

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**THE AUTONOMY OF THINK TANKS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
NEOLIBERAL AGENDA: A STUDY OF SELECTED THINK TANKS IN  
GHANA**

**BY**



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
MPHIL AFRICAN STUDIES DEGREE.**

**JUNE, 2015**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own research towards the MPhil and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person for any academic award in this or any other university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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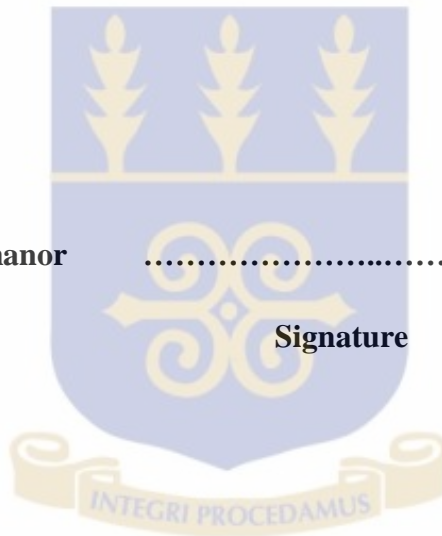
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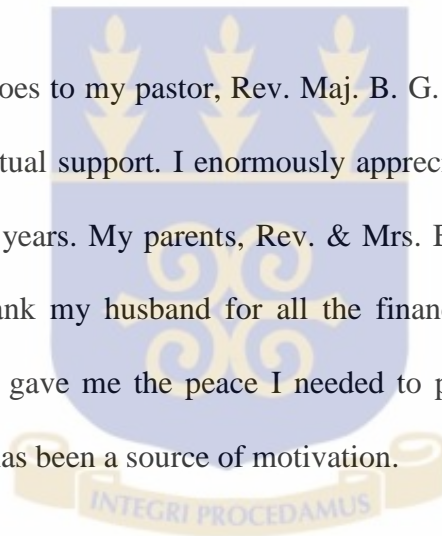
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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to Maj. Felix Mautsueni and Serena Klenam Mautsueni



## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the autonomy of think tanks in the context of the neoliberal agenda. Ghana is experiencing the fourth wave of think tank emergence. This period is associated with globalisation, characterized by economic and political reform as solutions to economic crisis of the 1980s. The period has also witnessed the roll back of the state and assumption of state social welfare functions by civil society organizations perceived by the developmental partners as autonomous and a conduit of development. In effect donor funding are made available to civil society organizations whose activities would specifically promote institutional reform. This research employs the good governance framework to examine the extent to which donor funding and dominant neoliberal interest influence the activities of think tanks and undermine their autonomy. It examines neoliberal conceptions of civil society as a critical force acting to make government policy more accountable and representative of popular interest. With a case study of three renowned think tanks: Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), an executive director and two research officials from each organization, a research fellow from Star Ghana and a member of parliament participated in the study. The findings indicated that donor funding associated with institutional reform has resulted in the valorization of two distinctive think tanks; those pursuing either social welfare programmes or institutional reform programmes. They are also autonomous because they operate independent of the state, assert internal control which enables them freely access donor aid (intellectual, financial and technical). The study concluded based on the findings that although think tanks are organizationally autonomous, donor funding is condition based and a situation that undermines their autonomy in a competitive knowledge based global economy.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ASDR	African Security Dialogue and Research
BUSAC	Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund
BWI	Bretton Woods Institution
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CEPA	Centre for Policy Analysis
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CODEO	Coalition for Domestic Election Observer
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EU	European Union
GAPVOD	Ghana Association of Private Volunteer Associations in Development
GGA	Good Governance Agenda
GRAP	Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme
GROs	Grass Root Organizations
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IFI	International Monetary Institutes
IMF	International Monetary Funds
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IPA	Institute of Policy Alternative
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre

NDIFID	National Democratic Institute for International Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSF	Open Society Foundation
OSIWA	Open Space Initiative for West Africa
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
RAVI	Rights and Voice Initiative
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAPRIN	Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network
SMC	Supreme Military Council
TWN	Third World Network
UGCC	United Cold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UNDF	United Nations Democracy Fund
US	United States
USAID	United State Aid Initiative Development
WAEOM	West African Election Observation Mission
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WTO	World Trade Organization

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background of the Study

Public policy is crucial in the development of a nation. Its success or failure rests on efficient and qualified expertise imbued with the right capabilities and skills for the production of good policies towards development (Ayee, 2000). Before the 1980s, the role of the state was central in social service delivery towards development but civil participation was limited to an appreciable degree. However countries across the globe encountered crisis which discredited state intervention. Developmental partners blamed the situation on wrong institutional structures, capacity deficit and attitude of state officials. In their view, state officials could not manage state resources to promote social reforms as they selfishly skewed policies to their interest and to the detriment of society (Ohemeng, 2005; Abrahamsen, 2000; Jomo and Fine, 1999).

By the 1980s, an Economic Recovery Programme in the form of neoliberal prescription explicit in the 1981 World Bank (WB) Report, 'Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa', were advocated by developmental partners towards economic recovery. The first phase of neoliberal reform, the structural adjustment programme (SAP), sought to reduce the role of the state and the assumption of its social welfare functions by civil society organization (CSOs) (Whitefield, 2002) and privatization of state enterprises to the private sector. The aim was to limit the role of the state and place the market as the new engine of growth. However, adjustment reforms could not result in the expected growth first, because, the market could not regulate itself and second, because, CSOs were financially

incompetent in the delivery of social services. This situation brought attention back to the state as a significant actor in development (Jomo and Fine, 2006; Whitefield, 2002).

Thus, the 1990s witnessed the introduction of the Good Governance Agenda (GGA) explicit in the 1989 WB Report, 'Sub-Saharan Africa; From Crisis to Sustainable Growth'. This was the second phase of neoliberal reforms and a process of globalization which aimed at reinstituting countries and projecting their economy at the global level through economic liberalization as a basis for democratic reform. According to the International Financial Institutions (IFI) the state had failed as a result of the absence of checks and balances in the system. Thus, the democratic process was an avenue to liberate CSOs to serve as a watch dog to hold the state accountable and to make constructive decisions in the exploitation of resources towards economic recovery, on the one hand, and to the benefit of society on the other hand. (Ohemeng, 2005; Abrahamsen, 2000; Jomo & Fine, 2006).

According to Abrahamsen (2000), the shift to the third sector is due to the fact that the WB perceives CSOs as autonomous groups that seek the welfare of their members as against a state that pursue selfish ambitions. Without giving consideration to the inhomogeneity of the sector, developmental partners confidently trust CSOs as democratic, charitable, participatory, transparent and efficient and hence, identified as the new engine of growth and development (Abrahamsen, 2000; Igoe and Kelsall, 2005).

The international institutions and foreign donors have taken the challenge to assist CSOs to promote their operations in service delivery, research and advocacy and more importantly to hold government accountable and responsive, specifically towards institutional reforms. (McGann, 2000; Abrahamsen, 2000; Jomo and Fine, 2006). Meanwhile, institutional reform is an initiative that demands the effort of efficient and

equipped technocrats capable of analysing research data to produce policy recommendations. However, not all CSOs had the requisite skill to participate in policy debate. Therefore, the onus lay on think tanks (private policy research institutes) as the voice of CSOs having the right expertise and skills to research, analyse and advocate the right policies not only in the interest of citizens but towards economic growth (McGann, 2005; Stone, 2000; Abrahamsen, 2000).

While the democratic process accompanied with donor aid ushered the emergence of think tanks in most part of the Sub-Saharan region (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011; Igoe and Kelsall, 2005), it has conversely impacted on their operations and activities. There are two types of donor funding to think tanks; core funding and project funding. Core funding caters for institutional cost and is geared towards long term project which enables organizations to go beyond donor priorities and conditions to pursue their goals and objectives for which they exist. Unfortunately this type of funding is very limited. Project funding on the other hand is more common, project specific and offers short-term support which compels recipient institutes to refocus on donor frames in order to gain access. It reveals the enthusiasm of donors for specific projects rather than organizational sustenance (Tsikata, Gyekye-Jandoh and Hushie, 2013). For instance, the Alliance Report (2008) noted the influx of a new funding mechanism for policy institutes in Mozambique, *Mecanismo de Apoio a Sociedade Civil* which spanned five years specifically for political purpose and another for advocacy on education issues. However these mechanisms expires once the intended programme is exhausted. Hence, the Open Society Foundation indicates that this situation threatens think tank ability to pursue policy alternative since they are given funds in support of specific projects which may not be in line with think tank objectives (Shivji, 2007).

Another issue of concern is the direct or indirect involvement of donors in the activities and programmes of think tanks. Most of the think tanks lack experienced and skilled expertise (capacity) while those who have still depend to some extent on external expertise for creativity (ideas) and direction in an effort to produce quality research outcomes. This situation exposes think tanks to external advice which facilitates donor interest. Hearn (1997) notes that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) incurred an amount of six million dollars on civil society organizations over five years, towards training in organizational management and lobbying skills but more importantly geared towards institutional reform. Thus, donor conditions do not only impact on think tank activities but undermine their autonomy (Brautigam, 2000) and threatens their sustenance after donor agenda is met.

In Ghana, the situation is not different. The 1999 GAPVOD/ISODEC report noted the existence of sixty seven policy and advocacy organizations between the late 1980s and 1999. However, by 2013, the Philadelphia think tank ranking report (2013) recorded thirty eight of such private policy institutes but identified only eleven of them. The drastic numerical decline can be attributed to decline in donor support (Whitefield, 2002). Thus, while a number of these think tanks cannot boast of economic viability, donor aid also poses sustainability problems. It is in this context that Star Ghana, a donor pool organization, has committed itself as a platform to engage think tanks in finding measures that can ensure their sustenance through the Sustainability Learning Festival in 2012.

Critical questions need to be asked to understand the relationship between think tanks and their donors. How did they emerge and what roles do they play? Have their roles been redefined within the Neoliberal context? Who are their funders and what is the interest of

these donors? What is the nature of donor expectations and how do think tanks seek to meet these expectations?

The research seeks to examine the relationship between think tanks and the good governance agenda and the extent to which they are able to develop an independent agenda or can only function to deepen or reify an externally defined agenda. Using three think tanks as a case study, the study focuses on the nature and activities of think tanks in Ghana, the various methods they employ in advocating and influencing policies, how they exercise choice in their production and advocacy for alternative policy analysis, their means of sustenance, and their relationship with donors as well as international institutions and the impact on their activities.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Developmental partners have blamed Ghana's developmental problems on policy deficit due to inefficient and inadequate expertise within government administration and the need for private expertise imbued with the right capacity and skills to help influence appropriate policies for successful development (Abrahamsen, 2000; CEPA, 1996).

Whereas CSOs were limited in the policy process, advocates of the GGA as the second phase of the neoliberal paradigm perceives CSOs as autonomous and advocate their liberation through a democratic process to contribute their quota in the policy process towards development. This has resulted in donor programmes aimed at supporting think tanks financially, intellectually and technically to promote quality policies for development (Abrahamsen, 2000; Igoe and Kellsal, 2005). Ignoring the implications of donor funding on CSOs, the WB perceives the autonomy of CSOs as relatively national in

scope (Abrahamsen, 2000). The problem is not to justify or condemn the neoliberal agenda or sources of think tank funding but to examine the influence of the concept of CSOs on the valorisation of think tanks and the relationship between the nature of think tank activities and donor interventions and how think tank are tied to or free of donor agenda.

The study seeks to establish that neoliberalism has led to the valorisation of two types of think tanks in Ghana; those that pursue social reforms on one hand and those that pursue institutional reforms in an attempt to receive aid from institutions and foundations that support the agenda on the other hand. While the roles of the latter has been redefined in line with the agenda, it is expedient to assess the sources of funding and the implication on the scope of activities of the two types of institutions, the linkages they establish at both local, national and international level and the general implications on their output. The study, therefore, seeks to assess the sources of think tank funding in Ghana and its influence on their activities as autonomous private policy research institutes.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

This study examines the extent to which donor funding and dominant neoliberal interests influence the activities and policy recommendations of think tanks and undermine their autonomy. It critically examines neoliberal conceptions of civil society as a critical force acting to make government policy more accountable and representative of popular interests.

To understand the various pressures on think tanks the thesis examines the following research questions:

1. The influence of concepts of civil society on theories about think tanks and the construction of spaces in which think tanks operate at both national and international levels.
2. The impact of globalization and neoliberal theories on the conception of the role of civil society and think tanks as a CSO.
3. The impact of concepts of good governance on creating spaces for civil society in policy formulation and think tanks as specialized CSOs responding to policy advocacy and policy research.
4. The scope of activities carried out by think tanks in relation to policy dialogue.
5. The impact of donor funding, donor funding protocols, and donor policy frameworks on think tank activities and policy formulation.

### **1.3 Conceptual Framework**

The study examines the relationship between good governance, civil society and donor support for non-governmental organizations (think tanks) within the civil society domain. It builds on a body of research critical of the relationship between civil society and good governance. Abrahamsen (2000), Igoe and Kellsal (2005), Jomo and Fine (2006) and Whitefield (2002) dominantly examines the discourse of good governance as a panacea to a discredited statist approach. In the good governance discourse, the state is discredited as inefficient due to policy deficit as a result of capacity and structural failures but most especially, due to cultural attitudes of corruption and rent seeking which limits the state from pursuing its social obligations. According to the WB 1981 report, ‘Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa’, the attitude of the state has resulted in resource mismanagement and distortion of market operations which undermines economic growth and development (Jomo and Fine, 2006; Ake, 2001; Mkandawire, 2002).

Thus, the WB advocates minimization of state intervention with focus on neoliberal reforms. The WB 1981 Report, characterized the first phase of the neoliberal agenda in the form of structural adjustment programmes which advocates the roll back of the state and assumption of some state functions by CSOs in the delivery of social welfare services (Whitefield, 2002; GAPVOD/ISODEC, 1999) as well as privatization of state enterprises to the private sector. However, civil liberty was limited in the policy process. Unfortunately, the impact of adjustment reform on the economy was far below the expected margin (Hutchful, 2002) leading to the GGA as the second phase of neoliberal reforms (Igoe and Kelsall, 2005; Abrahamsen, 2000; Agyeman-Duah, 2008). Thus, embedded within the GGA are two strands of developmental agenda towards recovery; continuity of economic liberalization or macro reforms (which constitutes adjustment programs) on the one hand, which would accomplish the mission of state power curtailment as a basis to promote civil participation in the policy process on the other hand (Abrahamsen, 2000; Jomo and Fine, 2006).

According to Igoe and Kelsall (2005:5), developmental partners have confidence in CSOs as “a more efficient conduit for development”. Abrahamsen (2000:52) argues that the WB and IFI projects the civil society domain to constitute ‘autonomous organizations’, “who are altruistic, cooperative, efficient, participatory and transparent” (Igoe and Kelsall, 2005:5), a virtue which can enable them demand a more “democratically accountable and responsive government, make development aid more effective, enhance citizen participation in decision making which can ultimately lead to sustainable good governance” (Abdul-Gafaru and Quantson, 2008). This has resulted in donor aid mechanisms aimed at supporting CSOs as autonomous groups that can complement state functions and contribute their quota through policy dialogue, research and advocacy to

bring about reforms in favour of the populace (Abrahamsen, 2000; Igoe and Kellsal, 2005; Brautigam, 2000). This commitment discredits the state as a representation of the elite while civil society is credited as representing popular interest.

While the state has been discredited as inefficient in the delivery of its social obligations by the WB (1989), neoliberal reform commits it to a new set of economic and political obligations on one hand and on the other hand, advocate support for organizations that can hold the state responsible in that regard. Thus, reception of donor aid has resulted in the valorisation of two distinctive think tanks assuming state functions as far as reform and development are concerned; those in pursuit of social welfare agenda on the one hand, and those in pursuit of institutional reforms on the other hand. Funding is limited but those pursuing institutional reforms easily access project funds while this same funding opportunity seems to erode the mission of think tanks pursuing social reforms (Whitefield, 2002). This is because recipient of donor aid are expected to set their objectives and work within donor frame to allow donors achieve their set targets and interest. In this way, donor interest has been articulated to mean popular interest while recipient organizations are compelled by donors to promote institutional reform. Private Policy Research Institutes are thus subjected to strict monitoring in the quest to meet donor expectations and where this is not so the contract is terminated. More so, the end of a donor project poses issues of sustenance to the organization. Assess to other donor aid compels organizations to deviate from their core objectives to attract new funds (Whitefield, 2002). Given these complexities, what scope do CSOs have, to make creative input into policy development and to create innovative solutions and how they are able to set policies that are creative, innovative and reflect aspirations of the populace. According to the WB, think tanks are private policy research institutes that serve as a representation of CSOs and

popular interest (Whitefield, 2002; Abrahamsen, 2000). The relevance of this model will help this study examine how think tanks articulate donor interest as popular interest given the relationship between think tanks and their donors and how think tank activities are informed by neoliberal tendencies or undermined by it.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

In the development discourse, the IFI have placed emphasis on the liberalization of civil society as a domain that constitutes independent and autonomous organizations with the propensity to advocate for policies in the interest of the populace rather than in the interest of the elite few. The perception of the international institutions is that the state is a representation of the elite group and its activities have been characterized by corruption and selfish ambition resulting in economic crisis. Neoliberal policies were thus introduced by the international institutions as an effort to dismantle state power and weaken its control over the market and contract state functions to CSOs. This has resulted in donor aid mechanisms, aimed at facilitating the activities of CSOs.

It is against this argument and from a theoretical perspective that the study seeks to challenge perceptions in main stream literature that civil society, as a neutral and autonomous force represents the interest of society as against a state captured by elite political interest. It seeks to examine the extent to which reliance of CSOs on donor funding influences their activities and promote agendas which are externally determined. The implication is that donor aid seeks to promote activities of CSOs whose vested interest is toward institutional reform. This has resulted in the establishment of two distinct think tanks; those pursuing social welfare agenda and those concerned with institutional reforms and capacity building for good governance. Thus, the study seeks to

examine the relationship between think tank programmes and donor aid and the implication of the latter on think tank activities. It also examines funding constraints faced by think tanks and the room for manoeuvre in implementing projects which meet or undermine their central objectives.

### **1.5 Study Methodology**

The study examines the history of think tanks and their framed vision and mission in relation to policy reform, donor interest and perceived interest of people in Ghana, analysis of the main documented projects they have been involved in and how these have changed over time in relation to donor funding. The researcher employed a case study approach where three renowned NGOs in Accra, the capital of Ghana were selected and three informants from each of the organizations in an effort to gather detailed information on the research questions. The think tank institutes are Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) having unique characteristics that meet the aims of the research.

