference to Chinese support to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme.[115]

Indus Water Treaty – building public discourse - Previously examined government think tanks with the exception of IDSA devoted little attention to the IWT and its application to Indo-Pak water disputes. The perspective that Pakistan's concerns were ill-founded is also reflected in non-governmental think tanks, yet research and policy formulations are more detailed. There is also a difference in perceptions regarding this issue. At VIF for instance the argument is that India should exercise full right over the Indus waters as legally permitted under the IWT and the use of river water should be maximised within India, curtailing the amount of water released to Pakistan. Further, it has recommended that there should be more storage dams built in Kashmir. Additionally, the "IWT should be renegotiated with Pakistan to enable India to have access to 20 per cent of the waters and 40 per cent of the catchment area."[116]

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[112]ibid

[113] *Ministry of External Affairs – Annual Report* (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, 2004-2005)

[114]Gurmeet Kanwal, "Tactical Nuclear Weapon's: Pakistan's Dangerous Game (or quest)" *VIF Article,* 8 October, 2012, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/october/08/tactical-nuclear-weapons-pakistan-s-dangerous-game-or-quest; Gurmeet Kanwal, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Lessons for India and Pakistan" *VIF Article,* 4 June, 2013, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2013/june/04/tactical-nuclear-weapons-lessons-for-india-and-pakistan

[115]Satish Chandra, "Prepare against Pakistan's Nukes", *VIF Article,* 1 September, 2012, http://www.vifindia.org/article/2012/september/01/prepare-against-pakistan-nukes

[116]Satish Chandra, "Stop appeasing Pakistan" *VIF Article,* 4 February, 2013, http://www.vifindia.org/articles/2013/fedruary/04/stop-appeasing-pakistan

However, while VIF emerged on the scene during later years of the CD, there was significant engagement with the issue at CPR owing to the research expertise from Verghese and Ramaswamy Iyer – both of whom have contributed significantly to the academic understanding of the water debate. Iyer for instance was directly engaged with the GOI and on the directive of Manmohan Singh, prepared a White Paper on the working of the IWT in 2010. The dominant policy narrative at CPR has been that the IWT represents a prime example of a successful agreement between India and Pakistan, and Pakistan's concerns are deemed ill-founded and typical of a lower riparian state. There are however noticeable differences in the positions of the two experts at CPR, on the future prospects of the treaty. While Verghese has advocated for Indus II, Iyer was not in favour of the inclusion of water issues in future dialogues with Pakistan and held that the Treaty negotiated through a long and comprehensive process be left as it is and India and Pakistan should continue to "operate it in a spirit of constructive cooperation."[117] Indus II however as Verghese has argued, could be a viable trust-building exercise and while the "Treaty has served its purpose, it leaves behind a possibly large untapped potential in the upper catchments of the three western rivers that are allocated to Pakistan but are under Indian control."[118]This potential it is argued could be "harnessed through joint investment, construction, management and control."[119] Further, owing to the effects of climate change and changing environmental conditions because of glacier melting, the need for an Indus II Treaty which would also address Pakistan's water scarcity issues in a more efficient manner has been recognised.[120]The recommendation pushing for Indus II was reiterated following the ruling on the Baglihar Dam by the Neutral Expert in India's favour.[121] The controversy over Baglihar and other dam projects for Iyer are essentially "underlying lower-riparian anxiety and insecurity about upper-riparian control."[122] With the breakup of the CD after 2008, while security formulations became more sceptical, CPR maintained that Indian

[117] Ramaswamy Iyer, "Water in India-Pakistan talks" *The Hindu,* 3 March, 2010, http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/article721712.ece
[118] B G Verghese, "It's time for Indus II" *The Tribune,* 26 May, 2005, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20050526/edit.htm
[119] ibid
[120] B G Verghese, "Indus Water Woes" *The Tribune,* 27 April, 2006, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060427/edit.htm
[121] B G Verghese, "Indus Valley cooperation" *The Indian Express,* 16 February, 2007, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/indus-valley-cooperation/23430/0
[122]Ramaswamy Iyer, "Writ in Water" *The Indian Express,* 31 October, 2008, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/writ-in-water/379421/0

response to Pakistani paranoia over water security should be one of reassurance and keeping to the provisions of the IWT.[123]

Terrorism- The aspect of terrorism is unique, it is usually one where consensus is achieved in think tank formulations. Both before and after the events of 26/11, arguments from think tanks like ORF have been critical of the official dialogue's lack of focus on terrorism and the acknowledgement of Pakistan's position on Kashmir as an "unsettled issue,"[124] and any attempt to delink the dialogue with terrorism has been criticized.[125] However, in addition to a general criticism, there have been policy recommendations to improve India's counter-terrorism strategies and infrastructure. In July 2005, after the Mumbai blasts, ORF recommended formulation of a National Counter-Terrorism strategy that could include; armed and punitive action against terrorist infrastructure and funding and specific recommendations centred on India's dialogue with Pakistan focused on making the issue of terrorism an integral part of the CD.[126]The demand for a viable counter-terrorism strategy also included the need to have a counter-terrorism legislation in India. The Mumbai blasts of 2005 also reflected CPR's continued focus on academic research. In a comparative analysis of the NDA's anti-terror policy and the UPA's weak anti-terror response, Mehta argued for the need to develop a discourse that can "detach the issue of majority-minority distinction" and develop a political strategy towards terrorism in addition to a strategic one.[127] Critical of the UPA's lacklustre response to terrorism, Parthasarathy has been particularly critical of the Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism (JATM) which signified Indian inaction in exposing the involvement of Pakistan-based groups like the LeT, not just in India, but in Afghanistan and western countries like the US, UK and Australia.[128] The JATM, Parthasarathy argued also conveyed the impression to Pakistan that it would discuss terrorism as an issue in other parts of India rather than in J & K.[129] Reflecting on his experience as India's High Commissioner in Pakistan at the time of the

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[123]Ramaswamy Iyer, "What water wars?" *The Indian Express,* 1 April, 2010, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/what-water-wars-/594319/0

[124]B. Raman, "Unequal accommodation: A National Stockholm syndrome" *ORF Commentaries,* 19 April, 2005, http://www.orfonline.org/research/unequal-accommodation-a-national-stockholm-syndrome/

[125]Kanwal Sibal, "To talk now is wrong" *ORF Commentaries,* 22 February, 2010, http://www.orfonline.org/research/to-talk-now-is-wrong/

[126]P V Ramana and Wilson John, "Mumbai Blasts: Time to Act" *ORF Policy Brief,* 20 July, 2006,

[127] Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "State of Vacuum in times of terror" *The Indian Express,* 12 July, 2006, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/state-of-vacuum-in-times-of-terror/8369/0

[128]G Parthasarathy, "Dangerous Compromises" *The Tribune,* 21 September, 2006, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060921/edit.htm)

[129] G Parthasarathy, "Are we fighting terrorism? India's approach can lead to nowhere" *The Tribune,* 30 November, 2006, *http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061130/edit.htm*

Kandahar hijacking incident, Parthasarathy recommended that a mere policy of "not yielding to terrorist demands" formulated in early 2008 is inadequate and must be backed by a parliament resolution; legislation; as well considering the possibility of covert action against terrorist infrastructure.[130]

Terrorism is very often also linked to an analysis of Pakistan's position on Kashmir - particularly used as a political tool by the Pakistan army. The "historical continuity" in Pakistan's Kashmir policy demonstrated by Musharraf's refusal to deal sternly with terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan has been highlighted repeatedly.[131] The Pakistan Army for Sood for instance "has a *Ghazwa-e-Hind* (the final battle for India) mindset"[132] thus creating significant apprehensions about the peace process. VIF's policy discourse has also maintained that the Deep State in Pakistan and the predominance of the Pakistani Army makes for a distrustful ally. In the light of this, policy recommendations for India are to continue the dialogue but only after a "befitting" response to ceasefire violations and infiltrations across the LoC. Focus has also remained on putting pressure on Pakistan to dismantle terror networks in its territory and acting against terrorist groups like the JuD and the LeT primarily responsible for the 26/11 attacks and other terrorist acts in India.

This cynicism towards the peace process after 26/11 was also reflected in ORF policy ideas several of which focused on using a military option against Pakistan. Some of these ideas are new and counter the government policy to not internationalise the conflict. A detailed research report for instance highlighted the continuing linkages between the LeT and the Pakistani establishment and specific policy recommendations included setting up of an international coalition of security experts under the UN umbrella to guide and monitor Pakistan's action against the LeT; international intervention in ensuring the safety of nuclear weapons and installations within Pakistan and keeping active intelligence and military options to deal with any future terrorist attacks.[133] Chellaney (CPR) also recommended that India must exert pressure on Pakistan to conform to international norms on terrorism, though the use of diplomatic and economic sanctions, and "waging [of] unconventional low intensity

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[130] G Parthasarathy, "How Kandahar hijacked us" *The Indian Express,* 6 February, 2008, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/how-kandahar-hijacked-us/269673/
[131] Wilson John, "The Jihadi Factor in India-Pakistan Peace Process" *ORF Issue Brief,* 6, May 2006, pg. 3
[132] Vikram Sood, "Terror from across the border: Why isn't war an option?" *ORF Commentaries,* 6 January, 2016, http://www.orfonline.org/research/terror-from-across-the-border-why-isnt-war-an-option/
[133] Wilson John, "Concerted International Action Needed to Rein in Pakistan Terror Groups" *ORF Policy Brief,* 9, February 2009, pg. 5

warfare".[134] ORF and CPR discourse in general, recommended continued dialogue with a restructuring of the CD, with issues such as Siachen and Kashmir to be addressed through Joint Commissions institutionalised by the Parliament in the two countries and discussed long-term. The new agenda should also include more robust engagement with trade and commerce issues, and social-cultural-educational and health exchanges should be emphasised.[135]

While the expansion of the dialogue to the international level was a new policy direction suggested by non-governmental think tanks, discourse has predominantly adopted the formulations of the government position particularly visible in the endorsement of the dual nature of the Kashmir dispute, the strategic value of Siachen and the need for an adequate response to terrorism. Policy ideas have however been more elaborate in comparison to government think tanks with a specific focus on academic research. There has also been a focus on the civil society dialogue and especially the need to address humanitarian aspects of the relationship through soft borders and reconciliation policies in Kashmir. However, post 2008, the discourse became more status quoist and think tank attention shifted from Indo-Pak relations. Further, think tanks like VIF and IF remained critical and apprehensive of any future dialogue with Pakistan unless core conflicts are resolved. This was in keeping with their close association with the BJP – the chief opposition party at the time. Since the BJP assumed power in India in 2014, there has been a deterioration of relations with Pakistan and several of the policy ideas discussed so far have become a part of official narratives. In line with the more hawkish views expressed in think tank discourse, the BJP has advocated a tougher stand and growing discontent in the region has also led to a stronger reaction against the separatist movement in Kashmir. In addition, in response to ceasefire violations on the LoC, the BJP government in power has not shied away from publicising its offensive policies represented in the "surgical strike"[136] conducted in September 2016. Thus, while the 2003 LoC ceasefire is continually challenged, formal dialogue with Pakistan has also been suspended.

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[134] Brahma Chellaney, "Don't compromise India" *India Today,* 23 August, 2013, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/india-pakistan-relations-loc-ceasefire/1/300969.html
[135]Wilson John and Kaustav Dhar Chakrabarti, "India-Pakistan Relations after Mumbai Attacks" *ORF Issue Brief,* 21, September 2009, pg. 7
[136] In September 2016, India claimed it had conducted a "surgical strike" in Pakistan controlled Kashmir across the Line of Control (LoC). While Pakistan denied this move, it represents a significant shift in India's military strategy in Kashmir. For more see: Shawn Snow, "Is Pakistan capable of a surgical strike in Pakistan controlled Kashmir?" *The Diplomat,* 30 September, 2016, http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/is-india-capable-of-a-surgical-strike-in-pakistan-controlled-kashmir/

Think Tank Contribution as Communicative Actors

As think tanks vie for government patronage through the sharing of policy ideas, the government too has used think tanks for consensus building on policy and specific initiatives related to the dialogue with Pakistan. Through their substantive research outputs – a combination of written publications and public events – think tanks have played a role in underlining the nature of the Indo-Pak dialogue and introducing its complex debates into the public domain. Furthermore, the body of intellectual elite in their personal capacities have written extensively on these debates and both through their repeated policy assertions and their direct engagement with government initiatives, they have popularised and promoted government policy. For instance, B G Verghese was associated with the Task Force on Inter-Linking of Rivers[137] since 2003 and also a part of a South Asians for Human Rights mission to Pakistan to report on minority rights in South Asia. Verghese's expertise on river water sharing also placed him in a critical position in contributing to the public discourse and with Ramaswamy Iyer, his writing contributed significantly to the academic understanding of water conflicts, particularly with respect to river water disputes. The role played by R K Mishra and Brajesh Mishra and others like M K Rasgotra and G Parthasarathy is also important – acting as a link between official policy and public intellectuals. Further, academic debates by Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Brahma Chellaney, C Raja Mohan and Manoj Joshi are abundantly available in the public domain for a better understanding of complex government policy on Pakistan.

