

Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Pak-China Relations

By

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DEDICATION

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Abstract

Basic premise of my study is that think tanks and study centers are an instrument of normative world. They are situated in a certain context and operate in certain dynamics; therefore, they are at liberty to choose what role they can play in foreign relations of any country. The role could be many since think tank is such a flexible entity that it can wear many hats and can claim itself anything. Their diversity and the ease to operate in any given environment is surely their strength but, at the same time, it is a big hurdle for those who wish to categorize them in a certain type. Although it is hard to typify them in one neat definition, those think tanks that orient their work and activities towards foreign policy they are called foreign policy think tanks.

Focus of this study is such think tanks. It takes a detailed account of foreign policy think tanks in Pakistan that are focused on Pak-China relations. Established recently, this study considers Pak-China study centers as think tanks because their work and conduct fall within the scope of a think tank. However, at the same time, this study considers them somewhat different entities than a typical regular think tank because some of them also working as study centers in literal terms. This thesis concluded that ideas influence policies when the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide roadmaps that increase actor's clarity about goals or ends-means relationships, when they affect outcomes of strategic situations in which there is no unique equilibrium, and when they become embedded in political institutions.

Introduction

1. Introduction

International Relations (IR) is no longer an exclusive domain of statesmen, bureaucrats and diplomats, in fact, its scope has broadened to non- governmental institutions, international organizations non-state actors and technological advancements such as Cyber security and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Amidst this shift, think tanks reflect this evolutionary trend in international affairs, especially in the domain of foreign policy. The importance of think tanks in foreign policy making process has increased due to two major factors: Firstly, in today's interdependent, information-rich and complex world, the governments and foreign policy makers need to have a well-informed and well-researched perspectives on international system and states' affairs, be it internal or external, to formulate a sound policy; Secondly, after a policy is made, it needs to be projected in a favourable light so that it may succeed and help in shaping perceptions and opinions along with acquiring a broad spectrum of state objectives.¹ This, eventually, increases the bargaining position of a state and enhances its prestige, makes its policies attractive to other.

For almost a century, think tanks in the West played a crucial role in materializing their leaders' visions.² In the American political landscape, the think tank community filled many gaps and played many roles: advisors, advocates, academics, diplomats, election-campaign runner, leaders of social, political and economic movements.³ Their strategic role was supported by this rationale whatever the policy is, it needs sound intellectual input, effective advocacy and rigorous academic research to ensure its success. With time and the nature of challenges, think tanks evolved and proved themselves to be an effective instrument of public and Track-II diplomacy, shaping perceptions, influencing public opinions and, thus achieving a broad range of state's objectives.⁴

¹ Howard J Wiarda, 'Think Tanks and Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: New Ideas, New "Tanks," New Directions', *International Journal* 70, no. 4 (2015): 517–25.

² 'The New Powerhouses: Think Tanks and Foreign Policy: American Foreign Policy Interests: Vol 30, No 2', accessed 16 August 2021, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10803920802022704>.

³ 'The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite, James A. Smith, 1990. Free Press, New York, NY. ISBN: 0-02-929551-3. \$24.95, 1993', accessed 16 August 2021, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/027046769301300313>.

⁴ David Shambaugh, 'China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process', *The China Quarterly* 171 (September 2002): 575–96, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000360>.

However, the strength and weakness of the think tanks is determined by the characteristics of the state and its civil society.⁵

The emergence of think tanks is not a phenomenon unique to the West only; it is the occurrence which has been taking place across the globe. Besides providing research and policy inputs for government institutions, the Chinese think tanks personnel provide information channel, help test and disseminate for the government. During interactions with the think tank community in any other country and on international forums, they meet foreign officials, specialists or a specific chunk of audience (government, non-government, public, civil society etc). In this way, they become an important information loop into and out of the system, familiarize the policies and influence the policy-making process along with carrying messages to a specific audience in the international relations and state-to-state affairs.⁶

One of the most visible worldwide developments in civil society in the last two decades has been the increasing proliferation of a new type of policy-oriented actor: policy institutes or “think tanks”. Think tanks, usually defined in the literature as formally autonomous organizations that disseminate, or themselves produce, policy research appear to be becoming ubiquitous in many policy arenas; their activities, as described in the literature, range from compiling and (re-)packaging academic research results to producing their own research inhouse, and from mere provision of facts and information to active promotion of ideological agendas and political viewpoints. They have been characterized in the literature as “switchboards” through which epistemic communities are connected, and as “universities without students”), but also, perhaps more sceptically, as “dealers in second-hand ideas.” The think tank label itself is today increasingly seen as a powerful discursive tool used by organizations to position themselves at the crossroads of academia, politics, media and business.

2. Statement of the Problem

President Xi Jinping undertook various bold policy initiatives at national and international front, which are of far-reaching implications since they are a hallmark of China’s emerging grand strategy in the Post-American world. Xi Jinping’s China Dream and his Belt and Road Initiative

⁵ Federico Merke and Gino Pauselli, ‘In the Shadow of the State: Think Tanks and Foreign Policy in Latin America’, *International Journal* 70, no. 4 (2015): 613–28.

⁶ Shambaugh, ‘China’s International Relations Think Tanks’, bk. 576.

(BRI) lies at the heart of it. Emerging as a signpost on the path of a new regional and a global order, these initiatives are aimed at building a community of shared destiny while having their foundations deep China's relations with its neighbors in the political, economic, cultural and security domain. Among China's friends and allies, Pakistan stands out as its unique partner. Both consider their partnership as an 'all-weather-friendship' that always stood the test of times. Now, it is high time to analyze whether this evolving aspect of rising China has an impact for Pak-China relations as well.

In perusal of its national objectives, China's relations with Pakistan are of paramount importance. Termed as "Iron Brothers",⁷ Pakistan and China have always treated each other much more than friends and partners. Though the history of their relations has many highs, the initiation of US\$62 project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is a part of gigantic economic venture of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the bilateral trajectory has witnessed an upward trend. It has opened a new chapter in Pak-China ties as it stimulated a mushroom growth of think tanks and study centres.

In the recent past, economic cooperation between the two countries has deepened in strength and substance. CPEC represents the collective will of the two countries to work together in multiple domains for the good of our people. With the advent of the present government, several new chapters of cooperation are being added – from agriculture to socio-economic development to industrial cooperation and widening the export base of Pakistan. The people to people exchanges and linkages are also being enhanced. In cementing ties between the two countries, the researchers and scholars too have an important role to play. Think tanks and China centres across the country are serving as useful forums for thinkers and scholars to generate ideas to deepen bilateral cooperation between China and Pakistan.

The China Study Centers in Pakistan witnessed a mushroom growth after initiation of CPEC while, earlier, Pakistani think tanks have already been paying special attention to the bilateral relations.

⁷ 'Pakistan Is China's Iron Brother, Reiterated Chinese FM', accessed 16 August 2021, <https://timesofislamabad.com/09-Mar-2019/pakistan-is-china-s-iron-brother-reiterated-chinese-fm>.

Currently, around sixteen China-focused centers and institutes are working across Pakistan, focusing on the significance of Beijing-Islamabad ties, CPEC, Synology, Beijing Consensus and Chinese culture. The China centres across the country are serving as useful forums for thinkers and scholars to generate ideas to deepen bilateral cooperation between China and Pakistan. Now, it is high time to analyze whether this evolving facet of China has any impact for Pak-China relations as well.

With this background, this study endeavors to assess the role of think tanks and study centers as academics, advisors and advocates in the context of Pak-China ties and in the bigger scheme of Beijing's role as a great power.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to pursue the following mentioned objectives:

- To understand the driving factors of think-tanks promotion and their relevance to Pak-China relations
- To assess the role of think-tanks and China study centers in Beijing-Islamabad ties;
- To establish a link between Pakistan's foreign policy objectives and the function of think-tanks and study centers;
- To map out the future possibilities and challenges in Pak-China relations in the context of think-tanks and study centers

4. Literature Review and Research Gap

Until the 1990s, think tanks were widely regarded as a typically US American phenomenon produced by the unique institutional traits of the American political system and culture. In recent decades, however, the global proliferation of these organizations has led to a growing scholarly interest in them also in other national contexts. In this context scholars have, among other things, noted the importance of a country's wider institutional architecture for the size, character and influence potential of its think tank population. Such institutional architecture is often conceptualized in terms of the character of a country's policy system, or, more recently, its "knowledge regime". Few studies have, however, analysed think tanks specifically as a civil society phenomenon, or linked the proliferation of this relatively new type of actor to the

transformations of civil society structures and of the prerequisites for the participation of civil society actors in policy-making. The same is true for Pak-China Relations.

Pak-China relations is a subject which has been studied extensively. Almost its every dimension has been studied. There is a huge amount of data available regarding to this study but Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan concluded the bilateral relations in his work “Prospects of Sino-Pakistan relationship” and stated that the People’s Republic of China cooperated Pakistan since the establishment of diplomatic relations and Pakistan also supported China in her isolation age. He explains political linkage, economic cooperation, defence cooperation, cooperation on international forum, nuclear cooperation and energy cooperation in details and also mentions the prospects of future cooperation between two states. His paper highlighted the past as well as future prospects of shared interest which increased its value.

Rashid Ahmad Khan stated that China supported Pakistan in all nasty conditions and in 21st century her support in terrorism is due to common fear from Uighur and ETIM. Claude Rakisits concluded Pak- China relations that the sixty year relationship of Pakistan and China is odd partnership because there is ideological difference between China and Pakistan. The communism and Islam are two different ways and ideologies. But there is one common thing which forced both states to cooperate that is their national interest and the supreme national interest is to contain India by all means.

Jafar Riaz Kataria and Anum Naveed explained the relationships in brought ways and try to explore the social and economic cooperation between two states. They titled the relations reliable and time tested relationship. Zahid Ali Khan and Shabir Ahmad explain that since the formation of relationship China is the key element in Pakistan foreign policy and policy makers always formulate friendly and cooperative policy towards Beijing. Andrew Small, in his study “The China- Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics” concluded that the cooperation of China with her best and reliable ally Pakistan is the real and time tested friend of China since China’s birth Islamabad supported PRC. He focused on China’s support to Pakistan in her mean time the war of 1965, 1971 and 1999 with India. In his view China uses Pakistan as regional balancer against India.

Since the inception of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project with Pakistan, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Sino-Pak ties took a new turn. Mussarrat Abid and Ayesha Ashfaq, scan that the Pakistan- China relation is second to none. Both states are cooperates each other to fulfill their dreams and CPEC is one the most vital dream. In this work they highlighted the pros and cons of CPEC to Pakistan. Shakeel Ahmad Ramay in his study "China Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Chinese dream being materialized through Pakistan" concluded that China is progressing by leaps and bounds especially in economy and became the World second largest economy. CPEC is one most prominent project of BRI. It will provide doors for the land lock countries of Central Asia. It will also fulfill the energy requirements of Pakistan. Minhas Majeed khan, Ahmad Rashid Malik, Saira Ejaz, and Ume Farwa concluded the CPEC as the game changer for Pakistan and whole region.

Since there is little or now literature available on role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Pak-China relations, this study is an endeavor to study their role in the bilateral relations.

5. Research Questions

This study aims to address three main research questions:

1. What was the need to establish Think tanks and Study Centers in improving Pak-China relations?
2. What role they are playing in the bilateral ties?
3. How these institutions can be effectively employed in deepening Sino-Pak ties?

6. Conceptual Framework

The debate of international relations, just like any other disciplines of knowledge, is nestled in the understanding of the social world and the methods for knowing it. On philosophy of social sciences, there are many perspectives but when the debate touches upon the realm of ideas, it begins to sail beyond clichés, rhetoric and traditional views. Those who rule the ideas, rule the world. Intellectual supremacy is one of the reasons why America's rule is predicted to perpetuate, despite the chatter of its decline. This lies in the domain of idea, the construct that catches the attention of Social Constructivists.

The function of think tanks, in academic sense, is developing a sound understanding of the international system, influencing opinions and shaping perceptions when they fulfill the responsibility of advocacy. In this very essence, role of think tanks and study centers fall under the domain of ideas and their effective propagation. In this domain, the social world essentially appears to be constructed world by humans. Therefore, in this study, Social Constructivism and Soft are being utilized to come to a better understanding of the social world overall and functions of think tanks in particular.

Social Constructivism asserts that the structure of international relations is not material, based on distribution of capabilities between states, but rather social in nature; international relations are via an inter-subjective process between states producing and reproducing structures of shared knowledge over time. The contours and trajectories of international relations are determined by the ideas and interactions defining states relationships with one another and not simple comparisons of power. According to the Neorealists, the main proponent of the theory, Alexander Wendt argued, the structure of international system is but a matter of distribution of material capabilities while the Neoliberalists, he elaborated, hold on to the same ontological opinion except considering institutions another essential feature of it. For Social Constructivists, Wendt maintained, international system and all its structural features are human inventions and represents distribution of human ideas.⁸

Social Constructivism offers a reflective lens to analyze Pak-China relations from the perspective of how ideas and interactions influence identities and the overall narrative of their relationship. It is not that ideas are a counterweight to the influence of material power in international relations but rather ideas underpin and give meaning and purpose to the development and employment of power itself. In synch with this idea, John Agnew argues that China's rise will not simply be the next hegemonic competitor in the great game of relative position in the global hierarchy, nor will it be a purely unique phenomenon as argued by largely Chinese Confucian-based analyses.⁹ Instead, this process will influence and be influenced by the dynamic international environment within which China's rise is unfolding. An environment increasingly populated by a number of

⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁹ John Agnew, 'The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory', *Review of International Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1 March 1994): 53–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692299408434268>.

non-Western, emerging powers with conflicting views and relations with the established Western international order; within this process, China may be subject to change and influence from both domestic and foreign sources.

However, Social Constructivism has its own limitations when it comes to analyzing the role of institutions like Think Tanks and Study Centers. Social Constructivism does explain the social construction of institutions but it fails to elucidate the power of ideas and the transformative change it brings after its acceptance. In other words, Social Constructivism does not account for institutional change on the basis of discourse. This study, therefore, complemented it with another theory, Discursive Institutionalism. Think Tanks, as emerging actors in Foreign Relations, create discursive space by moving ideas across political space and generating discourse on foreign policy issues. This power of Think Tanks which comes from creating discursive space is the arena of DI. Due to their ideational role, Think Tanks are idea brokers and policy entrepreneurs since they move ideas across political and discursive space among relevant stakeholders including domestic and international actors.

Discursive Institutionalism is a new theory in Political Sciences and continuation of evolution of Institutionalism. DI is pioneered by a Professor of International Relations at Boston University, Vivien A. Schmidt who believes that the place of ideas cannot be ignored in politics, be it domestic or international, and they assume a substantive role in political discourse. DI puts more emphasis on discourse and maintains that ideas without considering the interactive processes that convey ideas will be illogical. It is, in fact, discourse that facilitate generation of ideas and their deliberation by political actors and, hence, legitimization of ideas by the relevant stakeholders. DI explains how agents represent ideas, to whom they communicate these ideas, and in what institutional context. The major function of DI, as Vivien puts forward, is to explain “how institutions are created”, and “how institutions persist or change.” This DI explains in a “given meaning context” which is the domain of Social Constructivism.

It is just a brief description of theoretical framework applied in this thesis, a detailed presentation of theoretical framework has been given in chapter two.

7. Research Methodology

Research is a search for new and novel insights on the subject matter of social or natural phenomenon. It is a search for knowledge and the quest to explore hidden truths. It is the scientific and systematic search for the answers that a researcher is looking for. Methodology is at the core of any research process. For any study to be carried out systematically, there must be a scientific approach to define the methods and techniques which a researcher intends to employ in his study. Research Methodology is a systematic analysis of the techniques and approaches which are applied in a study.

Research methodology suggests a philosophical approach to the methods and techniques which are employed in a particular branch of knowledge. It is a methodological way of resolving research problems and the scientific study of how a research should be conducted. It is defined as “the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining, and predicting a social or physical phenomenon”. It is also described as the study of the methods by which knowledge is acquired, which are important in formulating the work plan of the research.

Research methodology is necessary for designing an action plan for resolving the research problem. It facilitates the researcher to explain various aspects of the subject under consideration. It explains why a particular research is undertaken; how a research problem has been formulated; how and what types of data have been collected; what particular method has been applied; and why a specific technique of analyzing data is used. The study of Research Methodology offers the necessary insight into selecting methods, materials, tools and techniques for the research problem. Research Methodology facilitates a researcher to discover new facts in a scientific and more credible way.