First, the concentration is on Ghana, the beacon of democracy in the Sub-Saharan Region (Top Guide, 2004), because little scholarly attention has been given to think tanks in this region. In Ghana, there are scores of books on CSOs but not think tanks (Ohemeng, 2005; Ohemeng et al, 2012). Also, concentration is on Accra because all the think tanks under study are urban based or have their head-quarters in Accra which has a history of rich associational life. Accra has been a strong hold for CSOs right from colonial era. Also, Accra serves as the seat of the government and think tanks as policy institutes deem it necessary to be closer to the policy house where they can easily participate in policy deliberations and influence policy or invite policy makers for policy dialogue. Accra also

serves as a place where donor country offices dominate. Thus, the proximity allows easy access to donor aid and support by think tanks (Gyimah-Boadi, 2008; Ayee, 2000).

Secondly, the three think tanks are chosen purposively based on ideal types (Whitefield, 2002) and global recognition (McGann, 2008, 2009, 2012). ISODEC emerged as a service delivery organization in social reform programmes, evolved as an advocacy organization and then combined both service delivery and advocacy programmes but this time towards institutional reform. CEPA emerged as a private policy institutes towards economic and institutional reform but compelled to move towards social reforms because of funding constraints. While the two organizations are under pressure to move from one reform programme to the other, CDD has remained affiliated to institutional reform since its inception. However, the dynamic transformation is as a result of changes in historical trajectories of ideological interest but more especially due to financial constraints. Selection of the three organizations was also based on the 'Global Go To Think Tank Ranking Report', an internationally acclaimed report which ranks think tanks across the world. Between 2008 (when the ranking was started) and 2015, the three think tanks under study have recurred among the best ten to twenty five think tanks in Sub-Saharan Africa which makes them internationally recognized and eligible for the study.

Information on the selected cases was gathered through in-depth interview with three officials, two research fellows and the Executive Director of the organization. A research fellow from Star Ghana, a locally based funding mechanism, as well as the chief whip in parliament were interviewed in order to gather information from both donor and government's perspective. The informants are research officials and a government official and were chosen on purpose based on their in-depth knowledge of the history of the

organization, changes in the global trend and its impact on civil society organizations. The in-depth interview was deemed appropriate because it affords the researcher the opportunity to interact face to face with respondents to source detailed information and explanation and to pose further questions to get clearer and detailed responses from respondents (Berg, 2004).

Data was collected on the history of think tanks to ascertain the period of emergence, the framework through which they establish their objectives and vision in relation to policy reforms, donor funds and donor interest and the transformations they have made over the periods. The research employed both primary data from the field and secondary data from both published and unpublished sources including journals, articles, books, official reports and the internet. Information gathered were thematically analysed with support from the literature. Discussions and comments were examined with focus on similarities and differences under proposed themes in order to verify the hypothesis and draw conclusion.

## **1.6 Organization of Chapters**

This work has been organized into five (5) main chapters. While the current chapter provides a brief background to the study, the following chapter reviews literature with focus on the relationship between key concepts in the development discourse. Thus it looks at the impact of globalization and neoliberalism on the conception of the role of civil society, and the evolution of think tanks in the process as a specialized group within the civil society domain responding to policy research and advocacy. It also looks at the relationship between think tanks and their donors and the impact of donor funding on think tank activities.

The third chapter discusses the nature of the policy environment and history of civil society in the context of neoliberal policies and good governance agenda in Ghana and how this development has opened space for the evolution of think tanks as a western invention. It looks at the relationship between think tanks and their external donors and its impact on their activities in the Ghanaian context.

Chapter four provides a detailed empirical analysis of the findings based on the data collected during the field work. The presentation of the data is based on qualitative interpretation of findings gathered through in-depth interviews and supported with literature. With the aid of the research questions, the researcher analyses research findings against the literature to test the hypothesis. The findings touched on the rationale for formation of think tanks, significance of think tank coalition and networking, the sources of think tank funding and its impact on think tank activities and how this has promoted or undermined think tank autonomy.

The final chapter provides the summary and conclusions to the study. It reveals the gaps in main stream literature that presents CSOs (think tanks) as representatives of popular interest. It reveals that think tanks that receive donor aid (creativity, capacity, funds) exist to pursue activities aimed at deepening the GGA which is an elusive and evasive framework that makes think tanks versatile and multifaceted in achieving everything and anything towards good governance. However, think tanks are a unique independent organization, a virtue that makes them manoeuvre to pursue varied aims and agenda. This makes them unpredictable and thus non-representative of either the elites or populace. However, donor aid is conditional which limits think tank activities and undermines their autonomy in a knowledge based global economy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Think tanks also known as private policy research institutes embark on numerous roles and activities in an effort to promote development. This ranges from policy advice, recommendation, and advocacy and the ability to influence the policy formulation process. Thus, they are perceived by developmental partners as representatives of both civil society and popular aspirations and as such can hold government responsible and accountable due to their autonomous nature. The think tank phenomenon can be better understood in the context of the neoliberal theory of structural adjustment and good governance and the civil society debate. Therefore, this chapter examines these three conceptions and how they relate to the autonomy of think tanks.

#### 2.1 The Neoliberal Paradigm

The neoliberal paradigm as part of a new development discourse and solution to global developmental issues is better understood in the geographical and historical context within which it emerged. According to Leitner, et al, (2007) the paradigm has its roots in core advanced capitalist countries as an idea which was first conceived by Hayek (1994), as a critic to state led capitalism in defence of neoliberal reforms. According to Jomo and Fine (2006), the state led approach to development signified an era where state intervention was perceived to be expedient in bringing about development. However, the 1970s witnessed economic crisis which resulted in global oil price hikes, stagflation and rise in interest rates which discredited the statist approach and led to Hayek's ideas of market reforms becoming highly influential in dominant policy circles (Leitner, et al, 2007; Jomo & Fine, 2006). This development marked the beginning of the neoliberal paradigm which came to

constitute the Washington consensus in the West backed by the Reagan and Thatcher regimes respectively (Jomo and Fine, 2006), but not until the fall of the communist bloc did it gain ascendancy (Abrahamsen, 2000; Leitner, et al, 2007).

However, civil liberties and political freedoms were ignored at the initial stage of the economic reform since strong state was perceived by the developmental organizations as expedient for the success of economic reform. Political participation was an oversight to the overall aim of economic adjustment. But circumstances were to change with the poor economic performance associated with adjustment or market reforms. The developmental partners held the state responsible for its indulgence in practices which resulted in bad governance and thus, advocated for institutional reforms through good governance (Abrahamsen, 2000; Ghaus-Pasha, 2004; Clayton et al., 2000).

Thus, institutional reform was an avenue for right winged activists and knowledge production institutes to emerge as products of post war demand for knowledge and research system and in an effort to find solutions to developmental problems toward market reforms (Peck and Tickel, 2002). They have since assumed new roles and networks that ensure the establishment of institutional reform (McGann, 2007) throughout the world.

However, in the Third World, emergence of the neoliberal paradigm cannot be analysed in vacuum. Though exclusively economic in scope and dimension, it forms part of an argument posited by Escobar in the 1950s on development as a discourse and part of a mechanism which goes beyond the literal interpretation of market led reform associated by liberal democracy. In his argument, Escobar (1995) expounds on a tripartite axis (forms of

subjectivity, forms of knowledge and forms of government) set by the West to construct the Third World as completely opposite of the developed world and the need for western intervention. This resonates Mkandawire's (2001) argument of a theoretical diagnosis of developmental problems with unachievable and unrealistic prescriptions.

A blame mechanism which serves as a means of 'subjectivity' is thus employed to brain wash and subject Third World countries to accept their fate as poor and underdeveloped and the need for an intervention in that direction. Such development was made possible by international organizations and knowledge production institutes which were established to serve as apparatuses to aid in the construction of these mechanisms towards the extension of western intervention and systems to Third World countries. Multilateral organizations among which are the Bretton Wood Institution (the World Bank and IMF), European Union (EU), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Organizations (UN) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) served as the most powerful international organizational machinery that symbolizes systems of powers that construct and regulate developmental practices through the production of knowledge theories and concepts (Stone, 2005; Jomo & Fine, 2006).

The relevance of these institutions as an instrument in Western system of intervention is based on another form of mechanism which Escobar terms forms of knowledge where networks are created between these institutions and local based knowledge institution and local developmental agencies, in both government and private sectors, who are sponsored by these same institutions to carry out new set of programmes and strategies within which is embedded a restructured 'mechanism of western power' (Escobar 1995; Jomo and Fine, 2006).

The success of these mechanisms is reliant on institutional restructuring as a third mechanism which Escobar calls systems of power or forms of government. This mechanism compels states to reform and reinforce regulations that would legitimize other sectors to emerge to facilitate developmental projects (Abrahamsen, 2000). How then does this discourse work in Africa?

## **2.2 Neoliberalism in Africa**

In Africa, the 1970s to early 1980's was a period characterized by developmental crisis, notably economic, which launched most African states into bankruptcy and debt accumulation. Arrighi (2002) noted failures in some sectors of the economy. He noted in 1975, the GNP per capita of Sub-Saharan Africa stood at 17.6% of the worlds per capita GNP. Bates (1970), observed that the growth rate that had averaged over 2% in the 1960s had fallen to 0% and had gradually turned negative by the 1980s. Ake (1989) buttresses this with an illustration of decline in the manufacturing sector from 8.5% in 1960/65 to 3.5% at the late 1970s. The mining sector also saw decline from 18.5% in 1965 to -13.5% in the late 1970s and early 1980. In agriculture, growth rate dropped from 1.4% in 1960 to 0.4% in 1982. Other sectors especially the health sector also experienced deterioration. The period between the late 1970s and 1980 was therefore termed the lost decades as it saw the dissolution of socio economic conditions of Africa at its peak (Arrighi, 2002).

A number of works traces the crisis to external and internal factors. With the external factors, Jomo and Fine (2006), points to external balance of payment deficit as a result of unfavourable terms of trade which affected economic growth in Third World countries. The situation was worsened by global crisis such as the oil price hike, and economic crisis in the United States which culminated into rapid rise of interest rates and in effect

precipitated debt to countries that were dependent on the international community for loans (Leitner, Peck, & Sheppard, 2007).

However, most literature is replete with internal factors as responsible for the crisis (Mkandawire, 2001; Arrighi, 2002; Abrahamsen, 2000). Although Arrighi, (2002) highlights environmental factors such as the Sahelian drought which also affected production and caused a tremendous impact such as famine and severe poverty, this was not enough to save African leaders from the blame game. Aside the above historical conjuncture, concentration was rather drawn to state activities, a claim which was most dominantly associated with the 1981 and 1989 Berg reports (The Report) as a document prepared by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) constituting developmental prescriptions for Third World countries (Arrighi, 2002; Abrahamsen, 2000).

Critiquing the report, Mkandawire argues that lack of ideological foresight and structural failures have been identified as responsible for Africa's economic failures. This is in consonance with the 1981 (Accelerated Development in Sub-Sahara Africa) and 1989 (Sub-Saharan Africa; From Crisis to Sustainable Growth) WB Reports which attributed developmental crisis to wrong institutional structures and bad attitude of African leaders characterized by a strong statist intervention and bureaucratic extension in all aspect of development (Abrahamsen, 2000; Mkandawire, 2001; Ferguson, 1994). According to The Report (World Bank Report) these internal problems led to bad policies resulting in bad governance (Arighi, 2002). Ferguson argues along this line attributing the structural issues to lack of developmental foresight and policy initiative which committed the state to wield power as a defensive mechanism but at the same time entrench itself through the extension of the bureaucracy (Ferguson, 1994). This is explicit in Bates (1981) argument where

African governments inherited a state largely dependent on exportation of agriculture produce. Policies were thus skewed to the detriment of farmers through existing monopsony. Although the motive was to reduce farmers' incentives to channel the quick profits into industries, the profits went into individual pockets. All the interventions of government in the three markets examined by Bates (1981) favoured the elites in the urban areas against the majority of farmers in the rural areas. Sandbrook (2000) relates these failures to policy deficit. Thus, Bates (1981) argues that since the state could not make right policies to stabilize the economy, it should be repressed to allow the market take its own course and to enable other sectors benefit. This is congruent with the view of the global West, which indicates that sound political systems or structures, right policies and economic growth were inseparable as the latter becomes a product of the former and hence a prerequisite to development.

Mkandawire (2001) argues vehemently against the blame game in that African leaders had developmental foresight evident in the varied developmental and economic success they achieved. He thus perceived a great sense of discriminatory measures employed by the global west that ignores the global crisis, external interference and environmental factors. However, the escalated economic and debt crisis, characterized by bankruptcy and distrust for leaders (Sandbrook, 2000) compelled African leaders to accept the blame game and seek aid from the international financial organizations (SAPRIN, 2003; Mkandawire, 2001). This opened another phase of dependency which redefined the relation between Africa and the West through the launching of the neoliberal paradigm by the Breton Woods Institution as solution to both economic and escalating debt crisis.

Critiquing the neoliberal discourse, Abrahamsen (2000) delineates the construction and reduction of developmental crisis in the South to economic failures and the need for Western intervention. The neoliberal reforms connote the rational embedded in a set of institutions and practices which seek to reorient society's understanding of the world in that manner and how they can contribute to its establishment in their independent countries. Thus, the Third World was involved through the blame mechanism which presented them as the opposite of the developed world and a need for mediation (Escobar, 2005). Failure of the state led approach and its associated crisis in the West was not enough to brand the West as underdeveloped but rather problems of the Third World were constructed and redefined within western context of underdevelopment and solutions imported. Enshrined in the Washington Consensus were neoliberal prescriptions of structural adjustment and good governance which served as conditions to aid Third World Countries towards development.

### **2.3. Structural Adjustment Programme**

Imposed by the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was the first phase of neoliberal reform aimed to set the economy of states on a path to sustainable growth. Efforts were therefore made to minimize the role of the state and to place corporate sectors at the fore of development. The period was characterized by macroeconomic programmes of stabilization and deflationary measures as well as liberalization programmes undertaken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) respectively (Jomo and Fine, 2006). Structural adjustment was associated with conditions related to currency devaluation, removal of protective tariffs, reducing inflation, downsizing the public services, drastic government cut back on education, health and welfare, financial reforms, export promotion and above all

privatization of public enterprises. These programmes were meant to roll back the state in its functions to promote market-led growth. Parastatals were privatized while most government functions were contracted to the private sector. The expected result was reduction in income rate and corresponding effect on domestic demand for commodities, hence increasing returns and restoring fiscal deficits but at the same time making room for foreign investors (Abrahamsen, 2000; Sandbrook, 2000; Jomo & Fine, 2006; SAPRIN, 2000). However, these reforms gave little room for the operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in social services and no room for participation in policy debates as those in favour of the regime were co-opted and those in opposition were restrained (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004; Clayton et al., 2000).

### **2.3.1 Disadvantages of Structural Adjustment**

While some scholars have shown skepticism towards any better outcome from a market led approach to development (Jomo & Fine, 2006), assessing the impact of SAP is a difficult one since the implementation of the programme varied in terms of time, place, situation and scope in different countries and in solving different situations. Adjustment in itself may not be bad, however, the assumption of commonality of African societies by western powers led to application of straight jacket fit for all strategy, raising many questions about the credibility of WB and IMF economic framework of SAP. The programme was indiscriminately implemented without considering the welfare of ordinary citizens or variations of economic problems in each country (Mkandawire, 2001). Though it yielded benefit to only six countries out of the twenty nine, it worsened economic conditions for many. For instance, Ghana, Burundi, Gambia, Madagascar, Burkina Faso and Malawi enjoyed the strongest resurgence ever in their economic performance while Nigeria, Zambia, and Cote D'Ivoire experienced industrial collapse and disengagement of

productive capital (Ibhawoh, 1999). It widened the socio-economic gap and spatial inequalities between the rich and poor, thus worsening the plight of the African. Failure of the market led approach was once again blamed on the inability of the state to conform to adjustment reforms due to capacity deficit (SAPRIN, 2004).

Failure of SAP coincided with the rise of the United States (US) as a hegemonic power owing to the fall of communism at the end of the Cold War. With the changing hands of power, the US sought to establish a global hegemony or dominant consensus over states that would accept aid from the international community's based on terms geared towards the establishment of a global economic order (Abrahamsen, 2000; Jomo & Fine, 2000). Structural failures were blamed on issues of governance which came to underline what Abrahamsen terms "litany of Africa's developmental problems". The launch of the WB's 1989 report, 'Sub Saharan Africa: from Crisis to Sustainable Growth', introduced a new discourse and panacea to the up-surgng developmental crisis. Thus, aspirations of US dominance was blurred with the introduction of good governance as a new developmental prescription and the second phase of neoliberal paradigm (Abrahamsen, 2000).

#### **2.4 The Good Governance Agenda**

The good governance agenda (GGA) is the second phase of neoliberal reform but an extension of the first phase in an effort to make up for the humanitarian problems that have been created or ignored by adjustment programmes, hence the term, 'adjustment with a human face' (Jomo and Fine, 2006). Embedded within it are two strands of developmental agenda: continuity of economic adjustment programs on the one hand; which serves as the basis of state power curtailment towards political reform or democratization on the other hand. According to the developmental partners, restructuring

is believed to lead to the emergence of autonomous institutions which can hold the state accountable (World Bank, 1989). Stokke & Mohan, (2001) argues that the market led approach in terms of adjustment programmes have contributed to the absolutism of the state since it was characterized by a strong state and a further marginalization of social organizations. Thus, efforts to curtail the powers of the state must ensure that the market is also controlled. Unfortunately, economic reforms serve as the basis of the good governance or accompanied by it so that failure of adjustment is rather blamed on the inefficiency of the state (Whitfield, 2003) and not the unregulated nature of the market (Jomo and Fine, 2006).

Thus, Escobar's blame game continues, this time around, exemplified in the inefficiencies of mainstream structures. This is asserted by Abrahamsen (2000), that the WB through the agenda sought to degrade the state led approach as structured on a colonial framework and hence a foreign imposition. According to the WB (1989) the mainstream model was characterized by dominant development enterprises that placed the state at the centre of its programmes ignoring local base support. Rather than building support among the people for development, local communities and associations were marginalized for lack of knowledge, capacity and resources to contribute to policy debate (Tandon, 1996).

Consequently, the state had an upper hand in the policy process but could not advance the security and welfare needs of its citizens. In the absence of an accountable state was an inefficient and corrupt government, an outcome which the WB equates to bad governance. Thus, the state is reduced to a problematic structure faced with challenges that inhibit development and a need to redefine its role with its citizens. Good governance becomes

the new prescription with emphasis on the complimentary role of the third sector in development.