As communicative actors, think tanks brought attention to government initiatives and policy proposals on Kashmir, particularly those set forth by Musharraf and Manmohan Singh which were analysed in depth and introduced into the public domain. The dual focus of the Kashmir conflict was endorsed by think tank policy discourse as examined in the previous section. Arguments in support of the government position were also popularised and expanded and as official dialogue considered the conceptualisation of soft borders that brought relief to divided families in Kashmir, academic debates at think tanks also engaged with this idea. ORF for instance, became a forum for discussion with visits by prominent politicians including by Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, former President and PM of PAK who held discussions in September 2006 and again in April 2007. This coincided with the official Kashmir roundtables, thus the presence of PAK representation is notable here. Khan was received by M K Rasgotra,

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[137] The association ended in mid-2004 as the new UPA Government decided to review the programme and pursue it departmentally. *Annual Report – 2003-2004* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2004)

who headed one of the Working Groups (Strengthening Cross LoC relationships) established by Manmohan Singh[138] to address internal dialogue in Kashmir. The emphasis of the discussions remained on the need for Kashmiri leadership from both sides of the border to dialogue with each other.[139]

The government's continued focus on economic and humanitarian CBMs was also emphasised at an interaction with visiting former diplomats from Pakistan at ORF in April 2005. Think tanks also performed an educative role. Changing dynamics in Kashmir visible after the Amarnath agitation in August 2008 brought to light the continued concerns of the Kashmiri youth. They also reflected the inadequacy in government understanding of the ground realities[140] – a gap that research from think tanks could fill. Publications like Verghese's, *J & K Primer* were important for "demythifying" the conflict in J & K. A significant tool towards creating public awareness, it was "intended to educate ordinary people about the basics of the J & K question and to put various events and issues in context."[141] He also recommended "a unilateral suspension of operations" by Indian security forces under clearly specified terms, even if initially limited to designated areas and subject to periodic review".[142]

Furthermore, highlighting Pakistan's changed position in Siachen reflected in Army Chief Kayani's initiative to demilitarize the Siachen region following the Gayari avalanche, in May 2012, Verghese published *Siachen Follies: Defining Facts and Objectives*[143] underscoring the key terms of the dispute and critical official agreements between India and Pakistan. While Verghese contributed to an academic perspective, expressed opinions by Ata Hasnain, Gurmeet Kanwal, and Vikram Sood in the media, coupled with their operational experience in Kashmir and Siachen provided a practitioner's analysis of the ground situation – enabled by the platform

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[138] The five working groups established after the 2006 Kashmir Roundtables were - Strengthening relations across the LoC; Center-State Relations; Good Governance; Infrastructure and Economic Development; and CBMs within Jammu and Kashmir, including for widows and orphans of violence, return of displaced persons, and return of people who crossed over during the insurgency. Aijaz Ashraf Wani and Sajad Padder, "Understanding the Discredited Institution of Dialogue in Kashmir," *Greater Kashmir,* 11 September, 2016, http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/op-ed/understanding-the-discredited-institution-of-dialogue-in-kashmir/228223.html
[139] "Kashmiri leaders from both sides should sit together" *ORF Event Report,* 28 April, 2007, http://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmiri-leaders-from-both-sides-should-sit-together/
[140] A Participant Interview with senior retired defence personnel in New Delhi on 20 October, 2015
[141] B G. Verghese, *A J &K Primer: From Myth to Reality* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2007)
[142] B G Verghese, "60 years of accession - It's time to fulfil promises" *The Tribune*, 1 October, 2007, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20071001/edit.htm
[143] B G Verghese, *Siachen Follies: Defining Facts and Objectives* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 2012)

provided by think tanks. More recently, VIF and IF have become a platform for the articulation of ideas held by the BJP. Even though the party initiated the CD in 2004, it became a key opposition to the UPA's Pakistan policy in subsequent years – reflected in the opinions and perspectives highlighted by VIF policy discourse. In addition to the prolific writing in leading Indian newspapers and the new mediums of the internet, think tanks and the analyses by elites, thus became a channel for information on progress in the Indo-Pak dialogue.

Non-Governmental Policy Think Tanks and India's Pakistan Policy – a summary

The analysis of discourse on Indo-Pak relations at ORF, CPR, VIF and IF has highlighted that during years when official dialogue was at its peak, there was robust research on Indo-Pak issues and policy ideas were shared and articulated – some conforming to government policies and some pushing for change. The government too, used think tanks as forums for discussion, for additional research and for creating awareness of its dialogue initiatives with Pakistan. Think tanks have thus been involved in the promotion, advocacy and articulation of foreign policy towards Pakistan, particularly during the CD period. However, the restrictive and bureaucratic set up in India has meant that think tank involvement is often limited to suggesting policy options and adding to public discourse on foreign policy, rather than a visible and direct involvement in policy formulation processes. While funding was diversified, government control on funding legislation and project funding also demonstrated the Indian state's efforts in creating a "historic bloc" – in this case support for its dialogue with Pakistan in collaboration with think tanks. Think tank engagement with policy formulation is also reflected in the government's invitation to intellectual elites like Verghese, Rasgotra and others to become involved in subsidiary aspects of policy making. Further, in keeping with the DI-Gramscian framework, elites in these think tanks have played a role in mobilising public opinion and contributing to public debate on government policy, indicating significant collaboration between civil society elite and policy elite.

However, as formal dialogue derailed, discourse at think tanks also reflected a change and became weaker and more status quoist. Thus, as dialogue faltered and the government and its policy directions on Pakistan changed, so did think tank interest. Broad institutional positions enabled a flexibility in policy thinking and to retain their policy relevance and to balance proximity to policy elites, think tanks therefore altered their research focus on Pakistan. The donor driven agendas of these think tanks controlled by the tacit approval of the government

also meant that while they had the ability to spread ideas over time, they were more likely to get ideologically absorbed into the stronger bureaucratic frameworks. This is also reflected in Schmidt's argument about the influence of right timing and right audience on discursive interactions.[144] Thus, as dialogue was suspended, think tanks agendas also adapted to the changing government policy directions. The change is also reflective of the distinctions between think tank interaction with ruling coalitions. Presenting conflicting opinions, while some argue that the new government is "more open to inputs from think tanks"[145] and "receptivity has increased,"[146]others have argued that the BJP is more open to "ideas similar to its own policy frames"[147] and there is now "more traction for IF and VIF owing to their alignments with the government."[148] This is also acknowledged by the MEA, and VIF is now considered as one of the key forums for policy promotion.[149] The aspects of ideological proximity also highlight the research maneouvering and arguments that emphasise think tank institutional embeddedness.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of non-governmental think tanks, this chapter has questioned their ability to challenge or endorse government policy narratives on Pakistan. Particularly notable for their diversified funding structures and the varied membership patterns, think tanks in this category namely, ORF, CPR, VIF and IF have enjoyed relative freedom from government funding and direction to their research agendas. Brought about by India's liberalisation process and the need to supplement government capacity on foreign policy, these think tanks were ideally placed to expand and challenge the policy discourse on Pakistan. While the greater emphasis on academic research and an informed discussion on India's Pakistan policy did enable some new thinking on key issues, the government control over funding legislation and the think tank need to retain policy relevance created significant challenges. Therefore, while providing support for government initiatives on dialogue with Pakistan, discourse insufficiently challenges policy frameworks and with the decline in official dialogue opportunities, think tank engagement with

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[144] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008, pg. 305
[145] A Participant Interview with senior researcher and retired defence personnel at IF, New Delhi on 19 October, 2015
[146] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at CAPS, New Delhi on 21 October, 2015
[147]A Participant Interview with senior member and retired defence personnel at IPCS, New Delhi on 29 September, 2015
[148] A Participant Interview with junior academic at JNU, New Delhi on 7 September, 2015
[149] A Participant Interview with mid-level bureucrat at the MEA in New Delhi on October 7, 2015

policy ideas on Pakistan has also declined, in favour of issues that enjoy continued government support and patronage.

Chapter Six

Non- Governmental Peacebuilding Think Tanks

The previous chapters have examined think tanks that are embedded into the bureaucratic set up in India, receiving funding and patronage from key government departments which also provide directions to research agendas particularly with respect to foreign and security policy. Further within the think tank universe in India, there also exist smaller players - non-governmental think tanks that have emerged in the post liberalisation phase, particularly in the post nuclear test era. While India's economic liberalisation paved the way for its rising economic credentials, the nuclear tests in 1998 created recognition for India as a significant strategic and military power. This has also impacted the policy research landscape in India as has been highlighted in previous chapters. This was coupled with a keen interest from international donor agencies to invest in Indian think tanks and independent policy research. The change in its external power relationships affected foreign policy agendas together with the interest by international donors that benefited think tanks under consideration in this chapter. Their initiation also coincided with the changing global definitions of security and an increasing interest in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and people's security, reflected also in the context of Indo-Pak relations.

Part two of the analysis of Non-Governmental think tanks, this chapter will look in detail at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS); Delhi Policy Group (DPG); Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) and; Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP). With respect to the analysis covered in previous chapters, these think tanks are smaller in scale and membership and there also exist noticeable differences in their membership patterns and engagement with the policy establishment in India. While highlighting these differences, the chapter will also ask if the positions that these think tanks adopt on the Indo-Pak conflict differ from government think tanks or other non-governmental think tanks like ORF. Like earlier, the DI-Gramscian examination of government role in consensus building through collaboration with think tanks will be considered, particularly in the case of these smaller think tanks with visibly reduced ties to policy elites.

The analysis will look at both discourse as well as interaction with policymaking and a few common elements stand out. While larger and more resourceful think tanks that were analysed

in previous chapters lack what Parmar calls an "institutional line"[1] and rather have a defacto institutional worldview, think tanks like IPCS, DPG, CDR and WISCOMP have clear institutional positions and often distinctly defined narrow organisational goals. This is partly due to the funding structures in operation which are project driven and partly due to the narrow constituency of knowledge elites. The focus at these non-governmental think tanks has also been on training and networking – through women's networks and youth training and simulations. Thus, while reaching out to policy elites and mobilising public opinion is a goal, an emphasis on grassroots initiatives and expanding stakeholders towards peace with Pakistan is also visible.

Nature of Intellectual Elite – Patterns in Institutional Worldviews and Collaborations with the State

Non-governmental think tanks in this category look visibly different from those addressed in the previous chapter. They are smaller in size and composition. More notably, they reflect significant differences in their funding structures. These think tanks are not funded by the government, other than small project grants to IPCS. Established in post liberalised India, research agendas therefore are more independent of government direction, but this also indicates a lack of patronage and support from the government. Further, in terms of their research agendas, in addition to policy enquiry, the advocacy and training component is significant. Particular emphasis is on projects dedicated to conflict resolution, peacebuilding and training for peace and in addition to this, there is a sustained attention to NTS issues. The emphasis of these research agendas is also a reflection of the nature of intellectual elite that focus on civil society activism and are also more actively involved in non-governmental multi-track processes.

Benefiting from the open economic environment of post liberalised India, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) was founded in 1994, under the leadership of Radha Kumar and founder director V R Raghavan. The institutional focus "was on strategic issues of critical national interest and research over the years expanded into special areas of peace and conflict studies and national security."[2] Through an emphasis on research and advocacy, DPG interactions cover a wide

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[1] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004) pg. 77
[2] More on DPG's official webpage - http://www.delhipolicygroup.org/about-us

canvas including strategic and geo-political issues, geo-economics, defence and security. Research programmes[3] supported primarily by the Ford Foundation began with the National Security Program that focused on regional security, internal security, emerging security challenges and nuclear policy and disarmament. In 2003, the program was expanded and a chair on NTS was instituted held by T K Oommen[4] and B G Verghese.[5] Radha Kumar's expertise in peace and conflict studies led to the initiation of the Peace and Conflict Studies program in 1998 with specific attention given to conflicts in Afghanistan, Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and India's north-east. While the Pakistan program focused on bilateral peacemaking between India and Pakistan, the program on J & K dealt with issues of internal reconciliation in the state and dialogue with Pakistan. Key target groups for DPG have been legislators, civil society and trade organizations with a specific focus on women's dialogues and women's networks within South Asia.

Founder Radha Kumar's ideas have been a crucial influence on the research design at DPG. An academic by training[6], Kumar is a specialist in ethnic conflicts, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, a focus visible in DPG formulations. Kumar was also instrumental in the setting up and running of the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Jamia Millia Islamia[7] as Director from 2005-2010 and from October 2010 to October 2011, served as one of the government appointed group of interlocutors for J & K. Another key influence at DPG in its early years was Gen. V. R. Raghavan, one of India's prominent strategic thinkers with significant operational experience serving in Siachen and Kargil where he retired as the DGMO

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[3] With new leadership, DPG programmes also appear to have changed. The new website (http://www.delhipolicygroup.org/) highlights focus on strategic and geopolitical issues including regional security challenges; geo-economic issues like India's political economy, regional economic integration including regional connectivity initiatives; defence and security issues include, national security policy, defence technology and trade, maritime security and issues of non-traditional security. There is less emphasis on peace and conflict studies now

[4] A renowned sociologist and professor Emeritus at JNU, Oommen was a member of the Sachar Committee set up by the PM to study social, economic, educational status of the Muslims in India as well as a Chairman of Advisory Committee of the Gujarat Harmony Project constituted after the 2002 Gujarat communal riots.

[5] Known to be an expert of water security issues, Verghese had a long term association with CPR and his viewpoints have been discussed in the previous chapter.