Keeping the importance of research methodology in mind, this thesis tried to build the argument by utilizing Qualitative Descriptive analysis and employs its forms. This study relies on both primary and secondary sources to assess the role of think tanks and study centers. Interviews have also been used as a source of analysis in the chapter. For deciphering the underlying tones of China’s foreign policy objectives, the research takes help from website sources, documented publications, number of publications and the theme covered in it. It has been observed that, in think-tanks and study centers, four themes generally dominate: China’s economic rise; domestic stability; its soft image in the world; and energy security. This study uses the tools of qualitative

analysis to comprehend the interaction between Pakistani and Chinese think-tanks in strengthening the bilateral relations.

8. Significance of Study

The Chinese economy has become ever-more integrated with the global economy, the need for quality research, assistance in policy formulation and assessment has increased manifolds. Not only that think tanks are a modern phenomenon in understanding the overall foreign policy tones of Chinese leadership, they are also helpful in mapping out the future trends in bilateral relations as well. Moreover, Pak-China relations have been viewed from traditional lens and, thus our understanding of the bilateral relations has not increased as one would expect it to be. Furthermore, since this remains a neglected domain, students, researchers and policy-makers both in China and Pakistan must work together to take the bilateral relations to a height unimagined. In this vein, this study comes in handy and offers a unique insight into the emerging dimension in Pak-China relations.

China attaches a special importance with its relations with Pakistan in particular under the changing international and regional situation. This kind of ‘state-to-state’ relationship gives China a lot of thought and direction of China’s conduct of its foreign policy. This year will be the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. One aspect of the work of Chinese foreign ministry right now is to draw upon the experience of past seven decades and learn how China can do better in future with regards to its foreign relations, particularly in China’s diplomacy with its neighbouring countries. Since think-tanks, educational and research centers are a part of public diplomacy and track-II diplomacy, their role must be understood in their entirety. By studying the evolution of think tanks, China’s foreign policy objectives can be understood better. Furthermore, since role of think tanks and study centres in Pak-China relations is a research gap, this study tries to fill this gap through taking a multidimensional assessment of the evolving dimension in Beijing-Islamabad ties.

9. Delimitations

This study has certain delimitations which are stated as follows:

- While analyzing Pak-China relations, this thesis takes into account of social, economic and cultural dimensions of the bilateral relations;
- Typology of the think-tanks and study centers have been specified according to their associational role (academic, advisory, advocacy);
- Only those Think Tanks and Study Centers have been included which are actively engaged in the bilateral relations.
- While a general commentary has been made on all the relevant Think Tanks, specific commentary has been made on those institutions which are most active in the bilateral relations.
- Pakistan Study Centers in China have also been excluded;
- In selecting an institution, its prominence and influence have been given preference.

10. Division of Study

This thesis has been divided in the following chapters:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Think Tanks: Origin, Evolution and Functions

This chapter opens up the discussion with the question ‘what is a Think Tank?’ Then, by briefly posing the difficulties in answering this query, it examines the challenges of defining a Think Tank. It is a given that, without coming to an agreed-upon definition of Think Tank, further discussion cannot be carried out to study the role of these institutions in Sino-Pak ties. Therefore, this chapter includes a comprehensive definition of Think Tank and, after tweaking it according to the subject of the thesis, justifies the modified definition in the context of this study. Afterwards, it gives a brief historical overview of Think Tanks, their evolution and the variety of functions they play in international relations. After having detailed discussion on these dimensions of Think Tanks, this chapter concludes with assessing whether Study Centers are any different from Think Tanks and considered as a Think Tanks given the role they play in the bilateral ties.

Chapter 2: Think Tanks in Foreign Relations: Theoretical Dimensions and Context

What role Think Tanks and institutions like them play in foreign relations and how it can be theorized is the subject of this chapter. It begins with laying out salient features of two theories which are being applied in this study while arguing why they make a case for understanding the role of Think Tanks in Pak-China relations at best. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one, Theoretical Contexts and Dimensions, briefly elucidates Social Constructivism and Discursive Institutionalism. Since the role Think Tanks play in Foreign Relations are of diverse nature which makes it difficult to study their role within the parameter of one theoretical context, this chapter also tries to explain why the tenets of these theories have been taken to comprehend the role of Think Tanks and Study Centers selected in this thesis.

Chapter 3: Dynamics of Pak-China Relations and Need for Think Tanks and Study Centers

This chapter discusses the overall dynamics of Pak-China relations and analyses the driving factors that led to involvement of Think Tanks and Study Centers in building the ties deep.

Chapter 4: Pak-China Think Tanks and Study Centers: Introduction and Functions

In this chapter, those Think Tanks and Study Centers which have dedicated their work to Sino-Pak ties are discussed. Here, their brief introduction and description of functions have been given.

Chapter 5: Analysing the Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Pak-China Relations

This chapter analyzed the role of these institutions in the bilateral relations and concludes with key inferences and policy recommendations.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 An Exposition of Think Tanks and Study Centers

What exactly is a Think Tank remains a question that has no definite answer. According to a popular socio-political axiom, it is all relative. The same goes for origin and evolution of Think Tanks. These are the institutions that originated in a certain socio-political and strategic context and, later on, evolved according to the changes in their domestic and international environment. In this milieu, this chapter offers an academic consideration of three key components of discussion of this thesis: definition, origin and evolution of Think Tanks. Without clearly laying out these essential parts of the subject under study, the purpose of discussing role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Pak-China relations would not be served.

This chapter opens up the discussion with an innocuous question ‘what is a Think Tank?’ Then, by briefly posing the difficulties in answering this query, it examines the challenges of defining a Think Tank. It is a given that, without coming to an agreed-upon definition of Think Tank, further discussion cannot be carried out to study the role of these institutions in Sino-Pak ties. Therefore, this chapter includes a comprehensive definition of Think Tank and, after tweaking it according to the subject of the thesis, justifies the modified definition in the context of this study. Afterwards, it gives a brief historical overview of Think Tanks, their evolution and the variety of functions they play in international relations. After having detailed discussion on these dimensions of Think Tanks, this chapter concludes with assessing whether Study Centers are any different from Think Tanks and considered as a Think Tanks given the role they play in the bilateral ties.

1.1.Origin of Think Tank: A Historical Overview

The role of intellectuals cannot be denied in any era of human history. From Plato and Hypatia of ancient times to Kant and Chomsky of modern era, the intellectuals were always at the forefront of guiding the wisdom of rulers in effectively governing their domestic and international affairs. Origin of Think Tanks, according to Records of the Grand Historian, can be traced back as early as 318 B.C., in the ancient China during the Warring State Periods.¹⁰ At that time, functioning mostly as a scholarly institution, Jixia Academy was considered to be the patron of scholarship at the time when the kings and monarchs or the religious leaders used to patronize the scholarship.¹¹ In the 800s C.E., the monarchs would hire independent researchers and lawyers to advise them as how to contest the clergy on the issue of taxes.¹² This functions of “independent researchers” in the state affairs resembles to today’s Think Tanks, which is an assembly of independent researchers.

In the modern contemporary history however, the existence of “humanist academics” and “scholarly network” surfaced as a noticeable feature in the 16th and 17th century.¹³ Moving from medieval times to modern era, the western societies became increasingly overwhelmed with this idea that, if quality of governance is to improve, the civil society had to play its role in the decision-making quarters.¹⁴ Having its roots deep in the Enlightenment era, the intellectuals were convinced

¹⁰ Oliver Weingarten, “Debates around Jixia: Argument and Intertextuality in Warring States Writings Associated with Qi”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 135, no.2 (2015), 283-307.

<https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.135.2.283>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jacob Soll, “How Think Tanks Became Engines of Royal Propaganda”, *Tablet Magazine*, February 1, 2017.

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/history/articles/think-tanks-jacob-soll-propaganda>

¹³ Jasper Dahl Kelstrup, *The Politics of Think Tanks in Europe*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 167.

¹⁴ Ibid.

that only the rulers and designated people at the helm of affairs cannot do everything right. They were of the view that intelligentsia is in a position to better guide the decision-makers and, even so, correct their path.¹⁵ In the west, these were the times when the old imperial system was fast decaying under the age of Enlightenment and Reformation. Hence, the need for incorporating pluralistic opinions from civil society became an essential requirement, at least in the minds of European intellectual of that time.

Being a vanguard of Enlightenment Movement, the French society first witnessed the emergence of “Salons” in the early eighteenth century where men and women used to gather and indulge in intellectual discourse related to every important aspect of their society.¹⁶ Most important was the issue of “liberty, equality and fraternity”, which led to the heated discussions on the type of government, role of the people and incorporation of pluralistic perspectives while making decisions at state level. The French Revolution and its aftermath sent ripples of change all cross Europe.

The most affected country by these social transformations of the French Revolution was the United Kingdom of England (UK) which witnessed the formation of Fabian Society in 1884.¹⁷ First of its own kind think-tank, the Society emerged as an influential organization that shaped the future of policy debates and progressive politics in Britain. Having enjoyed the organizational autonomy and editorial independence, the Society nurtured strong affiliation with the leftist political wing of

¹⁵ Donald E. Abelson, Old World, New World: The Evolution and Influence of Foreign Affairs Think Tanks”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, no.1 (2014), 125-142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12099>

¹⁶ Dianne Stone, “Policy Research Institute and Think Tanks in Western Europe: Development Trends and Perspectives”, *The Local Government Institute* (Budapest), January 2003. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/20539355.pdf>

¹⁷ Donald E. Abelson, “From Generation to Generation: Reflections on the Evolution of Think Tanks”, *International Review of Public Policy*, Vol.1, no.2 (2019), 238-249.

Britain, the Labor Party.¹⁸ With an extensive network of 70 branches in the country, this think-tank had an overwhelming number of its members in the two houses of British Parliament.¹⁹ It was a dynamic and thriving entity which was open to the public. With this, a new trend of linking policy debate with civil society had emerged.

While the ancient imperial system of governance was collapsing sporadically in the West, the European continent became immersed in the war of an unprecedented scale. Erupted in July 1914, the First World War wreaked havoc till its end in November 1918. The incompetency of the autocratic and imperial rulers brought home the fact that they alone cannot promise the welfare of the people.²⁰ Also, it became a trending view among progressive and liberal leaders, that free thinkers must have their input to sharpen the wisdom of the rulers.²¹ Before the negotiations of Versailles Treaty and during the post-WWI international huddle – Paris Peace Conference – the governments deemed it right to discuss the complexities of negotiating global peace with the academics and scholars.²² (Missing Connector)

1.2.Challenges of Defining a Think Tank

From its very connotation, Think Tank is affiliated with ‘thinking’ implying its fundamental function is research, education and awareness. It is considered to be an institution where intellectuals and scholars gather for writing, pursuing research and discussing the subjects which

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “A Century of Think Tanks”, *The Council on Foreign Relations* (CFR), May 6, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/event/century-think-tanks>

²¹ Thierry de Montbrial and Thomas Gomart, “What is a Think Tank? A French Perspective”, *The French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)*, November, 2019. https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/demontbrial_gomart_what_is_a_think_tank_2019.pdf

²² “A Century of Think Tanks.”

are related to common good. This practice is meant to be conducted either independently or guided by the government in order to have better policy orientations.

The term ‘Think Tank’ was first used during WWI as a military jargon.²³ At that time, it was described as a place where strategic plans can be discussed without being interpreted by any external agency.²⁴ However, the term began to be considered in a broader context when, during the 1960s, the US witnessed sporadic growth of non-profit, policy and research oriented institutions.²⁵ The origin of Think Tanks had not been exclusive to the US only rather the emergence of Think Tanks was a phenomenon that progressive states of the European continent observed far and wide.

Originated in London, the Fabian Society is said to be the first modern Think Tank²⁶ which was meant to influence the public policy of its country. Other than Europe, the organizations were established on other parts of the world as well: Canada, North America, Asia, and Africa. Think Tanks flourished in all parts of the world and set to perform various functions situated in their own socio-political and economic context.²⁷ It is this variety of functions and relativity of the environment, in which a Think Tank is situated, that renders its unique characteristics. Though the general purpose of a Think Tank is supposed to provide academic and research input in policy-

²³ Stella Ladi, “Think Tank”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 13, 2015. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/think-tank>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Hexham and Jeremy Johnston, “An Exploration of the Communication Strategies of Three Early Think Tanks”, *University of Calgary*, April 20, 2018.

https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/106533/ucalgary_2018_hexham_jeremy.pdf?sequence=1

²⁷ Nicola Jones et al, “Think Tanks and the Rise of Knowledge Economy: Their Linkages with National Politics and External Donors” in *“Think Tanks and Public Policies in Latin America”* edited by Adolfo Garce and Gerardo Una, 46-72, (Fundación Siena and Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), Overseas Development Institute (ODI). <https://www.cominit.com/la/node/319174>

making circles, however, they are hard to be characterized in black and white categories. There are many grey areas that make defining and categorizing Think Tanks difficult.

While the scholars do not agree upon one definition of Think Tank, they do agree that a Think Tank cannot have one definition. It is a hybrid domain and the reasons behind it are various. In According to Thomas Medvetz, defining a think tank is extremely puzzling since it is a murky subject.²⁸ In his book, he quotes Simon James who succinctly put the dilemma of defining Think Tanks by saying that “it is a vexed question which often degenerated into futile semantics.” Hartwig Pautz argue that categorizing Think Tank in one clear-cut definition is problematic due to their diversity of roles.²⁹ The basic disagreement within the scholar fraternity is on the commonly floated definition of a Think Tank, which is:

“A non-profit, independent, autonomous, public policy research organization”³⁰

The notion of Think Tank as an institution which is independent or autonomous from state or state structure, and private interests is only idealist. There is hardly any Think Tank in the world that operates either without aligning itself with state’s or any private entity’s interests. According to Diane Stone, believing a Think Tank to be “free”, “independent” and “autonomous” is an Anglo-American notion that finds no existence in the real world.³¹ Supporting this argument, James Allen Smith describes all the American Think Tanks either as planning or advisory institutions of the state.³² This explains how ‘free’, ‘independent’ or ‘autonomous’ are Think Tanks in America. In

²⁸ Thomas Medvetz, “Think Tanks and Emergent Field” (New York: Social Sciences Research Council, 2008), p.1.

²⁹ Hartwig Pautz, “The Think Tanks behind ‘Cameronism’”, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol.15, no.3 (2013), 362-377. doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00518.x

³⁰ Thierry de Montbrial and Thomas Gomart, “What is a Think Tank?”, 1-2.

³¹ Diane Stone, “*Public Policy Analysis and Think Tanks*”(London: Routledge, 2007), 10.

³² James Allen Smith, “*The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of New Policy Elite*” (New York: Free Press, 1991), 313.

other parts of the world, ‘free thinking’ of a Think Tank comes into question, because in some countries, it is legally mandatory for a Think Tank to acquire sponsorship of a government ministry.

Since a Think Tank has to be affiliated to some entity, whether government or private, the scholars tried to round off this obstacle. James McGann and Paul Dickson describe them as either ‘independent’ or ‘affiliated’ but they condition this criterion with two characteristics: For them, if an entity has to be termed as a Think Tank, it must be permanent not an ad-hoc institution.³³ With this, the question of profit-making comes into open. For these two scholars, a Think Tank can be a ‘non-profit’ or ‘profit-making’ entity.

It is not just the criterion of being ‘independent’, ‘autonomous’ and ‘free thinker’ that is a challenge in defining a Think Tank. There is much more to this puzzle. Nailing down a perfect definition for a Think Tank is also difficult because they work in a variety of dimensions. If their structure, research, and conduct is analyzed, they began to look like a chimera.

Donald Abelson maintains that a Think tank cannot be defined in absolute words because they vary in size, sources of funding, staff structure, ideological leanings, focus and type of research programs.³⁴ Smith argues that they are different from each other because their constituencies are different.³⁵ Also, he argues, they differ in striking the balance between ‘research’ and ‘advocacy.’

Paul Dickson thinks that the real problem is gauging their exact role in bridging the gap between research and policy, knowledge and power, and research and advocacy.³⁶ In short, the problem in

³³ James McGann, *“The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks, Public Policy and Governance ”* (Washington D.C.: Brooking Institutions Press, 2016).

Paul Dickson, *“Think Tanks”*(Minnesota: Atheneum, 1971).

³⁴

³⁵ Donald Abelson, *“A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy”* (Washington D.C.: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2006), 392.

³⁶ Paul Dickson, *“Think Tanks”*, 22.

defining a Think Tank is not that there is no information about them but it is “too much information” about them; such is the claim of McGann,³⁷ which seems highly pertinent.