In this light, redefining the role of the state calls for a restructuring with emphasis on political and economic reforms. Failure to re-enrol the state in developmental issues meant increasing the scope of the market and looking outside the domain of the state for the possibility of institutions that are potent in the delivery of developmental goals, hence the import of the good governance agenda (Abrahamsen, 2000).

It is in the identification of this sector, and contrary to the statist approach that debunks the efforts and capacity of citizens in developmental issues, that Abrahamsen (2000), Igoe & Kellsal, (2005) and Barkan, et al (1991), commends efforts of citizens. They are of the view that irrespective of state attitude to monopolize and repress external sectors, the informal sector exhibited resilience and undauntedly pursued initiatives towards their own development. According to Barkan et al (1991), there were organizations that assumed the responsibility of the state in promoting social welfare programmes in their various communities. Pillay (1997) gives an example of self-help groups in Uganda who, irrespective of the boundaries set by the state, mobilized to embark on social and welfare projects such as housing facilities, irrigation projects as well as establishment of the informal economy (Pillay, 1997). Extending this argument, Abrahamsen noted that citizens organized themselves into groups, so that as some engaged in business ventures to make a living, constituting what Igoe and Kellsal (2005) terms the informal economic sector. Self-help groups termed associational life also embarked on social service delivery programmes. Gradually these phenomena came to be seen as the key to Africa's regeneration as delineated by Igoe & Kellsal (2005) that the informal economy was

represented by advocates of the GGA as a seedbed of dynamic indigenous capitalism, and associational life as a site of empowerment and bulwark against authoritarian rule (Igoe & Kellsal, 2005: 12).

According to the WB (1989) report the actions of the state has resulted in depriving these local enterprises from having access to the market, and the repression of civil society organizations who have the potential of holding the activities of the state in check (Abrahamsen, 2000). This sets a dichotomy between the state as an oppressor and the third sector or civil society as a domain of freedom and attributed with resilience irrespective of state opposition, monopolistic efforts and suppression. The informal sector is portrayed with attributes of independence, competence, eligibility and proficiency and can be depended upon to bring about economic growth and development. This is because they are autonomous and reliable organization structured around traditional norms and values characterized by selflessness and sacrifice rather than profit or interest oriented. The WB therefore, seeks to invest in these sectors since they can act as a countervailing force against the activities of the state in an effort to promote a democratic reformation (Abdul-Gafaru and Quantson, 2008; Whitefield, 2002).

The informal sector becomes the core concentration of the WB with a vested interest of legitimizing institutions within it and to give them a central role in developmental processes. It resonates Escobar's (1995) assertion that, developmental crisis has ushered developmental discourse into a new stage characterized by new actors and social movements which has become instrumental in facilitating development. The WB equates these movements to CSOs (Abrahamsen, 2000).

## 2.5 The Evolution of the Concept of Civil Society as Tool for Transformation

Defining the roles of the various organizations within the civil society domain is a herculean task. However, concentration can be given to what inspired the notion of civil society as a tool for developmental transformation and the importance of its usage in the GGA. The argument advanced by the neoliberals that civil society is a tool for constructing change is associated with ideals of the renaissance which goes back to the period of enlightenment where the inspiration is drawn. According to Brook and Folic, (1997), the notion of civil society evolved in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century as part of western thought and scholars of political thought such as Frederick Hegel, Adam Smith and Adam Fergusson have expressed complimentary vision on the civil society concept.

Fergusons idea of civil society is one of a sphere which guarantees material civilization as well as intellectual progress. To him, civil society meant a polished and civilized life. In his book, *an essay of the history of civil society, 1767*, he advances an argument based on the growth and development of man in his natural state with the tendency and opportunity to advance from a state of savagery to a more advanced and civilized state.

In human kind, the species has a progress... they build in every subsequent age on foundations formerly laid... in successions of the years tend to a perfection in the application of their faculties to which the aid of long experience is required and to which many generation must have combined their endeavours (Ferguson, 1767:4).

For Ferguson civil society evolved as a result of man's advancement in life from the natural savagery state of life characterized by hunting and gathering, farming, to commercial agriculture and to a more advanced refined life of the development of commerce and division of labour. Man advances from a natural state to a complex one, through "the attainment of reason, the use of language, boldness of invention and

organization of life”, (Ferguson, 1767:4). Hence, man is susceptible to improve and become part of a refined society. This is his concept of civil society which constitutes an advanced life as a precondition for individual freedom of opinions for the growth of society (Ferguson, 1767). According to Kalidor (2003) this was reflected in the Aristotelian period where citizens had the freedom to participate in political life.

Although the process is slow it brings accomplishment with time which results in improved arts, trade and military culture as a symbol of sanity and order and a tool for dismantling disorder. Thus, he argues that civil society is a sphere of intellectuals who employ their intellect (Pietrzyk, 2001) as a tool to end despotic rule characterized by corruption within the feudal state. The result was peace and economic growth (Brook and Folic, 1997). Thus, civil society has been employed in recent times as a conduit to promote economic growth and development.

Using Fergusons argument as a basis, Smith differentiates between the primitive sphere of the household and the evolution of the advanced sphere as a result of economic ventures. According to him, the household is bounded by familial and kinship ties which serve as a basis of trust. As the cradle of trade, establishment of contract was not an issue of concern. Individuals were bounded by existing norms and values embedded in codes of ethics and rules of obligation. However, modernization ushered in commercialization which resulted in migration and abandonment of the household in search for work. Trust then became an issue of concern and contracts guaranteed based on religious or educational affiliation or long established relationships through trade. Smith terms this domain civil society (Chandoke, 2003) in consonance with Fergusons advanced sphere.

He agrees with Ferguson that members in this domain are civilized and exercise great measure of self-control. Smith asserts that the binding element in this sphere was trade where people exhibited diligence in their endeavours not for economic interest but social interest. Thus, they are propelled by the need to attain their self-actualized needs without which they are unfulfilled.

Contrary to Fergusons assertion that knowledge is a prerequisite for attainment of order and transformation, Smith argues that it is power and wealth that brings fulfilment (Smith, 2010; Chandoke, 2003) and the ability to exercise self-control results in societal order, a prerequisite for economic growth and thus a basis for capital accumulation. However, one cannot exercise self-control without self-knowledge or consciousness, making both arguments logical.

Also, economic accumulation serves as a basis for individualistic accumulation, a vice which threatens the domain of freedom since individualism can be converted to self-perpetuated interest as opposed to the household where communality dominates. This is due to the desire to acquire property, possibly through economic ventures which serves as a point of separation between the economically primitive and polished societies (Smith, 1995). Also, advancement in work is associated with professionalism which results in division of labour where people begin to fight for their right; right to ownership which raises moral issues of centeredness (Smith, 2010). The intervention of the government was therefore crucial in enforcing laws that recognized right of the individual in terms of property and ownership rights, and later the pursuit of democratic rights. Civil society becomes a domain of free men who have attained some level of advancement in their society in pursuit of the good life and accumulation of property while they call on

government intervention to protect this property through the enforcement of contract and registration of their property. For Smith, unlike the household or community, civil society was the domain for the attainment of freedom through the pursuit of self-actualization but obligations and regulations in the sphere prevents self-interest so that wealth accumulated is towards social fulfilment or natural needs (Maslow's hierarchy of needs) rather than selfish gains (Zunaida, nd).

Influenced by Smith and other political economists, Hegel was the first theorist to systematically distinguish the state from civil society (Kalidor, 2003). The intention was to dissolve absolutism in the state and incite officials to work rather than pursue selfish gains in terms of hoarding property. He agrees with Smith and Ferguson that the desire to become self-fulfilled and actualized as a social obligation prompts man to advance from the traditional household to a life characterized by modernity. For Hegel, what urges man is the desire to be recognized and acknowledged. To him, civil society is a society of the bourgeois where activities within the sector promotes self-realization and the pursuit of objective goals as opposed to subjective life in the household (Carothers, 1999).

He concurs with Ferguson and Smith that man becomes liberated from the shackles of nature and develops through challenges associated with modernization. Here, man has dominion over nature and regulates it to meet his needs. He also concurs with Smith that by the pursuit of hard work man gains virtue which can bring about egoistic tendencies. However, his environment confer on him some obligations and expectations which compels him to work for the good of society rather than himself. Hence, self-actualized needs are dependently and mutually attained. As man works under the canopy of modernization, ethical and social obligations commit him to meet expectations that

overshadow his selfish demands. In the context of the rational choice theory where the state embarks on projects not for the purpose of development but to extend the bureaucracy can be contested, since the projects to some extent meet social obligation than selfish gains (Jomo and Fine, 2000; Ferguson, 1767 ). Again, CSOs that capitalize on money in the name of embarking on development (Igoe & Kellsal, 2005) are also free to pursue their selfish gains. But to Hegel, it is the ownership of property that incites particularistic tendencies. Thus, he establishes civil society as a space of abstract rights which makes property hoarding impossible. (Zunaidha: nd). In Hegel's view, this is what can project the state as absolute and universal while its officials are detached from right to ownership in order to make sound judgments. For Hegel, civil society is not a platform for amassing wealth and accumulating capital. Realization of self and impacting on one's social sphere is the basis for self-recognition which brings accomplishment.

The concept of civil society died out and revived after the Second World War by Antonio Gramsci. He perceived civil society as a sphere in which existing social order can be found and a tool for suppressing autocracy (Wood, 1990). In his endeavour to understand the consolidation of the existing political order he engaged in thought provoking analysis that can result in a change of the status quo (Cox, 1999). The purpose of this reformation which came to be embedded within socialist theory was to compare the distinctive nature of political structures and constitutional reform in the west to existing autocratic regimes and how power can be transferred from the latter and diffused to society. He situated the idea of civil society as a sphere beyond an interception between state and society to a sphere outside the domain of the state, the family and the market (wood, Kalidor, 2003). He appropriated it as a tool to contend capitalist formation but at the same time as a domain that complimented the weaknesses of a state. The historical context within which

he juxtaposes his thoughts was characterized by tension between the state and labourers agitation for social and economic freedom (Cox, 1999; Kalidor, 2003). He was interested in promoting syndicalism which prompted him to advocate the formation of social units (trade unions) from beneath to serve as a tool for constructing change against the existing hegemony (Cox, 1999).

He posits that the driving force that can be responsible for development is the elite who unfortunately project their selfish interest above that of the people they represent. There is therefore the need for a community that can represent and project the interest of the masses rather than individual interest. However, the nineteenth century saw the establishment of civil society through the creation of a working class whose vested interest was the attainment of political right (Kalidor, 2003).

## **2.6. Redefinition of Civil Society in Recent Development and its Usage in the Good Governance Discourse**

Contrary to Gramsci's reformulation of civil society as a tool to battle capitalism, "current usage no longer has this unequivocal anti-capitalist intent ... it has acquired a whole new set of meaning and consequences ..." (Wood, 1990:63) with the end of socialism and the world crisis of capitalism in the 1970s. But it still resonate Gramsci's notion of civil society as a tool for dismantling authoritarian regimes.

Regarding the view of Ferguson, Smith and Hegel, Civil society is similarly defined as a sphere of freedom where economic ventures are undertaken. For Escobar (2005), the notion has come to represent the capacity for self-realization as defined by Hegel and Smith and freedom from autocracy as exemplified by Hegel. But the notion has been

redefined in recent times by proponents of neoliberalism where human needs is re-conceptualized along economic lines. Individuals are empowered to make self-interest choices (Leitner, et al, 2007) but this choice to Escobar goes beyond basic needs and asserts individual freedom from authoritarian rule as a basis for peace (Leitner, et al 2007) towards economic growth. Although individuals are empowered to make their own choices, these choices are undemocratically limited. Individuals may have choices in promoting particular interest but this must be in line with objectives of international organizations and foundations for promoting economic reforms. The choice of the individual is therefore skewed and limited.

In developing countries, the idea of civil society was revived through a revolution in both Latin America and Eastern Europe simultaneously with advocates such as Thatcher and Reagan (Kalidor, 2003). This was made possible through self-organized groups who took centre stage and became a force behind political transition in their respective countries. They employed various strategies including public discussions, crusades, protest, and mobilizations (Robinson & Friedman, 2005).

According to Robinson and Friedman (2005:1), the Western powers and foreign donors were influenced by these ideas and events and became aware of the potential role of civil society in democratic transitions in other parts of developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Initially, the economic crisis in these regions committed countries to coerce trade unions and CSOs and reduce social welfare expenditure in order to induce recovery and economic growth (Sandbrook, 2000). By the end of the twentieth century, “civil society was...an idea that was to contribute to a new set of global arrangement in the 1990s with a new face and definition”, (Kalidor, 2003:588). Liberalization of civil

society was rather advocated if any form of economic growth and development was to be attained (Obadare, 2013).

### **2.6.1 Importance of the Usage of Civil Society and Think Tanks in the Restructuring Process**

According to Stokke and Mohan, (2001), Developmental programmes are conceptually knowledge based in nature and hence cost involving. Aside the fact that project initiatives are cost intensive, the technicalities involved in setting agenda demands the help of foreign expertise who are also expensive to sustain. It becomes worse when foreign experts lack understanding of the cultural setting within which the developmental models are constructed making developmental programmes unfruitful. This has been a tremendous challenge faced by development initiatives in the Third World countries (CEPA, 1996).

Looking for an alternative employs the urgency of utilizing the skills of locally based trained expertise which can substitute for the foreign based expertise for maximum efficiency. It is in this vein that the WB advocates for institutions within the civil society domain. However, not all of them are technically inclined and aligned to developmental projects. Institutional reform is centred on the establishment of research based policy analysis that requires the efforts of experts and technocrats. Hence, placement of special emphasis on intermediary organizations (Obadare, 2013) by the World Bank as having special or important role to play. In view of this, a dichotomy is set between grass root institutions and the intermediary organizations that are perceived to be the voice of other institutions within the domain (World Bank, 1989; Abrahamsen, 2000). The role of CSOs and think tanks in the policy process can be better perceived through the theories of participation thus, the pluralist theory and the elitist theory.

### **2.7.1 Theories of Participation in the Public Policy Process (The Pluralist Theory)**

Proponents of the pluralist theory such as Dahl (1967 as cited in Haralamados and Holborn, 2004) are of the view that the aim of restructuring of the state political systems is to decentralize and promote multiple centres of power. Placing this theory in a historical context, Dahl (1967) and Hill (2013) advances the argument that as part of de-concentration, policy formulation and analysis was the sole responsibility of public policy actors and institutes in public administrative system. De-concentration is a system where state functions are delegated to government officials at the sub-national level as trustees of development (Ahwoi, 2010). According to Brown (1989), public administrative officials represent the people at the local level and expected to collaborate with citizens in decision making and implement central directives (Agawal and Ribot, 2000). Unfortunately, these actors are not well informed on administrative functions and especially the policy process which involves technicalities and complexities (Boasiako, 2010). The capacity of the populace on the other hand, is also disproportionate to developmental roles. Actors at the regional level have to take up decision making while the process ends at the national level where final decisions are made (Oyigi, 2000). Policies are therefore skewed to the interest of the upper classes and to the detriment of the citizens.

However, liberal democracy promotes decentralization which shifts power from the state as the sole actor in decision making, and limits its functions and services to the public through devolution of state power (Agrawal & Ribot, 2000). This is what Hill (2013) defines as the pluralist government where informed citizens and CSOs compete among themselves in an attempt to contribute to policy debate.

According to Haralamados and Holborn, (2004), the establishment of CSOs is essential in consolidating democracy since they hold the government accountable to deliver promises but also draw government attention on gaps that must be filled. Again interest groups have the ability to influence policy through increased vocal pressure on government to either pursue policies in their interest or alter policies that are detrimental to their interest. In that regard they do not only play an advocacy role but serve as intermediary organization that help shape policies, (Ainsworth, 2002).

This theory is a useful instrument in analysing the emergence and role of think tanks in a democratic context which has not only given them space to operate like any other CSOs but more importantly as a lens through which they can be identified as actors in the policy making process. Most scholars such as Abelson (2002), McGann (2007) and McGann and Weaver (2000) have emphasized their role as intermediary organizations who do not only influence policy formulation and analysis but offer recommendation to government on salient issues that can help better the lives of citizens in the development process.

#### **2.7.1.1 Critique of the Pluralist Theory**

The constraints identified with a pluralist system of decision-making is that whereas institutions within this domain have the political right to vote their choice of government into power, the populace cannot be involved in the policy formulation process as in the Athenian period where the number was limited (Kalidor. 2003). This means popular interest cannot be met (Hill, 2013). Kpessa and Belead, (2011) also noted that a large portion of the citizens are not well informed since they lack knowledge about policies and the policy process. Thus, they find it difficult to make effective contribution. Waltzer (1990) thus affirms the aloofness of citizens towards political issues. This is asserted by

proponents of the elite who view “the majority as apathetic and unconcerned with the major issues of the day” (Haralamados and Holborn, 2004:549). This becomes a major constraint to participation which renders the decentralization process incomplete.

The presence of interest groups could therefore be essential to channel the interest of citizens. However, different interest groups pursue varied interest whereas some groups have comparative advantage over others in pushing their interest through. The trade and labour unions for example, have more advantage over other religious groups and associations in pushing their interest which may be seen as urgent over others. According to Parson (1967) this breeds conflict of interest. Thus, Mosca (in Haralamados and Holborn, 2004), argues that the masses lack the capacity and knowledge in issues of governance and hence need to be directed by people whom Pareto (in Haralamados and Holborn, 2004) defines as cunning or intelligent and hence advocate in the interest of the elite.

### **2.7.2 Theories of Participation in the Policy Process (The Elite Theory)**

The elite theory was developed as an attempt to fill the gap in the pluralist theory. Proponents such as Mills (1963, in Haralamados and Holborn, 2004), posit that “elites not masses govern all societies” (Die & Ziegler, 1993:2). Contrary to the view of the pluralist theorists that all members of society can have access and participate in the policy process, the elite theory restricts access to the policy formulation process to owners of some form of resource such as education, money, status, knowledge, etc. which makes them organized and consistent in the midst of a disorganized populace (Reich, 2009).

Elite theory defines policy as an instrument in the hands of the influential who take it upon themselves to represent the masses. According to Persaud (2000), while capital accumulation is no longer a constraint to development, human resource in the form of knowledge or information has become a prerequisite for attaining economic growth and development. He further argues that there is the need to convert knowledge and information to policies that can promote and consolidate democracy. This involves skills and technicalities which requires expert in the process. Therefore from this perspective, think tanks themselves are looked upon as elite institution because of their access to knowledge and even more importantly decision-making (Reich, 2009).