[6] Kumar was Executive Director of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly in Prague (1992–1994), and Associate Fellow at the Institute for War and Peace Studies at Columbia University (1994–1996). She has also been a senior fellow in peace and conflict studies at the CFR in New York (1999–2003). She currently is on the board of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and the Council of the United Nations University where she was appointed as Chair in 2016.

[7] The Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution was launched in 2004 and was one of the first of its kind in an Indian university. Its chief focus is comparative and contemporary studies, and it aims to address the lack of serious and purposeful analysis of types and sources of conflict in our country and neighbourhood, and the methods of dealing with them that India has adopted. For more see, http://jmi.ac.in/cpcr

in 1994. At DPG he implemented projects on South Asian Comprehensive Security focusing on the political, economic, environment security issues; NTS premised on non-military security threats and nuclear policy stewardship aimed at sharpening the nuclear debate in India for introducing restraint and responsibility in nuclear policy.[8] The current Director General, Hemant Krishan Singh is also a former bureaucrat and a former career diplomat in the IFS. His expertise is essentially in India-Japan relations and India's policy in South East Asia manifested in the Look East Policy.[9] Other notable names associated with DPG have been, K Shankar Bajpai, Arvind Virmani,[10] Aditya Singh,[11] Arun Sahgal[12] and Rana Banerji.[13]

India's liberalisation and the developing interest in independent policy research also prompted the establishment of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) in 1996. The brainchild of P R Chari and Dipankar Banerjee, while "the initial charter of the Institute focussed more on non-military security issues and threats to the region, nuclear tests in 1998 and developments in the post 9/11 period in South Asia"[14] expanded research agendas. Leadership at IPCS is a combination of academics and practitioners, knowledge elites composed of seasoned diplomats and former bureaucrats like Salman Haidar, IP Khosla, Leela Ponappa and AS Dulat, armed forces veterans like AS Lamba, Uday Bhaskar and several academics. IPCS also claims to have "the youngest profile in terms of its faculty and also invites young scholars from other regions to host them as interns and visiting fellows."[15]

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[8] After DPG he moved to Centre for Security Analysis, Chennai, as President where he has led programmes on peninsular India's security perspectives, relations with South East Asia and on Civil Society- Governance interface.http://disarmament.nrpa.no/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/Bio_Raghavan.pdf)

[9] A seasoned diplomat, before joining DPG, Singh was Professor for Strategic Studies at ICRIER (2011-2016) and has been associated with several public policy initiatives and Track II / Track 1.5 strategic dialogues involving major Think Tanks of India, Japan, Asia and the US. He has written and worked extensively on the ongoing transformation of India's relations with the United States and Japan and their growing convergences in shaping Asia's emerging economic and security architecture.

[10] Virmani has been an advisor to the GOI at the highest levels for 25 years, including as Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance and Principle Advisor, Planning Commission. His affiliation with think tanks extends to his membership in the Governing Board of the Forum For Strategic Initiatives (FSI) and CPR.

[11] A former member of the NSAB, General Singh retired in September 2007 as GOC of the Southern Command

[12] A retired Brigadier in the Indian Army, Sahgal is the Executive Director of the Forum for Strategic Initiatives, a policy think tank focusing on national security, diplomacy and Track II Dialogues. He was previously the founding Director of the Office of Net Assessment, Indian Integrated Defense Staff, Head of the Center for Strategic Studies and Simulation, USI, and Senior Fellow at the IDSA. His research comprises scenario planning workshops, geopolitical and strategic assessments related to Asian security, and issues concerning nuclear doctrine and strategic stability in South Asia. He has been a member of the Task Force on Net Assessment and Simulation, under the NSC, and a consultant with DRDO. He is member of many Track 1.5 and Track 2 initiatives.

[13] A former bureaucrat, Banerji has held important positions in the state of Assam as well as in Indian missions abroad dealing particularly with security and intelligence-related issues impinging on National Security Policy formulation, with focused expertise on the South Asian region.

[14] http://www.ipcs.org/about-us/

[15] More about the IPCS Internship programme can be viewed at: http://www.ipcs.org/internship-program/

Much direction to its research agenda and specific programmes has come from P R Chari - a former bureaucrat and an early member of the think tank community in India. He was Director at IDSA from 1975-1980 and Research Professor at CPR from 1992-1996. Chari is known to have been an authority on issues of disarmament and nuclear proliferation. He was a faculty at the South Asian Summer School[16] conceived by George Perkovich aimed at creating a network of young researchers with expertise on issues of arms control and conflict resolution strategies in South Asia.[17] While rhetoric in the years following the 1998 nuclear tests was in favour of hawkish-national security positions, in academic circles, Chari was known for promoting a "consensual approach on the nuclear issue."[18]Serving as Research Professor at IPCS until 2015, Chari was also closely involved in the training and development of young professionals.[19]

While Chari's strength was his academic background, co-founder Dipankar Banerjee was a retired Army officer. He was also Senior Fellow at IDSA from 1987-1990 and Deputy Director from 1992-1996, following which he helped build the IPCS.[20] With a keen interest in disarmament issues, Banerjee has also remained interested in border security and security sector reforms. Other researchers like Suba Chandran[21] and Mallika Joseph[22] have written prolifically on foreign policy issues such as security sector reforms, relations with Pakistan and the developing political dynamics in Kashmir.

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[16]The South Asian Summer School in Arms Control was conceived by George Perkovich and was an annual summer school for young South Asian (and Chinese) journalists, officials, and scholars (about 25–30 participants, 6–8 international faculty). The first School was held in 1993 at Bhurban, Pakistan. The second session was held in May 1994, also in Pakistan; while the third took place in India in August 1995. The goals were to transfer state-of-the-art knowledge about arms control, verification, and conflict resolution, and to create a network of younger scholars that transcends regional borders. For more see, Sundeep Waslekar, "Track Two Diplomacy in South Asia" *ACDIS Occasional Paper,* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, October 1995)

[17]Chari was also involved in a study on the Brasstacks Crisis of 1987 – a study co-organized by Kanti Bajpai, Pervaiz Cheema, Sumit Ganguly and Stephen Cohen, that culminated in a detailed book, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar Press, 1995)

[18]According to C Uday Bhaskar, former director at IDSA, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/nuclear-disarmament-advocate-pr-chari-passes-away/article7466792.ece)

[19]Chari's particular interest in nurturing young minds is fondly recalled by his colleague. Dipankar Banerjee's comment in, "Tribute: P R Chari" *Mainstream,* LIII: 34, 15 August, 2015, http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5879.html

[20] Banerjee was also briefly Executive Director at the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) from 1999-2002, a prominent Sri Lankan think tank. In addition, he was associated with the US Institute of Peace and was on a UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Conventional Arms.

[21] Chandran edited *Armed Conflicts in South Asia* - an annual publication from IPCS to map and analyse the nature of armed conflicts in the region. With significant experience in the field of conflict resolution and peace studies, Chandran's specific focus has been on issues within the Kashmir conflict. He is currently affiliated with the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore, http://nias.res.in/professor/d-suba-chandran

[22] Mallika Joseph specialises in security sector reforms and has been Director of IPCS since 2015, prior to which she was Executive Director at the RCSS in Sri Lanka from 2012-2014.

Since it was established, IPCS has networked with international institutes like Brookings, Sandia National Lab, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (London), China Research Forum, and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, among others. In South Asia, it is the founder member of the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT), a network of leading think tanks in the region; the Strategic Studies Network led by the Near East South Asia Center involving think tanks and scholars from North Africa, West Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia. It enjoys relative independence from government financial support though some grants have been from the MEA and the Government of J & K. Most funding for IPCS programmes has come from the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the MacArthur Foundation, Korea Foundation, Japan Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Ploughshares among others. In addition to the research and training element, IPCS has also organised Track-II dialogues involving the strategic community from other countries on select issues such as Nuclear Security, India-Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Water Security.

Membership patterns at DPG and IPCS are however different from the two smaller think tanks in this category. Intellectuals at CDR and WISCOMP are primarily focused on civil society activism. CDR was established in 2000 by Sushobha Barve with a focus on research and advocacy through dialogue forums geared towards building networks. These include cross LoC civil society dialogues (since 2005), cross LoC women's dialogues (since 2009); youth leadership and inter-community dialogue in J & K; India-Pakistan Track 2 dialogues (with Jinnah Institute since 2010). Listed as a not-for-profit company, funding comes from Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS) and the European Union. Board members include prominent names like Rajmohan Gandhi, Wajahat Habibullah[23], Syeda Hameed[24] and Teesta Setalvad[25]. However, primary influence on CDR's worldviews has been from founder Sushobha Barve who has worked in the area of peace and conflict resolution with firsthand experience of communal violence during the 1984 riots in Delhi. In addition, she has worked in other conflict zones including Gujarat, Maharashtra and J & K. In 1992, she set up the Mumbai Mohalla Committee Movement Trust, and mobilized a citizens' police force.[26] In J & K, Barve has set

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[23]Former chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities and former Chief Information Commissioner of India.

[24] A prominent social and women's rights activist, Hameed is a former member of the Planning Commission. She has previously chaired the Steering Committee of the Commission on Health which reviewed the National Health Policy of 2002 which was later replaced by the NITI Aayog. Hameed is also founder trustee of the Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia and a former member of the National Commission for Women (1997–2000).

[25] Setalvad is an Indian civil rights activist, journalist and secretary of Citizens for Justice and Peace, an organisation formed for fighting for justice for the victims of communal violence in the state of Gujarat in 2002.

[26] http://india.ashoka.org/fellow/sushobha-barve

up several innovative women's empowerment and peace initiatives such as peace education training for teachers; interregional, intercommunity, and intracommunity dialogue between Hindus and Muslims, and Kashmiris and residents of Jammu. In addition to Barve, CDR has not been able to hire other full-time research staff until it received bigger grants from FNS and the EU.[27] Other researchers, less known, are based in Kashmir and work primarily at the field level.

Similarly smaller in scale, WISCOMP is an initiative of the Foundation for Universal Responsibility (FUR)[28], which was established with funds from the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Dalai Lama in 1999. A key focus at WISCOMP has been to initiate a discourse on women, peace, and security in South Asia and this is done through a combination of research, training, and advocacy. A clear institutional position emphasises the role of women as "peacebuilders" and "agents for nonviolent social change."[29] Further emphasis is on "empowering a new generation of women and men with the expertise and skills to engage in peace activism through educational and training programs in Conflict Transformation."[30] The organisation's stated focus is on a "people-oriented discourse on issues of security"[31] through advocating for peace, multi-track diplomacy and civil society dialogues.

In addition to the trust fund from FUR, WISCOMP programmes have been funded by the Ford Foundation, Embassy of Finland and small project grants from the MacArthur Foundation and International IDEA.[32] In terms of leadership, the primary influence has been founder Meenakshi Gopinath. An educationist, Gopinath was Principal of Lady Shri Ram (LSR) College in New Delhi (1988-2014) and also the first woman to serve on the NSAB (2004 – 2006). Mainstreaming gender and highlighting human security concerns have been her key focus and she has been a member of several Indo-Pak peace initiatives like the Neemrana dialogue, the Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD) and the Chaophraya Dialogue. In addition, Manjri Sewak has led WISCOMP's Conflict Transformation (CT) programme. With training in the field of peacebuilding, she has

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[27] A Participant interview with senior member at CDR, New Delhi on 7 October, 2015
[28] http://www.furhhdl.org/
[29] Mission of the organisation provided on their website that can be accessed at http://wiscomp.org/our-mission/
[30] ibid
[31] In an interview with senior member at WISCOMP, New Delhi on 7 September, 2015, it was argued that think tank's and NGO's conceptions of security changed from a hard-core state security focus in the early 2000s to one where both people's security and state security began to be considered. This was also the time when the MEA and at a larger level the UN started giving more credibility to NGOs.
[32] Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), http://www.idea.int/

significant expertise in CT and curriculum development and in addition to designing WISCOMP's Indo-Pak CT project, in 2004–5, Sewak was a part of a team that designed a Diploma Program in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding at LSR, in addition to her role as Visiting Faculty for the Program.[33] In addition to research staff, WISCOMP advisory board includes prominent names like Shyam Saran, Leila Seth, Varun Sahni, Amitabh Mattoo, Satish Kumar among others. Most of these have been associated with a think tank or have held prominent policymaking positions, and considered to be significant knowledge elites in each of their area of expertise.