Scholars have also tried to define Think Tanks on the basis of their functions and role they play in their domestic and international context. Kent Weaver defined Think Tanks as institutions that are either research-oriented or function as an instrument of advocacy.³⁸ He, however, further categorizes research-oriented think tanks into two categories: “university-without-students” and “contract-researchers.” Christopher Demuth differentiates between a Think Tank and a university because the former conducts research to influence and shape the public policy whereas the latter pursues research for its own use.³⁹ For this reason, Think Tanks publishes articles, books and contribute to newspapers and magazines in order to promote their agenda. They do it much more aggressively than a university would do. This is why they are termed as “university-without-student.” On the other hand, the contract-research Think Tanks are associated with the government agency/agencies which contract their research.

Struggling with the challenges of defining a Think Tank in a comprehensive definition, two scholars tries to offer a somewhat broader definition. According to Howard Wiarda, “Think Tank is an entity that thinks, writes, publishes, appears on television, participates in state activities, attends government ministries briefings, and gives policy recommendations to state organs/institutions is defined a think tank.”⁴⁰

³⁷ McGann, “The Fifth Estate”, 18.

³⁸ Kent Weaver, “The Changing World of Think Tanks”, *Political Science and Politics*, Vol.22, no.3 (1989), 563-578.

³⁹ Christopher Demuth, “Think Tank-Confidential”, *The Wall Street Journal*, October 11, 2017.

<https://ccdemuth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Think-Tank-Confidential.pdf>

⁴⁰ Howard Wiarda, “Think Tanks and Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: New Ideas, New ‘Tanks’, and New Directions”, *International Journal*, Vol.70, no.4 (2015), 517-525.

On the other hand, McGann defines it as, “public policy research, analysis, engagement institutions that generate policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable policy-makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues. Think Tanks may be affiliated with a political party, a university, or a government; they are independent institutions that are structured as permanent bodies, not ad-hoc commissions.”⁴¹

1.2.1. Definition of Think Tank Used in This Thesis

This thesis takes McGann’s definition as a basic premise of considering an institution as a Think Tank. Since this thesis studies the Think Tanks that focus their work to Pakistan-China relations, it modifies the above-mentioned definition as:

“foreign policy research, analysis, engagement institutions that generate foreign policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable foreign policy-makers and the public to make informed decisions about foreign policy issues. Think Tanks may be affiliated with a political party, a university, or a government; they are independent institutions that are structured as permanent bodies, not ad-hoc commissions.”

1.3.Evolution of Think Tank: Roles and Functions

In the history of modern think tanks, the 18th and 19th century marks a special era of think tanks development. Established by William Shipley in 1754, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) is described to be “the oldest think tank in

⁴¹McGann, “The Fifth Estate”, 10.

existence.”⁴² According to the same account, *Sociedad Académica de Amantes del País* (though defunct now) is the ancestor of all current European and American think tanks.⁴³

In fact, in the early and late twentieth century, the outbreak of two world wars convinced the people that the matter of maintaining international peace and stability cannot be trusted alone with the traditional style of governance. They began to believe, as, independent and free institutions are needed to improve the quality of governance so that another global conflict could be averted in time. Therefore, from the very outset, think tanks were a metaphor of free and neutral thinking much-needed for the governments which cannot help indulging in a biased course of state-to-state interactions engendering peace.

Not as much familiar as it is now, the rising liberal United States of America (USA) was pressing for creating an international civil society. The liberal internationalist US President, Woodrow Wilson was at the forefront of this movement. In fact, he was the face of those who wanted to inculcate the spirit of international cooperation and sustaining peace instead of relying only on the patterns of realpolitik. In the US, the debate about the role of think tanks revolved largely around the role of the country that it had to play in the international affairs.⁴⁴ Particularly, after the outbreak of World War II, the idea that the country’s elite need to engage in continuous

⁴² Enrique Mendizabal, “How Think Tanks can be an Agent of Social Change?”, *RSA*, June 16, 2017.

<https://www.thersa.org/blog/2017/06/how-can-think-tanks-be-agents-of-social-change>

⁴³ Ibid.

<https://onthinktanks.org/articles/how-can-think-tanks-be-agents-of-social-change/>

⁴⁴ Jiangli Su, “Think Tanks in the United States: The Evolution and Evolving Roles”, *Sociology Study*, Vol.6, no.3 (2016), 176-185.

conversation with the government on international affairs gained currency.⁴⁵ This led to the formation of Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) of the US.

The participation of scholars and experts, in restructuring the world, was not limited to discussion only rather the governments brought them into their delegations to the Parisian city of Versailles. Caught among huge transformations, the European governments were convinced of the need for expertise on the complex issues of their time: border redrawing, increasing demand for national self-determination, populists' insistence of democratic governments, and dispute settlement among nations for restoring peace and stability.

Such was the socio-political milieu in Paris, according to Chatham House's Dr. Niblett, when the experts, gathered for a dinner in Hotel Majestic on May 30th, 1918, conversed to build the institutions for a more neutral, detached and fact-based perspectives on international affairs.⁴⁶ This progressive thinking led to the foundation of, as Dr. Niblett explained, America's globally renowned think tank, Chatham House.⁴⁷ From the very outset, think tanks were meant to fill the void between decision-makers and the people.

Think tanks, in this context, began to have multiple faces. They symbolized a place where innovative ideas could generate. They were seen as a much-needed bridge between policy-makers and academics/scholars. They were considered as workshop of ideas for both policy debates and policy advocacy. In America especially, the role of think tanks expanded to every aspect of life: political, economic, historic, social, and international relations.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "A Century of Think Tanks", *CFR*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Hence, it became an extremely influential idea in the progressive and liberal wings of the US that, for good governance and aversion of international conflicts, some sorts of public-private partnership are needed for a better governance.⁴⁸ Some of the US think tanks, the Heritage Foundation and Brookings Institution, were established with this premise and now, due to their influence in policy circles in the country and world, became a household name.⁴⁹

Housing around one third of world's total think tanks, the US institutions have been researching for global challenges, offering solutions for puzzling problems, building narratives for the country, debating policy questions, lobbying for government policies at different levels. No doubt Think-Tanks have assumed to wear many faces due to the diversity of roles they play for different actors at different levels of their ecosystem.

It is worth noting that, despite the variety of role and function they perform, fundamental purpose of a Think Tank is to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy.⁵⁰

1.4.Types of Think Tank

Based on their affiliation and source of funding, the University of Pennsylvania's Global Go to Think Tank Index Report 2018 categorizes Think Tanks in seven types which are as follows:⁵¹

1.5.1. Autonomous and Independent Think Tank

⁴⁸ Richard N. Hass, "Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy: A Policy Maker's Perspective", US Department of State, November 1, 2002. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/15506.htm#:~:text=Some%2C%20like%20the%20Institute%20for,cover%20the%20foreign%20policy%20waterfront.>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ James McGann, "2019 Global Go to Think Tank Index Report", University of Pennsylvania, January 27, 2020. <https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-Global-Go-To-Think-Tank-Index-Report.pdf>

⁵¹ Ibid.

Those Think Tanks which describe them as ‘autonomous and independent’ they maintain their autonomy in their research and administrative work. They also take independent positions regardless of official stance of the government on the relevant policy issues. They are under less compulsion in pursuing their research and maintaining their policy stance. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Council for Foreign Relations (CFR), The Heritage Foundations are examples of independent and autonomous Think Tanks. However, by stating them ‘autonomous and independent’, it does not mean they are pursuing their work with objectivity and neutrally.

1.5.2. Quasi-Independent Think Tank

A quasi-independent Think Tank function independently from government organs but it is funded by some donor agency or group. Although they remain autonomous in their working to a large extent but they may face overwhelming monitoring from their donor agency. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is an example of quasi-independent Think Tank.

1.5.3. Government-Affiliated Think Tank

These Think Tanks are associated with one or the other organ of the government. They are not independent in their working and functions. This type of Think Tank is a formal part of government structure or organ and their functions are monitored by affiliated agency of the government. They follow government policies and, despite generally describing themselves as ‘independent and autonomous’, they cannot take independent policy positions. They pursue their research in a way that advocates, propagates, and provide policy feedback that remains in sync with the official policy lines. However, it does not mean that they cannot provide neutral and objective analysis. Yet they cannot break away from the government policy stances and postures completely. America’s Congressional Research Service (CRS) is an example of government affiliated Think

Tank which works under the purview of American Congress. Not only the functions of CRS are directed towards serving the Congress but its researchers also work exclusively for Congressional staff and their committees to provide policy input at all levels of its legislative process. This is why it is also termed as Congress' Think Tank.

1.5.4. Quasi-Government Think Tank

These Think Tanks are funded by government agencies but they are not a formal part of any government agency or institution. Research of these institutes is commissioned by government agencies as they are funded by the government. The Woodrow Wilson Institute is example of quasi-government think tank.

1.5.5. University Affiliated Think Tank

These types of Think Tanks are situated in a post-secondary educational institutes i.e., universities. Primarily, their work is purely research based and academic. In other words, a university-affiliated Think Tank is a policy research institution which is run and governed under the university it is situated. These Think Tanks are common in the US and other parts of the world as well. The reason for their prevalence is the plentitude of research resources and academic climate that facilitate them in conducting neural and objective research. Hoover Institution is an example of university-affiliated Think Tank. It is situated in Stanford University, US, and carries public policy research independently.

1.5.6. Political Party-Affiliated Think Tank

This type of Think Tank is affiliated with some political party. It has overt and formal association with a political party. It follows the party's stance and policy positions in the relevant matters of discussion. Progressive Policy Institute in the US is a political-party affiliated Think Tank.

1.5.7. Corporate or ‘For Profit’ Think Tank

Corporate Think Tanks are run on business models and usually function as consulting firms. Their research is oriented at their clients’ demands and, therefore, their policy input and research tends to be different from other Think Tanks which function mostly in a political world. The working and research of corporate Think Tank is more of economic and monetary in nature instead of socio-political and strategic. The McKinsey Global Institute is a famous example of corporate Think Tank.

1.5.8. Academic Think Tanks

Academic Think Tanks are mostly situated in a university and they carry out purely academic research projects. In fact, it is their focus of research that defines them as academic. Their research projects are mostly proposed by senior researchers according to their academic interests. For their research ventures, these Think Tanks seek donors. Usually, their parent university gives them funding. Within the resources allocated to these Think Tanks, the researchers give call for papers, engage academia and later on publish their research.

1.5.9. Research-Oriented Think Tanks

They are similar to academic Think Tanks except the scope of their research projects is not limited to academic topics only, Their area of study is broader. Also, it is not necessary for these types of Think Tanks to stay confined to their host/parent entity rather their donors may vary according to the type and interests of their research projects.

1.5.10. Policy Advocates

A policy advocate Think Tank is a research institution that conducts research projects according to the policy lines of their parent organisation. They are research institution that advocate policy as well. These types of Think Tanks are usually associated with the government agency/ies.

1.5. Is Study Center a Think Tank?

A Think Tank generally tends to be a research or policy institute that may or may not have affiliations with government organ/s. They perform research and advocacy on the subjects which could be related to any field of study. In the context of IR however, socio-political, economics, military and political strategy are their common areas of concern. On the contrary, a Study Center as its name implies is created to ‘study’ a specific subject/s. In general terms, Study Centers are established to teach languages and also study the designated area of research. For example, American Study Center has been established in Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan. The center conducts seminars, conferences, and symposia along with carrying out research in American studies. These two functions make the Center no different than a regular Think Tank, however, its function as an educational institute makes it different than a Think Tank: In the American Study Center, M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs are also offered.

In the case of China-Pakistan Study Centers, the spectrum of their functions is quite broad. There are many China-Pakistan Study Centers that do not offer any language/higher education studies program but they are still named as ‘study centers. One such example is China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). It does not mean however that there do not exist such Study Centers that actually offer Chinese language courses. Situated at Government College University (GCU), Lahore, China Study Center (also named as Excellence Center China Studies) offers diploma in China Studies including Chinese language, political system of China, socio-cultural studies of China, regional developments and Chinese role in it, key

characteristics of Chinese economy, China's role in world politics. Given its functions, Center of Excellence China Studies at GCU is more than just a Think Tank.

Borrowing on Hartwig Pautz' definition of Think Tank – the definition of a think tanks should focus on its functions instead of apparent organizational structure – this study considers study centers also think tanks. Moreover, employing the modified definition of Think Tank which has been used in this thesis, “foreign policy research, analysis, engagement institutions that generate foreign policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable foreign policy-makers and the public to make informed decisions about foreign policy issues. Think Tanks may be affiliated with a political party, a university, or a government; they are independent institutions that are structured as permanent bodies, not ad-hoc commissions” this research considers Study Centers as institutions which can be deemed as Think Tanks.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Contexts of Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Foreign Relations

What role Think Tanks and institutions like them play in foreign relations and how it can be theorized is the subject of this chapter. It begins with laying out salient features of two theories which are being applied in this study while arguing why they make a case for understanding the role of Think Tanks in Pak-China relations at best. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one, Theoretical Contexts and Dimensions, briefly elucidates Social Constructivism and Discursive Institutionalism. Since the role Think Tanks play in Foreign Relations are of diverse nature which makes it difficult to study their role within the parameter of one theoretical context, this chapter also tries to explain why the tenets of these theories have been taken to comprehend the role of Think Tanks and Study Centers selected in this thesis.

2.1. Theoretical Contexts and Dimensions

Basic contention of this study is that Think Tanks and Study Centers, having ideational power, play various roles in Foreign Relations. In literature, supreme place of Idea is well acknowledged. Ideas have been termed as indicators for interests and roadmaps.⁵² They have also been described as “strategic constructs”⁵³ and “narratives that shape understanding of the events.”⁵⁴ This is the most important function of Think Tank as an ideational actor/agent. They help shape narratives. They are influential agents of making or marring public perceptions. With the traditional theoretical notions of IR, it is not possible to adequately explain the role of ideas in Foreign Relations, which is the domain of a non-state actor like Think Tank.

⁵² ‘Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change - Google Books’, accessed 16 August 2021, <https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=DfeLsaiPr7oC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=goldstein+and+cohen+role+of+ideas&ots=P-UOYhoniT&sig=XJXHhDko9UC6SVB001vr4cnJCEw#v=onepage&q=goldstein%20and%20cohen%20role%20of%20ideas&f=false>.

⁵³ Julia Balogun et al., ‘Placing Strategy Discourse in Context: Sociomateriality, Sensemaking, and Power’, *Journal of Management Studies* 51, no. 2 (2014): 175–201, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12059>.

⁵⁴ ‘World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations’, Routledge & CRC Press, accessed 16 August 2021, <https://www.routledge.com/World-of-Our-Making-Rules-and-Rule-in-Social-Theory-and-International-Relations/Onuf/p/book/9780415630399>.

Theoretically, there are many ways that can help describe, explain and understand the role of ideas in Foreign Relations. Social Constructivism and Discursive Institutionalism are the two befitting theories among many. The reason for selecting these two theories is that they defy any clash between ideas and material structure. Both argue that ideational factors are the key to understanding the role of actors and institutions in a world that can be constructed socially.⁵⁵ Traditional Theories of IR either dismiss the role of non-state actors in international system, especially those of the ideas and discourse, therefore another theory is needed that can compliment Social Constructivism in analyzing the role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in foreign relations. Since this thesis applies two theories to fully perceive the role of Think Tanks, it first describes Social Constructivism and argues why it is relevant for the study.

2.1.1. Social Constructivism: Introduction and Description

As compared to Realism and Liberalism, Social Constructivism is a relatively new theory. Its inception in IR is associated with end of the Cold War. This timeline coincided with the collapse of Soviet Union when both Realists and Liberalists deemed insufficient to predict this transformative event in the history of IR. Social Constructivists filled some of the gaps that the positivists and materialists theories – such as Realism and Liberalism – left in the literature of IR. Along with this, the constructivists challenge some of the core assumptions that are generally conceived by the realists and liberalists. These traditional theories focus mostly on the state as a unitary structure of international system and perceives unbalanced distribution of power in the system as a nature of the system.

In complete contrast with these conceptions, the Constructivists claim that the reality of international is socially constructed and as the famous saying goes – anarchy is what states make of it. Although Social Constructivism was propounded as a theory of IR by an American Political Scientists – Alexander Wendt – in 1992, it has its origin in Social Sciences.⁵⁶ The Constructivists maintained that the social world is what we make of it. They believe that the human agency whether they are leaders or influential citizens construct the social world, so is true for Foreign

⁵⁵ Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia*, Critical Studies of the Asia-Pacific (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137488251>.