The neoliberal paradigm constitutes an agenda which demands high quality policy based research analysis (Obadare, 2013). In the view of the Schumpeterian, developmental reform shifts demand and interest from production to knowledge and towards the establishment of a knowledge based economy (Haralamados and Holborn, 2004). Thus, the WB advocates demands for intermediary institutions since,

..., they can create links both upwards and downwards in society and voice local concerns more effectively than grass root institutions. In doing this they can bring a broader spectrum of ideas and values to bear on policy making. Intermediary organizations are also expected to exert pressure on public officials for better performance and greater accountability (Abrahamsen, 2000:53).

It cannot be disputed that the organization in focus are policy research institutes and advocacy centres since the high concentration of intellectuals and policy experts in the private policy institutes or think tank domain reflects a knowledge base resource. In conclusion, while the elite theory acknowledges the existence of CSOs in a pluralist

system, it projects think tanks as a representative of these groups by virtue of the fact that they are part of the intelligentsia and as such serve as an apparatus to advance democratic ideals and economic practices throughout the globe. Since establishment of networks is crucial to the success of this framework, the formation of linkages with local knowledge based institutions that can work with the international organizations to promote knowledge based policies based on traditional values has become crucial (Abrahamsen, 2000; Escobar, 2005).

Thus, the WB advocates support for think tanks in an effort to consolidate institutional reform. Think tanks as representatives of CSOs have received tremendous aid from both external donors and bilateral as well as multilateral organizations (Whitefield, 2002). While the Bank emphasizes freedom of these organizations from the grip of the state, the study seeks to assess their autonomy in relation to the neoliberal agenda and how donor funding undermines the assumed autonomy.

### **2.7.2.1 Critique of the Elite Theory**

While proponents of the elite theory are of the view that the elite groups are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds, and hence have the propensity to promote the interest of various social groups in society, their nature as an elite group poses a threat since they also have their personal interest at heart. Whereas public institutions are rated as an elite group that pursues their own course to the detriment of society, Walker (1966), associates think tanks as a second elite who do not vote as a result of their non-partisanship, having no direct contact with citizens but claim to influence policies in their interest. Unlike the first elite who are held accountable by their citizens, the second elite are held accountable by

their donors and not citizens though their activities can have both positive and negative impact on citizens.

Again, the place of CSOs in the decentralization process is one that is unrealistic. This is because they advocate for a roll back of the state and transfer of its power in the quest to promote ownership or privatization (Ahwoi, 2010) which defies the notion of power sharing or participation in the decision making process (Oyigi, 2000).

## **2.8 Conceptualization of Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Think Tanks**

The notion of civil society is ubiquitous in the developmental discourse as a result of its instrumental role in bringing about political transition and developmental transformation. This is due to the fluidity of the term that allows its usage in every aspect of development. Despite its significance in the development discourse, there is no definite definition of the concept and many scholars stand opposed to what the term should definitely stand for. While some scholars perceive civil society as associational life (Gyimah Boadi, 1994; Burbidge, 1997) consisting of various groups outside the state and market (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004), with common or divergent interest, others perceive them as formal groups (Fierbeck, 1998) due to their legitimacy. However, the latter places civil society at a position that raises concerns about the kind of relationship that must exist between civil society and the state. While some scholars perceive an antagonistic relationship in an effort to bring the state to order (Bayart, 1986) others perceive it as one of partnership.

In this study, the term civil society refers to an advanced space outside the state, market and society (family) that constitute all voluntary and associational organizations with varied role and interest in an effort to bring transformation to their members or society

irrespective of their position as opposed or amiable to the state. This is in line with the view of the London School of Economics (2004), where civil society is identified as a broader umbrella that shelters varied actors and institutional forms (Masterson, 2007; Gyimah Boadi, 1994) with different agenda, interest or ideology (Abrahamsen, 2000) but with a binding force of freedom from manipulation which underline the autonomy they enjoy (Walzer, 1990). However, the idea that civil society constitutes diverse groups with multiplicity of interest undermines its usage in the democratic discourse where associational groups and organizations exist to promote and entrench democracy (Abrahamsen, 2000). According to Abrahamsen (2000) organizations within this space epitomizes and reflects a wide range of activities. Most of them are politically, socially, economically or religiously motivated. While some may exist to pursue political interest in an effort to either curtail state power or promote its legitimacy others may not have any relationship with the state but rather endeavour to achieve social or economic obligations to their members. More so, others may be established along ethnic lines working within a defined boundary to promote the interest of their members. Abrahamsen (2000) therefore reiterates that the notion of civil society as democratic is unacceptable. Whitefield (2003) also argues that the concept of civil society has become a tool employed by donors to promote donor interest of institutional reform and hence redefined the role of CSOs to that effect. She thus defines civil society as an abstract domain that represents organizations outside the public sphere whose activities are trusted by the international community to bring democratic transformation in an effort to roll back the state and hold it accountable. The 1990s therefore witnessed the urgency to associate economic reform with political transformation. The onus lay on CSOs as a tool for restructuring. According to the WB the presence of civil society can promote a plurality of institutions that can hold the state accountable in the delivery of its functions

However, not all the organizations within the civil society domain serve as instrument of manipulation. As noted earlier the domain includes independent and unique organizations pursuing various forms of competitive interest outside the state. For Waltzer (1990), each competitor is a representation of an NGO. This is explicit in the definition given by The London School of Economics (2004) that NGOs are social movements such as self-help groups, community based organizations, trade union, business associations, professional associations and advocacy groups as well as developmental nongovernmental organization and international NGOs (Obadare, 2013). However some scholars oppose the above classification as NGOs. Carothers (1999) categorizes organizations within the civil society domain into two. The first constitutes what Gyimah Boadi classifies as civic associations. They constitute locally based self-help groups such as the trade unions, the students union, business associations, religious groups and other domestic associations or grass root organizations aligned to particular group interest. The second category is what Carothers (1999) classifies as NGO's, a new term Hagberg (2004) associates with developmental activities. Actors within this category engage in roles that are divergent to the mainstream associations although there may be common traits. They are noted, paramount for public education, advocacy roles and policy influence. Similarly, Mercer (2002), limits NGOs to contemporary urban based organizations that are well established and supported either domestically or internationally (well resourced). According to her,

... NGOs may therefore be international organizations or they may be national or regional NGOs. They are seen as different from Grassroots Organizations (GROs) (that are usually understood to be smaller, often membership-based organizations, operating without a paid staff), but often reliant upon donor or NGO support, which tend to be (but are not always) issue-based and therefore ephemeral, (Mercer, 2002:6).

To affirm this, Igoe and Kellsall (2005) define NGOs as an ideological instrument that seeks to promote domestic-like organizations (civil associations) in an effort to enlarge and consolidate civil society. The WB also emphatically differentiates NGOs from grass root organization and the specific role played by the intermediary organization poses a dichotomy between groups within the domain. Hence, the Banks enumeration of developmental roles in terms of policy analysis and idea initiative serve as a complex task limited to a unique group within the civil society domain. This implies that whereas organizations and groups within the civil society domain pursue varied interest not all of them have the capacity and ability to influence policy or propose developmental ideas. However, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and other donor agencies seek to work with domestic knowledge based institutions that have their orientation in development and policy issues. It is in this stead that think tanks have emerged as locally based policy institutions serving as a representation of all the other associational groupings within the civil society domain. Developmental partners and INGOs have channelled their resources in support of these organizations in order to engender developmental interest. It is difficult then to argue that any of these organizations stand independent or opposed to the ideological interest of their donors which also results in a contestation of their autonomy (Abrahamsen, 2000; Whitefield, 2002).

According to Stone (2007), and McGann (2007), the term 'think tank' is used here to mean autonomous or independent and non-profit private policy research institutes whose agents are involved in studying particular policy themes or wide range of policy issues, devotedly seeking diverse avenues through which they can educate and counsel both policy makers and the public. Medvetz (2008) employ their state of autonomy to distinguish between them and other CSOs. However, the autonomy of think tanks has largely been contested

by many developmental scholars as a false impression (Stone, 2000; McGann, 2005; Smith, 1990).

Comparing think tanks of the global West such as those in northern Europe and Britain and the global South such as in Asia and Africa portrays those in the former as having a better advantage. According to McGann (2007), due to the existence of civil and philanthropic culture in the United State, think tanks in this region receive financial aid from private enterprises who can hardly tie them down. This is because while the donors are guided by “enlightened self-interest” towards global transformation, their influence is much more limited than when international organizations and donor agencies are in force (McGann, 2007). Hence they enjoy financial independence than most of their counterparts in other regions.

However, this does not mean think tanks in the global west are completely autonomous. McGann’s (2007:46) argues that “it is clearly the fuel that fires the idea industry” This is an indication of the existence of other donor agencies and corporate entities who have the ability to determine the direction of their work especially where some ideological foundations are determined to push their interest through. For instance, Climate campaigners consider oil giant ExxonMobil one of the world’s most controversial oil firms for its opposition to the Kyoto Protocol and its role in convincing the US government to abstain from effective measures to combat climate change. Despite growing pressure, the company continues to fuel the work of climate sceptic think tanks and lobby groups in North America and Europe. According to the Worldwide Giving Report published annually by the ExxonMobil headquarters in the US, the oil giant distributed \$2.9 million to 39 such groups. The report reveals that the Competitive

Enterprise Institute, a Washington think tank that aggressively challenges the need to act against global warming was the biggest US beneficiary of ExxonMobil funding last year (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2006).

With such a potential conflict of interest, earlier 2006, the Royal Society, the UK's most prestigious scientific body, wrote to the oil giant to demand that it withdraws its funding for climate-sceptic think tanks because they have "misrepresented the science of climate change by outright denial of the evidence"(Adam, 2006 cited in Corporate Europe Observatory, 2006). This suggests the source of funding for think tanks and NGOs in general could have a rippling effect on the activities, the programs and the opinions held.

Medvetz, (2008) argues that as far as the emergence of think tanks as a post war phenomenon is concern, they have been a progeny of interest-based institutions or sectors be it the government (public), the market, parties or universities. McGann (2005) and Parson (1995) assert their doubt on the autonomy of think tanks as offspring of the three sectors presented by Medvetz. While they may be affiliated to one or more of these sectors, they are to McGann a progeny of early prototype knowledge institutes of what Parson (1995) calls grand old men. Gulliver in Smiths *Idea Brokers* (1991) described them as learned advisors who produce scientific knowledge analysis and to McGann have played a neutral and objective role until the introduction of developmental ideals affiliated with such sectors as the state, the market or civil society. This is asserted by Igoe and Kellsal (2005), who noted the role of patron funders as responsible for the existence of mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century knowledge based institutes whom they seek to use as what Rich, (2007 ) terms a "currency" for buying their respective ideals into formation. Thus, affiliation of think tanks to particular interest agenda has the tendency of diverting their

focus of being objective and neutral and hence limit them to produce alternative policy advice where necessary.

In the Global South however, Medvetz noted that think tanks have emerged as a result of political transformation. While in the Global West, they existed to push the Keynesian and neoliberal agenda simultaneously through, their proliferation in the Global South is linked to the restructuring which aimed at dismantling the state and reinstituting countries and projecting their economy at the global level through economic liberalization and contracting of state services to organizations within the civil society domain (Datta, Jones And Mendizabal In Garce And Una, 2010). This has served as a context within which think tanks emerged and assumed new forms of roles without constraint (Igoe and Kellsal, 2005).

Some scholars provide a different historical background to the emergence of think tanks. Whitefield (2003) for instance link the emergence of think tanks to a civil society revolution as an effort to demonstrate the frustrations of the masses in an era characterized by economic crisis. Organization of civil groups meant they had realized the weaknesses of the state in terms of inability to make right decision since it lacked ideas, access to information, critical analytical skills as well as general decline in knowledge. Sandbrook (2005) and Hashimoto, Hell and Nam (2005), link the emergence of think tanks to an era of knowledge depreciation which led to policy deficit. The public policy institutes performed poorly most especially because of their affiliation to the state which could not provide capacity training and technical assistance to these institutions but used them to entrench itself since they could not criticize the state but had to promote its interest. Civil associations therefore sort to dissolve the centralist system and close up the gulf through

civil participation in terms of service provision, advocacy strategies and capacity building for both government and citizens but more importantly participation in the policy formulation process. Although the associational groups were better placed in terms of service delivery, most of them were handicapped with regards to funding and analytical skills towards advocacy in an effort to participate in the policy process. Hence demand for knowledge based research organizations with powerful analytical skills led to the emergence of private policy institutes.

However, Bratton (2004), in support of Medvetz's argument, noted a two dimensional approach to the proliferation of think tanks. Aside the internal demand for change, there was also external pressures for political transformation. According to him, the emergence of a civil space could not have been possible without the intervention of developmental partners. Abrahamsen (2000), argues that the developmental partners were responsible for the structural conditions that led to agitation for political transformation. They were again a major force that propelled the transformation. This is because they were not only facilitators of the neoliberal agenda that supported civil liberties but made it part of a new conditionality to states that needed their support. It is therefore not surprising that the new organizations were faced with a major challenge of sustenance, as they were not for profit organizations. This coincided with the introduction of donor aid based programmes by developmental partners such as the WB and IMF and other donor agencies and a coincidental opportunity for CSOs. It can thus be concluded that the neoliberal paradigm is the most dominant factor in the proliferation of think tanks in Africa leading to a new relationship between the policy institutes and the developmental partners as well as their donors.

## **2.9 History of Think Tanks**

Tracing the genesis of think tanks could be an arduous task since they differ in scope, objectives and functions, nonetheless, Goodman (nd) traces the dawn of think tank emergence to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The idea was first associated with Thomas Clarkes, an antislavery Englishman who established the society for the Abolishing of African Slave Trade in 1782. Clarkes inspired his audience through a carefully laid out pictorial and written description depicting the nature of slave events. He engaged in a battle of ideas geared towards the abolition of slave trade, an achievement which earned his establishment an anticipation of becoming the world's first think tank (Reed, 2005).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, another establishment emerged in Britain known as the Fabian Society. This was a discontent group who embarked on initiatives to transform their country. They employed various means such as publication of pamphlets and books, organization of seminars and stimulated discussions in their campaign for change. The organization without doubt can be classified as a think tank since the group exhibited most features of an active modern think tank. These societies established by the forerunners became the archetype or prototype of ensuing think tanks (Anstead and Straw, 2008).

However, McGann (2005) traces the emergence of modern think tanks to America. According to him, the liberalization and decentralization of the administrative structure in America was an open door for contribution of ideas and knowledge outside the government sector. The private sectors therefore, took advantage and filled the gap. McGann's representation of an illustrative list of think tanks in the US proved that the first ever think tank to be established, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was started in 1910, followed by Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs in 1914 and

then the Brookings Institute in 1916. However, the resurgence of modern think tanks can be classified into four waves.

### **2.9.1 First Wave of Think Tanks**

According to Smith (1991), prior to the Second World War experts from academic and scientific research institutes were responsible for influencing government decisions in the US and elsewhere. Stone (2000: 156) argues that these group of experts concentrated within public based policy institutes existed in “responds to growing levels of literacy and pressures for public debate” and thus complimented the intellectual needs of government before the mid twentieth century (Smith, 1991). Though the term think tank was coined after the Second World War, Stone (2000) classifies this group of experts as the first wave of think tanks since the private policy institutes that emerged after existed to compliment the role of the public policy institutes. Some of the earlier established public research institutes include, Hebert Hoovers Research Commission, the Council of Economic Advisers (Smith, 1991) Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1910, the Institute for Government Research (1916), Brookings Institution in 1927, (Abelson, 2002).

Unfortunately, the state lost trust for the public research institutes (Rich, 2004). Despite their academic efforts in influencing change, Smith (1991) noted some challenges; firstly, they lacked analytical skills to connect intellectual assumptions to practical life which posed a major challenge. Secondly, Rich noted that they became subject to government patronage as they were coerced and manipulated to pursue public interest. Thirdly, they were incompetent because they could not offer foreign policy recommendations that would project their country to a global level (McGann, 2007; Stone, 2000). Therefore,

government looked outside the public sector for policy advice. This led to the emergence of private policy institutes that existed to fill the gap created by the public policy institutes.

### **2.9.2 Second Wave of Think Tanks**

By the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was an upsurge of another wave of policy institutes which were private and had emerged as mediators between academic institutions and the state in an endeavour to compliment the effort of the public research institutes, and make academic research relevant for policy (Stone, 2000). The private policy institutes emerged as a post war phenomenon in a period where the US was advancing towards a hegemonic power in a bi-polar world with an urgent need for national security policy as well as foreign policy to help the state consolidate her rule. This is affirmed by Farazmand (1991) who argues that private policy institutes were instrumental in analyzing academic research and making them relevant for development not only in the US but to gain foreign influence.

### **2.9.3 Third Wave of Think Tanks**

The third wave of think tanks emerged in the 1970s as a result of global crisis in connection to the OPEC oil crisis, and economic crisis in the US (Stone, 2000; Jomo & Fine, 2006). Private policy institutes emerged in responds to trans-border policy problems of pollution, to promote human capital development, aid civil society development and extend policy analytic capacity (stone 2000:153).

Proliferation of think tanks around this period was not only because policy makers needed support but because these institutes became conscious of their role in influencing policy through problem identification and solution (Parson, 1995). Hence, think tank

organizations around this period were sensitive to environmental demands. Most of think tank institutions within this wave were engaged in advocacy which made their work unique from those of earlier established institutes by breaking the frontiers and offering services beyond their national borders.

#### **2.9.4 Fourth Wave of Think Tanks**

The last wave of think tank was a late C 20<sup>th</sup> phenomenon with its rippling effect across the globe. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the US as a hegemonic power, and the expansion of the European union as well as restructuring in political systems that emphasized the importance of the role of the third sector associated with donor support has opened space for the proliferation of think tanks in this regard (Stone, 2000). Think tank institutions that emerged in the fourth wave have new set of roles in the policy discourse. The essential role of these institutions is to fill the gap created by mainstream policy institutions. They exist to take up state functions and compliment the role of public policy institutes (McGann, 2005).

Africa cannot be left out since the continent experienced a surge in this era. The emergence of think tanks in Africa has been attributed to a number of factors. Gap in knowledge, modernization, partisan politics among others (Think Tank Report, 2013). The most dominant factor is the political transition from a rigid path of decision making to a more flexible one which paved way for CSOs to emerge in an effort to provide solution to the various socio-culture, economic and political problems (Obadare, 2013) and participate in the policy process to influence policy in that regard (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011).

## 2.10 Role of Think Tanks in the Policy Process

The emergence of think tanks around the middle 20th Century was in part to fill the gap that had been left void by the public policy institutes. Although there was a transformation of roles in their activity after this period, they originally existed to perform certain kinds of roles (Smith, 1990). Other roles include;

They are a bridge between the world of ideas and politics, interpreting raw information into useful data or scholarly material into a policy product for useful usage (McGann 2007). Rich (2004), asserts this by defining them as experts who basically engage in a battle of ideas to produce a policy relevant research for policy makers and hence Goodman's (nd) definition of them as idea brokers.