With significant focus on capacity building and creating long-term knowledge networks, WISCOMP began its work with a public dialogue on *Reporting Conflict through a Peace lens* focusing on the relationship between gender, conflict reportage and peacebuilding in South Asia. Other research programmes include CT, Gender Peace and Security and Educating for Peace. Within these broad themes, the focus has been on gender sensitivity training through the project on violence against women titled *Partners in wellbeing*; "engendering security" through the South Asian collaborative research project titled *Transcending Conflict: Gender and Non-Traditional Security[34];*supporting women-led civil society initiatives in the Northeast and Kashmir (*Women Building Peace)*. Of particular significance to this thesis is the *Athwaas* project situated in J & K which will be detailed later. Between 2000 and 2008, WISCOMP with support from the Ford Foundation funded research studies by mid-career researchers on South Asian political and social issues in the *Scholar of Peace* Fellowship programme. In addition, collaborations with other international and regional organisations has been an active part of the research agenda.[35]

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[33] The center has now been renamed the Aung San Suu Kyi Center for Peace and courses offered include Conflict Analysis and Conflict Transformation; Dialogue; Mediation; Gandhi; Justice, and Reconciliation. http://lsr.edu.in/ASSK-Centre-for-Peace.asp

[34]Initiated in 2002, this research project was the first systematic attempt to foreground, through case studies from the South Asian region, the need to develop methodologies that situate gender concerns squarely within the security discourse. It facilitated cross-border research, published as monographs, by scholars from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and India on areas of conflict within the country of their residence. http://wiscomp.org/programs/gender-and-nts-south-asia/

[35]WISCOMP has partnered with Peace Research Institute Oslo in its multi-year project on "Making Women Count for Peace" and organized a roundtable on Women and Peace Building in 2015; association with PAIMAN Trust in Pakistan to strengthen people to people contact between India and Pakistan. Mossarat Qadeem, Founder and CEO, PAIMAN Trust has been a WISCOMP Scholar of Peace Fellow in 2002 and a regular at WISCOMP's annual CT workshops. It is also one of the 14 founding members of the NTS-Consortium based at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Further WISCOMP is a member of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. The Women Peacemakers Program, an initiative of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation set up in 1997 in the Netherlands has also given financial support to WISCOMP to bring together women from regions of armed conflict in South Asia for dialogues on peacebuilding

With differences in elite composition and research agendas, the approaches that shape think tank discourse on Indo-Pak relations are also different. The next two sections will examine the differences in their approach by first examining policy discourse on Pakistan. Secondly, the ability and efforts of these think tanks to introduce an alternative policy narrative based on an increased focus on civil society activism and NTS issues will be considered.

Policy Discourse and Mobilisation of Dominant government narratives

Embracing the incremental nature of the CD formulation and its emphasis on civil society engagement, programmes have focused on grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, particularly in Kashmir – with women's networks (WISCOMP, DPG, CDR), engaging with youth through educational programmes (IPCS, DPG) or with traders and other economic actors like in the case of CDR. While the agendas are project driven based on funding arrangements, there is also a very clear and sustained engagement with dialoguing with Pakistan and building networks beyond the borders. The role of the intellectual elite also comes into play, with the involvement of experts like Radha Kumar, V R Raghavan, P R Chari and Meenakshi Gopinath in government advisory and research positions. There is also evidence of an interest in Indo-Pak dialogue that predates the CD. Thus, as early as May 1997[36], DPG commissioned a study on Kashmir, one that has led to significant academic and policy debates under the co-directorship of Kanti Bajpai, Dipankar Banerjee and Amitabh Mattoo. The project was undertaken in four phases comprising background papers on internal security, foreign policy, economic development and centre-state relations; extensive fieldwork in J & K between June-October 1997 with briefings from the MEA and the DGMO. While conducted under the sponsorship of the DPG, the report was a result of an independent research effort by key specialists and provided significant policy recommendations both for internal reconciliation as well as relations with Pakistan. Some key suggestions included military cooperation with Pakistan to include CBMs, a cautious defence posture and a nuclear safety assistance and collaboration zone; settlement of smaller disputes like Siachen, Sir Creek and Wullar Barrage; economic cooperation through concessions on Pakistani exports, facilitating business visas and revisiting the pipeline proposals; track two diplomacy as well as engagement with third parties

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[36]The draft report written in November 1997 was presented to the DPG trustees and directors and subsequently presented in New Delhi in 1998.

that could enhance cooperative deals with Pakistan.[37] The language of some of these recommendations is similar to the official formulation of the CD process initiated in 2004. However, the causal link between them is difficult to determine because of lack of information and transparency in the policy processes.

The initiation of the CD, provided a further impetus and think tanks began to engage more actively with its various debates. Their particular approach towards key issues will be discussed further. Further, in addition to policy research by both DPG and IPCS, publications from think tanks (particularly IPCS) also tracked the official dialogue through comprehensive chronologies creating significant scholarship on the process.[38] Also noteworthy is the research by junior academics or students that formed a part of the youth component at IPCS, several of whom moved on to other think tanks or academic positions after their experience at the institute.

Kashmir – In addition to DPG's analysis of Kashmir before the CD, IPCS policy briefs and commentaries also focused on the different elements of the conflict, concentrating on political leadership, both mainstream and separatist with attention to the alienation of the people of the region. The impact of the conflict on the disillusionment within the populace[39] has been a common thread within IPCS research discourse becoming more prominent since 2004. Elections[40] and issues regarding local governance were also considered, in addition to suggestions for an "institutionalised" dialogue[41] with the Hurriyat party. DPG's early viewpoints on Kashmir also focused on internal reconciliation and redressal of Kashmiri

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[37]Kanti Bajpai, Dipankar Banerjee, Amitabh Mattoo et al. *Jammu and Kashmir: An Agenda for the Future*, (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 1999), pg. vi, vii

[38]Detailed chronological information on the progress of the different baskets of issues in the CD were catalogued at IPCS over the years. These include, K S Manjunath, "Indo-Pak Peace Process: Chronology of Events 2004-2005" *IPCS Special Report,* 6, January 2006; K S Manjunath, Seema Sridhar and Beryl Anand, "Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue 2004-2005: A Profile" *IPCS Special Report,* 12, February 2006; Priyashree Andley, "Third Composite Dialogue: An Overview of Indo-Pak Relations in 2006" *IPCS Special Report,* 36, March 2007, Sameer Suryakant Patil, "Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue: An Update" *IPCS Special Report,* 53, June 2008 and Samarjit Ghosh, "Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue – 2008: A Review" *IPCS Special Report,* 65, February 2009.

[39] In 2000, commenting on the rise of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Chandran brought to light this alienation coupled with the disillusioned youth as a key factor in the rise of the HM. D Suba Chandran, "The Hizbul Mujahideen" *IPCS Articles,* 405, 14 August, 2000, http://www.ipcs.org/article/terrorism-in-jammu-kashmir/the-hizbul-mujahideen-405.html

[40] In August 2002, IPCS conducted a field survey in the Kashmir valley on the forthcoming elections, highlighting Kashmiri reluctance to participate in elections attributed primarily to bad governance and rigging. D Suba Chandran, "Recent developments in Kashmir II- Hizbul Cease-fire – implications" *IPCS Articles,* 402, 7 August, 2000, http://www.ipcs.org/article/terrorism-in-jammu-kashmir/recent-developments-in-kashmir-ii-hizbul-cease-fire-implications-402.html.

[41]D Suba Chandran, "Kashmir: Need for an Internal Dialogue" *IPCS Articles,* 354, 11 May, 2000, http://www.ipcs.org/article/jammu-kashmir/kashmir-need-for-an-internal-dialogue-354.html

grievances and the promised autonomy and the concept of "soft partition"[42] – very similar to the concept of open borders envisioned by the PM in later years. Kumar however at that stage was sceptical about the acceptance of an open border if "the rest of the border between India and Pakistan [was] closed."[43]

As in the previous analysis, here too, the dual focus on Kashmir – as both an internal and a bilateral conflict remained. The need for an "institutionalised bilateral mechanism"[44] between India and Pakistan, particularly with regards to their discussions on the Kashmir conflict was emphasised. DPG also offered suggestions for cooperation in earthquake relief[45] and key formulations on Kashmir by President Musharraf and Manmohan Singh were considered. With G Parthasarathy (CPR), Radha Kumar published the *Frameworks for a Kashmir Settlement*[46] – to suggest ways in which complex factors related to a solution for J & K could be addressed through discussions on key issues such as self-governance and conflict resolution strategies. Early proposals towards the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service[47] which became an important CBM in the following years were also discussed in detail at IPCS. Additionally, Chari has stated that the new initiative for dialogue stems from the realisation of "all parties to the Kashmir imbroglio that they have to make compromises and that maximalist rhetoric, addressed to domestic audiences is counter-productive."[48]While Indian CBMs suggested in 2003 were welcomed by Chandran[49], Banerjee on the other hand seemed sceptical about them owing to Pakistan's stubborn attitudes and was also critical of Pakistan's suggestions to bring in UN monitoring for the Kashmir bus service and meetings between Pakistan and Kashmiri separatist leadership.[50]

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[42]Radha Kumar, "Untying the Kashmir Knot" *World Policy Journal,*19: 1, Spring 2002, pg. 21
[43]ibid
[44]D Suba Chandran, "The Indo-Pak Riddle: Neither forward nor backward nor stationary" *IPCS Articles,*1036, 18 May, 2003, http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/the-indo-pak-riddle-neither-forward-nor-backward-nor-stationary-1036.html
[45] In 2005, after the Kashmir earthquake, DPG put together a collection of articles by legislators in J & K and academics and policy experts on specific areas of concern detailing priorities for relief and rehabilitation jointly between India and Pakistan. *Kashmir – After the Quake: Prospects for Peace* (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 2005)
[46]G Parthasarathy and Radha Kumar, *Frameworks for a Kashmir settlement* (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 2006)
[47]D Suba Chandran, "New Indian Initiatives in Kashmir" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 13, November 2003
[48]P R Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process – American Engagement in South Asia* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2007) pg. 214
[49]D Suba Chandran, "New Indian Initiatives in Kashmir" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 13, November 2003,
[50] Dipankar Banerjee, "India-Pakistan Imbroglio over CBMs" *IPCS Articles,* 1200, 6 November, 2003, http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/india-pakistan-imbroglio-over-cbms-1200.html

IPCS continued to engage with key decisions like the initiation of the bus service and the Kashmir roundtables that led to the constitution of working groups, specifically on cross-LoC trade. Research scholarship at the time brought to light psychological perceptions of the Kashmiri people towards the government in New Delhi and argued that Cross LoC trade would marginalise extremist voices in the valley.[51] In addition to presenting political ideas, IPCS participation in the policy process also helped to fill in gaps in the government's knowledge of ground realities. Owing to its running projects in J & K and empirical knowledge acquired, several recommendations on cross LoC interaction emphasised more effective trade and introduced the idea of cross LoC tourism, both religious and adventure – ideas that were new and underexplored. To facilitate cross LoC interactions it was suggested that the Jammu-Sialkot and the Kargil-Skardu routes should also be opened and with the revival of heritage routes for tourism, regional festivals (such as the Pir Panjal Festival[52] and the Poonch festival[53]) should be allowed. It was also suggested that cross LoC trade should be made an economic CBM rather than just a political tool – thus expanding the basket of goods and providing banking facilities instead of the barter system currently in place.[54]

There was significant engagement at these think tanks on the internal dialogue in Kashmir. Policy ideas went beyond a review of the army's presence and Kashmir's strategic value. Events and discussions since 2004 took on board key issues under consideration and IPCS became an important actor for mobilising public opinion and through its communicative discourse, became relevant to the presentation of political ideas to the public. These ideas included but were not limited to the potential demilitarisation of Siachen as a key to resolving the Kashmir dispute, while also addressing counter-insurgency operations in the region[55]; the impact of alienation of Kashmiri people owing to the intense militarisation was also an idea that was discussed at length.[56] In May 2006, responding to the PM's Kashmir roundtables and the organisation of the different working groups, DPG also organized simulations based on the

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[51]It was highlighted that the fruit industry in Sopore region, an area that Geelani belonged to, if allowed to trade its apples across the LoC, would help counter the adverse propaganda by Geelani and his militant supporters in PoK.

D Suba Chandran, "Cross LoC Trade: Challenges and Opportunities in J & K" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 66, May 2008.

[52]D Suba Chandran, "Pir Panjal Regional Festival" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 142, April 2010

[53]D Suba Chandran, "Poonch Festival: A Strategy to integrate Border Regions in J & K" *IPCS Special Report,* 64, January 2009

[54]D Suba Chandran, "Expanding Cross LoC interactions- Perspectives from India" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 131, September 2009.

[55]"Kashmir: Looking Further" *IPCS Article,* 1382, 5 May, 2004, http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/kashmir-looking-further-1382.html

[56] Radha Kumar, Anjali Puri and Saurabh Naithani ed. *What Makes a Peace Process Irreversible: A conference report* (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 2005)

working group on Centre-State relations which it believed "touches on the crux of the problem: Kashmir's political status."[57] This initiative was supported by the EU, particularly the European Cross Cultural Programme (ECCP). The conference and many of the policy recommendations that emerged from these conferences drew on other comparative conflicts such as in Northern Ireland and Israel and Palestine, particularly the Oslo agreement. A noteworthy argument that emerged was the idea of "Non-Retractable 370" that essentially proposed that the rights to self-rule that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution provided to J & K be extended to all of the former princely state and made non-retractable with regional and international guarantees towards its implementation.[58]

Further, unlike government think tanks, the role of the Hurriyat in the internal dialogue in Kashmir was seen differently. It was argued that while not the sole representative, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) represented significant Kashmiri public opinion that must be taken on board within the dialogue.[59]The Hurriyat it was argued, "provides the much-needed political space between militancy and the moderate demand for an independent Kashmir or maximum autonomy"[60] and the union government should therefore attempt to engage with the moderate leadership within the Hurriyat like Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Sajad Lone. Recommendations were also made in favour of allowing a Hurriyat delegation to Pakistan and PAK. This was significantly different from the position taken by other think tanks examined earlier who recommended limiting the Hurriyat's connection to PAK and its relevance only as an actor in the domestic dynamics of Indian Kashmir.