⁵⁶ Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425.

Relations. Through their actions and interactions, human agency continually shape and reshape the reality of international relations. There are three major claims that Social Constructivism make. Firstly, the principal unit of analysis in international political theory is state. Secondly, All the state structures are inter-subjective and constructed instead of absolute or static as maintained by the realists or liberalists. Thirdly, Social Constructivism asserts that it is not human nature that constructs social reality but the social structures that do so.

Basic premise of Alexander Wendt's theory of Social Constructivism is that "social construction" creates the environment in which all the actors and agencies of international relations interact.⁵⁷ According to Wendt, the Ontology of international system is as such as a mere product of social construction, which stands in stark contrast with the Ontology of the positivist and materialist conception of IR theories such as Realism and Liberalism.⁵⁸

In his academic work, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt wrote that the way realists define international system – materialistic objective power – is their own conception. In his popular work, *Anarchy is What States Make if It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, he challenges the basic assumption of the Realists and Liberalists. He explains that the power politics in the international system and its 'essential' components as defined by the Realists and Liberalists are not nature of international system but it is just a conception. By describing international system as a product of 'Social Construction', he implies that international system is such a reality which is not absolute, static or inert but a fluctuating one. In more exact word, he explains, the reality of international system is constructed, hence social reality.

What lies at the heart of Social Constructivists claim is 'Identity.' The Constructivists argue that the identifications in IR are not constructed by the material structure but by the meaning which are assigned to the material structure. Wendt explained this assumption with the example of nuclear weapons and the meaning attached to it. He argues that the nuclear weapons that North Korea possess are more threatening than the ones possessed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain. In

⁵⁷ Wendt.

⁵⁸ 'Foreign Policy in a Constructed World - V. Kubáľková, Professor and Reader in the Department of Government Vendulka Kubalkova - Google Books', accessed 17 August 2021, https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=17Q65q0thgoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA38&dq=social+constructivism+i+n+international+relations+alexander+wendt&ots=mp24ZqGbd0&sig=exx-bg0EPQO1Hov49DrmbwVZpAo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=social%20constructivism%20in%20international%20relations%20alexander%20wendt&f=false.

the example referred by him, the nuclear weapons are material structure while the meaning assigned to it is ideational structure. This example also makes it clear that material structure itself are meaningless unless human agency assigns some meaning to it, which it does according to its social context. In fact, Social Constructivists take into account the effect of ideas, identities, norms, beliefs, and perceptions in international politics. Their assumptions entail that reality is under construction and makes room for the change. In short, the Constructivists hold that ideational structure (meaning) is not absolute rather it can be changed and constructed over the course of time according to the beliefs and ideas that the actors of international politics stick to.⁵⁹

Another important debate in Social Constructivist literature is of agency and structure. For them both are mutually constituted implying structure shapes agency and vice versa. The Constructivists categorize structure as ideational and material whereas they refer agency to an agent/actor's ability to do some work.⁶⁰ Wendt explained this with the examples of US and North Korea again. The relations between them are socially constructed which can be changed once their beliefs about each other change. To be more specific, the enmity between the two states can change the existing structure of their relations. This stance stands in complete contrast with the realists who believe that it is the anarchic nature of the international system determines the actions and interactions of the states. This example also illustrates one more defining feature of Social Constructivism, which is construction of identities and interest. They maintain that identities represent actors, reflect their interests and determine their actions.

2.1.2. Shortcomings of Social Constructivism in Analyzing the Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers

This thesis pursues social constructivist understanding of think tank functioning based on the premise that the “ideas shape or constitute the situation or context of the action” and that “they also shape and constitute the agents themselves especially their interests, preferences and identities.” Think Tanks broker Ideas that generate discourse among policy experts in the academic world and policy makers in the policy-making circles.⁶¹ This discourse, if influential enough, can become the part of structures and institutions which are related to Foreign Relations. These

⁵⁹ ‘Introducing Constructivism in International Relations Theory’, *E-International Relations* (blog), 23 February 2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/23/introducing-constructivism-in-international-relations-theory/>.

⁶⁰ ‘Introducing Constructivism in International Relations Theory’.

⁶¹ ‘World of Our Making’.

institutions employ their resources to exercise their ideational power through discourse when they use to advance their political agendas and can help institutional change.

This study considers think tanks as an agent of change. The change they are trying to induce as an influence seeker; the change their funders are trying to bring; the change that the civil society overall expects them to induce. Think tanks can be deemed fit as an agent of change because of their ideational power: a reality lies at the heart of Social Constructivism.

Though Social Constructivism explains the social construction of institutions, it fails to elucidate the power of ideas and the transformative change it brings after its acceptance.⁶² In other words, Social Constructivism do not account for institutional change on the basis of discourse. Discursive Institutionalism explains the institutional change which, for this thesis, is apt as it studies Think Tanks. This theory fills the void of Social Constructivism by reconciling the competing interpretations of structures vis-à-vis agents and change. It also describes the normative discursive power of Think Tanks, which are non-state actors, and how they interact with state-structures. Discursive Institutionalism explains why think tanks play the role of an enabling or constraining structure.⁶³

One of the important reasons this thesis choses DI as a complementing theory for analyzing the role of Think Tanks along with Social Constructivism is that “it explains the change in structure (be it material or ideational) through constructivist discourse.”⁶⁴ Discursive Institutionalism is also called Constructivist Institutionalism.

Think Tanks, as emerging actors in Foreign Relations, create discursive space by moving ideas across political space and generating discourse on foreign policy issues. This power of Think Tanks which comes from creating discursive space is the arena of DI. Due to their ideational role, Think Tanks are idea brokers and policy entrepreneurs since they move ideas across political and discursive space among relevant stakeholders including domestic and international actors.

Think Tanks use their ideational power to endorse, advocate, and bring change in the foreign policies of their relevant governments. This institutional change which comes after any

⁶² Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security*.

⁶³ Zimmerman.

⁶⁴ Zimmerman.

government/private entity accepts the idea brokered by a Think Tank, which then it incorporates into its policies whether domestic or international. Ideas are valuable and, once accepted, bring change in the relevant institutions and policies. These Tanks, in this regard, can transform ideas into political change by building certain structures, initiating specific processes and interactions within their social and political network.

2.1.3. Discursive Institutionalism: Description and Relevance

Discursive Institutionalism is a new theory in Political Sciences and continuation of evolution of Institutionalism. DI is pioneered by a Professor of International Relations at Boston University, Vivien A. Schmidt who believes that the place of ideas cannot be ignored in politics, be it domestic or international, and they assume a substantive role in political discourse.⁶⁵ Idea exists at three levels: philosophies, policies, and programs. She categorizes ideas into two types: normative and cognitive.⁶⁶ She describes discourse as an “interactive process of conveying ideas.” Therefore, as she holds, discourse is also of two types i.e., communicative and coordinative.⁶⁷ The first type of discourse takes place among political actors and the other one between political actors and the public. Those states which have strong and stable political systems tend to have coordinative discourse while the simpler polities tend to have communicative discourse. She describes interests as neither subjective nor material. She terms interest as “subjective ideas.”

DI puts more emphasis on discourse and maintains that ideas without considering the interactive processes that convey ideas will be illogical. It is, in fact, discourse that facilitates generation of ideas and their deliberation by political actors and, hence, legitimization of ideas by the relevant stakeholders. DI explains how agents represent ideas, to whom they communicate these ideas, and in what institutional context.

The major function of DI, as Vivien puts forward, is to explain “how institutions are created”, and “how institutions persist or change.”⁶⁸ This DI explains in a “given meaning context” which is the domain of Social Constructivism. The biggest problem in assessing the true leverage and influence of their ideational power in policymaking circles. It is that their actual power in getting their ideas

⁶⁵ Vivien A. Schmidt, ‘Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2008): 303–26, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060606.135342>.

⁶⁶ Schmidt.

⁶⁷ Schmidt.

⁶⁸ Schmidt.

accepted is almost inaccessible. The reason, experts of Think Tank account for this inaccessibility, is the unofficial space in which they operate and exercise their influence as a policy actor. Social Constructivism is a state-centric theory and does not give much epistemological explanation to assess the role of non-state actors such as Think Tanks in Foreign Relations. DI acknowledge the role of non-state actors in Foreign Relations as ideational and discursive actor that has the ability to exercise their influence on structures and processes of international relations. In a nut shell, DI is befitting as a complementing theory along with Social Constructivism because the former theory does not acknowledge the role of non-state actors in Foreign Relations but DI does by identifying them as “discursive actors” that operate in a “political space” to transform ideas into “institutional change.”

2.2. Theorizing the Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Foreign Relations

Basic premise of this study is that Think Tanks are an instrument of the normative/social constructivist world and enjoy the ability (agency) bring institutional change through ideas and discourse. There are many recent studies that are analyzing the role of ideas and discourse in Foreign Relations. It is that, with the turn of new century, the number of non-state actors increased, so did their interaction in the international system. With this change, the importance of ideas also increased in foreign policy making. This became evident in Vienna Conference when leaders of Think Tanks, intellectuals, and independent analysts were taken to the historic event.

2.2.1. As an Ideational Actor

In recent decades, however, the global proliferation of these organizations has led to a growing scholarly interest in them also in other national contexts. In this context scholars have, among other things, noted the importance of a country’s wider institutional architecture for the size, character and influence potential of its think tank population.⁶⁹ Such institutional architecture is often conceptualized in terms of the character of a country’s policy system, or, more recently, its “knowledge regime”.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ ‘What Are Think Tanks Good for? - United Nations University Centre for Policy Research’, accessed 17 August 2021, <https://cpr.unu.edu/publications/articles/what-are-think-tanks-good-for.html>.

⁷⁰ ‘The Role of Think Tanks - Center for International Private Enterprise’, accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.cipe.org/reports/how-to-guide-for-economic-think-tanks/the-role-of-think-tanks/>.

Because of the ideational and ideological character of their activity, think tanks are essentially civil society actors (the production of ideas and ideology being chiefly the function of civil society, as we will elaborate on later in the article). The scope of the expansion of think tanks in a society should therefore be seen as related to the broader institutional make-up of a country's civil society and to the character of the interest representation system with respect to policy access for civil society actors, rather than only (and more narrowly) to the characteristics of the political system or the knowledge regime.

Think Tanks are ideational actors because they move ideas across political space through various means and ways.⁷¹ In foreign relations, Think Tanks function as an ideational actor by adapting certain strategies and then exercise their influence in various ways. They are prolific publishing houses since they generate traditional and non-traditional (multimedia) publications. Alongside their regular publications, they produce high-quality journals and magazines several times a year. These publications carry the works of external analysts and professionals. They conduct research and provide analysis input on policy issues. Based upon their influence and relevance/importance of their research and work, they provide consultancy to policymakers on the issues of immediate concern. They act as a bridge between academic and policy-makers world. This is the most common role they play. They try to merge the advice from both end and struggle to come up with a balanced more nuanced approach towards policy making problems.

Within the ambit of this thesis, it will be analyzed how enabling they are as an ideational actor in Pak-China relations.

2.3.2. As a Political Actor

Think Tanks generate discourse on issues related to Foreign Relations and, this is how, they advance their political agenda by exercising power as discursive actors. This specific trait of Think Tanks typifies them as political actor.⁷² They interpret government policies in their own way, based on their inclinations and affiliations with their parent organizations, for media and the public. In this way, they facilitate the government's policy initiatives and play the advocacy role for the

⁷¹ Daniel Béland and Mitchell Orenstein, 'How Do Transnational Policy Actors Matter?', n.d., 35.

⁷² Pelle Åberg, Stefan Einarsson, and Marta Reuter, 'Think Tanks: New Organizational Actors in a Changing Swedish Civil Society', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 32, no. 3 (1 June 2021): 634–48, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00174-9>.

government. By leveraging the power of citizens and communities, they help bring about reforms in foreign policy by engaging in a bottom-up approach.

They spread information in electronic and print media. They advance their agenda and are expert in getting their message across. They also make appearances in TV shows, news channels and other programs of current affairs. This is how they help in building their own narrative on certain policy issues. Majority of Think tanks have senior bureaucrats and politicians in their advisory board list, who advice and guide them in laying out their course of action. In this way, they have direct access to policy making circles. Also, those institutions that are funded and owned by government organizations they work in close proximity with the government institutions.

They build their own web of social relations in which academics, media personnel, bureaucrats, politicians, and other professionals interact. By exploiting this vast web of social relations, they exert their influence. Through this web, they became a medium of flowing information from bottom to top or top to bottom. They can get access to high government officials. The door to government institutions always remains open for them. Almost all think tanks have former government officials who work in different capacities at these institutions. Therefore, they help them provide access to their former organizations. They provide the supply of key personnel and well-informed analyses to the government. In this way, they acquire influence and leverage within the government institutions to carry their agenda through.

However, this is to see, in this thesis, whether they are independent political actors or dependent ones.

2.3.3. As an Instrument of Track-II Diplomacy

Track-I Diplomacy is the official diplomacy that takes place between governments of two or more than two states. As an instrument of foreign policy, Track-I diplomacy is conducted by government officials and diplomats.⁷³ It is used as a means of wielding political power to influence the outcomes of negotiations between states.⁷⁴ On the other hand, Track-II or backchannel diplomacy is the form of diplomacy that takes place among non-state actors that include academics, research

⁷³ 'Track II Diplomacy: A Short History – Foreign Policy', accessed 17 August 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/06/20/track-ii-diplomacy-a-short-history/>.

⁷⁴ Sajjad Malik, 'Track II Diplomacy and Its Impact on Pakistan India Peace Process', *Strategic Studies* 31/32 (2011): 108–28.

community, retired government officials and diplomats. This form of diplomacy which takes place through outside official diplomatic processes and structures. This term was first coined by Joseph Montville that he used to describe the efforts of resolving conflicts by non-government officials.

Basic purpose of Track-II diplomacy is not to replace Track-I diplomacy but to assist it in conflict resolution, lowering tensions, perception management, and increasing understanding. Regarding the strengths of track 2 dialogues: Although government officials do not participate, this framework also allows for deeper understanding of positions and perceptions, as experts outside of government are able to share their independent and personal views in ways that can later feed into the policy process.⁷⁵ In most cases, these participants are familiar with the positions of their respective governments, but are not necessarily expected to assume or defend those policy positions in the dialogue. The absence of government officials can sometimes lead to more open discussions, with a greater likelihood of breaking through a difficult impasse than would be likely if officials were in the room. Further, track 2 dialogues can construct a secondary channel of communication that can help build trust between the same group of participants over a period of years.

There is wide variation in how this form of diplomacy materializes in practice. Track 1.5 and track 2 dialogues often look different depending upon the stage of the conflict (e.g., preventive, pre-negotiation, negotiation, post-conflict) and the level of participants (e.g., civil society leaders, quasi-government officials).⁷⁶ The objectives outlined by the dialogues may also differ, as some are more focused on relationship building while others take a problem-solving or outcome-driven approach, such as establishing a draft agreement, joint statement, or new proposal. In any instance, to be able to define success in track 2 dialogues, it is important to be clear about the objectives and keep them within achievable limits.

Track 2 processes that tend to be more successful often sequence objectives at different phases of the dialogue or upon changing country context and conflict dynamics. For example, a track 1.5

⁷⁵ 'New Realities in Foreign Affairs: Diplomacy in the 21st Century', Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/new-realities-in-foreign-affairs-diplomacy-in-the-21st-century>.

⁷⁶ Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security*.

or track 2 process may begin by creating a platform for the opening of future negotiations, and then evolve into framing for those same negotiations.⁷⁷

More successful track 2 processes consider the importance of diverse stakeholders, work to fill in the gaps of the larger peace effort, and address power asymmetry among participants. They'll also manage expectations across participants, and—increasingly important—establish and implement what are called “transfer” mechanisms. In other words, the influential participants within a track 2 dialogue and the official mediators of the peace process can often serve as effective transfer channels, exchanging information and ideas developed within the groups to more formal processes, for example with official actors through confidential briefings or memos or to the public through speeches, op-eds, interviews or other inclusion initiatives such as public consultations. Ultimately, Track 2 processes are part of a larger ecosystem of change, and transfer mechanisms can link these dialogues to broader peace processes or policy discussions underway at multiple levels—from local actions, to the public opinion arena, to other track 2 processes, and to the formal higher-level peace processes and policy discussions.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Christian Lechervy, ‘Think Tanks in France: Providing Guidelines for Diplomatic Action’, *Revue Internationale et Strategique* No 110, no. 2 (29 June 2018): 20–32.