1. Building confidence in public institutions. To this they provide informed personnel for the legislative and executive branches of government. They also seek to challenge the conventional wisdom, standard operating procedures, and "business as usual" of bureaucrats and elected officials.
2. Serving as an informed independent voice in policy debate
3. Identify, articulate and evaluate policy issues, proposals and programs.
4. Providing a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information between key stake holders in the policy formulation process.
5. Other range of activities include, framing policy issues, researching and writing books, articles, policy briefs, and monographs; conducting evaluations of government programs; disseminating their research findings (McGann 2007).

According to McGann (2007), towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, think tanks assumed diverse roles and functions due to some environmental factors. Political

transition associated with “decentralization and the pluralistic nature of American political culture” (McGann, 2007:2) in the United State was the major factor that induced their proliferation which hitherto redefined their role. However, they have spread across the globe due to other factors which has further altered their original mission of engaging in a war of ideas with the purpose of closing the gap between knowledge and politics, and of producing objective and neutral policy research. Some of the factors include Globalization associated with the fall of the communist bloc and the rise of the US as a hegemonic power in an effort to establish a global hegemonic order and the need for the production of foreign policy in that regard (Abrahamsen, 2000). The rise and fall of authoritarian regimes, modernization and associated information and communication technology, introduction of partisan politics are other factors that have propelled the proliferation of think tanks. These factors have redefined their roles (Rich, 2004; McGann, 2007).

Whereas Weaver (1989) links the growth of think tank industry in association with modernization and its associated political transformation, McGann accentuates the redefinition of think tank role from producers of objective scholarly research and analysis to specialized action oriented research. This is in line with the introduction of political and market reforms with the impact acknowledged by Rich (2004) as reorienting think tanks in their role from policy analyst to advocates of certain ideologies using policy research as ammunitions. Affiliation to certain ideological orientation and their overly dependence on aid has altered their credentials as autonomous policy research organization.

### **2.11 Conceptualizing autonomy**

In the development literature, autonomy is synonymous to self-governance (Selznick, 1953). Hence, this paper defines autonomy as the ability of an actor or organization to

enjoy freedom of self-governance which allows it to willingly accept or reject the support (financial, technical, intellectual) of other agencies. This definition is appreciated looking at the characteristics of autonomy from a national, organizational and ideal context (McGann, 2005; Collier, 2011; Kelstrup, nd).

McGann and Weaver (2005) defined autonomy within a national context. Thus, where an actor or organization is not co-opted, manipulated or given assistance by the state or any political party. This kind of autonomy gives an actor or organization the legal freedom to operate.

Collier (2011) also defines autonomy from an organizational context. Thus the ability of an actor or organization to manage itself to become consolidated, raise its status to become influential and globally competitive. This kind of autonomy allows an actor or organization to seek aid without restriction. Hence, Stone (2000) argues that organizational autonomy is impossible without interaction with external forces since it creates avenue for new ideas and innovation. Thus, autonomy is stronger when an actor or organization is partially closed, (Collier, 2011).

This suggests that external aid may not be bad in itself but once it is associated with conditions it has the propensity to undermine the autonomy of an actor or organization. Whereas the developmental literature acknowledges the characteristics of autonomy, the thesis seeks to consider the relationship between recipient organizations and their donors and the extent to which imposed conditions undermine their autonomy (Shivji, 2007; Stone, 2000; Brautigam, 2000).

Datta, Jones and Mendizabl (2010:55), argues that, “think tanks have become dependent on foreign donors not only for financial aid but also for ideas”. According to McGann (2007), intellectual (ideas) and technical (skills) assistance allows donor agencies and the international community to participate directly or indirectly in programmes of the actor or organization giving way to donor influence (Ohno, 2005). Most think tanks depend on external expertise for direction on specific projects in an attempt to produce quality research outcomes.

Also, most donor agencies are under pressure to meet expectations of their home countries by extending ideological precepts, developmental models and international practices. Aid is associated with particular developmental projects and contracted to interested organizations that can extend these projects in areas where developmental ideas are in demand (Whitefield, 2002; Shivji, 2007).

Again Meyer, (1992) argues that donors are taking “a step back” as they “shift institutional building from the public sector to the ‘private’ [NGO] sector.” The existence of weak national institutions results in dependence on donor aid which comes with policy prescriptions and further weakens institutional and policy autonomy of recipient countries. The international community and donor agencies in turn render the state incapable of delivery and channel funds to other sectors to serve as a check on the state in the delivery of policy prescriptions (Brautigam, 2000:37). Organizations and actors in the third sector becomes instrument of manipulation and used to consolidate externally imposed policy prescriptions.

The third characteristic of autonomy is the ideational autonomy (Kelstrup, nd) where the autonomy enjoyed by an organization is in the ideal situation. Think tanks are by nature non-representative of any group or ideology. Contrarily, they are perceived by the WB as organizations that do not have personal interest and therefore a good representation of the populace (Abrahamsen, 2000). Also, some of the organizations affiliate with particular world views and ideologies in an effort to get aid (Kelstrup, nd). This situation contradicts their nature as non-representative and undermines their autonomy in a real world.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

From the literature it can be seen that the idea of civil society as an advanced space for economic ventures and the fulfilment of man's social needs have existed as far back as the period of enlightenment. However, the fluidity of the word has allowed its usage in contemporary times as a tool for inducing developmental change across the globe. Developmental partners have reduced developmental problems to poor economic performance by an inefficient state whose policies have been detrimental to the markets and society at large. In Third World countries, this blame game has been part of an interventionist mechanism which convinces countries in the Global South to accept their fate as underdeveloped and a need for the extension of western intervention and practices through international organizations that serves as an apparatus for extending western models towards an expected growth and development. The introduction of neoliberal reforms towards economic recovery was perceived by developmental partners as panacea to the crisis. Failure of the first phase which constitutes SAP did not stop developmental institutions from holding the state responsible and inefficient in administration of SAP. According to the developmental partners, state inefficiency, poor cultural practices and capacity deficit resulted in bad policies which distorted regular operation of the market

and deprived citizens of their basic rights. This was equated to bad governance which challenged the need for a restructuring as an effort to promote good governance. Political reforms would serve as the basis for the emergence and proliferation of multiple institutions which are perceived by developmental partners as autonomous and trust worthy. A shift to the third sector has its basis in the fact that when the state skewed policies and resources to the benefit of state officials and elite to the detriment of society, citizens organized self-help groups and enterprises to facilitate resources to promote interest of their members. Thus developmental partners perceive these groups to be trustworthy, non-egoistic and that given the space or opportunity, they can hold government accountable towards economic development. The onus lay on civil society as an intermediary space where according to the International Financial Institutions both economic and humanitarian ventures are promoted by autonomous institutions. However, concentration has not been given to the inhomogeneity of the domain where varied interests are pursued. Also, not all of them have the capacity and requisite skills for research and advocacy work. The onus thus lay on think tanks as private policy institutes imbued with the expected skills to research and develop objective policy analysis and recommendation towards development. In Sub-Saharan Africa, valorization of think tanks was associated with institutional reforms with the establishment of various mechanisms to promote the activities of these organizations. The issue is that, think tanks are perceived by the international community as autonomous groups pursuing objective policy analysis and therefore given aid (financial, technical and creativity) by the international organizations and donor agencies that seek to pursue particular developmental agenda. To what extend do think tanks articulate donor interest as popular interest against a state that serve as a representation of the elite?

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THINK TANKS IN GHANA

#### 3.0 Introduction

Although civil society organizations (CSOs) have existed in colonial and post-colonial times, they were politically inactive until the 1990s, a period which witnessed institutional reform in Ghana. However the nature of institutional reform demands the contribution of qualified and highly skilled experts towards policy research analysis. This placed commitment on think tank organizations which were hitherto absent in the Ghanaian political context. This chapter seeks to trace the factors responsible for the evolution of think tanks as a new phenomenon in Ghana, their roles and relationship with their donors.

#### 3.1 History of Civil Society in Ghana

According to Hutchful (2002), Ghana has witnessed two developmental revolutions, thus economic liberalization in the 1980's and institutional reforms in the 1990s, as a continuation of the former. However, the revolution was as a result of economic problems which were in turn linked to a number of factors. Thus, while the dependency theorists link the economic crisis to external issues such as global capital crisis and imperialist exploitation, the public choice theorists linked it to internal issues, especially cultural attitude of leaders (Hutchful, 2002). Hutchful, however draws attention to inherited colonial structures and influence of external actors through harsh policy prescriptions. Underneath these two major factors is a strained state society relationship (Hutchful, 2002; Kimenyi and Datta, 2011).

Gyimah-Boadi and Markovits (2008) argue that there has been the presence of a coerced and weak civil society in both colonial and post-colonial Ghana. However, they identified organizations within the space as associational groups whose engagement in political life was phenomenal, characterized by adversarial relationship with their colonial masters and secessionists.

According to Gyimah Boadi (2000) the colonial masters were antagonistic in their administrative proceedings as a result of their exploitative motive (Young, 2004; Agyemang Duah, 2008). Therefore, civil groups and associations existed in contestation to colonial authorities as an attempt to protect citizen's interest. Instances can be drawn from a number of pressure groups such as the Fante Confederation, the Accra Native Authority and the Aborigine's Right Protection Society founded in 1868, 1869 and 1898 respectively. These groups protested against illegal extension of British powers, authority and jurisdiction in the Gold Coast while they also fought for the rights of the people (Okyere, 2000; Darkwa, Amponsah & Gyampo, 2006). Agitation and opposition of political groups like the UGCC and the CPP through whose struggle the country won its independence cannot be overemphasized. These nationalist movements and other associations that engaged in anti-colonial struggle become coalitions that budded to form a strong civil society base after independence (Gyimah-Boadi and Markovits, 2008). However, their relationship with secessionists was hostile due to some factors.

The foremost reason given by Young, (2004) was that, secessionists could not carve traditionally based developmental models, hence reliance on colonial dossiers characterized by a legacy of strict bureaucratization of the policy process. Nationalists and

secessionist as well as bureaucrats from this period dominated the policy process in what Armstrong, (1996) refers to as a bureaucratic decision making model.

Secondly, Ohemeng (1995) argued that the underlying cultural overtone was that these regimes epitomized a patriarchal state where leaders assumed a paternalistic attitude and thus took decisions on behalf of citizens (Antwi, 2010; Kpessah, 2011; Kimenyi and Datta, 2011). According to Meng, (2004), this accounted for the single party rule and authoritative nature that characterized most of the regime. For example, Nkrumah slide into single party as a means of consolidating himself as a patron of the state (Meng, 2004) but it was most importantly an effort to curb civil opposition as he pursued economic recovery programmes based on socialist ideals (Agyemang-Duah, 2008). Unfortunately he failed to restore the economy as all the huge capital invested in domestic production in an effort to substitute importation of goods ended in a debacle (Meng, 2004). According to Rothchild and Gyimah Boadi, (1981) such initiatives do not allow for an open space in decision making but rather encourages rent seeking and clientelism (Hyden, 2006) which does not promote development.

Young (2004) on the other hand, emphasized about the overly dependence of the state on the international community for policy direction as a condition for donor aid (Young, 2004). According to Hutchful (2002) the external prescriptions did not favour citizens and hence the need to coerce them to avoid any form of opposition. Rothchild and Gyimah Boadi (1981) also noted three military regimes characterized by authoritarian preferences which left no room for citizen participation.

The National Liberation Council (NLC) which took over from the Nkrumah government in 1966 was the first to resort to externally imposed market reforms followed by the National Redemption Council (NRC) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in an attempt to restore economic order at its best. Hence devaluation schemes, cutting down of public expenditure; fiscal control and control on importation of commercial goods were some of the measures put in place. Although these policies were meant to have a long term effect, it provided little benefit for citizens with disadvantages such as high rate of unemployment and decrease in average income with the lower class experiencing the impact. Citizens had lost hope in the state and resorted to self-help and economic ventures.

The early 1980s experienced the first revolution under the Provincial National Defence Council (PNDC) which came into power based on a strong civil support aimed at restructuring Ghana's economy. However, supporters of the PNDC government were tired of IFI schemes which did not favour them and sought to oppose it. Unfortunately, external aid was conditioned on strict adjustment programmes which committed the regime to frustrate efforts of civil engagement in the policy process as an effort to subvert opposition (Joseph, 1997). Hutchful (2002:197), noted, "... there would be no immediate relief from harsh adjustment ... heavy handed political repression meant that the regime had always been vulnerable to charges of human rights abuses, as growth lagged it became vulnerable to criticism on its economic record as well". Failure of adjustment to induce recovery and stabilize the economy led to an internal insurgence in the early 1990s for political transformation. This analysis thus subject political change to internal factors as expressed by O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, (1986) where authoritarianism had to give way

to democracy as a result of popular pressure which in effect made room for civil liberty and participation in the policy process.

In contrast, Darkwa, Amponsah and Gyampoh, (2006) hold that opportunity for civil participation owes to external development associated with donor initiatives. Although adjustment policies were unfavourable to Ghanaians, the developmental partners were not ready to end this development. They therefore decided to channel money into the system as an effort to alleviate social problems associated with adjustment. According to the WB (1989), the state lacked the institutional capacity to implement economic reforms and had also lost the citizens trust. Thus the WB advocated civil participation. The self-help initiative compelled the WB to conclude that they are cost-effective, culturally informed, technologically innovative, and able to mobilize popular support which can strengthen civil society, and promote democracy (Agyemang-Duah, 2008). While civil society has been given a collective identity by the WB, not all organizations within the civil society domain favoured the new strategy. Thus, ideological conflict set the pace for the establishment of pro and alternative democratic movements. The International Organizations and donors resorted to grant aid to those countries that embraced civil liberty and channelled aid in support of CSOs that favoured economic recovery programmes. This sets a dichotomy between organizations in favour of the status quo and its associated social reforms on one hand, and organizations in favour of institutional change on the other hand (Whitefield, 2002). It can thus be argued that although change was as a result of internal pressure this could not be possible without the intervention of external powers which Hutchful (2002) describes as a cake with an icing.

According to Ohemeng & Ayee (2012) not all CSOs were imbued with the capacity and skills as far as externally imposed policies were concerned. A review outlined by CEPA thus indicated, “Maximum efficiency requires that the expertise of highly trained and qualified local personnel in various discipline is collectively harnessed and utilized for the common good in centres such as CEPA” (CEPA, 1996: VII ). It can be concluded that the experts and organizations under discussion is the think tank institutions.

As soon as Ghana attained democracy, a number of think tanks emerged to consolidate the process. Although a number of advocacy organizations were already in existence (GAVOD Report), participation in the policy process was associated with the democratic dispensation. According to Agyemang Duah (2008: 217) the period saw the development of a “new type of civil society organization, one that focused on governmental accountability and democratic development”. Darkwa, Amponsah and Gyampoh, (2006) also confirmed that think tanks attracted the greatest portion of donor funds which depicts the crucial role they are expected to play in terms of policy influence. However, Whitefield (2002) argued that “the left failed to obtain external funds for its economic proposal and could not compete with the theory of neoclassical economics and the financial backing provided by the WB and IMF. Thus, a dichotomy between think tanks pursuing social reform programmes and those that pursued institutional reform programmes.

### **3.2 Sources of Think Tank Funding and Relationship with Donors**

The WB, the IMF and the United States (a major stake holder in the Bretton Woods Institution) are the major brains behind developmental agenda which demands that international agencies, donor agencies and international aid organizations and government

organizations such as the OECD, United Nation Development Programmes (UNDP), the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), European Union (EU), and African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), OSIWA, Ford Foundations, German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), International Centre for Transnational Justice, among others channel their resources towards this course (Abrahamsen, 2000; Ohemeng, 2005; RAVI, 2005; Hutchful, 2002).

According to Igoe and Kellsaw (2005) the US and Germany are the most prominent entity in the provision of donor support to CSOs. Other countries such as the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Canada also serve as sources of donor aid. The USAID is an aid based organization that exists to promote democracy. It employs civil society as a framework to operate in an effort to espouse democratic ideals (Hearn 1999). It thus supports CSOs including research policy institutes such as think tanks that seek to promote neoliberal reforms. Similarly, Whitefield noted that the “USAID is an extreme example of the way in which donor agencies channel funds through the frameworks of “civil society” and “good governance” to effect desired changes in the structure of society, in economic policies and in forms of government” (Whitefield 2003:383). G-RAP now Star Ghana which serves as a donor basket aims at soliciting funds from donors to support research and advocacy organizations (RAVI, 2005).

The relationship between think tank and their donors may seem cordial since it is one of partnership. However, it is also characterized by dependence which poses a challenge at the same time. According to Igoe and Kellsal (1995) the organizations lack funding and institutional support which they receive from the donor agencies and developmental

partners. They have therefore been subject to donor patronage as aid is not received on a silver platter. This is exemplified in the overly dependence of think tanks on their donors (Datta, Jones and Mendizabal In Garce & Una, 2010) for funds which do not cater for institutional needs and objectives but rather to meet donor target and which according to Brautigam, (2007) can impact on their output.

Datta, Jones and Mendizabal (2010) identified two types of donor funding; core funding and project funding. Core funding caters for institutional cost and is geared towards long term project which enables organizations to go beyond donor priorities and pursue their goals and objectives for which they exist while they endeavour to meet donor expectations. Unfortunately this type of funding is limited. Project funding on the other hand is project specific and comes in massive supply but offer short term goals which compels recipient institutes to change some aspect of their objectives or sometimes their entire objective in order to receive such funds. More so, it reveals the enthusiasm of donors in a specific project rather than sustaining the organization (Tsikata, Gyekye-Jandoh and Hushie, 2013). Datta, Jones and Mendizabal (2010) noted how a multi donor initiative in Ghana, in 2008, skewed the concentration of beneficiaries towards intervention on poverty reduction strategy papers towards donor policy processes. The Royal Danish Embassy and CIDA among other groups supported and launched three innovative funding mechanisms for think tanks. These are, the Ghana research and advocacy programme (GRAP), The Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI), and BUSAC fund. These funds were given in support of specific projects which may not be in line with the objectives of think tank institute. This is line with the assertion of Datta, Jones and Mendizabal (2010:55) that “Foreign funding has also tended to skew think tank priorities towards those of donors’. Marouani and Ayuk (2007) argued that African think tanks were

often used as channels for donors to strengthen their influence on research agendas and policy making in Africa”.