Radha Kumar was also a member of the team of interlocutors appointed by Manmohan Singh in October 2010. With extensive interviews (700 delegations in the 22 districts of J& K) and three roundtable conferences, key suggestions were the recommendations for CBMs related to human rights and rule of law reforms; a review of AFSPA; improvements in police-community relations; providing better relief and rehabilitation for widows and orphans of violence in the state and; facilitating the return of Kashmiris stranded across the LoC, many of whom had crossed over for arms training.[61] The appointment of the interlocutors could also be seen as an

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[57]"Simulation Exercise: Frameworks for a Kashmir Settlement" *DPG Programme on Developing Peace Processes and Partners* (New Delhi: DPG, 2006)
[58]Ibid, pg. 9
[59]D Suba Chandran, "New Indian Initiatives in Kashmir" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 13, November 2003, pg. 1
[60]ibid
[61] Radha Kumar, M M Ansari and Dileep Padgaonkar, A *New Compact with the people of Jammu and Kashmir,* Final Report of the group of Interlocutors for J & K, October 2011

admission by the Central Government of the lack of adequate information from the region and think tanks like DPG and elites like Radha Kumar could provide such insight. The team also promoted the recommendations of the PM's Working Groups and endorsed the idea of "irrelevant borders". Radha Kumar further asserted that the report's impetus was on a "settlement of core political issues" rather than one focused on CBMs.[62]The report was submitted in October 2011, and was made public for an informed debate in May 2012. It did not however receive any serious official consideration.

Think tanks in this category have also contributed to debates on the changed nature of Indo-Pak relations and the continuing radicalisation in the state of J & K visible in the Amarnath and Shopian[63] incidents. IPCS for instance undertook a project titled, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Building Peace and Countering Radicalisation* (2009), that aimed to bring together younger generations from the different regions to gain an understanding of key issues and deliberate on preventive measures for further radicalisation. The project focused on three kinds of radicalisation – regional; religious and ethnic and divided into three phases, concentrated on field surveys across the three regions,[64] research papers and a workshop in collaboration with the University of Jammu in December 2009. Key recommendations that emerged focused on the need to address regional and religious issues in all regions of the state with an emphasis on internal displacement, governance and decentralisation. Suggestions reflected a need for better communication, easy travel, revival of tourism and other cross regional cultural and educational activities.[65]

Peace and Security - In addition to its active discourse on Kashmir, these non-governmental think tanks have also engaged with the debate around nuclear weapons. As early as 2001, DPG in collaboration with the Islamabad Peace Research Institute (IPRI)[66] facilitated a continuing dialogue on Nuclear Risk Reduction. The talks involved briefing the foreign office and sought

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[62]Radha Kumar, "To a battery of Ever-ready Denunciators" *Outlook,* June 11, 2012, http://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/to-a-battery-of-ever-ready-denunciators/281116
[63] Mass protests broke out in Kashmir in May 2009 after the bodies of two women believed to be raped and murdered by Indian troops were discovered in the Shopian district of the Kashmir valley. For more see: Altaf Hussain, "Deaths provoke Kashmir protests" *BBC News,* 1 June, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8076666.stm
[64]The focus was specifically on ten towns – Jammu, Rajouri, Doda, Kishtwar, Anantnag, Srinagar, Baramulla, Sopore, Kargil, and Leh
[65] *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh – Building Peace and Countering Radicalisation* (New Delhi: IPCS, March 2010)
[66]Islamabad Peace Research Institute (IPRI) is a prominent think tank in Pakistan operational since 1999. http://www.ipripak.org/ s

to develop "a shared and agreed lexicon" on key nuclear concepts such as 'minimum nuclear deterrence.'[67]The dialogue it was argued "facilitated an interaction between two sets of experts comprising former Foreign Secretaries, defence services officers, nuclear strategy analysts and academicians."[68]Commenting on this interaction Raghavan noted the "differing interpretations placed on commonly used nuclear phraseology. It was also a revelation to note how adversely, immature political rhetoric in one country affects the mood in the other."[69]

Raghavan's influence and his support for nuclear disarmament and abolition could be clearly seen on DPG's worldviews. In 2002 and 2003, he was a part of a Carnegie - NTI and Stimson Center enabled Track 2 workshop, as well as a part of a working group on an Expanded Non-Proliferation System between November 2009 and June 2011. The impetus of these dialogues was to formulate Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures (NRRM) for the subcontinent.[70] At IPCS this expertise lay with Chari and Banerjee and the issue of nuclear non-proliferation particularly with regards to the nuclear relationship between India and Pakistan since 1998 was considered. A specific project on Nuclear Security also conducted several dialogues under the India-Pakistan-China trilateral Nuclear Strategic Dialogue with support from the NTI.[71] With funding from NTI, IPCS also organized capacity building workshops at a student level, for media and young professionals in 2008 and 2009 on Nuclear Weapons, Global Disarmament and Regional Security.[72] In addition, between 2007 and 2009, IPCS collaborated with IDSA to organize workshops on disarmament and nuclear issues for government officials and armed forces personnel.

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[67]Manjrika Sewak, "Multi-Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Security" *RCSS Policy Studies,* 30 (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), pg. 45

[68]V R Raghavan, "South Asian nuclear dialogue" *The Hindu,* 1 September, 2000, http://www.thehindu.com/2000/09/01/stories/05012523.htm

[69]ibid

[70] In addition, among the participants were future national security advisers M.K. Narayanan and Mahmud Durrani, as well as Salman Haidar, V.P. Malik, S.K. Mehra, V.R. Raghavan, Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, Raja Menon, Jehangir Karamat, Najmuddin Shaikh, Shaharyar Khan, and Feroz Khan. For more detailed information about these workshops see, Michael Krepon, "Nuclear Risk Reduction Redux in South Asia" *Stimson Center Issue Brief,* 14 June, 2012, http://www.stimson.org/content/nuclear-risk-reduction-redux-south-asia

[71] For more information on the Trialogue interactions see: *Debriefing the India-China-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue: Towards a Stable Nuclear Order in Asia* held at the Fudan University, Shanghai on 8-9 August 2009 (New Delhi: IPCS, September 2009); *Review of the Shanghai Meeting and the Future Agenda* (New Delhi: IPCS, October 2009)

[72] For more on the youth programmes see: D. Suba Chandran and Rekha Chakravarthi, "Nuclear Disarmament & Regional Security - Reintroducing the Disarmament Debate among Young Scholars" *IPCS Workshop Report,* August 2008; *Second Annual Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament and Regional Security* (New Delhi: IPCS, September 2009)

Chari was the most vocal proponent of nuclear disarmament at the institute often highlighting the need for enlarging mutual understandings of security concepts and nuclear doctrines,[73] more so since 2004. In addition, he recommended that India should concede to Pakistan's request to include cruise missiles in the pre-notification of missile test agreement signed in 1999. Chari was sceptical about the recommendation to increase channels of communication between air forces and nuclear establishments and in several commentaries during the early phase of the dialogue process[74], emphasised the need for conventional CBMs to progress simultaneously with nuclear CBMs and called for the extension of the 1988 agreement to include population centres and major economic assets. Dipankar Banerjee has also been vocal about nuclear disarmament, his views summed up as "elimination through binding commitment, irreversibility of politics, transparency and verification."[75]

As part of the India-Pakistan-China trialogue organised by IPCS since 2008[76], similar issues of nuclear dangers and threat perception; existing nuclear CBMs; fissile material stockpiles and control and production ban; particular emphasis on Asian nuclear stability and security; harmonising doctrines for cooperative security; aspect of nuclear weapons and terrorism – have been taken up between key interlocutors from India, China and Pakistan.

Siachen - By and large, viewpoints on Siachen have questioned the strategic significance of the area for both India and Pakistan. Perspectives have also linked the potential demilitarisation of Siachen as a key to resolving the Kashmir dispute.[77] The shift in Pakistan's position reflected in Army Chief Kayani's proposal after the Gayari avalanche, was perceived as a "major departure" from Pakistan's previous position.[78] The proposal it was argued should result in a positive Indian response that would be helpful in asserting again that Siachen/Saltoro ridge is not of strategic significance and should be resolved. IPCS thus adopted a more reconciliatory position, while many in the think tank community in India were suspicious.

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[73]P R Chari, "Nuclear CBMs: What is possible?" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 22, June 2004. The need for a common "nuclear lexicon" and "military terminology" between India and Pakistan was also emphasised in a Participant Interview in New Delhi on 20 October, 2015.
[74]P R Chari, "Nuclear CBMs between India and Pakistan" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 24, July 2004
[75]Banerjee's comments as part of joint workshop organised by IPCS and Department of Political Science, Madras Christian College (MCC) in September 2008. For more see, R. Sridhar (ed.) "Nuclear Disarmament and South Asian Security: A Regional Dialogue" *IPCS-MCC Workshop Report* (New Delhi: IPCS, 2008)
[76]Five rounds of dialogue were conducted starting from December 2008 – September 2011. The trialogues where conducted with support from the NTI and were held in neutral locations like Thailand, Singapore and China.
[77]"Kashmir: Looking Further" *IPCS Article,* 1382, 5 May, 2004, http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/kashmir-looking-further-1382.html
[78]Dipankar Banerjee, "Special Commentary: Resolving the Siachen Dispute" *IPCS Article*, 3613, April 2012, http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/special-commentary-resolving-the-siachen-dispute-3613.html

Terrorism - Unlike other think tanks focusing on Indo-Pak relations, the issue of terrorism was not considered extensively by these think tanks. The only organisation that addressed the issue in their policy discourse was IPCS. The issues of terrorism and armed violence have however been perceived at IPCS through a South Asian perspective and very often recommendations focus on a joint South Asian strategy to counter terrorism in the region.[79] This is in contrast to the others' steadfast focus on a Pakistan-centered policy on terrorism. Discourse at IPCS before the Mumbai attacks had considered issues of internal conflicts and left-wing extremism as well. Thus, in August 2005, IPCS collaborated with the Social Science Research Council and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs to conduct an intensive study,[80] incorporating two years of field research and analyses of protracted violent conflicts from around the world, focusing particularly on Kashmir, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Further in 2005, a research study analysed the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)[81] and its activities and operations in India. In addition, as was popular at IPCS, several publications highlighted terrorist attacks in India and particularly in J & K. Post Mumbai, focus has been on strengthening internal security through improvements in intelligence and implementation agencies[82] – ideas that have been expressed by other research organisations as well.

Introducing Alternative Policy Narratives

With regard to the discourse on security, research agendas at these think tanks are defined through a particular perception of security – with more emphasis on NTS issues like gender and resource politics. This emphasis is also more clearly visible in their adopted approach towards the India-Pakistan dialogue process. There is a noticeable emphasis on building cross border networks, particularly with like-minded constituencies and civil society in Pakistan and in training of the youth, seen as future stakeholders in the conflict and hence relevant to the creation of resolution strategies. Even within India, the emphasis of these institutes has been on civil society engagements seen more squarely in the programmes of WISCOMP and CDR, even though there is some attention to this aspect at IPCS and DPG. The training and

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[79]Devyani Srivastava, "Terrorism, Religious radicalism and Violence: Perspectives from India" *IPCS Issue Brief* 120, September 2009.

[80]Rohit Honawar, Seema Sridhar and Priyanka Singh, "Terrorism and Political Violence: Kashmir, Sri Lanka and Aceh" *IPCS Special Report,* 1, August 2005

[81]Rohit Honawar, "Jaish-e-Mohammed" *IPCS Special Report,* 4, November 2005

[82]D. Suba Chandran, "Fighting Terrorism: Strengthen and Modernise the State Police" *IPCS Issue Brief,* 88, December 2008

professional backgrounds of the elites within these think tanks is also reflected in their focus on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and alternate conceptualisations of security issues.

Thus, while IPCS and DPG focus on the broader issues regarding Pakistan, CDR and WISCOMP have emphasised engagements with civil society. CDR's approach has focused on leading civil society initiatives to facilitate cross LoC dialogue in Kashmir. Not classifying itself as a "purely security oriented organisation"[83], CDR dialogues have taken on board debate and discussion on Indo-Pak relations. Its approach is to take on seemingly "non-political issues"[84] like water, public health and education and by "framing the issue and interpreting it in a different way and by avoiding volatile issues"[85] (like a direct reference to the IWT for instance), the Centre has attempted to retain the interest of policymakers, and thus its viability as a research institute. WISCOMP programmes have also reflected an interest in conflict resolution with particular emphasis on the role of women as peacebuilders and the role of women's organisations in building peace between India and Pakistan. In 2000, it was part of the India-Pakistan Women's bus for peace initiative launched by Nirmala Deshpande (in the backdrop of Vajpayee's Lahore bus).[86] This was perhaps the first group to initiate cross-border dialogue in the aftermath of the Kargil conflict.