⁷⁸ ‘New Realities in Foreign Affairs’.

Chapter 3 Dynamics of Pak-China Relations and the Need for Think Tanks and Study Centers

This chapter discusses the overall dynamics of Pak-China relations and analyses the driving factors leading to involvement of Think Tanks and Study Centers in building the ties deep.

3.1. Pak-China Relations: An Appraisal

Pakistan-China relations are said to be a journey of friendship that spanned decades of cooperation and collaboration. From diplomatic to political and economic, the relations covered many a milestone. Beginning as early as 1951, Pak-Sino ties are built on strength, mutual trust, and shared interests. From the beginning to present day, the bilateral relations stood the test of times and gained many achievements. Despite their ideological differences, the two countries never faced any serious disagreement.

3.1.1. Strategic and Defense Cooperation

Pakistan remained a staunch ally of China in its times of isolation during Cold War era. At that time, Pakistan joined Capitalist bloc by signing the South Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1954 and the Central Treaty Organization in 1955.⁷⁹ In the later decades, 60's and 70's, China remained isolated from international community as the Cold War was at peak in this time. China's international isolation did not hinder Pakistan to stay in close cooperation with its old strategic partner in the region.⁸⁰

Sino-Pak ties flourished in each direction, however in its early years, defense cooperation dominated the relations due to "India Question" and Sino-US rivalry in the Cold War era.⁸¹ For decades and even today, China is said to be hedging against India by providing Pakistan a helping hand, particularly in those areas which New Delhi finds irksome. The aftermath of Sino-Indian

⁷⁹ Umbreen Javaid and Asifa Jahangir, 'Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years' 52, no. 1 (2015): 27.

⁸⁰ Javaid and Jahangir.

⁸¹ Muhammad Munir, 'Pakistan-China Strategic Interdependence: Post-9/11 Imperatives', *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 2 (2018): 21-42.

war led Beijing to use Pakistan a counterweight to Indian machination in the region. Another important factor was the US that also compelled Beijing to make Pakistan its partner in the region where India was taking advantage of the situation whenever it could. The same was true for Pakistan. Islamabad sought Chinese help and assistance against India and, after US sanctions in the wake of nuclear experiments, Beijing became a leading arms exporter to Pakistan. India Question and US factor became a driving factor for Beijing and Islamabad to nourish defense cooperation.

Since beginning of bilateral ties, China has been playing an important role in building and modernizing Pakistan's weaponry system of its army, navy and air force. Along with technical and financial support, China facilitated Pakistan in building its power plants, defense industries, and communication network. Author of "Shooting for a Century", Stephen P. Cohen describes Sino-Pak ties as primarily driven by Indian hostility and, in his view, it is particularly true for China as it sees New Delhi a stumbling block in fulfilling its regional ambitions.⁸² Another South Asian expert, John Graver, is of view that Pak-China relations is a metaphor of two-front theater for India. The relations strengthened after the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in 1971.⁸³ When India conducted nuclear experiments, both Beijing and Islamabad expressed their concerns about regional security. In fact, the power equation in South Asia is very tricky and this might be the reason why Indian leaders voiced it time and again that their nuclear program is not meant to counter Pakistan but China. In this milieu, it seems not surprising why China helped Pakistan in building its nuclear installations: The objective was to counter Indian hegemony in the region by empowering its bitter enemy and neighbor, Pakistan, by assisting in building its nuclear capabilities.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also brought Beijing and Pakistan closer to each other. Both wanted to mitigate the spillover effect of the invasion and became one in preserving their security interests. According to an expert, China's Afghan policy manifested that the securities of both the countries are "inter-linked and indivisible." The bilateral defense cooperation deepened with these

⁸² 'Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum on JSTOR', accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt4cg8gm>.

⁸³ 'Sino-Indian Rapprochement and the Sino-Pakistan Entente on JSTOR', accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2152324>.

regional developments and, in 1992,⁸⁴ it reached a milestone when China provided 34 short-range ballistic missiles to Pakistan. China also transferred missile technology to Pakistan as per rules of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).⁸⁵ The US, however, did not find the technology transfer occurring according to the proscribed rules, and, the Clinton administration imposed sanctions on China. The missiles that China gave to Pakistan can easily target Indian cities that are situated at Indo-Pak border.

China has been assisting Pakistan in building its conventional weaponry systems and modernizing its nuclear arsenal. Pakistani Air Force has Chinese interceptors, highly-capable radar system and famous Chengdu J-10B which is compared to America's JF-16.⁸⁶ The two countries are also involved in co-production of many defense projects including JF-17 Thunder, Hongdu-L5, Al-Khalid tanks, space technology, and other advanced training aircraft like K-8 Karakorum.⁸⁷ For its air defense, Both countries also engage in military training exercises as well. China also helped Pakistan in developing its nuclear arsenal especially when, after the US sanctions, it became difficult for Pakistan to acquire enriched Uranium and Plutonium. Beijing's help in building nuclear reactor in Khushab is well documented. In Chashma Nuclear Power Plant too, China provided assistance to Pakistan. Along with small arms and ammunition, JF-17 Thunder and its production facilities, F-7 aircrafts, T-85 tanks, F-22P frigates with helicopters, and K-8 jet trainers are the modern weaponry which has been provided to Pakistan by China.⁸⁸

After 9/11, Sino-Pak strategic cooperation further strengthened and ensued exchange of high-level-visits from the two sides. These visits were meant to enhance mutual understanding in the backdrop of regional and global developments that took place US-led War on Terrorism. These visits and the consequent policy in the region leading to Sino-Pak naval cooperation. In 2003, China and Pakistan conducted its first joint naval exercises. This search-and-rescue operation was

⁸⁴ 'STRENGTHENING GEO-STRATEGIC BOND OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA THROUGH GEO-ECONOMIC CONFIGURATION on JSTOR', accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26616702>.

⁸⁵ Rashid Ahmad Khan, 'Pakistan and China: Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism', *Strategic Studies* 32/33 (2012): 70–78.

⁸⁶ 'The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics - Andrew Small - Google Books', accessed 17 August 2021, https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=KscdCwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT3&dq=strategic+and+defense+cooperation+in+pakistan+and+china&ots=m18nRDmPLY&sig=JSns_Y9GuLTd19cJKL1yEAuUQq4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=strategic%20and%20defense%20cooperation%20in%20pakistan%20and%20china&f=false.

⁸⁷ 'The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics - Andrew Small - Google Books'.

⁸⁸ 'The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics - Andrew Small - Google Books'.

of special importance because it was first time that China's Army participated in a naval exercise with any foreign country. In 2005, the two countries signed a treaty of cooperation and friendship was of pivotal value since it categorically stated that "China would defend Pakistan's political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity."

With the deepening naval cooperation between the two countries, Gwadar Port emerged as a pinnacle of Sino-Pak strategic and military cooperation. Unraveling in the context of America's "Asia Pivot" (contain China strategy), China decided to respond with its "Ring of Pearls" strategy which aims to secure strategic ports in the Indian Ocean for securing its maritime interests.⁸⁹ Gwadar Port was taken as one of such ports. Both China and Pakistan are against a dominant India in the Indian Ocean since it works with the US to act as a counter-weight to China. As a ploy to these ambitious regional hegemonic designs, Gwadar Port became a metaphor of convergence of interests of both China and Pakistan. Not only acting as a catalyst in strategic cooperation, Gwadar Port synergized Sino-Pak collaboration in economic field also.

3.1.2. Evolution of Economic Ties

Although strategic and military relations continued to flourish, economic ties remained under developed. Since 1990s, economic concerns took precedence and the two countries started to sign related agreements. Many high-level visits took place and resulted in trade agreements, investment, and economic ventures. Though economic ties were established in 1951, it take some time to transpire economic ties into trade agreements.⁹⁰ China signed first trade agreement with Pakistan signed in 1963. Despite having signed this agreement and unprecedented access to each other's markets, no other trade agreement could be signed. The bilateral economic ties could not take off until the turn of new century. In fact, 2000s was the time when China gained global economic supremacy due to its continued efforts in national and international arena. This transformation reflected in China's deepening economic ties with Pakistan.⁹¹

⁸⁹ 'STRENGTHENING GEO-STRATEGIC BOND OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA THROUGH GEO-ECONOMIC CONFIGURATION on JSTOR'.

⁹⁰ Niloufer Mahdi, 'SINO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND', *Pakistan Horizon* 39, no. 4 (1986): 60–68.

⁹¹ Mahdi.

In 2000s, China had invested in infrastructure, mining, energy, and technological projects.⁹² It happened after the visit of Chinese Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji's visit to Pakistan in 2001.⁹³ He stated that the two countries must deepen their economic cooperation by engaging in agriculture, infrastructure, technology, and other fields. His visit culminated in many agreements that included the lease of Saindak Copper-Gold project. Other than this, many agreements were signed that were meant to enhance technological cooperation, increase bilateral tourism, supply of locomotives and railway coaches. He pledged to provide financial support of around US\$1 billion for building Gwadar port and the coastal highway. In 2003, another landmark was achieved in economic cooperation when a Joint Declaration of Direction of Pak-China Relations was signed. This document emphasized the need to improve economic ties and, two years later this joint declaration, Pak-China trade grew to US\$4.5 billion, which stood at US\$1 billion in 2001. This was quite an improvement although the balance of trade remained in favor China, the growing economic relations were encouraging nonetheless.

How keen the Chinese leadership was to build economic ties with Pakistan became evident with the Premier Wen Jiabao's first visit to Pakistan. In 2005, he came to Pakistan and, this time around, he also attended China-Pakistan Business Cooperation Conference. Addressing to the audience, he shed light on economic complementarities between the two countries focusing on Pakistan's abundant resources and China's technological edge in utilizing them in a most productive manner. He stated that China will continue to encourage the local businessmen and create job opportunities, therefore, he stressed that the two countries should work together to enhance economic cooperation. He was of the view that both Chinese and Pakistani government must create opportunities and avenues for the business communities of the two countries for establishing a mechanism of economic cooperation and collaboration. To this purpose, he enlisted many areas ranging from finances to agriculture, and science and technology. He also proposed initiation of joint economic ventures, lease projects, and modalities of foreign ownership of the projects which might be initiated in Pakistan.

Another milestone came in 2006 when President Musharraf paid a visit to China and signed 13 agreements and MoUs including energy, trade, defense and communication. Another agreement

⁹² 'China-Pakistan: A Journey of Friendship (1950-2020) - Global Times', accessed 17 August 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1189007.shtml>.

⁹³ 'China-Pakistan: A Journey of Friendship (1950-2020) - Global Times'.

was signed to facilitate the “Preferential Buyers’ Credit” which is a form of short-term loan. Media reports suggested an uptick of economic cooperation after this visit and, it was reported, that China would invest US\$12 billion in different projects in Pakistan along with providing a US\$500 million for a joint venture company. It was in 2008 when a comprehensive trade agreement signed and implemented. After the two countries achieved this milestone, they kept increasing their economic engagements on a variety of projects.

The same year, Gwadar Port Complex which is the most strategic economic project till date was launched. China was involved in the Gwadar project since its beginning and remained its major financier. Beijing also provided technical assistance of Gwadar Port project at various stages of its implementation. Along with technical assistance, China provided 80 per cent funding for construction of the complex and, in return, gained access to Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. Gwadar Port holds great significance not only for China but for Pakistan also. Islamabad has been long pursuing Beijing to invest in its Gwadar Port project. Once the Former Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Tariq Fatimi, stated that it is Pakistan that wants China to invest in Gwadar Port as this move will help the country to establish its position as an economic trade hub in the region.

3.1.3. Rising China and Changing Dimensions of Sino-Pak Ties

After 1990s, China’s economic trajectory kept rising to a point when it became a global factory and, therefore, its maritime trade increased. Most of its maritime trade took place through Strait of Malacca in Asia Pacific. Around Strait of Malacca, there are states which are US allies, therefore, it is very easy for Washington to economically scuffle China anytime it wants. Housing its navy 180 nautical miles away from Strait of Hormuz gives China strategic edge as it is the marine pathway where 40 per cent of global oil is shipped. This move helped China to diversify its trade and acquire a strategic position in the Indian Ocean to secure its maritime trade to a large extent. Here, again, its stature as a rising power in international arena defined the dimensions of its relations with Pakistan.

In order to comprehend the actual dynamics of the bilateral relations, it is essential to identify the underlying causes of their much-hyped relations. Just like any other state-to-state relations, Sino-Pak ties, too, are a mirror reflection of their national and international contexts. Despite the fact that it is a new era and much has transformed internally and externally since the two developed

formal ties, the traditional element of their amity always remained same. India and US factors still function as the forces that gel Beijing and Islamabad together. China supports Pakistan in defense field and uses it as a counter-balance to India in the region. Pakistan, in return, supports China on diplomatic and international forums while working as its close ally in the region. Sino-Pak strategic duo works to achieve their objectives. In the context of America's 'Contain China' strategy and India's long-held enmity towards Pakistan, the two continues to work together at regional and international level. Beijing expects Islamabad to work as its political ally in implementing its regional and global foreign policy initiatives.

3.1.3.1. Global China's Belt and Road Initiative

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced a gigantic foreign policy initiative – One Belt, One Road (OBOR – that stretched over three continents, engaging more than 64 countries and estimated to cost up to 1.3 trillion US\$. The Belt, in OBOR, refers to road and rail routes that has been termed as Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) whereas the maritime routes are called 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Economic Road (SRER). OBOR, now termed as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by the Chinese officials, has been incorporated in the constitution of the country. This move indicates the importance that China assigns to this trans-continental project. BRI comprises of six corridors:

1. The New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor
2. China-Russia-Mongolia Economic Corridor
3. China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC)
4. China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor (CICPEC)
5. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)
6. Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIMEC)

With the inception of OBOR, a new chapter opened in Pak-China relations.

3.1.4. Inception of CPEC

In the present era, the historic signing of 51 MOUs related to CPEC, the relations gained global attention. CPEC became another point of convergence for two friends that brought the two countries, its institutions and people even closer. CPEC is part of China's global development strategy, BRI. It is a gigantic project that stretches over 65 countries making up to almost three

continents. Comprising of land and maritime routes – the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road – BRI is an extensive connectivity project that has far-reaching implications for China, its partners in difference regions, and the world itself. It has six economic corridors and CPEC is one of them.

A pivotal component of BRI, CPEC is an emblem of regional connectivity particularly in the realm of economy. Estimated to be around US\$46 billion, 51 MOUs were signed between Pakistan and China on May 2015. It was the first corridor of BRI that was implemented and developed at fast pace. It is aimed to connect China's northwestern province, Xingjiang, with Pakistan's Gwadar Port through building a network of infrastructure.

1. Gwadar Port

In the development of interior Central Asia, Gwadar port (located on the shore of Arabian Sea in Gwadar, Baluchistan) will play an important role. Several development projects in Gwadar, allotted a total investment of 792.62 million USD, include Gwadar University (focusing on marine studies) and vocational & technical institutes; major infrastructures like East-Bay expressway (sixty percent completed) and Gwadar International Airport (forty percent completed); Gwadar industrial free zone with forty business including the industries of petrochemical, stainless steel, boatmaking industries & fisheries; a system for fresh water supply and hospitals. After its completion, it is assessed that Gwadar port will become a trade hub in the region; attributing mostly to its duty-free economic zone which has already secured an investment of 474 million USD from thirty companies.

2. Energy

To overcome the current energy crisis and to employ the existing energy resources of Pakistan, a considerable part of the CPEC investment has been focused in producing 17,045MW of electricity (10,400MW on priority basis) by constructing various power projects. Most of the power projects are run by coal and hydel; fourteen of which are to be completed by 2020. The coal-based projects will run on imported coal except for two that will run on local coal (1980MW). In addition to power projects, the development of transmission lines is also underway. The 878km long transmission line from Matiari to Lahore with a load capacity of 4000MW is fifty per cent completed, and the Matiari to Faisalabad transmission line is under construction too. The energy

projects have secured 19 billion USD investments as FDI; seven of which has been completed and added 3240MW of electricity to the national grid. The energy sector of CPEC is expected to create thirty thousand jobs with a 2.5% addition to the current GDP and a growth rate of 7.5%.

3. Transport Infrastructure

Transport infrastructure under CPEC involves road networks, railways, highways and energy tunnels. Not only will it reduce the cost and time of internal transportation and trade within Pakistan, but it will also boost the export of agricultural projects previously affected by the high cost of transportation. The project aims at the construction of new routes and repairing of the existing ones. In addition to all that, trade and economic cooperation with China and other countries will be positively affected as routes will shift to land from sea and air transportation which is ultimately cheaper. Connecting Gwadar port to Kashgar, 2500-3000km roads costing 9784 million USD is envisioned. One of the right railway projects and seventy per cent of Karachi to Lahore motorway has been constructed.