The Ravi Fund Directory (2005) provides details of sources of grants available to CSOs. Information from the report indicated that donors have their own set objectives with which funds are to help interested applicants achieve. For example the WB made some grants available in 2005 with the aim of empowering citizens. The fund was geared towards specific project description which was to help achieve the objective. Hence the grant was to be used for the organization of educational forums such as conferences, workshops, and producing education materials to inform citizens about their role and contribution towards an accountable system of rule. There is also a set criterion within which applicants must be qualified. However, the funds are very limited but expected to help think tanks achieve multiple task and activities. In the same report DANIDA made available funds which were towards good governance and human right activities. The funds are meant for strengthening community based organizations as a sole responsibility of think tanks. The specificities of the funds are determined by donors in the following areas; Holding District Assemblies accountable on the distribution and monitoring of resources, education on rights and access to basic social services such as health care, Raising awareness of basic rights such as voters’ rights, women’s rights, rights of vulnerable groups including people living with HIV/AIDS and rights to inclusion and participation in decision making process and development programmes. Recipient organizations are to provide narratives and financial reports at the end of each contract as a way of monitoring the use of the funds.

The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) serve as a donor basket drawing funds from different donors in an effort to provide institutional support for Research and

Advocacy Organizations (RAOs) towards improving their autonomy from government and donors as well as enhancing their research efforts in particular areas. The provision of grants in 2005 was thus towards improving policies in pro poor and gender balanced issues. Development of institutional capacity is thus geared towards meeting the specific objective that the grants are tied to. Since GRAP is a pooled funding mechanism, the report indicated the contribution of donors such as DANIDA, CIDA, Royal Netherlands Embassy and DFID as a follow up to their move towards multi donor budgetary support approach in order to assist the government of Ghana and its civil society partners to achieve its poverty reduction strategy at the time.

### **3.3 Activities of Think Tanks in Ghana**

Although the presence of a weak civil society was felt in the early post-colonial period, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the proliferation of think tanks in an effort to influence and shape public policies. By 1999, the GAPVOD/ISODEC directory of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) compiled about sixty seven policy/advocacy organization which constitutes 20% of all CSOs. The Global Go To Think Tank Ranking Report also recorded between thirty three and thirty six think tank organizations in Ghana between 2008 and 2013 but only nine think tanks have featured so far in the report. These few have shown resilience till date. These are, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), the Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR), Institute of Policy Alternatives (IPA) and Third World Network (TWN), Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Justice and Human Right Institute and ISSER.

ISODEC was the first to be established in 1984 after which CEPA was established in 1993 and followed by TWN in 1994. ASDR emerged in 1995, followed by CDD in 1998 and IPA in 2000 (Ohemeng, 2005). By 2008, thirty three think tanks had emerged which grew to about thirty six, a number which was maintained between 2010 and 2012 (Global think tank report, 2008, 2010, and 2012). This means by this time most of those operating in 1990s have ceased operating (Agyemang Duah, 2008). The reason argued by the GAPVOD directory is as a result of donor cut back at the end of specific developmental projects. About six of them in all have been recognized on the global think tank ranking report between 2008 to 2013 as part of the world's top think tanks; IMANI Centre for Policy and Education, Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), Centre for Development Studies (CDS), ISODEC, Institute of Statistical and Social Economic Research (ISSER) and Justice and Human Right Institute, CDD and CEPA. The level at which these institutes were repeatedly ranked showed their prominence and recognition based on their performance and competence over others.

Some of the overall role of these organizations as policy institute reflects the US style of think tank operation. The major role is to supplement the efforts of government (Gray 1977) in policy making and the establishment of the right institution in promoting the right environment that can facilitate good governance. CEPA, IEA and CDD are known to be conservative think tanks promoting neoliberal ideals towards transparent and accountable governance in a conflict free environment. They encourage privatization of state services and galvanize support for new institutions towards this aim. The overarching objective of CEPA as in the mid to late 1990s was to work within the national goals of economic and political reform, thus, "we hope to develop into a centre for reflection, analysis and discussion so as to become a source of new ideas and policy options on what might be

termed the economic interest of Ghana, namely, to grow into a prosperous, humane and peaceful society” (CEPA, 1996: VII). Prosperity here can be redefined as economic growth while a peaceful and humane environment can be achieved through the good governance agenda (Abrahamsen, 2000). CEPA hopes to achieve this main objective through other sub-objectives. CDD on the other hand “is dedicated to the promotion of society and government based on the rule of law, appropriate checks on the power of the state and integrity in public administration ... to promote democracy, good governance and the development of liberal economic environment in Ghana. The IEA share in the same vision of promoting good governance, and economic liberalization. According to Ohemeng the organization has “also become a prime policy entrepreneur for the introduction and support of the managerialist idea in Ghana” (Ohemeng, 2005:455).

TWN, on the contrary works in the context of good governance where it seek to advocate the case of the marginalized in society as well as marginalized countries on the global front. As an advocacy institute it seeks to promote the welfare of the marginalized in society by advocating for equitable distribution of resources (Ohemeng, 2005).

Another major function exhibited by think tanks in Ghana is their ability to act as mediators between the state and society. Most of them serve as mediators between the state and society as well as the state and institution in terms of policy resolution and policy information or dialogue (CEPA, 1996). They have been able to foster peace and cordial relationship between government and opposition parties. For example, Ohemeng (2009) noted how the government of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) in an attempt to organize a national reconciliation commission to investigate human right abuses under the PNDC incited irritation among the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) which felt it

would be unfair deal to ignore the condition under other military regimes that had existed. The intervention of CDD in an effort to conduct a research on national reconciliation and results delivered to these groups in a conference organized for government, political party and CSOs made a tremendous impact. Thus, attention was given to victims who had been abused than waste time to cast blame game.

The above information also indicates their role of informing the government and general public on policy issues to educate them on governance and economic issues. They disseminate information on pertinent issues that need the attention of both government and the entire public. One common characteristic of think tanks in Ghana is the fact that they serve as tools for advocacy towards institutional reform (Agyemang Duah, 2008). Organizations such as TWN and ISODEC have advocated for participation of CSOs in policy issues. They have been instrumental in advocating for a review of structural adjustment policies which have yielded a commendable result in the form of the SAPRI report through the collaboration of government and the donor communities (Ohemeng, 2005).

Another role identified by Agyemang-Duah (2008) is agenda setting across a wide range of developmental and policy issues. A number of Think tanks have either worked to consolidate democratic initiatives or initiated projects to consolidating the democratic process. Some of the areas where think tank contribution is evident is around election monitoring and poverty reduction strategies (Agyemang-Duah, 2008; Abdul Gafaru and Quantson, 2008).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In Ghana, the presence of civil association has been witnessed during colonial and post-colonial period but characterized by adversarial relationship between the organizations and their authorities. Political and economic reforms led to a cordial relationship between civil society, a term associated with the democratic process as it saw the liberation of civil groups and emergence of what Baffour Duah (2008) terms a new kind of civil society and which Hagberg (2004) also terms developmental organizations, in an effort to pursue institutional reform through policy analysis. While funding was made available for these organizations, not all the organizations pursued institutional reforms leading to two distinct groups in the policy research industry. Conversely, both groups embark on normal think tank roles but geared towards institutional reform. This is as a result of funding constrains which redirects the focus of recipient organizations towards policy research and advocacy of institutional reform programmes as a condition for accessing donor funds.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

According to the World Bank (WB) 1989 Report, 'Sub-Saharan Africa; From Crisis to Sustainable Growth', the good governance agenda (GGA) as the second phase of institutional reform would lead to the liberation of civil society organizations (CSOs) as autonomous groups that are non-egoistic, people centered and thus can serve as potential wheels for development (Abrahamsen, 2000). The study seeks to look at how the emergence of think tanks, as representatives of CSOs, have been informed by the neoliberal agenda and how they exist either independent of the agenda or to reify the agenda. Looking at three think tanks in Ghana, Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA), Integrated Social Development Centre (SODEC), this section seeks to thematically analyse collected data to assess factors that contributed to the emergence of think tanks and how their activities are informed by neoliberal tendencies.

#### 4.1 The Influence of the Concepts of Civil Society on Theories of Think Tanks and the Construction of Spaces in which Think Tanks Emerged.

The researcher found out that CEPA is an autonomous, non-governmental and non-profit research institute established on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1993 by Dr. Joseph Abbey. He was a state commissioner who had resigned from his post as a statistician at the Ministry of Finance. According to him, the structural reforms pertaining to Ghana specifically was not externally oriented as people perceive. He was part of the team that drafted the policy for external approval. His basis was that the team thought adjustment policies were best for the country looking at the level of corruption and misappropriation of state resources

without any sense of accountability. He reiterated that adjustment reform was characterized by a strong state as argued by Agyemang-Duah (2006) and Joseph (2007) and it was not until the democratic dispensation that he resigned to established CEPA. According to Dr. Abbey,

CEPA was established in 1993/94 because that was the time when the country was ushered into a democratic rule which led to demand for local expertise that can analyze our policies and provide policy recommendations to anchor our policies to the satisfaction of our people. We therefore deemed it necessary and significant to influence policies at the macro level (Abbey, 2013).

The above statement brings out the unique characteristics which differentiate think tanks as policy research institutes from other CSOs and also resonates the WB's assertion that these intermediary organizations have the required skills to influence policy (Abrahamsen, 2000).

An interview with another research official, Lawrence Apaloo, revealed that the core mandate of CEPA was pursuance of macro-economic policy analysis. The institute existed as Centre for Economic Policy Analysis but things changed over the period to their disadvantage and this has influenced a change of name to Centre for Policy Analysis. The initial and core project of CEPA was publication of its flagship known as the *Ghana Economic Review and Outlook*. It basically captured CEPA's core objective which seek to conduct research and disseminate information and as well serve as a platform for policy engagement in economic issues (CEPA, 1996). According to the research official, CEPA was at its initial stages dependent on core funding from ACBF (ACBF offered an annual amount of one million dollars), OSIWA, USAID and the WB which enabled it pursue its core objective. Thus, in its Economic Review Outlook (1996), CEPA boasted of a strong funding base that enabled it maintain its autonomy as compared to other public and civic

research organizations. However, it was revealed that in reality, core funding was not as flexible as it is meant to be. According to Mr. Apaloo,

Although the organization can use core funds for institutional support, the organization is obliged to do research for either the government or the donor in which ever area they demand. That means donors and government can come with their research themes or topics for the organization to research and come out with recommendations (Apaloo, 2013).

It was also revealed that donors provide institutional training to equip staff in areas of research. Unfortunately, situations turned unfavourable and the organization had to compete with other organizations for project and commissioned funding. The organization has reframed its objective to conform to project driven calls. An interaction with the librarian at the centre revealed that CEPA was established as an institution with the mandate of informing economic policy issues. However, its objectives have been broadened to meet donor frame and support. Apart from the macroeconomic issues CEPA has given concentration to micro economic issues as well as social issues with emphasis on education and poverty alleviation issues<sup>1</sup>.

According to another informant,

We are a macro based organization but sometimes we go into micro (agriculture, health, education and sanitation). This is due to financial constraints which compel us to move into areas that were initially not part of our objectives. We sometimes receive funds from donors who want to fund social projects other than economic (Abena, 2013).

The researcher asked the respondent how they cope with such activities since they did not have the expertise to embark on social projects. According to my respondent any time

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cepa.org.gh/about\\_cepa.php](http://www.cepa.org.gh/about_cepa.php), 12 Jan, 2012.

there is an avenue for funds for social projects they employ the services of experts outside the organization.

CDD is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit research institute established in 1998 by Professor E. Gyimah Boadi, a democracy and governance expert, H. Kwesi Prempeh, a corporate attorney and expert on constitutional and legal policy, Dr. Baffour Agyeman Duah, an election and conflict management expert and William Yeboah a chartered accountant and finance executive. The researcher found that just like CEPA, the establishment of CDD was the outcome of an opportunity that came with the democratic transformation and the demand for research and advocacy along this line. The history of the organization revealed the political situation that led to its birth at the time.

... Just at a time the Ghanaian democratic process was entering an important new phase – transition from an elected president and administration with military authoritarian antecedents to one without – and when democratic space had been opened up by the late nineties to a point where it was possible to set up an explicitly democratic and political governance research and advocacy NGOs...<sup>2</sup>

The notion the researcher draws from the above statement is that non-governmental organizations were politically inactive until Ghana underwent a political reform as argued by Agyemang Duah (2008). An interview with a respondent from the organization revealed that the Executive Director had quit lecturing in the US and joined the Centre for Democracy and Development in Nigeria as a fellow. Concomitantly, misunderstanding between the director and the organization in Nigeria on one hand and the opportunity

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>, 12 Jan, 2014

ushered by the democratic change in Ghana on the other hand, led to the idea of an NGO establishment. The organization was established as a result of the creation of space associated with political reform and exists in pursuance of democratic consolidation. This confirms Darkwa, Amonsah and Gyampoh's (2006) argument that think tanks originated to consolidate the democratic process.

According to Mr. Paul Abrampah Mensah (a senior research fellow and Programmes Director),

CDD was established in **1998**... Looking at what was happening at the time, in **1998** when the organization was formed, there was demand to concentrate on entrenching democracy. So the focus of CDD as it was formed was how to entrench democracy. After the first election held in 1992, the boycott of parliamentary election and the aftermath, the victimization, the necessity to reconcile the nation after a long time coup. ...the focus was how to forge ahead as a democratic country, (Abrampah, 2013).

This notwithstanding and in line with McGann's (2007) argument, the vision of CDD is a clear indication of the organizations affiliation and alignment to a specific ideological orientation, thus,

CDD is dedicated to the promotion of democracy, good governance and the development of liberal, political and economic development in Ghana and Africa as a whole and the organization believes that research and publications must reflect issues of democracy, good governance and liberal economic reforms<sup>3</sup>.

According to Abrampah "we operate on liberal principles, it's a democratic institution and our vision is to establish democracy" (Abrampah, 2012). CDD has been consistent with its activities and programmes because of its commitment to good governance ideals and this

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<sup>3</sup> <http://civilsocietygh.org/wacsi-html/web/view-cso.php?id=1038>, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2014.

has given them assurance of a consistent inflow of project funding. This is in line with Abrahamson (2000) and Whitefield's (2002) argument that the WB and US have entreated donors and international organizations to support countries and organizations that are in pursuance of the good governance agenda (GGA).

In 1984, Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) was started by some young graduate engineers who were assigned to do their national service in the area of sanitation in Nima, a deprived community in Accra. By the end of the term they decided to start an NGO and provide social services to grass-root based organizations in the area of sanitation. The relationship between ISODEC and the recipient organizations reiterates Carothers' (1999) definition of NGOs which according to Ghana Association of Private Volunteer in Development (GAPVOD), emerged with adjustment reforms and which places ISODEC as a well-established organization funded locally or internationally over other associational groups. Also, Dr. Yakubu Zakaria (Zach), a Programmes Director and Research Officer claimed that "ISODEC started with a zero resource base" (Zakaria, 2014), which reaffirms the WB's (1989) assertion that these self-help organizations constituting civil society are autonomous and non-egoistic in nature and the need to trust them as vehicles for development. Responds from the three organizations also proved that think tanks perceive themselves as NGOS and the grass-root organizations as community-based organizations.

From an urban health and sanitation base, ISODEC grew into a predominantly rural water and sanitation promoting organization in the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. In this project, ISODEC piloted what is now known as the national water strategy, with an aim of decentralizing water management systems and a shift in public resource allocation in the water sector in favour of the rural. From the mid-1990s, ISODEC transformed into an organization which pays equal attention to basic needs support activities, as well as

empowerment and socio-economic rights promotion. Dr. Zach gave two reasons for the transformation at ISODEC and this was as a result of funding issues but more importantly because they thought they could impact more lives through advocacy.

Due to funding constraints, which was internally generated, ISODEC metamorphosed into a research and advocacy organization in 2000 with the aim of advocating issues toward social reform (Zack, 2013).

Drawing from Igoe and Kelsall's (2005) assertion that CSOs and think tanks for that matter proliferated in response to donor aid, ISODEC became a research and advocacy based institution as a result of financial and capacity deficit. According to the respondent,

This was beyond our capacity as a civil society organization because service delivery demands a high amount of capital, if you want to construct boreholes and improve sewage conditions which demands drainage systems..., and civil society don't have that kind of money so the organization decided to go into advocacy (Zack, 2013).

The researcher inquired from the organization if research and advocacy did not equally demand funding. According to the interviewee, service delivery was a direct responsibility of the government while they felt research and advocacy would have direct impact on government to respond to the several needs of the people which would lead to a higher impact. Another reason he gave was that donors were also ready to sponsor research and advocacy in certain areas that they operated in and since they had the required expertise it made their work much more feasible.

This is in line with CEPA's (1996) argument that the unique thing about think tanks to other CSOs is their strong and quality human resource base imbued with experts who have

the requisite skills to engage in research analysis and advocacy. Darkwa, Amponsah and Gyampoh (2006) also attest to the service demand of these organizations. Coincidentally, the transformation of ISODEC clashed with the GPRS initiative in 2000. This was at a time when the GPRS was introduced under the regime of President John Agyekum Kufuor, which demanded the contribution of policy research based institutions in the fight against poverty under the UN's Millennium Development Goals<sup>4</sup> (Abdul-Gafaru and Quantson, 2008). An interview with the campaigns coordinator at ISODEC, Dr. Steven Manteaw expounded that the organization deemed it could make better impact through policy influence<sup>5</sup>. This was affirmed by Dr. Zach that ISODEC deviated from service delivery because it was the responsibility of the government and secondly, because, the culture at the time demanded that they influence policies at the national level which the government was unable to deliver at the local level.

As a think tank, ISODEC had the privilege to join a team of CSOs around the world in the SAPRIN project to reassess the effect of neoliberal policies in the sub-region and to find alternative measures. The researcher found out that this opportunity was a delight to the organization as a critic of the WB and its neoliberal policies. The respondent stated, “SAPRIN was a campaign directed at the WB and we don't accept funding from the WB as we do not want to compromise our integrity” (Dr. Zach, 2013). The SAPRI project was however funded by the UNDP, the European Union (EU) and five other European countries and governments with the aim of assessing the impact of structural adjustment policies<sup>6</sup> (Saprin, 2004).

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php>

<sup>5</sup> ‘Time with David’ (<http://isodec.org.gh/articlepage.php?idnews=54>, 12 Jan, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.SVREtA0X.dpuf-7>, Jan, 2015

The researcher inquired what ISODEC exist for and according to the respondent, ISODEC envisage “A world in which every life matters” and their mission is to work in collaboration with the marginalized as far as issues of human rights, social justice and accountability is concerned. The objectives pursued by the organization is to defend and promote public goods (water, education and health) and basic human rights, promote accountable use of public resources, promote alternative macroeconomics, and promote responsible regional integration<sup>7</sup>.