The shaping of the formal dialogue gave fillip to DPG programmes as well and in 2005, DPG launched its two year program on *Developing Durable Peace Processes and Partners*, "built around India's renewed peacemaking engagements."[87] The project "combine[d] closed door policy conferences with student workshops, in an effort to expand policy-oriented research on peace and security between Indian and European think tanks and universities."[88] Significant focus was on training and simulation exercises on key aspects of the Kashmir dispute. The discourse at WISCOMP has also engaged with the academic and policy debate on Kashmir, both through its research and its more participant driven forums. Its CT workshops for instance

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[83] A Participant Interview with senior member at CDR, New Delhi, on 7 October, 2015

[84] ibid

[85] ibid

[86] Sewak has argued that the 'bus for peace' represented the "most public cross-border collaboration between women from the two countries" and "brought into greater focus the need to open the channels of communication between the people." Manjrika Sewak, "Multi-Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Security" *RCSS Policy Studies,* 30 (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005)

[87] Radha Kumar, Anjali Puri and Saurabh Naithani ed. *What Makes a Peace Process Irreversible: A conference report* (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 2005)

[88] ibid

have included drafting of joint statements on Kashmir between Indian and Pakistani participants (2001)[89] and workshop simulations on conflict resolution strategies (2004).[90]

The creation of civil society networks is also a crucial agenda for these think tanks. In addition to emphasis on internal dialogue and reconciliation, CDR has a collaborative partnership with the Jinnah Institute[91] in Islamabad and has jointly organised Track Two dialogues since 2010. In addition, a one-year education partnership has been initiated with the Lahore University of Management Sciences. These cross-LoC interactions[92] were expanded based on participant feedback[93] and focused on participation from both sides of the border in Kashmir, in an attempt to bring to the table differing viewpoints and varying regional problems and perspectives. Academic research studies on pertinent issues in J & K have also been commissioned including a comparative analysis of documents related to the autonomy question in Kashmir[94] funded by the FNS and EU; another on the issues of the Indus River Basin with support from the FNS - an outcome of deliberations during the CDR-Jinnah Institute dialogue on common concerns in the Indus Basin.[95] DPG too, has collaborated with other organisations for instance, in November 2006, a conference titled *Pluralism and Democracy after 9/11; Europe and India* in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Centre and with the support of the ECCP mobilised public opinion to consider and adapt conflict resolution strategies from Europe to the South Asian region[96], an idea that Radha Kumar had proposed in her earlier writing as well.[97]

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[89] More details on this are available in the workshop report- Manjrika Sewak, *Rehumanizing the Other* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2002)

[90] For further details on these simulations see: Meenakshi Gopinath and Manjrika Sewak, *Transcending Conflict* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2004)

[91] The Jinnah Institute is a think tank in Pakistan focusing on policy research. It has collaborated with several Indian think tanks like the DPG and the CDR in addition to spearheading the Chaophraya Track Two Dialogue in collaboration with the Australia India Institute (AII).

[92] The first Intra-Kashmir Women's conference was held in Delhi in 2007 with support from the IDRC. Subsequent conferences were held in Srinagar (2009) and Gulmarg (2011). For more details see: *Bridging Divides: A Report on Intra-Kashmir Women's Conference*, (New Delhi: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2007)

[93] ibid

[94] The documents that this study focused on were – Naya Kashmir produced by J & K National Conference under Sheikh Abdullah in 1977; the self-rule framework of resolution produced by the J & K People's Democratic Party in October 2008; Achievable Nationhood produced by J & K People's Conference under Sajad Gani Lone in December 2006; Report on J & K Regional Autonomy by Balraj Puri in 1999 and Report of the State Autonomy Committee adopted by the state legislative assembly in June 2000. For more see, Arif Aayaz Parrey, *Anatomy of the Autonomy* (New Delhi: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation)

[95] Shakil A Romshoo, *Indus River Basin: Common Concerns and the Roadmap to Resolution* (New Delhi: Center for Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2012)

[96] Radha Kumar and Ellora Puri (ed.) *Peace-building: Indian and European Perspectives* (New Delhi: DPG, 2006)

[97] Radha Kumar, "Untying the Kashmir Knot" *World Policy Journal,* 19: 1, Spring 2002, pp. 11-24

Further to mobilising opinion on cross-LoC dynamics, there is also a focus on intra-regional dynamics in Kashmir, addressing the concerns of all three regions of the state, namely Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. Responding to the "MEA's admission that they lacked information on LoC areas in the Jammu region, or the divided families in the Jammu region,"[98]CDR has, since 2004 conducted *Intra-Region Dialogues*. Based on participant recommendations, the dialogues were expanded across the LoC and since 2005, CDR has conducted 10 Across LoC dialogue conferences – running parallel to developments in the official dialogue process that focused specifically on cross LoC Kashmir CBMs since 2005. Conflict resolution ideas emerging from these dialogues have stressed the need to reduce violence, initiate a dialogue process that includes people of all regions and communities of the divided state and an end to human rights violations, in addition to suggestions for a calibrated reduction of security forces from civilian areas.

Several studies that focused on specific problems in border districts, faced by divided families and Kashmiri Pandits living in the valley were also undertaken, reports of which were circulated to relevant policy elites. It is the organisation's assertion that "the new suggestions for opening of routes for travel and trade in all three regions of the state"[99] was owing to the recommendations made by CDR dialogues, particularly the opening of the Poonch-Rawalakot route, which it claims is a "direct result of suggestions made through CDR initiated Track III civil society meetings."[100]In addition, the organisation has claimed that fencing across the LoC was modified as a response to CDR suggestions "regarding impact of violence and fencing on border communities."[101] Ideas emerging from Intra-Region dialogues were centred on the reduction of violence and allowing for easy trade and travel and a crucial aspect was the inclusion of participation from AJK, Gilgit and Baltistan, usually ignored actors in the political dynamics. These dialogue forums involved the participation of a wide selection of experts, both political and civil society actors from all regions in J & K, as well as significant participation from PAK and bureaucrats and policy makers in Delhi and Islamabad. It is one of the rare dialogue forums that managed to organise a meeting in Islamabad whereas many other

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[98]A Participant Interview with senior member of CDR, New Delhi on 7 October, 2015
[99] *Beyond Borders: In Search of a Solution for Kashmir* (New Delhi: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2009) pg. 16
[100]ibid
[101]Ibid

organisations were unable to, owing to visa and funding restrictions. This is perceived as an indication that the government is receptive to such dialogue forums.[102]

In addition to dialogue groups, there has been emphasis also on developing modules for peace education training to improve communication and enable an understanding of the conflict and the diversity of opinion in Kashmir. During the period from 2004-2007, CDR conducted peace education programmes for 200 government secondary schools and teachers from 100 schools.[103] It also launched its water initiative in 2010 in recognition of "issues related to water, climate change, the environment, transboundary aquifers, changing demographics, cooperation for joint disaster management and possible joint studies on issues of common concerns in the Indus Basin."[104] This project also took the form of an India-Pakistan dialogue in collaboration with the Jinnah Institute. Further along this line, IPCS's project titled, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Building Peace and Countering Radicalization* (2009) also aimed to bring together younger generations from the different regions to gain an understanding of key issues and deliberate on preventive measures for further radicalisation. The workshop with primarily student participation[105] focused on critical issues such as the regional differences within J&K, role of the Amarnath land row agitation in polarising communities and regions and its spill over effect in other states, the gradual waning of Sufi influence in the Valley, displacement of Kashmiri Pandits, alienation of Rajouri and Poonch districts, the growing Gujjar-Pahari divide in these twin districts, and the challenges that confront Ladakh since its division into Leh and Kargil districts, among other topical issues in the context of J&K.

A key goal of CDR initiatives has also been to develop a "deeper understanding between stakeholders"[106] by developing networks within Kashmir, primarily among the women who have suffered due to years of violence. The impetus to civil society engagement was also undertaken in WISCOMP programmes. Influenced by the ideas of John Paul Lederach,

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[102]A Participant Interview with senior member of CDR, New Delhi on 7 October, 2015
[103]*Beyond Borders: In Search of a Solution for Kashmir* (New Delhi: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2009) pg. 11
[104] *India-Pakistan Water Roundtable – Joint Statement* (Bangalore: CDR and Jinnah Institute, 2014)
[105]Resource persons at the workshop included academics like Varun Sahni (VC -University of Jammu), Siddiq Wahid (VC-Islamic University, Srinagar), Dipankar Sengupta (University of Jammu) former bureaucrats like S S Bloeria (former Chief Secretary, J & K) Mohd. Ashraf (former Director, J & K Tourism), Ved Marwah (former Governor)
[106] *Beyond Borders: In Search of a Solution for Kashmir* (New Delhi: Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, 2009), pg. 8

particularly the concept of conflict transformation and the "three tier pyramid"[107] model, WISCOMP too has emphasised the engagement of stakeholders at different levels of social and political hierarchies. Special attention is given to women's empowerment and gender-based violence particularly in the context of armed conflict. In 2000, WISCOMP organised a Roundtable on *Breaking the Silence: Women in Kashmir*. A direct result of the roundtable was the creation of *Athwaas* – an all Kashmiri women's network in 2001. The *Athwaas* group focused on income generating activities in Kashmir; rehabilitation of widows and orphans; trauma healing and peace education workshops in addition to creating peace education programs for Kashmiri youth. *Athwaas* also created *Samanbals*[108] – a safe space in various locations in Kashmir to dialogue in conjunction with an income generating activity.

In response to Manmohan Singh's Roundtable conferences in Kashmir which lacked the participation and representation of women's voices, in August 2006, WISCOMP also organised a convention titled *Women in Dialogue: Envisioning the road ahead in Jammu and Kashmir*. A primary goal of the convention was to "contribute proactively to the ongoing dialogue on the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir by placing womens' perspectives, and their visions of the road ahead squarely on the table."[109] In addition to advocacy and social development, WISCOMP's work in Kashmir has also focused on prolific academic research on various aspects of Kashmir's political and socio-economic dynamics, both internally as well as in relation to Pakistan.

These think tanks have also been more actively engaged with multi-track initiatives on conflict resolution and trust-building in general and with explicit focus on Kashmir and issues of water politics. This role is particularly relevant in the light of the deteriorating status of the official dialogue since 2008. Think tanks therefore enabled a forum for interaction when official channels of dialogue were suspended. Through their grassroots initiatives, they were also able to highlight the political dynamics and changing public perceptions particularly in Kashmir.

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[107]John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.
[108]The *Samanbals* created were – Psychosocial Counseling Center – Zohama, Budgam district, Helpline Samanbal, Bijbehara, Anantnag District, Purkho Migrant Camp Samanbal in Jammu, Widows' Support Center, Dardpora, Kupwara. For more on WISCOMP's *Athwaas* initiative see: http://wiscomp.org/programs/women-building-peace/ ; Sumona DasGupta, *Breaking the Silence: Women in Kashmir* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2001); Soumita Basu, *Building Constituencies of Peace: A Women's Initiative in Kashmir, Documenting the Process* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2004)
[109] *Envisioning Futures: Women in Dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir: A National Consultation* (New Delhi: WISCOMP, 2007), pg. 3

During the Amarnath agitation for instance, CDR teams travelled extensively in the region and remained in communication with their existing networks in the state. Meetings were held in the towns of Poonch, Mendhar, Surankot and Mandi most affected by the rioting and reports were sent to state administration. DPG also organized a conference in March 2012, titled *Achieving Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Options Today* that focused on the need for CBMs for conflict resolution particularly the need to incorporate a dialogue process between legislators.[110] IPCS initiated its Indo-Pak dialogue on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in 2009 and as part of the project, a series of background papers were published that provided a detailed narrative of history of Indo-Pak disputes with a specific focus on cross LoC interactions, IWT, terrorism, trade and regional cooperation. The papers were uniquely designed to provide both an Indian and a Pakistani perspective on these issues. The Indo-Pak dialogue initiated by IPCS also featured a Track Two meeting in Bangkok in October 2009 with support from the Ploughshares Fund. Terrorism and associated issues formed a crucial part of this interaction in addition to focused discussions on religious radicalism and the dangers of terrorism and violence and evolving Better Joint Mechanisms to Counter Terrorism.[111]Other aspects included a need to review and expand CBMs and the possibility of third party intervention in the absence of a successful bilateral dialogue process. The dialogue also considered a review of the IWT.

Subsequently, in March 2013, a Track II Indus Water dialogue was conducted by IPCS with support from the Ploughshares fund and several issue briefs[112] were commissioned that provided insight into multiple dimensions related to the Indus River Basin. The papers dealt with a range of issues including climate change, cross LoC CBMs and the status of the IWT. The dialogue titled *Towards Building an Indus Community* focused on contemporary issues relating to Indus Water sharing based on the existing approaches and issues from the perspectives of India, Pakistan and two parts of J&K. Besides comprehending the discourse on 'rivers of the global commons' between both states in terms of sharing the Indus waters, the

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[110]A Conference Report, *Achieving Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Options Today* (New Delhi: Delhi Policy Group, 2012)
[111]*Conflict Resolution and Peace Building: India – Pakistan Dialogue,* (New Delhi, IPCS, 2009)
[112]The following issue briefs formed a part of this project – P R Chari, *Indus Waters Treaty II: Optimizing the Potential*; M Ismail Khan, *Gilgit-Baltistan: Melting Water Towers of the Indus*; Shafqat Kakakhel, *Climate Change and the Indus Basin*; Shaheen Akhtar, *Cross-LoC CBMs on the Indus*; Sardar Muhammad Tariq, *Managing the Indus Waters: Alternative Strategies*; Mushtaq Hussain Awan, *Kishenganga and AJK: Views from Muzaffarabad*; B G Verghese, *The Inconvenient Truth: Responding to Pakistan's Water Concerns and Challenges*; D Suba Chandran, *Towards an Indus Basin Community*; Kavita Suri, *Indus and J & K*

bilateral identified new approaches and recommendations on Cross-LoC CBMs over the Indus. It schemed innovative methods and alternatives with respect to working together on issues related to the environment, climate change, supply-demand deficit gap, joint projects and making effective use of the IWT and, ultimately, garnering all efforts towards a policy orientation.[113]

Non-Governmental Peacebuilding Think Tanks and India's Pakistan Policy: a summary

Think tanks explored in this chapter could be described as "insulated agencies"[114] as understood by the bureaucratic politics literature as seemingly more insulated from formal bureaucratic positions and thus different from the "embedded institutions"[115] that better describe think tanks like ORF and IDSA. Yet it is the insulation from bureaucracy that makes these think tanks unable to have better inputs into policy making. The lack of government patronage and resources means that research cannot be sustained and very often these think tanks have moved towards adopting "more palatable" research agendas that are not in conflict with formal bureaucracy. This is reflected in the CDR's framing of issues or DPG's expansion of programmes to a focus on Afghanistan. With new leadership, DPG programmes also appear to have changed and there is now less emphasis on peace and conflict studies. The power of the statein forging consensus is very visible here.