4. Industrial Cooperation

To efficiently increase economic growth and employment rates, establishing free industrial zones under CPEC is a vital aspect. The plan to construct nine special economic zones in the corridor and all over Pakistan, characterized by local raw materials, production and labor will result into better standards of living, the stability of the currency and reduced imports; marked by increased urbanization and expected two million jobs. During FY-17, the growth rate of FDI in Pakistan was 12.7% due to the development of CPEC. According to the World Steel Association, the establishment of stainless steel & petrochemical industries under CPEC will increase the growth of energy consumption in the economy at a higher rate. The completion of CPEC will be marked by high industrial activities, increased energy supply and strong infrastructure, all pointing an increased FDI. The heavy investment in different sectors of CPEC will ultimately strengthen Pakistan's economy.

5. Special Economic Zones

Since its inception, Pakistan has been focusing on its industrial development. In order to do so, in 1952, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) was established to encourage industrial growth that work successfully till 1970. After conversion of resources to agriculture

sector from industry, the industrial growth rate decline at 2% in 1970s from around 11.9% in 1960s. After this failure, the focus shifted to the clustering of industries. In Pakistan, various terminologies have been used to identify the clustering of industrial production. For instance Industrial estates, industrial clusters and special economic zones are the most used concepts in this regard. First, an industrial estate is an area consisting of many factories and business in single locality but it is relatively small area than special economic zone with limited liberal economic policies. The industrial failure in 1970s led the government to established industrial estates. Many sick industries forced the government to establish more than 100 industrial estates around the various locations in Pakistan. But if we examine the present situation, the industrial sector became worse than before. Poor governance; rent seeking behavior of industrialist, political and economic agents are the major reasons which are highlighted in the literature for this failure.

An industrial cluster is a group of interconnected firms of common industry localized in one geographical region that encourages the social and economic development of related community. Pakistan also having some successful working industrial clusters such as; Sialkot Surgical Goods Cluster; Gujarat Ceramic/pottery Industrial cluster; Faisalabad Readymade Garments Manufacturing cluster; Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) Marble Cluster; Tannery/Leather Industrial Cluster and Gujranwala cluster etc.

A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a specific area of the land used to promote industrial growth in a country by providing more lenient economic and tax policies as compare to general economic policies in a country. According to World Bank's 2008 annual report, "by some estimates, there are approximately 3,000 zones in 135 countries today, accounting for over 68 million direct jobs and over \$500 billion of direct trade-related value added within zones." Government of Pakistan has promoted five industrial estates such as Multan Industrial Estate Phase-II, Bhawal Industrial Estate and Mainwali, Rahim Yar Industrial Estate, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rawalpindi Industrial Estate, as special economic Zone under CPEC project with expectation of 150,000 jobs creation. BOI Pakistan approved additional three SEZs in Punjab such as Quaid-e-Azam Apparel Park (QAAP) at M2 near Shaikupura Interchange, Industrial City located on Trade corridor and M3 near Sahiwal interchange and 225 acres Value Addition City near Faisalabad on Expressway. Turnover of Rs 1 trillion is expected with creation of 2,000,000 jobs through these SEZs by its completion in 2018-19. Planning Commission of Pakistan is expecting 27 SEZs to setup across

country under CPEC by introducing Gwadar SEZ as first model based on area of 3000 acres on special discretion of China. The distribution of SEZs will be as follows: eight SEZs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seven in Punjab and Baluchistan each, three in Sindh while Gilgit-baltistan and Islamabad will have one, one each.

3.2. Need for Think Tanks and Study Centers in Deepening Pak-China Relations

China's Evolving Foreign Policy and Think Tanks

Idea makes and mars a nation's standing among the comity of nations. The distinguished political scientist, Joseph S. Nye, while contesting the very idea of US decline, argued that America's intellectual supremacy will sustain its glory for decades to come. For almost a century, the American think tanks fulfilled their role for materializing the American leaders' visions in different eras. Their role and influence in decision-making process generated an intense debate in the literature of International Relations (IR). The rationale behind their strategic role was the fact that whatever the policy is, it needs sound intellectual input, effective advocacy and rigorous academic research to present and revise in a favorable light. To serve this purpose, think-tanks and study centers are extremely important and, in this context, the domain of foreign policy seems to be no exception.

China is a country that underwent great many transformations in a period of one century. Along with political adjustments and economic rise, China's intellectual landscape also kept changing and, with change in leadership, it experienced great many changes. In this context, think tanks and research institutes were no exceptions. These institutes also underwent huge transformation and reflected on the swings of domestic politics and the need to fulfill their three-fold role of research, consultancy and advocacy according to the vision of Chinese leaders during different times.

In Chinese foreign policy, the origin, evolution and role of think-tanks have generated scholarly debate in the IR circles. In 2002, Cambridge University's prestigious journal, the China Quarterly, dedicated an entire issue to the role of think-tanks in the foreign policy making process. Western scholars identified Chinese think-tanks as one of the key components of decision making. Many western scholars studied the typology of the Chinese think tanks. For example, Bates and James Mulvenon studied the influence of national security community in think-tanks and other academic research institutions and provided a better insight into improving the understanding of the People's

Liberation Army (PLA). The eminent Chinese scholars, David Shambaugh studied the role of civilian IR think-tanks in Chinese foreign policy and noted that these institutes “offer better indicators of foreign policy debates.”

In his article, *China's Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Institutional Evolution and Changing Roles*, Pascal Abb divided the evolution of Chinese think tanks in five periods: Mao's ideological era (1949-1966); the suppression of intellectuals and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976); Deng's eras of reforms and “opening up to the world” with little or no attention to the need for think-tanks in international policy discourse (1978-1992); Jiang Zemin's and Hu Jintao's push for intellectual diplomacy and encouragement of think tank culture(1989-2012); and the present era of think tanks mushroom growth in Xi Jinping's presidency.

In the existing literature, there is a consensus among the scholars that the origin, evolution, development and the role of think-tanks in the Chinese foreign policy making process are set in the context of Beijing's ideological transformations over the time, the role of paramount leadership, the regional obligations and the international environment. The scholars agree that the booming number of think-tanks and their increasing role in foreign policy is invariably linked to China's growing influential role in the international system and, prior to reaching the zenith of economic supremacy, the role of think tanks in foreign policy remained almost non-existent.

In Mao's era, the scholars argue, the Communist ideology remained an indomitable force in the foreign-policy making process which this gave the intellectuals and the think tank community too little space to think outside the Maoist philosophy. After the failure of Mao's Cultural Revolution, the *Gang of Four* challenged and revisited the Chinese ideology giving freedom to the Chinese intellectuals as they could provide them with their insights and opinions, however, the historic mass protest at the Tiananmen Square led to a marginalized role of scholars and think tank community in China's policy on domestic and international front.

Afterwards, in the times of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, think tanks in China witnessed a boost because, according to these leaders' philosophies, China was confronted with new problems and challenges at external front while the most prominent was the country's growing foothold in economy across the globe. Therefore, they felt the need to employ modern instruments of policy research, consultancy and advocacy -- think-tanks and research institutes -- to formulate sound

policies and build consensus at home and abroad. Now, with the advent of Xi Jinping as China's President, the intellectual landscape has been experiencing a change yet again on a positive note. Although, in China, think tanks are not an entirely new phenomenon, their role and influence increased with Xi Jinping's assumption of presidency in the office. Xi Jinping has termed as a paramount leader second only to Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Remarkably, *Xi Jinping's Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era* has been added to the CPC's Constitution in the 19th Congress (October 24,).

CPEC has become a hallmark of Pak-China relations which have been held in high esteem by both Beijing and Islamabad since their initiation of diplomatic relations. In the recent past, economic cooperation between the two countries has deepened in strength and substance. CPEC represents the collective will of the two countries to work together in multiple domains for the good of our people. With the advent of the present government, several new chapters of cooperation are being added – from agriculture to socio-economic development to industrial cooperation and widening the export base of Pakistan. The people to people exchanges and linkages are also being enhanced. The China centres across the country are serving as useful forums for thinkers and scholars to generate ideas to deepen bilateral cooperation between China and Pakistan. He Li, in his article, "The Role of Think-Tanks in Chinese Foreign Policy" writes that the role of think tanks in the China's relations with other countries has been ignored, in fact, it is much deeper and wider. He stressed on the need to understand the three-dimensional role of Chinese think-tanks, which advocacy, advisory and academic research.

At present, America's 'unipolar moment' has run its course paving way for other nations to rise and shine. The most prominent among the rising powers in China which has been predicted to be the next Super Power. China's rise has been phenomenal and, predictably, brought itself with great many changes in the social, cultural and intellectual realm as well. Remarkable as it is, second only to the US, China hosts the largest number of think tanks (24,00) in the world. It is indicative of many developments and factors such as growing role of intellectual diplomacy in the internal and external front; recognition of the need for knowledge-economy; building consensus on the issues of national interests and projecting China's soft image in the world.

There is hardly any doubt that Pak-China relations are asymmetric and, therefore, it comes with no surprise that China is the trend setter and Pakistan follows suit. With the advent of evolving

realities of twenty first century, Beijing began to assign special priority to Think Tanks and Study Centers in foreign relation. In Pakistan, a sudden mushroom growth of Sino-Pak oriented Think Tanks and Study Centers reflect this trend set by China.

ii. Emerging Challenges in Sino-Pak Ties

At a time when Pakistan was facing huge electricity shortfalls and suffering from socio-political and economic challenges both at national and international level, Chinese pledge of investing US\$46 billion was no less than a blessing from heavens. However, it generated skepticism and euphoria. The size and scale of investment created a sense of euphoria which was further heightened by Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Yao Jing's claim that the CPEC has created around 70,000 jobs in Pakistan. Such claims were making rounds even before his statement. With the euphoria that could not match the hopes that it was creating among the people of Pakistan, skepticism also rose to its extreme.

Amidst rising debt and plummeting economy, CPEC was projected as a 'game changer' for Pakistan and the surrounding region. Therefore, with the mega project like CPEC, many questions arose in the minds of people of Pakistan. This reflected in the discourse generated by research community, media outlets, and ordinary citizens. The question that topped all was related to CPEC whether it is another East India Company. With this, an ending debate started in Pakistan where public got divided into three sections: the one that believed that CPEC is indeed like another East India Company; the second that negated it completely; and the third that were confused about it.

Since it was an economic venture and lacked exact details of the agreement, the controversies started to raise their heads. The project was soon alleged to have corruption issues, unfair trade practices by Chinese, relocation of Chinese industry in Pakistan, and lack of transparency.

Yet, the most witty analyses on this subject appeared in Pakistan's leftist newspaper, Dawn. The newspaper remained leading media outlet that engaged the people of Pakistan from all sections of life in stirring critical questions about nature of Chinese investment in the country. One such analysis was penned down by Khurram Hussain who compared China's CPEC with Great Britain's East India Company. Negating the assumption, he argued that it is not remotely comparable to East India Company as CPEC has been commenced with mutual consent which was absent in the former case. Secondly he opined, the Company let go of its trading activities and began to grabbing

lands and taking unlawful control over India's resources including agriculture, minerals, humans, etc, whereas the CPEC is being implemented in an entirely different manner. Based on this comparison, his opinion was extremely insightful and calculated: "The short answer is no. The long answer is no." According to him, the problematic part of CPEC were of those where extraction of minerals/resources/revenue and its transmittal to China was involved, which he described as 'not alarming' since CPEC involved other countries as well that were investing in this project.

Related to this was another query stirring fears in the people's minds: What kind of investment CPEC is? a gift? investment? loan? To this, there came confusing answers. In early years after signing CPEC MOUs, Deputy Head Mission at Chinese Embassy in Pakistan (who is now China's Foreign Spokesperson), were among those authoritative persons who explained nature of Chinese investment in CPEC to people of Pakistan. Paying a visit to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry's Think Tank, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Mr. Lijian was accompanying a ten-membered delegation from China's External Security Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Heading the delegation, Ambassador Guangyuan said that the delegation was sent to expedite progress of CPEC informing the audience at ISSI that "CPEC is not a gift but a reward to Pakistan." Later on, in the same meeting, Mr. Lijian said that the CPEC projects are not Chinese-specific only rather they are open to investment for national and international investors. Replying to what kind of investment CPEC exactly is, he said that it is not state-to-state loan kind of project but the companies that would invest in Pakistan pay loans not the state of Pakistan. As ambiguous as it could be, answers and explanations of these kinds from Chinese side raised doubts and fears instead of providing any satisfactory answer.

With these explanations and briefings, the earlier frenzy of CPEC being a "gift" from China began to subside. Earlier in 2016, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif said that President Xi Jinping said that "CPEC is a gift to Chinese people from Pakistan." What exactly was CPEC to Pakistan began a question that made rounds on media, think tank community and academia. Here, exactly started the dilemma of taking off a mega-investment project like CPEC in Pakistan. The project was seen as a huge opportunity for Pakistan which must not be taken as "granted" or absolutely "concessional." How much control will Pakistan have on implementing and governing the flagship project of BRI became a puzzling question.

The fears of CPEC turning into East India Company were heightened by China's foreign policy initiative of "China Goes Global" which was aimed at relocating the domestic companies in different regions of the world. After assuming global economic ascendancy and establishing itself as "the world's factory", Beijing started to hit growth slump domestically and decided to relocate its businesses elsewhere in the world. It is in this context as well that BRI was launched and one of its components CPEC, due to 'brotherly relations with Pakistan', was put as a flagship project and called as a "litmus test" for BRI success. It was not surprising, in this milieu, why Chinese paid frequent visits to Pakistan and began to emphasize more on its speedy implementation. Therefore, the troubling issue, on part of both Pakistani and Chinese government, was to satisfy the local business industry and make CPEC investment and implementation transparent.

From Pakistan's business community, the protest of different nature and scale began to appear. In 2018, the local traders blocked major CPEC entry points fearing that the projects will render local traders and businessmen redundant. The biggest fear in Pakistan's business community is that, for them, it is "non-participatory." The local business community had high expectations from Chinese venture in Pakistan due to various reasons. For a mega-investment venture like CPEC, the local trading and business community expected to gain much by participating in it. At the time of CPEC inception, Pakistan was facing worst power outages which resulted in huge damage to its local industry and, many of them, shifted to other countries including Bangladesh – the former East Pakistan. According to a report released by the World Bank, Pakistan suffered 6.5% loss of GDP due to power outage. It was not surprising why the local business community became optimistic over the opportunity of their involvement in the CPEC projects.

Various Pakistani investors started to portray a picture different than that was being presented by Pakistani and Chinese government. Pakistan's Overseas Investors Chambers of Commerce and industry termed the CPEC projects as unfair for them as, for them, there is not a level-playing field for investment. President of the Federation of Pakistan's Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Daroo Khan Achakzai said that "Pakistan may enter into second phase of trade agreement with China but not at the cost of closing our local industry and adversely affecting the economy at large." President of Pakistan Business Council, Ehsan Malik, echoed same fears, "...simply getting Chinese industry to move and giving them incentives at the expense of present business will not benefit the country." Both the leaders of Pakistani business community of the view that a

transparent investment could do wonders to Pakistani business projections which, according to them, was missing completely.

Related with these fears and anxieties is the question of repayment obligations. To this as well, the Government of Pakistan and its relevant organs gave mixed answers. Previously, the independent researchers came up with rough estimates of total debt that Pakistan had to pay. The State Bank of Pakistan provided no detail of the debt burden that was to be paid by the country rather another estimated account came from the World Bank which estimated that annually around 0.4 per cent of GDP could be the cost of CPEC outflows on Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. The Government of Pakistan did not provide prerequisite details about CPEC projects and the debt burden they could cost on Pakistan, let alone the exact details. The information coming straight from high-ranking officials generated more confusion. The then Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, who said that the Chinese loans were soft loans and serviced at 2 per cent to Pakistan. Diplomatic answers like that could not unveil the mystery that shrouded financial details of CPEC projects.

When media and public scrutiny became scathing, the then Minister for Planning and Development, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal irked and asked on social media why there is so much negativity and baseless propaganda going on. He expressed his amazement over the question why SEZs are allotting to Chinese companies only. While answering to why Chinese companies are being relocated in Pakistan, he opined that it is happening due to raising wadges in China. Asking innocuously, Mr. Minister asked what's the harm if it is happening. Whatever the harm or nor, it was evident that the government officials including Ministers as well, especially those who were the implementers of the CPEC projects, had no satisfactory answers to the people's natural and rightful queries.