From the above objectives it can be inferred that ISODEC embraces a wide range of issues, both social and institutional reforms and seek to promote an accountable government and issues of human right. Its pursuance of alternative macroeconomic policies asserts to the conclusions of the SAPRIN Report (2004) which states that “The stark conclusion emerges: if there is to be any hope for meaningful development in the countries of the South and for the sustained reduction of poverty and inequality, the Western-inspired and imposed doctrines of structural adjustment and neoliberal economics must go” (Saprin, 2004: 1). This attests to the fact that ISODEC is by no means in favour of neoliberal policies. At a workshop held by the organization in collaboration with the UNDP towards exploration of better policy issues for poverty reduction, the organization made its stand on the need for alternative macroeconomic models as against the WB’s structural adjustment policies which keep recurring in different forms<sup>8</sup>. However, the rationale for the workshop revealed that ISODEC has expanded its scope to cover poverty reduction strategies towards development. The researcher inquired about this scope of operation which was affirmed by the respondent that the organization believed in the good

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.DF8pHphn.dpuf> , 7 Jan, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.modernghana.com/news/70936/1/ghana-must-develop-its-own-macroeconomic-model-iso.html>, 27 Jan 2005.

governance agenda as indicated in their mission statement which seek to hold government accountable in its role towards service delivery and also empower citizens through education in order to exercise their rights to development. According to Dr. Zach, “ISODEC is also engaged in a series of campaign and programmes towards poverty reduction”. (Zach, 2013).

#### **4.2 The Impact of Globalization and Neoliberal Theories on the Conception of the Role of Civil Society and Think Tanks as a Representation of Civil Society Organization.**

McGann (2007) argues that 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century think tanks have assumed varied roles in line with some specific ideological orientation. Stone (2000) argues that the basic functions of think tanks are not limited to “policy research analysis and advocacy” (Stone, 2000:154), but have a wide range of roles which is reshaped in line with certain ideological interests (Stone, 2000; McGann, 2007). The researcher found out that while the think tanks under study emerged with political reform associated with civil liberty, their major roles are geared towards a particular ideological line of entrenching democracy, holding government responsive and accountable and building citizen’s capacity to demand basic rights but more importantly to be equipped in contributing to development in their various specialties of work. These functions are performed through some frames such as the Right Base Approach or the Good Governance Approach.

CEPA at the initial stages of its establishment sought to provide a platform for policy engagement in the economic field, serve as a link between the government, the private sector, the academia and the public, to analyze issues easy for public consumption and to influence policies of national interest (CEPA, 1996) in the light of the structural

adjustment and good governance agenda. According to Dr. Abbey, CEPA shares with the neoliberal policies of adjustment and good governance and works in that direction. These agendas have served as the frame through which the organization works.

Around the year 2000 CEPA intensified its work in capacity building for organizations through training and recently, research and advocacy towards poverty reduction. The researcher asked why this new area of capacity building. The responds was that, “there was demand for it. People lacked the needed capacity and skills for work so they call on CEPA for training. Most donor agencies also depend on CEPA to train funded agents to equip them for research. The WB contracts CEPA to run training programmes towards poverty reduction. “The organization also organizes Basic Poverty Measurement and Diagnostic Courses some of which has been held in Ghana and in the sub region” (Mr. Apaloo, 2013). The organization has started working along poverty reduction issues.

The general roles undertaken at CDD reflect the functions of every normal think tank. The objectives of the organization show that it is committed to capacity building programmes for like-minded institutions in the government sector, CSOs and the military. In this vein CDD does not work with institutions which do not share in their ideals. This is because the founders of the centre seek to provide sound research and advocacy on the basis of democracy and good governance<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the organization operates through the good governance framework. Other roles include consultancy to both government, private and NGO’s and technical support to foster networking and collaborative work<sup>10</sup>. CDD also serves as a platform for the organization of conferences and symposium and takes

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<sup>9</sup> (<http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>. 7<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> (<http://civilsocietygh.org/wacsi-html/web/view-cso.php?id=1038> 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2014.

responsibility for publication of issues deliberated for both internal and external consumption. The outcomes of the proceedings also help them in their advocacy roles. The Afro barometer is “an African led series of national public attitude survey on democracy and governance in Africa” and Dr. E. Gyimah-Boadi is a co-founder. It initially involved twelve countries in Africa but has extended widely to become a global barometer. The aim is to monitor the activities within the government sector in an effort to hold the state accountable towards good governance<sup>11</sup>. (Darkwa et al, 2006).

ISODEC combines its social service delivery roles with research and advocacy roles. The reason given by the respondent is that ISODEC taps into different donor pools and each comes with its own specificities. “ISODEC has diversified and doing so many things because activities are project funded” (Zach, 2013) ISODEC therefore serves as a root organization which serves as a life line to several branch affiliates. According to Dr Manteaw,

ISODEC provides micro-finance services through our subsidiary organization, the Cedi Finance Foundation (CFF) and the Bawku-East, Small Scale Farmers Association (BESSFA) Rural Bank in which ISODEC is a majority shareholder, promotes civic and human rights awareness among groups to enable them participate in the political and governance process. ISODEC is affiliated to a public interest law firm, the Centre for Public Interest Law (CEPIL) which provides free legal support to communities and individuals whose rights are trampled upon by those with power. We are particularly active in mining communities and also urban communities facing eviction (Dr. Manteaw, 2013).

The respondent also stated that ISODEC is basically into research and advocacy. The organization researches into developmental issues from political through social to

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>

economic and resound their recommendations for government attention. Some of the research areas include issues of sanitation, health and education. The organizations serve as a platform by organizing conferences which provides avenue for policy dialogue and debates of national concern.

Again, the organization disseminates research findings through its articles and publications. This is done through its weekly paper called Policy Agenda and the motive is to promote democratic participation and also promote civic and human rights awareness among groups to enable them participate in the political and governance process.

The organization also facilitates and support coalitions and networks at both local and national level to intensify their voice and gain influence at both international and national level but more importantly empower the various local based groups to assert their rights.

They are also into organizational capacity building (public and private) to deliver basic needs services such as basic education, water and reproductive health services equitably, cost effectively and in a participatory and culturally sensitive manner. According to Dr. Zach,

We provide direct service support, Training of Trainers services, we lobby, we debate, we agitate, we mobilize and organize for mass social actions; and, we seek judicial intervention as a last resort to realize our mission objective (Zach, 2014).

However, it must be noted that ISODEC seeks to establish a consolidated democracy through its Right Based Approach (RPA)<sup>12</sup>. Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004) distinguish between the Need Based Approach and Right Based Approach. They argue

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.isodec.org.gh/program.php>, 5<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2014.

that normatively, the Right Based Approach compels citizens to demand their rights with respect to legally endorsed international pacts. According to them the right based approach enhances participation as a means of international institutions to indirectly legitimize their policies and thereby take strategic hold of developing countries. On the practical side, they argue that the RBA gives opportunity to NGOs to demand responsive and accountable claims on their states. Another dimension is that the RBA calls for existing resources to be shared equally and for assisting marginalized people to assert their rights to those resources. This is opposed to the need base approach which rests on alternative means to development and carried through charitable or liberal intentions (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). According to Dr. Zach,

Work at ISODEC is guided by RBA and renewed every three years. Evaluation is done by partners who alert us on our weaknesses towards improvement. All the sectors they look at is towards promotion of specific rights that donor wants citizens to demand, focus on marginalized especially in the rural area with respect to their ethnicity, background and distance to the central power. However, RBA is highly challenged because ISODEC is embarking on operations initiated by other partners who also have their different framework (Zach, 2014).

What the researcher deduce from the above information is that, the funds received by ISODEC is project specific which makes donors determine which area the organization should look at and what area they must convince citizens to demand their rights in.

#### **4.3 The Impact of Concepts of Good Governance on Creating Spaces for Civil Society in Policy Formulation and Think Tanks as Specialized Civil Society Group Responding to Policy Advocacy and Policy Research at Both Local, National And International Levels.**

According to Stone (2000) think tanks endeavour to engage at the global level which serves as the basis for building and strengthening capacities and skills of groups, organizations and policy actors, to promote goods and service at a global standard. A global system, thus, demands linkages between various actors and groups for various reasons (Harberg, 2004). All the think tanks under study have established some kind of relationship either at the local, national, sub-regional or international level and the researcher sought to know what informed these collaboration.

An interview with Mr Apaloo revealed that, CEPA is not committed to any specific or unique group or coalition. Rather, the organization partner with other international organizations and think tanks as well as government institutions to source information. Some of the government institutions include the Bank of Ghana and Ghana Statistical Service. According to the respondent, CEPA networks with almost all its donors and one of the purpose is to get resources, be it financial or material. Apart from the funding advantage, CEPA has access to materials or documents which they exchange and which gets them informed. Another reason is to save cost in that the donor agencies bear the cost of research publications, distribution and dissemination of information from CEPA. In effect Mr. Apaloo stated that “this kind of relationship allows CEPA to be acknowledged at the international level and gain influence at the national level” (Apaloo, CEPA, 2012).

CDD on the other hand, has established networks with CSOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the sub-regional and international level. According to the interviewee, CDD collaborates with some organizations at the national and sub-national level. These are;

Ghana anti-corruption network, West African Election Observation Mission (WAEOM) which is in twelve countries, Freedom of Information Network, and Coalition for Domestic Election Observer (CODEO) which is a coalition of forty independent institutions and religious bodies (Nana Ama, 2013).

At the international level the organization operates in partnership with international agencies such as USAID, SIDA, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the National Democratic Institute for International Development (NDIFID), the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDF), and CIDA<sup>13</sup>.

CDD-Ghana's international networks and collaboration include membership of the Network of Democracy Research Institute (NDRI), World Movement for Democracy/Africa Democracy Forum (ADF). Steering Committee of the Community of Democracy (CoD), African Transitional Research Justice Research Network /West African Transitional Justice Network, Friedrich Nauman Foundation, Institute for Democracy (South Africa), International Centre for Transitional Justice (USA), Economic Commission for Africa and the WB<sup>14</sup> (Dr. Franklin Oduro, 2013).

The essence of the coalition at the national and sub-regional level is to help them embark on their projects through information sharing and easy access across the regions. It also

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs> 7 Jan, 2015)

<sup>14</sup> CDD Brochure

helps limit cost. At the national level they collaborate with international institutions to undertake a variety of research project, outreach programmes and draft policy proposals. However, the overall aim is to consolidate the organization to attain recognition and popularity and widen their influence in the attempt to attain their mission and vision<sup>15</sup> (CDD, 2013). In line with this argument, the CDD brochure states that “the centre collaborates and networks extensively with local state and non-state bodies in pursuit of specific democracy and good governance objectives” (CDD Brochure). However, Dr. Oduro, stated clearly that “the coalition makes the organization consolidated and influential which enables us attract support from the international organizations because they must believe in you” (Dr. Oduro, 2013).

ISODEC has established relationship with other think tanks and NGOs at both local and international level. Some of the organizations at the local level are TWN, the Northern Network for Development, SEND Foundation, Institute of Policy Alternative (IPA) and ISSER. All these organizations seek to influence policy at the national level. The Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA), which is an offshoot of ISODEC has established relationship with organizations at the international level through its branch, the Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA). Among them are the Institute of Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the International Budget Project (IBP) in Washington and Save the Children-UK and OXFAM UK. ISODEC has collaborated with IBP and IDASA on Budget Management and Fiscal Transparency and PRSPs<sup>16</sup>.

Our Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA) undertakes research and analysis on the budget and the economy as a whole; conducts training, and provides budget information services to promote pro-poor and gender equitable impacts in the

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>, 7 Jan, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.DF8pHphn.dpuf>, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015.

generation and use of public resources, through the budget. It conducts training in public expenditure management, budget analysis and pro-poor and equity enhancing budgeting to both government and CSOs mainly in the Anglo-West African sub-region (Dr. Zach, 2014).

The researcher found out that most of these coalitions do not have strong basis and this is because unlike CDD which has long lasting relationship with collaborators (due to long term projects such as CODEO and election projects), ISODEC and its collaborators embark on short term programmes and this leads to pending relationship at the end of each project. However most of these networks have influenced the formation of other networks while some are directly formed or supported by ISODEC. Among them are, The Northern Network for Education Development (NNED) and the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNEC) which both campaign for educational rights. The Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHRs) also campaigns for reproductive rights and the Market Access Promotion Network (MAPRONET) seek to promote market access for poor producers, Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition fight for the interest of peasant and small scale farmers. ISODEC has formed the Coalition for Universal Access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment for HIV/AIDS victims to have access to ART.

At the sub-regional level ISODEC partners with the West Africa Right Based Advocacy Network which constitute six organizations and represents the coalition on the Ghana EITI multi stakeholder steering committee. The researcher questioned ISODEC's involvement with various organizations that are into different projects. The responds was that ISODEC has established networks and partnership and even facilitated the formation of some

coalitions for a number of reasons. The first reason given by the respondent was the issue of funding.

We are able to do much with the little funds we've got. All we have to do is to amplify our voice through these subgroups. Another reason is to establish our influence. Anytime we want to demonstrate, we organize members of the subgroups into the streets with banners and placards. We call it picketing. At the end of picketing, we give policy briefs to government and national newspapers. This was what we did with the issue of pre-paid in water delivery. We felt it should be post-paid (Zach, 2014).

Apart from facilitating service delivery, the respondent claimed that it enables them easy access to information. However, the motive is to establish influence which is also a strategy for sustenance and continual access to donor funding and contracts. "We partnered with UNICEF on budget analysis and since then we have gained contracts to continue in that regard" (Zach, 2014).

#### **4.4 The Scope of Think Tanks Activities in Relation to Policy Dialogue.**

According to McGann (2005) think tank activities vary in scope although the 'boutique' think tanks specialize in specific areas. The researcher found out that the think tanks under study are not the boutique type but have diversified towards a particular development agenda. They do not specialize or focus on a specific policy agenda but cover a broad range of policy issues from political, economic, social, security, religion, education and legal matters. Their major role is to serve as a platform for policy deliberation while outcomes are published solely for donors and to other consumers solely based on donor's instruction.

The core mandate of CEPA is publication of its annual flagship, *Economic Review and Outlook of Macro Situations in Ghana*. This is an issue paper series produced through the funds given by the ACBF. Topics are given for research and an example is the ‘State Audit: An Instrument for Accountability and good Economic Governance’, published in 2005. CEPA looks at a variety of issues based on donor project. They therefore research on issues which may be commissioned, project based or contracted but sometimes internally driven. According to the respondent, all commissioned and project research are donor driven and looks at specific themes or issues in the interest of the donor. An example of a commissioned work was one contracted by the Trade and Investment Programme for a Competitive Export Economy (TIPCEE) for the government of Ghana on ‘Microstructure of Ghana’s Foreign Exchange Market’. The interesting thing about this work is that CEPA does not deal with issues of micro importance. This means the government contracts their services on the credit of core funding. This is because they are deemed as charity organization offering free research analysis. According to Mr Apaloo, (CEPA, 2013) “donors provide grant to us as charity organizations in order to respond to both their needs and that of government”. CEPA also gets projects which come with specific themes. One was given by German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), USAID and TIPCEE on “Customizing the Ease of Doing Business Survey in Ghana and Trading across Borders” “CEPA was supported by the consultants from the University of Ghana Business School. What helped CEPA was that it did these projects under the PHASE III of the ACBF Grant Agreement which commits the organization to respond to government and donor request for research. Though this is supposed to be a core funding which is meant to be flexible and also cater for institutional building and strengthening of the organization, it also comes with conditions.

The core mandate of CDD is to promote political and economic reform. However, the organization hardly has control over research areas. This is because donor contract and commissioned work is conditioned on specific areas of donor interest. Retrieved information from conferences, workshops and symposiums are published into research papers. Another published material known as *The Critical Perspective* is an occasional paper published by CDD. It provides scholarly and insightful analysis of contemporary issues in governance and democratic development in Ghana in particular and Africa in general. According to my interviewee, most of the research themes are determined by their donors. Thus, most publications at the Centre reflects topics determined by donors. Examples of these include; “The Judiciary in the Golden Age of Business” (2002) which was sponsored by DANIDA and “The Ghana Government and Corruption Survey: Evidence from Households, Enterprises and Public Officials” (2000) which was commissioned by the WB.

CDD is a member of CODEO a network responsible for election observation. All election papers are products of CODEO but commissioned by the USAID, WB or FNF. This means that the themes or topic for research in the area of elections is provided by the donor. Some of the publications are ‘Promoting a Peaceful Transparent and Credible Biometric Voters Registration Process’ funded by DFID/UK, ‘Ghana’s Election 2012 in Perspective’ was funded by USAID, ‘Towards the Effective Regulation of Executive Power; An agenda for Deepening Liberal Democratic Consolidation in Ghana’s 4<sup>th</sup> Republic (2010)’ was sponsored by Friedrich Nauman Foundation. (FNF seek to promote liberal market economy and stimulate growth in the private sector), ‘UN Economic Commission for Africa’s Africa Governance Report I (2002) and report II’ (2007). ‘UN Diagnostic Research on governance and anti-corruption in Ghana (2000), ‘Social Accountability in Ghana’ were all research for the WB in 2006. ‘Ghana Drivers of Change

Analysis' was commissioned by the Overseas Development Institute, (UK), and Research on Democratizing Civil Military and Police Community Relations in Ghana sponsored by DANIDA, FNF, USAID (Nana Ama, 2015).

The publications mentioned above are written from projects organized by donors or sponsored by specific donors who determine the themes or topics they want the institution to research on. However, there are few publications which are not linked to any specific project but written to present current state of the nation within a specific framework. An example is the *Kronti ne Akwamu*, some conference proceedings, and *Critical Perspectives*. These materials are sold to generate some funds not for profit but for publication.

The scope of engagement at ISODEC is very broad. The organization seem to deal with almost every aspect of developmental issue from education, oil and gas, legal issues, service delivery in terms of fiscal and material services, budget analysis, accountability programmes, health (reproduction), advocacy and capacity building, monitoring evaluation, establishment of coalition and support for local organizations. The researcher inquired why the organization cannot just focus on a tailored area. The responds was that donors come in with diverse issues looking for organizations that can help them in various research areas. ISODEC has widened its branches so that whatever area a donor concentration may be, the organization would be fit and ready to take up the contract. Most of the donor projects or commissioned work comes with specific area of interest as highlighted below. According to the librarian,

Capacity of Oversight Institutions, such as, School Committees to Enhance Quality of Girl Child Education was commissioned by TENI/SNV. The area of focus was to achieve systemic change by improving transition, completion and quality of basic

education for disadvantaged children, particularly, girls in northern Ghana. Improve Quality of Family Reproductive Health Care Delivery by Improving Access to Information was commissioned by SIMAVI. The area of focus was family reproductive health care and the MDGs. Improve Transparency and Accountability in the Management of Oil and Gas Resource was another project commissioned by OSIWA and the aim was to improve Capacity of Natural Resource in the Management of Revenues from the Extractive Sector by OXFAM with focus on Capacity Enhancement of Sub-National Structures. Again, Creation of Platforms of capacity building was by COSPE with focus on Building of CSO platforms on water and sanitation and capacity building for the platforms as network building. Improve Health Service Delivery through Transparency and Accountability by STAR GHANA with focus on Public Expenditure Monitoring in the health sector through ICT. Improve capacity of natural Resource in the management of revenues from the extractive sector by STAR GHANA with focus on Capacity building on local content. There was an advocacy work on budget targeting policy improvement towards children, women and essential services by UNICEF with focus on Analysis on budget allocations to children and women in areas of health, education, social welfare, water and sanitation, (Heartwill, 2013).