Further, aspects of bureaucratic bargaining and "research brokerage" are also evident as these think tanks are dependent on tacit government support to organise many of their cross-border initiatives (in the form of offcial approvals and visas) and to enable their continued funding from international agencies. The role of these think tanks however in building discourse and mobilising public opinion during 2004-2008 is visible and the communicative discourse aspect expressed through publications, public outreach and networking programmes, aided also by new methods like social media groups and formal media engagements has been strong. The linkages with formal policy making however are weak and very often considered as "bleeding heart" organisations, the narratives introduced are not given considerable value. Yet, the work of these organisations in expanding narratives, to create spaces for articulation of civil society's

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[113]The high level panel included a profound list of participants that varied from the governmental sector, civil society, media, conservation NGOs, think-tanks, academia, as well as international agencies from India, Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

[114] Daniel W. Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics and the Crafting of Foreign Policy" *American Journal of Political Science,* 44: 4, October 2000, pg. 734

[115] ibid

aspirations and their attention to train and empower younger generations makes them unique. The networks that these think tanks create – with Pakistan and within Kashmir sustain even when official dialogue is suspended.

Conclusion

Presenting the second part of the analysis on non-governmental think tanks, this chapter has conducted a critical examination of their research agendas focused specifically on peacebuilding and reconciliation. Taken together, think tanks such as IPCS, DPG, WISCOMP and CDR are smaller in scale and membership, and demonstrate noticeable differences in membership patterns when compared with government think tanks or more resourceful non-government think tanks like CPR and ORF. Also distinct is their engagement with the policy establishment with visibly reduced ties to policy elites and an added emphasis on advocacy. The chapter also explored the policy positions on the Indo-Pak conflict, highlighting programmes geared towards training and networking, creating women's networks and enabling forums for training of the youth. Thus, while reaching out to policy elites and mobilising public opinion is a goal, an emphasis on grassroots initiatives and expanding stakeholders towards peace with Pakistan is also visible. While these peacebuilding think tanks significantly expand the discourse on Pakistan to include civil society and women's perspectives, their distance from official narratives and lack of proximity to policy elites, curtails their institutional relevance and provides evidence of the state's role and predominant place in forging policy consensus. The state's role in building consensus can also be seen through the control of funding and access to these think tanks, limiting their institutional potential in creating a changed discourse on Indo-Pak relations.

Chapter Seven

Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Challenging or Building Consensus on India's Pakistan Policy?

The starting point of enquiry for this thesis was to examine think tanks and situate them within India's policy making arena. The thesis has interrogated the placement and understanding of think tanks as policy actors/ agents/ idea brokers and information filters. In doing so, it problematised the role of these non-state actors and their specific engagement with one of India's most volatile foreign policy issues – i.e. its relationship with Pakistan. This research has built upon other studies and literature on think tanks worldwide and contributed particularly to the study of Indian think tanks. It is the first of its kind to explore the activities of Indian think tanks through an examination of their policy discourse on Pakistan and their specific role in promoting and mobilising public opinion on the Indian government's policies. To be able to account for think tank role in policy, the thesis used the discursive institutionalist approach in conjunction with a Gramscian understanding of state-society relations. The DI-Gramscian model developed in this thesis has helped to trace think tank interactive processes – their coordinative and communicative discourse on Pakistan as well as a critical analysis of Indian think tanks' role and relevance to policy making, together with an examination of their relative position in the policy structure. It also brought to light significant challenges faced by think tanks in India to both retain their institutional independence and maintain their policy relevance.

The international literature on think tanks and theoretical formulations have gradually accepted their role as policy actors but each approach has differed on the specific position of think tanks vis-à-vis policy establishments. This thesis has therefore argued that how think tanks are defined should take into account the context in which they operate. Thus, scholarship on American think tanks and the application of that to the Indian political scenario is problematic. As relatively new actors, the understanding of think tank involvement in the policy process must consider the structural environment, i.e. India's unique political context, its various institutional structures and the material realities that have had a direct impact on the growth of think tanks. The use of DI enabled an understanding of the various processes through which

Indian think tanks seek to have an impact on policy. DI's emphasis on right timing[1], right audience[2] and various levels of interaction between think tanks and policy making bodies was found particularly useful. Further, the phenomenon of the "critical juncture"[3] was able to explain how the Composite Dialogue period was significant to think tank engagement with India's Pakistan policy. The development of the DI-Gramscian approach has further allowed for an examination of the material and structural constraints that think tanks in India face. It provided a better understanding of the nature of relationships between think tank intellectual elite and policy making elite in India – a relationship that is particularly relevant for the adoption of think tank ideas and their continued institutional relevance. The use of case studies further highlighted differences in think tank affiliations; membership patterns and their subsequent policy ideas and policy interactions. This in turn, allowed for an examination of specific constraints – structural and ideological – that transformed the way a particular think tank was situated in the Indian policy making scene. The following section will revisit some of the main arguments that have emerged from this analysis.

Nature of Intellectual Elite – Patterns in Institutional Worldviews and Collaborations with the State

The examination of think tanks in India involved a closer look at their composition and institutional positions. The ability of a think tank to influence policy particularly in India was directly related to their relationship and proximity to the policy making apparatus. Literature on Indian think tanks however was found inadequate in explaining these dynamics. The application of Gramsci's notion about a difference between civil society and political society[4] and their symbiotic relationship provided a good framework. Think tanks in India are notable for their knowledge elites and the ability to relay their ideas to policymakers was directly connected to their institutional policy relevance. The established positions and proximity to leadership of K Subrahmanyam and Jasjit Singh for instance as intellectual elites also added to the credibility of the IDSA and CAPS respectively. R K Mishra's close proximity to Vajpayee and the Reliance group was also able to secure the initial funding and institutional impetus for

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[1] Vivien Schmidt, "Reconciling Ideas and Institutions through Discursive Institutionalism" in Daniel Beland and Robert Cox (ed.) *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 57

[2] ibid

[3] Stella Ladi, "Think Tanks, Discursive Institutionalism and Policy Change in Georgios Papanagnou (ed.) *Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values and Capacities,*(Paris: UNESCO, 2011) pg. 208

[4] Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 36: 2, 1975, pg. 353

ORF. This also had an opposite effect and the IDSA and ICWA declined in their influence under new leadership. Therefore the relationship and ability of the elite to establish their networks and maintain proximity to policymakers was found extremely beneficial for a think tank and greatly enhanced the possibility of acceptance of its policy ideas.

For Gramsci, the state collaborates with

> private organisations to mobilise, to advance its own causes, to legitimise and promote its own interests. The elites for their part, embody what Gramsci describes as 'state spirit' and become relevant for some decisions and are used for generating public opinion in others.[5]

Through the DI-Gramscian framework, this aspect of state-think tank cooperation was expanded to the examination of think tank linkages with the foreign policy establishment in India. The manifestation of the "knowledge/power nexus"[6] between think tanks and policy elites in India indicate that the government used the resources of think tanks to privilege a particular understanding of a foreign policy issue and think tanks behaved more substantially than merely a bridge between civil society and policy. Think tanks on their part adjusted their discourse to suit government policy directions in order to balance government patronage and policy relevance.

Institutional structures at think tanks were also found to closely resemble the government. Their membership patterns show similar professional and socio-economic backgrounds, political positions, over-reliance on senior researchers and a high-profile leadership together with the importance on personal linkages. Though capacity building for younger researchers is encouraged in a few think tanks like CPR, ORF and IPCS, the presence of former bureaucrats and diplomats and their vast experience is usually preferred. Also visible is a gendered dynamic, with a small sample of women-led think tanks or women researchers. Representative of Gramsci's power bloc, membership patterns also impact the way ideas are represented in think tank discourse with only limited attention to foreign policy ideas that focus on the different impact that the India-Pakistan conflict has on men and women.

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[5] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 128
[6] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, June 2007, pg. 276

Intellectual elite at government think tanks (IDSA, ICWA, CAPS, CLAWS and NMF) come from similar professional backgrounds and have experienced common training methods. The government particularly the MEA and MoD have played an important role in the creation and support to this body of elite and this power bloc – both through financial support and involvement in policy initiatives – indicative of the growing need for policy expertise on defence and strategic issues. Very often the physical office spaces occupied by government think tanks are also provided by government grants of land.[7] These similarities in membership and government funding (though for specific projects) are also noticeable in non-governmental think tanks. There is however an added attention to academic research at ORF, CPR, VIF and IF, in addition to noticeable linkages to business interests and affiliation with political parties (namely the BJP). While funding structures are more diverse in non-governmental think tanks, there is some project based funding from the MEA. There is also implicit government control and regulation of foreign funding through legislations like the FCRA (1976).[8] In addition to enabling foreign contributions, the GOI has also involved these think tanks for specific policy initiatives. Thus, elites like Subrahmanyan, Jasjit Singh, B G Verghese and Ramaswamy Iyer have been invited to participate in government committees. The experience of former military service professionals has also enabled a better insight into defence policy directions.

The analysis in previous pages has also indicated that in the absence of funding opportunities from the government, the level of interaction and proximity of think tank elites to policy elites is also reduced. Thus, smaller and less resourceful non-governmental think tanks such as DPG, IPCS, WISCOMP and CDR lack government patronage and support. They are funded through donor organisations like Ford Foundation and have noticeably different membership patterns. Established in post liberalised India, in addition to academics trained in conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies (WISCOMP, DPG, IPCS), civil society activism is a dominant characteristic. The different training and worldviews of elites and funding bodies has a direct impact on the nature of research agendas. Thus, these smaller non-governmental think tanks reflect a particular emphasis on projects that are focused on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and training for peace. Further, the advocacy (CDR, WISCOMP) and training component (DPG, IPCS, WISCOMP) is significant, in addition to an active participation in multi-track

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[7] Jayati Srivastava, *Think tanks in South Asia: Analysing the knowledge-power interface* (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2011), pg. 19
[8] ibid

processes. While independent research agendas enable them to articulate alternate policy narratives, it however curtails the ability of these think tanks to have an impact on policy.

The proximity and similarities between policy elites and think tank intellectuals give rise to arguments that government think tanks offer nothing more than an "an extension of government thinking."[9] Their role has often been criticised for providing a narrow and limited engagement and a perpetuation of government narratives. The distance from policy making however, as prevalent in the case of non-governmental peacebuilding think tanks discussed in Chapter 6, challenges their ability to communicate their new policy ideas to the relevant policymakers.

Think Tank Contribution to Policy Discourse

With respect to policy research agendas, think tanks in India are found to concentrate on a variety of issues ranging from social and political policy; political and military strategy; socio-economic development; political participation in addition to NTS issues related to drug and human trafficking and terrorism. There is considerable policy emphasis on India's foreign strategy regarding Pakistan, with most think tanks in India adopting an active research and advocacy component centred on the dispute with Pakistan. The initiation of the formal dialogue and the debates initiated by the CD, created further interest and think tanks have played a consultative role and provided advisory policy ideas. Yet, these ideas are restricted to specific policies rather than a paradigmatic shift in India's position on Pakistan. Unlike Zimmerman's assertion that think tanks created "discursive spaces"[10] to inform foreign policy agendas and change dominant narratives by framing and setting agendas, policy agendas on Pakistan are the domain of the Indian state. The conclusions on government think tanks are similar to Parmar's that,

the outlook and attitudes of Chatham House leaders, at all levels, were very similar to that of the official makers of policy. Where they differed was generally concerned with tactics, details, timing and emphases, rather than fundamentals…converting Chatham House into an arm of official foreign policy within an agenda largely determined by the state.[11]

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[9] A Participant Interview with senior member and retired defence personnel at IPCS, New Delhi on 29 September, 2015

[10] Zimmerman highlights that "to enhance their discursive ability, think tanks have created unique discursive spaces where they can control the discursive process. These spaces are often located alongside formal governing processes but are free from the strict political limitations imposed on governmental venues. For more see, Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016)

[11] Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pg. 106

In institutionalising and funding think tanks, the GOI has therefore also engaged in a consensus-building role on policy directions on Pakistan. However, it is this "constant restatement of policy message via different formats and products"[12] that enables government think tanks to have a place in the process.