With these views, it became clear that the officials and implementers of CPEC must take advice from the relevant stakeholders and make appealing public perceptions of Chinese people and investment in the eyes of the people of Pakistan. The government and its organs needed help in mitigating the growing skepticism by providing satisfactory answers to the people and making much-needed perception of the people of Pakistan about their means of governance, politics, economy, culture, and people at large. This purpose cannot be served better than Think Tanks whose fundamental objective is to help the stakeholders by making informed decisions through

their fact-based research and analyses; policy advocacy; and taking initiatives of Track-II diplomacy.

iii. People-to-People Contacts

With the inception of CPEC, it was first time that Chinese people and Pakistani people were meeting each other so frequently. Earlier, the bilateral ties were being conducted at state-to-state level with little or no involvement of the public. The brethren ties developed mostly in strategic context in the Cold-War era and afterwards. It is surprising why the two countries that have unprecedented level of understanding between them had almost negligible people-to-people contacts. This dimension of Sino-Pak ties became to assume central light when Chinese foreign policies witnessed a huge transformation. With Chinese initiatives of modernizing and diversifying its economy, the need for people-to-people contact was felt as was never before.

Inception of CPEC has made it evident to Pakistani and Chinese authorities that, without the involvement of the people, smooth implementation of the project cannot take place. For Islamabad, it is truly a ‘game changer’ initiative if implemented in its true spirit. It can modernize and diversify Pakistan’s economy. Along with this, it has impacts that can put Pakistan on the regional map by making it a transit trade hub of the region. For reaping its exact potential, the research indicated that people-to-people contacts are pivotal as developing this aspect of bilateral ties would help alley fears and controversies surrounding CPEC, help making better freedom of movement, people-to-people exchange, and increase cultural understanding between the two countries.

It is in this context in which the previously established think tanks began to assign special importance to Pak-China relations. It is also the same context that led to mushroom development of Think Tanks, which are commonly termed as China- or China-Pakistan ‘study centers.’

Chapter 4: Role of Think Tanks and Study Centers in Pak-China Relations: Analysis, Inferences, and Policy Recommendations

Following mentioned is a brief description of the Think Tanks and Study Centers which are assigning specified attention to Pak-China Relations.

According to the definition of Think Tank used in this thesis:

“foreign policy research, analysis, engagement institutions that generate foreign policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable foreign policy-makers and the public to make informed decisions about foreign policy issues. Think Tanks may be affiliated with a political party, a university, or a government; they are independent institutions that are structured as permanent bodies, not ad-hoc commissions.”

All these institutes conduct research, generate foreign policy analysis, engage the relevant stakeholders in the bilateral discourse, and help the people and the officials to make informed

decisions about Pak-China relations. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate to consider them Think Tanks

1. The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI)

Dissolution of East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh, was a watershed event for Islamabad. This development, in Pakistan's history, introduced many changes at various levels. The then democratically elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar A. Bhutto gave an impetus to creation of liberal environment in research and academics. He was a staunch advocate of turning to non-western partners and friends for making a bigger bloc of Muslim and other Eastern countries. For him, Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia and China were critical. During this time, in 1974, Second meeting of Organization of the Islamic Conference took place in Lahore. In this milieu, the Foreign Ministry established the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) for a better policy input in keeping with the prioritization of strategic issues at regional and international relations. This is just one perspective accounting the establishment of the institute. Many, inside the think tank community, believe that since Pakistan's foreign policy has always been India-centric, ISSI was created in a response to the Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses in 1965.

The institute has been registered under the Societies Registration Act 1960 as an autonomous and non-profit organization. The institute is categorized as a policy think-tank, according to the senior researchers at ISSI, and aims at "providing policy inputs through informed research, objective analyses and dialogue on global and regional issues affecting peace, security and development of Pakistan." As a prominent think tank in Pakistan, ISSI conducts studies, initiates discussions, provides forums for scholars, writers, community leaders; and hosts delegations. It is carrying out all these activities in the domain of Pak-China relations. Regarding the bilateral ties, the institutes

performs all these functions. Moreover, it holds public talks, conducts seminars, and conferences while giving ample space for both Chinese and Pakistani scholars to interact with each other.

The Institute, being an unofficial Think Tank of MOFA, assigns special importance to Pak-China relations and, therefore, had established a Pak-China Study Center earlier in 2000s. The Center was reinvigorated later in 2016. The cause of establishment, and roles and functions are given below.

2. China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC) at ISSI

BoG of ISSI approved the establishment of CPSC in 2016 which is a reflection of changes in China's role in the global arena. In the second half of the 21st century, China was recognized as a global economy and launched gigantic foreign policy initiatives. One such initiative was BRI which was announced by Xi Jinping himself in 2013 while addressing a university in Kazakhstan. According to the Institute, China's ascendancy as a "global economy and power" was the reason behind the establishment of the Center. It was assigned the task of "dedicated research and analysis about China's policies and its impact on Pakistan." The Center was also assigned the task of conducting Track-II Diplomacy regarding the bilateral relations. It also functions as a platform for understanding "Chinese history, culture, society, economy, politics, and government." The Center also assumes its role as a policy institute as it claims to "provide inputs to the Government and the relevant stakeholders."

Other than these roles, CPSC brings forth divergent ideas, thoughts and suggestions to materialize socio-economic goals approved by the authorities of Pakistan and China. CPSC, further, paves the way of collaboration of joint ventures of China- specific centers and institutes. Its activities encircle publishing quarterly magazines, reports on Pak-China relations and CPEC. It also prints books on the relevant topics. It deals with the research papers, too. The center offers itself as a

platform to learn Chinese language, culture, history, politics and economy. It helps the Government of Pakistan develops insights to foreign policy of the country. It's a medium to maintain deep friendship relationship with the Embassy of China in Pakistan. CPSC intends to increase the circle of its research to China's foreign policy, economy, Chinese government systems, tourism and people to people contacts. It provides linkages with partner institutes in China as well.

Though termed as 'study center', CPSC does not offer teaching courses/programs rather it claims to provide policy input to the government for steering the relations in a better direction. CPSC claims to undertake a daunting task:

- To study Chinese foreign policy;
- To study Chinese economy and how Pakistan can learn from Chinese model;
- How evolving regional scenarios are affecting Pak-China relations;
- To study Chinese government system and its internal dynamics;
- China-Pakistan economic ties;
- CPEC;
- people-to-people contacts;
- tourism and culture;
- education, science and technology;
- media exchange;
- foster research links with partner institutions.

ISSI and CPSC are playing an important role in Pak-China relations by acting as an ideational actor, political actor, and a handy instrument of Track-II Diplomacy. As ideational actor, ISSI is publishing a research journal along with many other publications. Publishing a research journal reflects on its commitment towards fact-findings in the emerging issues of bilateral relations. Its research journal, however, is mainly centered around typical issues of the relations. Most of the time, it publishes research papers on topic revolving around mega impacts of CPEC and the misconceptions surrounding it. By its topics, it is evident that the institute is merely playing a mouthpiece of Pakistan's foreign ministry. It also tows the official policy line in almost all the issues related to Sino-Pak ties.

As a political actor, it stays in touch with government institutions and frequently sends the government organs its policy briefs, confidential briefs and monologues, etc. It also arranges in-house meetings, public talks, seminars, national and international conferences. Since its inception, ISSI has been receiving the foreign delegations that come through MOFA. With the inception of CPEC, the in-house meetings with the delegations from China became more frequent. In these meetings, frank and honest views were exchanged. ISSI received Chinese delegations from all walks of life, however, the ambassadors, diplomats, intellectuals, and think tank community were most frequent to come to ISSI.

In contrast with ISSI, CPSC does not publish any research journal rather it issues a quarterly magazine which has opinion based article mostly and those, too, with topical issues coming with an extra tinge of sentimentality of “*Pak Cheen Dosti Zinda Baad.*” However, in policy advocacy and Track-II diplomacy, CPSC is working proactively in deepening understanding between the two countries.

3. Center of Excellence for CPEC

CoE for CPEC is an official Think Tank of Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms whose pet project is CPEC. The Ministry established this Think Tank in early 2016 in collaboration with PIDE which claims itself to be a “research institute and a policy think tank.” PIDE is one of the prominent research institutes which located in the vicinity of Pakistan’s leading university: Quaid-i-Azam University. The Ministry established this think tank with the view to “conduct evidence-based research on all aspects of CPEC.” In its introductory booklet, the Center claims to offer better insights for improving policies on CPEC for “policy makers, the implementers of CPEC, business community, and society.” It also dedicated itself to provide and promote “true” narrative on all the aspects related to CPEC along with conducting focused research on six areas which are as following:

1. Socio-economic impact
2. Impact on employment and Human Resource Development (HRD)
3. Regional connectivity
4. Impact on trade and industry
5. Urban development
6. Finances and integration of financial sectors

The Center chose to spread its research and analysis through its website and a quarterly magazine. For engaging in discourse on CPEC and overall Pak-China relations, it decided to hold, 2 international conferences, 5 seminars, and 12 (national) round table conferences every year. While taking academic help for promoting CPEC in the country and its citizens, the Center devised to employ its partner – PIDE – for arranging training workshops, if necessary, and summer camps one or two per year.

The Center was established to fill the policy gaps on CPEC issues, perceptions, and implementation but it seems to be struggling with fulfilling its core responsibilities. The fundamental task was to provide evidence-based research on CPEC but Center's work and research is guided more by nominal slogans and policies. Its work is mostly limited to arranging conferences and publishing opinion articles in print media.

The research is lacking, most of the work which is categorized under publication and working papers series is not evidence-based research but commentaries and opinion-based analysis. When asked by Head of Urban Development Research of the Center, Dr. Saleem Janua responded that that delay is not on Center's part but on Ministry's since they are mostly focused on image building and perception management issues of CPEC.

4. Pakistan China Institute (PCI)

PCI is established and headed by Pakistan's seasoned political figure, Mushahid Hussain Syed. It was established in 2009 and is unique from other Think Tanks, selected in this study, since it existed before the inception of CPEC. PCI claims itself to be "non-political, non-governmental, and non-partisan." It dedicated itself to cover all aspects of Pak-China relations, from diplomacy, defence, education, energy and economy to environment. Its work is not focused on evidence-based research but on generating and steering discourse on Pak-China relations to new heights. It mostly organizes discussions and makes public perceptions on the issues related to the bilateral relations. It also holds lectures, facilitates exchanges of visits, and publishes magazines.

It is an advocacy Think Tank which takes pride in advocating Sino-Pak ties since it states that "PCI is a frontline advocate of Pak-China relations". From its very commitment, it is very clear what form of analysis and other content this Think Tank may produce.

It spreads its analysis and work to the government officials, academics, research community, civil society and public. In collaboration with International Cultural Exchange of Xingjiang, PCI publishes a monthly, Youlin Magazine. The magazine is dedicated to create awareness about Chinese society, history, culture, ethnicities, and arts. However, on the website of Youlin Magazine, there are news and introduction of Pakistani culture, personality, history and ethnicities. It also posts news of events happening in major cities of Pakistan which might attract the Chinese people who are interested to know Pakistani culture or come into contact with the business community.

PCI is the first Think Tank in the region that published Xi Jinping's book, Xi Jinping: The Governance of China. The book comprised of lectures, speeches, interviews, and instructions along with letters and correspondence that President Xi made at various occasions. This book helps the reader in understanding Chinese policies on energy, economy, society, governance and culture. It also helps the reader understand the rising China's domestic and foreign policies. PCI launched the book in Urdu in Islamabad at Prime Minister's Secretariat. The event was conducted on April 14, 2017. Along with this, PCI also published an anthology of essay, "To China, with Love." The Embassy of China has organized an essay writing competition in which these essays were collected, which later were arranged in the form of a book by PCI. "To China, with Love" are essays that consist of Pakistani people's personal experiences and insight on China. The authors also offered suggestions and proposals to improve Sino-Pak ties at people's level.

Regarding Sino-Pak ties, PCI proactively engages in the processes of Track-II diplomacy. It took many initiatives in this regard, however, its leading step is establishment of Research and Development International (RDI) which is envisioned to be a joint Think Tank of Pakistani and Chinese research community. RDI was co-launched in April 2015 by PCI and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the China Institute for Reforms and Development (CIRD). RDI is both a process and product of Track-II Diplomacy. The idea of joint policy-advocacy Think Tank was conceived at an international conference on BRI, held in Haiko. PCI's Chairman, Mushahid Hussain and Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Madam Zhao Beige are co-chairing the RDI. The basic purpose of RDI is make an expert panel on Pak-China relations, who would belong to all strata of Pakistani and

Chinese community in order to ensure smooth sailing of BRI and CPEC.⁹⁴ PCI frequently engages itself in the processes of Track-II diplomacy , it also organized China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Dialogue

CSC at SDPI

SDPI is Pakistan’s voice in the global sustainable development community and has been working to amp up the transition towards sustainable development within and across generations. From social justice to environmental issues, economic growth to standard of education and healthcare, SDPI is a multifaceted entity striving to bring about a positive impact in many fields.

China Study Center of SDPI was inaugurated in 2018 and has been working closely with the CPEC Center at the Planning Commission. The very productive collaborations between the two organizations include a number of conferences centering around sustainable development and two research papers on financial market integration between Pakistan and China. Moreover, the China Study Center at SDPI strives to provide provincial governments better opportunities focusing on education, investment, trade and climate change. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are of great interest and the organization is working with the BOI to find ways to conventionalize the SEZs. A recent project of CSC – SPDI looks at the environmental impacts of the CPEC.

China Study Center (CSC) at National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

NUST Chinese Study Center is currently offering an undergraduate degree in Sinology educating students on Chinese history, culture, economy and literature. CPEC projects are of great significance for Pakistan as well as China and hold endless opportunities for both the nations. Keeping this in mind, the goal of NUST Chinese Study Center is to not only render the students well-versed in Chinese language and culture, but also thoroughly prepare them to excel in this bilateral connectivity.

Although the institute is offering an undergraduate program as of now, a two-year master’s program in Sinology is being introduced soon. This program will include 8 subjects and provide

⁹⁴ <https://www.pakistan-china.com/mn-rdi-purpos-and-function.php>

the students hands-on experience on Chinese work ethic by sending them to China for their research work.

PICS – Sargodha University

Pakistan Institute of China Studies just started operating a while back, but the agricultural college of Sargodha University has already collaborated with two Chinese agricultural universities and published 38 research papers. PICS is playing two pivotal roles; research and training of its students through academics and forming interest-based links between Sargodha University and Chinese universities by organizing think tanks, joint-panels, conferences etc.

Understanding that substantial cultural differences exist between China and Pakistan, the institute aims to educate and familiarize the younger generation of Pakistan with the culture, language, history, economy, politics and international relations of China. Pakistan Institute of China Studies is utilizing different mediums to do so. Recently an All Pakistan Art Exhibition focused on Pakistan-China friendship was organized by the institute which invited people from all around. Many talks have also been held on Pakistan-China relations by notable speakers. One main goal of the institute has been to tackle any misgivings that the people of Pakistan may have regarding China, since the local media does not happen to have a significant grasp in that regard. Moreover, PICS is working on the formation of Confucius Centre for a language training program in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy.

FESASC at US-J

Far East and South-East Asia Study Centre at University of Sindh, Jamshoro laid its foundation in 1973. After successfully functioning and implementing its objective i.e: involvement in high-level teaching and research, respective training; offer postgraduate and doctorate programs in East Asian studies; encourage cooperating and establishing disciplinary relationship with other teaching and research institutions; conduct faculty exchange programs; and hold conferences and seminars on relevant areas of study.

There are a total of 17 research desks at Area Studies Centre. The main reason behind these research desks of Asia-Pacific are to encourage more teaching and research when it comes to language, literature, culture, history, economics, political and sociological studies in Far East and South East Asian countries, at the mean time holding educational programs, cultural collabs and

to collect and gather data for the strong foundation of social, political, security and trade relations of Pakistan with all the respective countries and build a greater harmony among them.