Working closely with government ministries on particular issues and their direct relationship with the government patrons has provided government think tanks the opportunity to interact with actors at the centre of policy formation. This has significantly broadened the scope of their "coordinative discourse." Yet, while proximity provides an opportunity for the transfer of policy ideas, it has restricted the adoption of alternative narratives as the evidence shows. Government patronage and funding and the similarity in elite composition has also indicated that these think tanks take cues from their funding agencies – in this case the MoD and the MEA. Dominant discourse on Pakistan, reflected in research projects at IDSA, CLAWS, CAPS and NMF has therefore, led to policy recommendations that centre on national security with a focus on threats from a failing Pakistani state with basic irreconcilable ideological differences with India. Think tank discourse perpetuates government narratives on Pakistan, on Kashmir, Siachen and nuclear doctrines and side-lines alternative conceptualisations on resolution of key conflicts. Government think tanks have also not engaged adequately with issues of trade, people to people contact or the Sir Creek dispute. The similarity in viewpoints with the defence and foreign policy community in India therefore emphasise the Indian government position on Kashmir, argue for continued military presence in the region and continue to stress on opposing differences in nuclear doctrines and strategies.

On the other hand, even though non-governmental think tanks are funded externally, there continues to be a certain dependence on government accounts on Pakistan and investment in the dialogue process owing to project funding. However, differences in the nature of intellectual elite and institutional agendas that focus more on academic research have also expanded the academic understanding of Indo-Pak issues. As proximity becomes distant, the ability of think tanks to suggest policy alternatives is more visible, for instance in CDR, WISCOMP and IPCS with more emphasis on NTS issues like the emphasis on gender-based violence and conflict over resources. In their approach towards the India-Pakistan dialogue

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[12] Diane Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Tanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes," *Public Administration,* 85:2, 2007, pg.274

process, there is therefore a noticeable emphasis on building cross border networks, particularly with like-minded constituencies and civil society in Pakistan and in involving the youth as future stakeholders in the conflict, hence relevant to new designs on resolution strategies. Even within India, the emphasis of these institutes, particularly WISCOMP and CDR has been on civil society engagements and reconciliation, which also highlights their proactive involvement in non-governmental multi-track processes. As "insulated agencies"[13] however, these think tanks are unable to have better inputs into policy making. Their lack of government patronage and resources means that research cannot be sustained and very often these think tanks have moved towards adopting "more palatable"[14] agendas that are not in conflict with formal bureaucracy. The framing of these issues is also done strategically so that there is no conflict with the government position – thus CDR for instance stays away from political issues and DPG has changed its emphasis on peacebuilding to incorporate the government's developing interests in Afghanistan.

Think Tank Contribution as Communicative Actors

Operating within a top-down policy making structure, while think tanks do not introduce agendas and also do not set frames, they do however inform public opinion on, "the ongoing policy initiatives of governments."[15] As carriers of communicative discourse, think tank research on government policies, disseminated through meetings, conferences, research publications and writings in the media completes the cycle – bringing government policy to the wider public arena. With their influence in shaping/gauging public opinion,[16] Indian think tanks are repositories of knowledge and offer an academic understanding of policy changes. On relations with Pakistan, as this thesis has highlighted, policy standards are created by the state, yet think tanks participate in the refining and promotion of these ideas through their research and analysis. Explained by Gramsci as quoted in Bates, "intellectuals succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled, and thereby secure the "free" consent of the masses to the law and order of the land."[17]

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[13] Daniel W. Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics and the Crafting of Foreign Policy" *American Journal of Political Science,* 44: 4, October 2000, pg. 734

[14] Richard Higgott and Diane Stone, "The Limits of Influence: Foreign Policy Think Tanks in Britain and the USA", *Review of International Studies,* 20: 1, January 1994, pg.28

[15] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: Scope, Dynamics and Philosophical Underpinnings," in Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis (eds.) *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) pg. 86

[16] A Participant Interview with senior researcher at VIF, New Delhi on 14 October 2015

[17] Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 36: 2, 1975, pg. 353

Think tanks in India therefore promote key government initiatives – such as the Kashmir dialogue (both internal and bilateral), CBMs introduced as part of the dialogue process on ease of travel and nuclear issues. Through specific research projects on PoK and cross LoC interactions (IDSA), AFSPA (IDSA), IWT (CPR, IDSA, IPCS), think tanks have introduced these debates into the popular discourse. This role is particularly useful as there are limited avenues for insights into government policy, particularly on issues of defence policy. The public discussion around key debates has helped to popularise the Indian government's position on Kashmir and its emphasis on PAK as occupied Indian territory. The defence policy think tanks have also provided a review of the continued army presence in Kashmir, their humanitarian activities in the state of J & K and have distinguished these with human rights violations and the lack of democratic and political rights in PAK. Non-governmental think tanks on the other hand, have enabled an academic understanding of water conflicts, particularly with respect to river water disputes (both Verghese and Iyer played a crucial role here); the impact of armed conflict on civilian populations (IPCS, WISCOMP, CDR) and the gendered nature of conflict in J & K. (WISCOMP, DPG). The prolific writing by former diplomats and public intellectuals such as M K Rasgotra, G Parthasarathy, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Brahma Chellaney, C Raja Mohan, Manoj Joshi and others have also provided a better understanding of complex government policy on Pakistan.

Future Research Opportunities

The themes explored in this thesis open up a number of avenues for further research. Think tanks in India are flourishing and research agendas are constantly evolving to provide expertise on new issues of foreign policy. There is also an emergence of new think tanks like the Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, Brookings and Carnegie India which are funded primarily by corporate interests in India. The key emphasis of these new research institutions appears to be to reignite India's relationship with the United States. In addition, old think tanks like the ICWA have been given a new lease of life even though they appear to function primarily as a MEA platform for visits by foreign delegations.

The nature of relationship between think tanks and policy-makers has also undergone a change especially since the election of Narendra Modi as Prime Minister. The NSC led by Ajit Doval, under the direct supervision of the PMO has now seemingly assumed a more important place.

While there have been efforts to introduce lateral entry[18] to the MEA to resolve capacity issues and the specific framing of India's grand strategy as articulated by a MEA official[19], there are reports that the NSA under Modi enjoys a more influential role rather than the MEA and Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj.[20] In terms of formal institutions, the Modi government is also in the process of restructuring the NSAB. With reduced membership the NSAB was reconstituted in 2016 with former ambassador to Russia, P.S. Raghavan as the new head with only three other new members announced.[21] Sources have also pointed out that the "functional utility of the NSAB should be more on security and strategic issues."[22]

The centralisation of foreign policy is even more visible in the conduct of India's policy towards Pakistan. While official dialogue remains suspended, unofficial interest and discourse on India- Pakistan relations has also changed. Research institutions in Delhi like the IDSA, ORF and VIF to name a few have welcomed the Modi government's robust foreign policy towards Pakistan and largely believe that the "firm hand" towards ceasefire violations and dialogue with the Hurriyat were what was missing in India's foreign policy overtures.

As government supported and what are now sometimes referred to as "government approved"[23] think tanks are seen propagating the government discourse, institutions outside of the government are becoming weaker. Members of the civil society, both peacebuilding organisations and several people's initiatives for peace have been marginalized and rendered weaker by stringent funding structures. Those that remain have changed their dominant agendas and are more comfortable adopting programs and positions that do not contradict the government's agendas.[24] The lack of alternative voices has also vitiated the public opinion on

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[18] Responding to debates about lack of capacity to deal with India's growing foreign policy engagements, in June 2015, the MEA invited application for outside "Consultants" to join the ministry's Policy Planning and Research Division (PP&R). for more see, Suhasini Haidar, "MEA Opens doors to IR experts as consultants" *The Hindu,* June 29, 2015, accessed at: http://www.thehindu.com/news/external-affairs-ministry-opens-doors-to-international-relations-experts-as-consultants/article7367713.ece

[19] A Participant Interview with mid-level bureaucrat at MEA, New Delhi on 7 October, 2015.

[20] For more on the evolving tole of the MEA vis-à-vis the NSA see: Prakash Nanda, "Indian Foreign Policy under Modi" *Fearless Nadia Occasional Papers* (Australia-India Institute), 3, Winter 2014; Sumit Ganguly, "Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy?", *The Washington Quarterly*, 40:2, 2017, 131-143; Suhasini Haidar, "South Block in the shade" *The Hindu,* 13 May, 2016, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/south-block-in-the-shade/article8591271.ece

[21] "National Security Advisory Board Reconstituted, But With Fewer Members," *The Wire,* 10 October 2016, https://thewire.in/72258/national-security-advisory-board-reconstituted/

[22] Yatish Yadav, "Modi Government to Mould National Security Advisory Board in New Avatar" *The New Indian Express,* February 8, 2015, accessed at: http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/Modi-Government-to-Mould-National-Security-Advisory-Board-in-New-Avatar/2015/02/08/article2657638.ece

[23] Jyoti Malhotra, "The Growing role of Government-Approved Think Tanks" *NDTV,* 1 March, 2017, http://www.ndtv.com/opinion/think-tanks-controlled-by-foreign-ministry-are-supplanting-the-media-1664683

[24] As mentioned during a Participant Interview with a senior member of CDR, New Delhi on 7 October 2015.

peace with Pakistan, thus the popular consensus that Vajpayee claimed was influential in a rethink of positions has been lost. This is evident in the lack of people to people contact, no cricket diplomacy and strict measures on inter-cultural interactions. While this thesis has made a case that government think tanks perpetuated dominant government narratives even under the UPA, there was some tolerance for alternative narratives from think tanks. These were manifested in the ability to get foreign grants, hold events and consultations with Pakistani participants and the easy grant of visas to conduct training and networking programmes. [25]

Other think tanks funded by international donors have been recent targets of the FCRA[26], thus while IPCS funding from the Ford Foundation has been affected, others like the DPG appear to have shifted their research focus from Indo-Pak issues to the new and emerging India-Afghanistan relationship. A former Director at IPCS, highlighted that "the BJP is not open to intellectual discussions and it is very difficult to have an objective dialogue between India and Pakistan."[27] Other analysts have also pointed out that there was more role for think tanks in the UPA government and that in the Modi government, institutes close to the government dispensation like the VIF have more traction.[28] The role of the NSA in taking decisions on the Pakistan is now more centralised. Therefore, future research could investigate the changing role of think tanks in India – in light of the centralising tendencies of the Modi government. Also as the think tank landscape changes with the addition of new think tanks like Brookings and Carnegie in India, their relatively reduced reliance on government funding, have increased the possibilities for the development of broader and more independent research agendas. Thus, the emerging discursive interactions between the government and better resourced and more internationally networked think tanks could be an interesting aspect of research in the future.

Conclusion

Although policy directions and foreign policy agendas are decided by the government and top leadership in India, Indian think tanks are crucial actors used for promotion of ideas, generating

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[25] It is reported that the Indian missions in Pakistan processed only 30 visas in June 2003, which went up to over 30,000, during the highnoon of the Composite Dialogue. In early 2007, an average of 12,000 visas had been issued for Pakistani visits to India. Meenakshi Gopinath, "Processing Peace: To Speak in a Different Voice", *Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 4: 2: Winter 2012 pg. 4

[26] The Ford Foundation was one of the few organisations that were targeted by the new Indian Government citing violations of the FCRA. For more see: "From Greenpeace to Ford Foundation: Modi govt's controversial crackdown on NGOs" *Firstpost,* 2 June, 2016**,** http://www.firstpost.com/india/from-greenpeace-to-ford-foundation-modi-govts-controversial-crackdown-on-ngos-2812196.html

[27] A Participant Interview with senior member and retired defence personnel at IPCS, New Delhi on 29 September, 2015

[28] A Participant Interview with junior academic at JNU, New Delhi on 7 September, 2015.

public debate in support of a certain set of ideas and filling in knowledge gaps in new policy areas. Think tanks create what Medvetz has described as an "institutional subspace"[29] for IR professionals in India. Within the backdrop of India's policy on Pakistan, think tanks have reacted, engaged, elaborated and promoted the dialogue agenda in their own institutional styles, reflective of their particular funding structures and their predominant elite influence. To summarise, think-tanks neither act as neutral bridges between academia and politics nor always function for public good. They act as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse, a role that is at the heart of the political debate. Thus, the DI-Gramscian framework has helped to explain think tank involvement in policy formulation and to better understand the complex nature of collaboration between state and non-state actors manifested in policy debates on India's policy towards Pakistan.

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[29] Thomas Medvetz , *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pg. 7

Appendix 1

List of Think Tanks and Institutions visited in New Delhi between August – October 2015

1. Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS)
2. Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR)
3. Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
4. Delhi Policy Group (DPG)
5. Forum for Strategic Initiatives (FSI)
6. Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)
7. India Foundation (IF)
8. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA)
9. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)
10. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
11. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
12. National Maritime Foundation (NMF)
13. Observer Research Foundation (ORF)
14. Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)
15. Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF)
16. Women in Security, Conflict management and Peace (WISCOMP)

Appendix 2

Research Questionaire

For the semi-structured interviews, some questions were used to guide the conversation towards the goals of the project. Additional questions were customised and tailored to the level of expertise of the interviewee.

1. In terms of the institutional structure of foreign policy making in India, what role do you think tanks play in policy formation in India?
2. How has think tank influence changed and evolved in India?
3. How have think tanks articulated the interests of the civil society and acted as a bridge between civil society and policy making? Can you share some strategies that your think tank has used to effectively communicate the interests of civil society to the policy makers?
4. What specific approaches has your think tank taken in engaging with the peace process with Pakistan?
5. On the back-channel diplomatic efforts between India and Pakistan, what role do think tanks play?
6. Do you have any concluding thoughts about the role and relevance of think tanks and your institution in particular on Indo-Pak peacebuilding in the near future and how it might be enhanced or improved?

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