CSC at UoB

University of Balochistan is the oldest university in the Balochistan province, which laid its ground in 1970. At the moment, 15000 students are currently enrolled in a wide range of programs which include 46 Masters-degree programs and 35 Undergraduate-degree programs. In 2018, UoB came to an agreement with the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan which lead to the establishment of China Study Centre at UoB. Presently, there are four core areas in China Study Centre which also cover the language program. There's a huge number of students who are pursuing degrees in microbiology, disaster management, mineralogy, seismology who are also very eager to learn Chinese language and thus, will help in the further development of Gwadar. The students are given more opportunities with the help of the collaboration unit that is linked with three Chinese universities i.e: School of Earth Sciences, China University of GeoSciences Wuhan, University of Beijing Institute of Science and Technology. There is a collaborated research held in different fields like Molecular Biology, health sciences and Mineralogy among USC and above-mentioned universities. USC is also focusing on further research and dissertation of Masters and Doctorate students who have already studied China-Pakistan relations. USC provides financial aid to the students who are working on the security situation in Balochistan; CPEC and prospects of Balochistan; and Baloch Youth and CPEC.

1. CSC at GCU

Centre of Excellence in China Studies at Government College University (GCU) came into establishment in 2014 with the permission from Government of the Punjab to teach Chinese language to students and any ordinary citizens interested in learning the language. One of the important goal of the Centre is to conduct research on China related topics. CSC is fully equipped with a library (Books on China) and language-lab having both audio and video amenities for the students. The Centre has students from MA, MPhil and PhD in different fields like Political Science, History, Economics and Psychology, along with China related research. The Centre provides the students with a monthly stipend and arranges their timely visits to China for collecting data and conducting interviews. The Centre has collaborated with China University of Geosciences Wuhan, and Three Gorges University, Yichang for academic foreign exchanges of both students

and faculty. These universities give admission offers to the students in MS program and provide scholarships in respective areas as well. They also help the research students by offering a monthly stipend, free accommodation and free transportation. “Spring School” for Chinese students is available for those who wish to spend three weeks in GCU and want to take part in our academic and co-curricular activities. This has proven to be a very productive exchange program for both sides, by encouraging the students to build confidence and raise awareness whilst their stay at GCU. A number of various MPhil and Masters dissertations related to China have been completed. The Centre also conducts sessions and international conferences in harmony with the department of Political Science, in which national scholars are welcome to join and hold critical reviews on the research papers written. CSC has a database of the students who have completed their Chinese language programs from GCU and to expand it even further to bigger academic levels.

CPMI at SDSB

Suleman Dawood School of Business (SDSB), is located at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), is committed to play a key role in the development of Belt and Road including CPEC. SDSB offers full range of academic programmes of undergraduate level with two majors (Accounting and Finance, and Management Science). China Pakistan Management Initiative was formed in late 2017. CPMI in collaboration with the key principles of the SBSB, is working on the management in Pakistan. The main focus of the centre is to provide a platform for a global level research, education and training on both Chinese and Pakistani businesses and policies. CPMI has a number of trained and equipped managers and leaders to help promote the economic era of regional trade etc. The main idea behind this framework is to have business connections with Chinese counterparts in an effective manner and to raise awareness on how things work in China.

1. CPEC at CU-AJK

Central University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir held a workshop to evaluate impact of CPEC on the development of Pakistan. A seminar on ‘CPEC and Regional Connectivity: Opportunities & Challenges’ was also conducted in collaboration with PIDE, Centre of Excellence for CPEC. Due to shortage of funds, the CPEC centre AJK faces a decline in projects due to lack of resources for students and faculty members of different departments. University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir is also funded by HEC and for the most part, it has its own independent funding. After the 2005 earthquake, a new building for the university was in the process of building. Due to the political

dispute and sensitive nature of Kashmir causes problems in the way of collaboration with the Chinese universities. CU-AJK is trying to find more donors like HEC and the Chinese Embassy for financial and different kinds of support. . There is a need for more collaborations, projects and MoUs between CPEC Centre UAJK and other China study centres.

5.2. Key Inferences

From the discussion and investigations made in this thesis, some key inferences can be drawn which are as follows:

- Think Tanks and Study Centers are playing the role of an interlocutor between the people and public for building trust in the public officials and overall foreign policy posture of Pak-China relations.
- Through their various publications, they are facilitating in independent and informed expression of voices from various sections.
- These institutions are providing the platform to all the relevant stakeholders for voicing their issues and concerns independently.
- by arranging seminars and conferences, they are building a social network of knowledge by helping float ideas for further strengthening the relations and effectively tackling emerging problems.
- They are utilizing all forms of media – print, electronic, and social – to present their own interpretation of policy issues, events, and future projections for better understanding of their country’s orientation towards Beijing and vice versa.
- They also inform the independent and joint postures of China and Pakistan on the regional and global issues of concerns. In this way, they are helping build public perceptions towards Chinese policies and mutual trust between the two countries.

- Through student and scholar exchange programs, short-term fellowships, joint researches, and arranging international conferences, they are helping the two nations coming closer to each other, understand their culture and interact with each other. This is how people-to-people contacts are being nurtured through these activities. This also helps in removing cultural barriers that Chinese and Pakistan people encounter while interacting in daily routine.

5.3. Policy Recommendations

- **Synchronization**

The government needs input in foreign policy issues and, due to pivotal position of China in Pakistan's foreign relations, it looks forward to informed and innovative perspectives in moving the bilateral ties forward. Therefore, Think Tank community must synchronize their efforts for creating a more knowledge-oriented and evidence-based literature on the issues regarding Pak-China relations.

- All Think Tanks working related to Sino-Pak ties should create a web portal for effectively aligning their activities.
- For this purpose, a focal person from each Think Tank must be nominated to regularly share the relevant activities and core responsibilities.
- However, this suggestion does not mean curtailing the independent functioning of the institutes. It is only meant to serve as a place for cross-pollination of ideas on the issues of core interests to Pak-China relations.
- Although the agenda, activities, functions of Think Tanks and Study Centers are different from one another, sphere of their working interlaps as they are concerned with Pak-China relations. Therefore, they must convene working group meetings on regular basis for improving the overall policy environment.
- Effective communication between Think Tanks and government policy-making circles will be an enabling factor for these institutions. This will help strengthen their collective voice on any particular issue and facilitate them in incorporating their research and feedback into policy circles.

- It has been observed that publications and policy suggestions of Think Tanks come in the form of lengthy volumes and tend to be extensive. As far as making an impact is concerned, short and brief incisive analysis need be provided. To this end, creating a Think Tank portal on Sino-Pak ties and utilizing it for immediate policy feedback is necessary.

- **Barriers of Funding**

All the Study Centers are funded by Chinese embassy in Pakistan. As far as Think Tanks are concerned, most of them are funded by the Chinese embassy. This very factor gives too much leverage to the donor even in micromanaging research and other activities of the institutions. Though financial assistance is necessary, it should not become a barrier in taking the bilateral ties into a realistic and mutually productive sphere of engagement.

- The donors and funding agencies should be engaged in a manner that help them facilitating empirical research and truth-based information instead of micromanaging research and other institutional activities of Think Tanks.
- There must also be a forum engaging the donors where independent voices, especially critical ones, could be heard and their suggestions are incorporated into policy frameworks.
- Another issue regarding assistance is that the funding agencies provide financial assistance because they want their own agenda pursued. There is no harm in it unless it falls in the ambit of national interests. Here comes the role of Think Tank community how they strike this delicate balance.
- To give a realistic dimension to this very factor, it is important for Think Tank community to make a case for realistic pragmatic foreign policy orientation in foreign policy circles
- . Through their informal meeting and visits of Chinese scholars, diplomats and government officials, they can initiate discussions and engage them in more open and pragmatic issues of sensitive nature as well.
- In other words, Pakistani Think Tanks and Study Centers must make most of all the instruments of Track-II Diplomacy. This is an indirect way of convincing the Chinese funders of the issues and sensitivities that must be conveyed from Pakistani side. This pursuance mechanism is more effective than direct ones.

Building an Effective Knowledge Regime

Other than towing official lines on policy issues, Think Tanks must explore ways to utilize media platforms for dissemination of their policy research in a meaningful way on key policy issues.

Although Think Tanks have their own extensive social network comprising of people from academia, Think Tanks and government agencies (domestic and international), they must develop their linkages strong enough for their research inputs taken into the policy-making process.

This age is the age of transformations and unprecedented shifts. China's rise, America's decline, eventual alignments and re-alignments along with the emerging challenges of current pandemic are few examples. To thrive and succeed in a contemporary world of disorder, Pakistan overall must carefully chalk out its future plans in the realm of foreign relations. There is, no doubt, that Pakistan assigns special significance to its relations with Beijing and looking forward to reaping the benefits of its global rise. Despite this fact, it must not repeat the mistakes it committed in the Cold-war era by putting all its eggs in Washington's basket. For this to facilitate, the Think Tank community can play the role of a vanguard. It is about time that Pakistan develops an overall strategy of its foreign relations that is balanced, nuanced, and multipolar in its very nature. Following mentioned are some suggestions in this regards:

Bilateral relations are evolutionary in nature but, in International Relations, they can be devolutionary some times. In this light, it is essential that the Think Tanks and Study Centers are assigning top priority to ensuring a positive trajectory of bilateral relations. However, too much emphasis on learning from Chinese culture and model only can put our own country on the path of conflict.

- **Perception Management**

Think Tanks and Study Centers must remember that Pakistan is a country where western political and educational models run deep in the society. Therefore, they must use their 'independent and critical thinking' to meet halfway with the Chinese scholars and officials as far as reconciling the two nations socio-political and economic models are concerned. This was one of the reasons why

Chinese projects faced severe backlash from some sections of Pakistani intelligentsia. This criticism had two dimensions: internal and external. There is no doubt that China's rise has created panic in the western capitals. Particularly in the US, it is

Through informed and evidence-based research, Think Tank and Study Centers must ensure that, through China's politics of regional and global connectivity, Pakistan is carved as hub of regionalism in the minds of national and international policy makers.

Conclusion

This thesis is enmeshed in this premise that international system is a normative system and social realities can be created. International norms are a product of human interactions and the realities of international relations are “what we make of them.” Therefore, this thesis studies the role of think tanks in foreign relations considering them an actor of civil society that is producing knowledge and enabling/disabling the state and the people to make informed decisions on public/foreign policy issues.

Think Tanks play a variety of role in International Relations, especially in the domain of foreign policy and a state’s relations with other countries, their functions and activities are diverse. The principal task of a Think Tank in international relations is producing foreign-policy related knowledge to the relevant stakeholder including public. The Think Tanks have evolved to place emphasis on spreading the information and knowledge they generate. They do it in many ways and, in this way, they consciously target their audience.

What should be the role of think tanks and study centers in Pakistan’s relations with another country, not emphasizing China only, is linked with the role of civil society in shaping the society and governance. Think tanks play a pivotal role in shaping the contours of a society since they mobilize expertise, present evidence-based analyses and make public opinion. Besides, they nurture such networks among national and international community through which they spread ideas, create a conducive environment for any policy propagation, and ultimately stimulate certain actions. The need for Think Tanks and Study Centers in Sino-Pak ties has a special context in which they emerged and functioning at present.

Pakistan has always assigned special significance to its relations with China but, after the commencement of CPEC, it has taken its ties with Beijing to a new height. With the resolve to successfully implement the flagship project of BRI, Pakistan employed its resources to reflect its commitment to its ties with Beijing and the new project that will make Pakistan a hub of trade in the region. It is in this context that stimulated the already existing foreign policy Think Tanks to

pay special attention to Pak-China relations and resulted in mushroom growth of other institutes – mostly named as Study Centers. Among these institutes, there were some ‘Study Centers’ which cannot be categorized as study centers in literal sense as they were not offering language or teaching courses in Synology etc.

In this thesis, Think Tanks and Study Centers that have been studied in this thesis are policy research and analysis institutes that are performing an important role in deepening Pak-China relations in many aspects. They became active in generating policy discourse on Pak-China relations and performed the function of a political actor.

By enlisting the activities that these institutions are conducting, it becomes clear that their role in Pak-China relations is of broader nature and has been done in an-all-comprehensive manner. By performing the above mentioned functions, they are working towards fulfilling their responsibilities in the field of research, engaging academia, policy circles and public on the bilateral issues, and enhancing outreach of the public.

It also became evident that, as regards with Sino-Pak ties, the agenda of these institutions is highly diversified. Although CPEC has been the centerpiece of their activities, it is not the only issue however. They are engaging the government officials, academia, and sections civil society in almost all the issues that are of utmost concern in China-Pakistan ties.

Just as their agenda, their functions and activities are also as diverse and broad. They are framing policy issues in Pak-China relations. They are publishing books, research journals, magazines, policy and issue briefs, and monographs. They disseminate their publications and writings in a vast sphere of audience. In this way, they are

With the discussion conducted in this thesis, this fact came to light that they are working as Human Resource Think Tanks as well and helping address the issue of unemployment to, fresh graduates, mid-career, senior government officials, and retired personnel as well.

They became a political actor since they were involved in a series of discussions in the meetings held between the two governments. It is true that, through their research and academic work, they are adding the dimension of knowledge in the bilateral relation but, to what extent, this knowledge is transforming into power is not clear. It is that they use their ‘power of knowledge’ for their

political agenda. It is especially true for those institutes that are either affiliated with the government organs or with any political party/politician.

From Pakistani perspective, the sentimental touch clouds the pragmatic side of Beijing-Islamabad ties. From the perspective of government and its affiliated institutions, any aspect of the bilateral side is too enmeshed in rhetoric, “brethren tie” and a “historic friendship that stands all test of times”. From the viewpoint of government critics and progressive thinkers, the Chinese, their culture and their initiatives in Pakistan, especially under the ambit of CPEC, are portrayed in extremely negatively light – the one which is tinted with western contempt towards China. Situated between these two poles, think tanks as well as study centers can play the bridge and harmonize the opposing, at times warring, opinions on this issue.

The present world is transforming at an extremely fast pace bringing with it challenges of unprecedented scale. Given the complexity and interdependence of these challenges, think tanks as a vanguard of Pakistan’s civil society should engage the relevant stakeholders in a pragmatic, innovative, actionable, and solution-oriented debate on the policy issues. Along with the much-touted problems of the century, a traditional issue remains outstanding: the ‘post-truth’ culture. In the policy- and decision-making domain, the facts and expertise often surface as a murky subject and, in this digital age, media too has become a double-edged sword. All these factors generate a milieu which makes the study of policy- and decision-making processes ambiguous and hard to understand. With the thrust of knowledge and evidence, think-tanks and study centers can clear the air around policy-making quarters while defying the post-truth culture.

In Pakistan, Think Tanks are growing and maturing to influence foreign relations of the country. As this thesis studies role of Think Tanks in Pak-China relations, it observed that a major chunk of the institutions have oriented themselves to become a mouthpiece of government policies on Sino-Pak ties whereas only too few can be categorized as ‘independent’ or ‘free thinkers’ on the given subject.

There is likely to be a continued expansion in their activities pertaining to the bilateral relations. These activities include conducting research for making better and informed decisions as far as public and state are concerned, providing advisory services and practicing policy advocacy. With the advent of Study Centers, the range of activities become even broader since these hybrid institutions are extremely diverse in nature. Not only they are performing the functions of a ‘regular’

Think Tank, they are also assuming the role of education institutions with more-than-necessary emphasis on promoting culture, economy, and China model in Pakistani populace.

Instead of being independent autonomous political actors, the Think Tanks and Study Centers are working more as extensions of government agencies. The focus is more on official policy advocacy instead of generating ‘truth-culture’ on bilateral relations. Their political relevance also comes into question since they either seem to be devoid of their independent policy agenda or satisfy with becoming an extension only. This makes them more than too often grounded in government processes and structures. Their Foreign Relations discourse, particularly with respect to Pak-China relations, is too narrow. It is mainly focused on CPEC and mostly answers those questions which are related to perception management course.

The think tank, as discussed, is one actor among many in the policymaking process. Its specific contribution to policymaking is that of policy expertise tailored to the needs of time-pressed decision-makers. Despite what appears to be an increasing devaluation of expertise in public discourse, policymaking is hardly possible and certainly not desirable without it. However, think tanks are not necessarily contributing to “better policy,” as was discussed with regards to some think tanks’ dubious role in highly contentious policy areas. Moreover, despite protestations of objectivity and a focus on “evidence,” it is clear that think tank output and activity are necessarily and inevitably influenced by the ideational prisms of those who work for the think tank and those who fund it. This is, of course, the case for any research. In that sense, the article has tried to cast a critical spotlight on the think tank, not to dismiss it as an illegitimate or inherently problematic actor in the policy process but rather to assure that those interested in the relationship between ideas, expertise, and policymaking and how it is manifest in the think tank can use this thesis as a starting point for their own critical enquiry.

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