The information the researcher gathered from all three organizations suggests that funding, be it core or project funding, confines recipient institutions to specific donor themes which they are obliged to research for recommendations. These are also short term projects and once they come to an end, accessibility to funds also ends. The organization is then left alone to struggle for funds towards organizational sustenance.

#### **4.5 The Scope of Donor Funding, Donor Funding Protocols and Donor Policy**

##### **Framework on Think Tank Activities and Policy Formulation.**

This section looks at the scope of donor interests and the activities they support as the basis for trusting CSOs with funds. It also looks at the engagement of donors with CSOs and the justification for employing them in donor activities. CSO funding mechanism is not constant as they derive their support from different donors at the international level or mechanisms established at the sub-regional, national or local level. For instance, ISODEC receives funding from ACBF, SIMAVI, COSPE, IDASA, PLAN GH, Voluntary Support Organization, International Budget Partners, GRAP and Star Ghana. CEPA also receives funding from ACBF, WB, USAID, STAR GHANA, UNDP and IMF. CDD receives its funding from the Friedrich Norman Foundation, WB, Overseas Development Institute (UK), USAID, UNDP, ACBF, and Star Ghana. While researching into each of the individual donors to trace their mission, vision and rationale behind their activities demands time, the researcher decided to focus on particular donors that are common to the organizations under study. The USAID, ACBF and Star Ghana are common to all the organizations. However the WB funds CDD and CEPA but chosen because whereas ISODEC denies taking funding from the WB, it is a beneficiary of the ACBF which is directly funded by the USAID and the WB.

##### **THE WORLD BANK**

The World Bank was established in 1944 as a post war effort for reconstruction in Europe but has extended its mandate to bring development to developing countries through structural adjustment, good governance and poverty reduction (Whitefield, 2002). It therefore offers both financial and technical assistance to Third World countries towards reform. The Bank is also a project driven institution and supervises its programmes

(educational programmes, legal reforms, anticorruption measures) through different strategies<sup>17</sup>. One of the strategies is the employment of CSOs as a tool to embark on its goals and that is; to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity which is a developmental programme in vogue<sup>18</sup>. According to the Bank, "... civil society engagement has become a central pillar in fulfilling the Banks mission ..." (WB, 2006). However, the Banks mission has been based on mainstream models which come in vogue. From structural adjustment to good governance, climate change and poverty reduction, the Bank does not cease to engage and partner with CSOs (WB, 2006). The Bank opens calls to CSOs on specific themes and those found eligible are nominated. According to the Bank,

the overall objective ... is to provide a structured and transparent mechanism for CSOs to contribute to, influence and share information, lessons learned and advice on the development and impact of the World Bank Group plans, policies and programmes...(specific programmes) in low and middle income countries in the context of the WBGs goals ...<sup>19</sup>.

## **UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

USAID as an agency responsible for international aid has its basis from the Marshall Plan where George C. Marshall, the US secretary of state (1947-1949) sought to contribute to the reconstruction of post-war Europe. The success of the Marshall Plan became a concept that was adopted in US Foreign Policy by President Harry Truman who adopted an international Development Assistant Programme with the aim of "creating markets for the

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/history>. 15 Jan, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do> 15 Jan, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/call-for-nominations-civil-society-group-for-health-nutrition-population>, 15 Jan, 2015.

US by reducing poverty and increasing production in developing countries”<sup>20</sup> as an effort to raise their standard to meet international demands. According to President Truman, “... what we envisage is a programme of development based on the concept of democratic fair dealing ... Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace ...”<sup>21</sup> According to Escobar, (1995:3) “the intent was quite ambitious”. The aim of the agency is to promote developmental obligations in countries where they have planted the seed of democracy while advancing what they call “our security and prosperity”<sup>22</sup>. USAID was born in 1961 and has since embarked on programmes offering technical and financial assistance as a crucial means to US foreign Policy. In 1970 the agency shifted focus from technical and capital assistance to basic human needs and then to free markets in the 1980’s and then sustainability programmes and democratic reform programme in the 1990s with the focus of rebuilding the economies of developing countries through NGO’S. This is affirmed by the agency that, “the investment we make in developing countries has long term benefit for America and the American people”<sup>23</sup>. According to Mr Apaloo, “the state is underdeveloped and since they are trade partners they want to help us get to that stage where we can meet global standards” (Apaloo, 2013). USAID is a premiere US government agency with two interdependent aims. On the one hand is to eradicate poverty and promote strong democratic societies, which serves as a basis for advancing the security and prosperity of the US on the other hand. The agency seeks to advance strong democracies through good governance and promote human rights as an effort to eradicate poverty and establish strong societies. The rationale of the organizations mission is that “... resilient democratic societies feature broad based economic growth...”<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are-/usaid-history>, 15 Jan, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission/vision/values>, 15 Jan, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work>, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission/vision/values>, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015.

USAID is an initiator of project driven programmes developed from USAID's Global Development Lab. The aim is to improve living standards through the framework of good governance, gender equity, education and environmental sustainability. Specific areas funded are agriculture, health systems, climate change, humanitarian crisis and democracy, human rights and good governance. Initiatives vary based on the needs of individual countries. For instance, while the agency seeks to avert humanitarian crises in war torn zones such as Afghanistan, it seeks to consolidate democracy in peaceful countries like Ghana through NGOs<sup>25</sup>. The agency sees these organizations as tools for reconstruction to bring stability, consolidate democracy and promote human rights as an effort to build their economies. It therefore grants support to like-minded organizations that can serve as a tool to promote its agenda. Thus, "USAID will ensure that when it comes to civil society our investments are matched by our political commitments and that we utilize both our presence in the field and technical innovation to support inclusive and accountable democracies that advances freedom, dignity and development"<sup>26</sup>.

### **AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION**

ACBF was birthed in 1988 as a result of a conference held on Africans development by the WB. Capacity deficit in policy analysis was identified as the basis for Africa's developmental problems and economic setbacks (blame game). The WB, Multilateral donors and private foundations decided to establish an initiative for capacity building in Africa. The result was the establishment of ACBF. ACBF membership and sponsorship is drawn from the WB, UNDP, African Development Bank (AFDP) and the IMF. However, its core mandate is to build capacity and skills of its clients for good governance and economic development in Africa. ACBF has a mandate of training policy researchers,

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/usaid-history>, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> <http://blog.usaid.gov/2014/standing-with-civil-society>, 15 Jan, 2015.

economic analysts and managers in an attempt to compliment the role of governments in the policy formulation process. As a demand driven institution, it has its broad framework within which collaborators must work. There are systems and mechanism to ensure that funding is used for the mandate for which it was provided. In this vein, the foundation has strategic plans which are implemented within specific periods of years. These plans reflect competent areas and organizations that apply for funds must work within this framework to achieve the foundations objective. An example is the Strategic Medium Plan (SMTP I) which was embarked on between 2002 and 2006; SMTP II which was undertaken from 2006 to 2011 and SMTP III between 2012 and 2016. The first Strategic Medium Term Plan (SMTP I) was from 2002 to 2006 where the foundations core objectives was reflected in six competent areas. Economic policy analysis and management, financial management and accountability, strengthening and monitoring of national statistics, public administration and management, strengthening of the policy analysis capacity of national parliament and professionalization of the voices of the private sector and civil society. While these areas serve as the overall framework, the organization set out to look at sub areas under each of the plans. For instance under SMTP I, it sought to strengthen effectiveness of the core public sector, strengthening of public sector, private sector and civil society interface, strengthening of training and research institutions, strengthening of regional organizations and establishment or strengthening of country level framework for coordination of capacity building and participatory development<sup>27</sup>.

Organizations that apply for funds prepare their own proposals which must be consistent with ACBF strategies and framework which is based on ACBF country's development plan. ACBF also provides technical assistance upon institutional request. According to

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<sup>27</sup> [www.acbf-pact/media/faq/what-acbf'srole-cap](http://www.acbf-pact/media/faq/what-acbf'srole-cap)

Abrampa, the foundation embarks on capacity building and training and institutions are compelled to become pragmatic, to gather experience. The result is that various research themes and topics are given for research and politics analysis reflected in their knowledge and learning activities. Thus, most of the activities embarked on by think tanks is just a take home project.

## **STAR GHANA**

Star Ghana serves as a donor basket or funding mechanism with DFID, DANIDA, EU and USAID as the main sponsors with an aim of strengthening transparency, accountability and responsiveness in Ghana. Star Ghana works within thematic areas of democratic governance, access to justice, sustainability, parliament, media organization and journalism, health, oil and gas, education, election<sup>28</sup>. All these areas serve as the basis for grant calls. The democratic governance call for instance “aims to strengthen democratic governance through civil society engagement and advocacy, the project seek to explore opportunities for ... alliances/networks/coalitions in the implementation of their proposed action...”<sup>29</sup>.

An interview with a key informant from the programmes department, Mr. Alimo, revealed that the organization existed to promote and reflect the ideals of its funders. Another revealing insight with regard to the objective of star Ghana was geared towards capacity building and training private policy institutes. According to my respondent,

Our funders are supporting transparency, accountability and responsibility of duty bearers, thus whatever we do is geared

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/grantees>, 8th Oct, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/grantees/democratic-governance>, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2014.

towards accountability of public leaders. We identify their capacity needs and train them to be system building and strengthening. We have a stream of funding for this; A restricted component and an open component called window funding (Alimo, Star Ghana, 2014).

The institution has evolved as an initiator of various short term programmes. It started as the Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI) from 2004 to 2010 which employed the Rights Base Approach, The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-rap) from 2005 to 2011 which engaged think tanks in research and policy advocacy, KASA from 2008 to 2010 emphasized on natural resource governance and the Civil Society Governance Funds (CSGF) from 2004 to 2010) aimed at capacity building of CSOs in the task of monitoring and advocacy in line with good governance and human rights. Star Ghana as a metamorphosed mechanism seeks to work within national framework of good governance with emphasis on gap closure based on accountability and responsiveness<sup>30</sup> in the areas of “basic education quality, rural health services, agricultural value chains, urban sanitation and the emerging oil and gas sector,”<sup>31</sup> gender equity, social inclusion and demand value for money.<sup>32</sup> Grant recipients are expected to emphasize on gender related issues in their proposals. Star Ghana’s programmes will “compliment the objectives of achieving more equitable poverty reduction and human development targets”<sup>33</sup>.

With focus on the autonomy of the think tanks under study, the findings indicate that think tanks have the autonomy to pursue their interest but this is partly altered once they go for donor support. Though they are free to work in any field of their choice they are obliged to

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/introduction/#>, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/outputs-and-key-principles/> 5<sup>th</sup>, Jan, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/theory-of-change/> 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/outputs-and-key-principles/>, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2015..

work within thematic areas that reflect donor mission and vision. The relationship with their donors is also characterized by strict monitoring and supervision to ensure that they adhere to the rules of the game. This was what my respondent had to say

we don't detect what they should do, they decide what they want to do but just that it should be within our frame work or broad themes for the grants, they send proposals and we also give them something we call result streams, results they are supposed to give us, that when you do it like this you suppose to get ABCD, we show them that these are the results, so your contract is tied to those things. When we monitor and realize that you are not going towards that line we cancel the contract (Alimo, 2014).

The respondent also affirmed that Star Ghana has realized that the relationship between civil society organizations and think tanks and their donors is one characterized by coercion. Star Ghana has taken the responsibility to engage think tank organizations on finding better means of support towards sustainability. It is for this reason that star Ghana organized the “first ever sustainability festival” (star Ghana 2012 report), to educate organizations towards financial sustainability.

### **Policy Maker's View**

As part of the empirical research an interview was conducted with an influential member in parliament who represented the demand side of the relationship between think tanks and government. From the view point of the policy maker, think tanks capitalized on the ‘freedom of rights’ associated with the democratic process in an attempt to influence policy in government.

With the issue of influence my informant claims they make tremendous impact in the nation though they work in various fields. According to him,

They influence policy through the papers they write or their publications. They are also instrumental because they educate us on key issues and expose us to information that ordinarily, we may not have had access to. Government also incorporates most of their views into bills which are passed into law while they also help shape policies. I personally worked with them in a health committee and undertook a basic need project on mental health. They were also instrumental in advocating for the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill (Hon.Muhammed-Mubarak Muntaka, 2013).

It was also revealed that since the government has its own public policy institutes it does not financially or technically support civil society organizations and think tanks for that matter. Also, think tanks are supported by different donors who seek to promote different projects and agendas. The relationship between the state and civil society organizations or think tanks has been more of distrust and suspicion. In Ghana, most civil society organizations are advocates of market liberalisations and reforms since donor organisations such as the USAID, World Bank and African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) support such ideals. In this vein, the possibility of working assiduously against home grown policies is wide. This impedes government effort to promote policies that have traditionally based values (Hearn, 1997; Ohemeng, 2005). However, although the government does not support them in any way it depends on civil society organizations either for training or research. This is because they are deemed as charity organizations offering either material or research support towards development.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

The study looked at the autonomy of think tanks in the context of the neoliberal agenda. It sought to examine the extent to which donor funding and dominant neoliberal interests influence the activities of think tanks and undermine their autonomy and to challenge perceptions in main stream political discourse which present the state as a representative of the elite and civil society as autonomous domain that represents popular interest. It thus examined the relationship between good governance, civil society (think tanks) and donor funding. The discussion was thematically analysed based on factors that led to the emergence of think tanks, the impact of globalization on their roles, the establishment of networks and coalition between think tanks, their donors and other civil society organizations (CSOs) and the essence of such networks and framework within which think tanks operate in relation to policy dialogue and the impact of donor funding and donor framework on think tank activities. Based on the objective and field work carried out in Accra, this chapter seeks to summarise the entire work and draw conclusions as such.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

Although a number of NGOs existed before the 1990s, the policy research institutes under study emerged after Ghana re-introduced democracy in the early 1990'2 and they existed to entrench it through research and advocacy. This is in consonance with Carothers (1999') argument which differentiates community based organizations from NGOs and which Hagberg (2004) defines as developmental organizations that emerged to promote particular development agenda. Although most of them have their core mandate, they are compelled to broaden their scope and look at a wide range of issues due to funding

constraints. CEPA existed to influence economic policy at the macro level and to publish its economic flagship which is the Ghana macro-economic review and outlook but have diversified to look at a range of social and economic issues at the micro level. ISODEC has shifted from social service delivery programmes to advocacy in social reform programmes but later added institutional reform programmes. However, CEPA is considering a shift to social reform programmes. The two organizations are challenged due to funding constraints. To some extent, CDD does not face financial problems because it easily accesses project funding as a result of its strong affiliation to the good governance agenda. However, all the organizations under study face institutional problems because project funding does not cater for organizational cost. The researcher also found out that these organizations hardly use the term think tank but rather private policy research institute and they differentiate themselves from other civil society based on their unique human resource base with high academic achievements which gives them a comparative advantage in terms of policy influence.

At CEPA the researcher found that the organization constituted a staff of twenty two from degree holders to PhD holders and categorized as a strong force and institute. However, financial challenges have resulted in setbacks at the organization. With lamentation my respondent retorted that,

We used to be segregated by departments, research, administration and finance. We ran our programmes through departmental heads who are all degree and PhD holders but things have changed. First, we are out of funds and secondly, the environment in which we are pulling skilled labour down, (Mr. Apaloo, 2014).

Most times donors offer expertise especially from the WB to help the organization. They hold conferences and seminars and invite experts to offer their views where donors also sit

in to contribute. However, where a programme is beyond their capacity, (example in educational programmes which is a new area) they hire expertise outside the organization.

CDD on the other hand has a staff of about forty from the Executive Director to the manual labourers. Apart from the labourers, the main staff constitutes graduates from the university level, master's degree holders, doctorate degree holders and professors who operate in their specialized fields. Due to limited nature of staff, officers are compelled to engage in changing roles. A departmental head plays a lead role in his specialization of field but becomes a member of a team in another department where he can contribute. According to my respondent,

CDD has a seven member board; the board chairman and his vice take decisions and endorse all programmes. The administration is headed by the Executive Director, Professor Gyimah Boadi and his deputy, Dr. Franklin Oduro (who is also the head of programmes and research). At the next level are two associates, Dr. Baffour Agyeman Duah and Professor Henry kwesi Prempeh, who are both associate and founding members. At the next level are the departmental heads. Finance and administration (composed of the Human Resource, accounts and administration procurement), research and programmes (this is the actual engine room where all the ideas are generated, proposals written and projects implemented), publicity and resource mobilization is a key aspect of the organization responsible for resource mobilized (but not a strong base in that area). At CDD, the staff are officers who work as a team under themes. I handle the election, violence and decentralization and have a group under me. There is another office that operates under marginalized group, power and gender having a leader and three members. A leader at one office is a member or subordinate in another office. This is due to limited staff which has to do with funding issues (Oduro, 2014).

Although CDD does not have issues tapping into project funds this does not cater for institutional cost and hence deprives the organization of employing more staff. CDD does

not depend on external expertise because it is expensive to hire so they team up with donors who provide the funds while the organization depend on internal expertise to embark on projects. However, the respondent stated that they meet with representatives of donors and deliberate on issues which allows them make input and give policy direction. According to the respondent., “they also brief us on what they think is right, especially on issues that is on their heart, so we share ideas with them which makes both of us meet our objectives and goals mutually” (Abrampah, 2014).

However, the respondent claimed that the organization is not obliged to take donor advice or contribution, an attribute which makes them organizationally independent. This owes to the fact that they have the requisite expertise and personnel who have the urge over policy issues. However, because developmental agenda is externally oriented all the interviewees admitted that the organizations depend on external advice and policy direction in order to produce expected output.

ISODEC had about forty staff but the number has reduced drastically due to funding problems. Staff members are leaving by the day either to continue their education or seek greener pastures. One of the informants of the research quitted due to funding issues. Also the informants were not fully confident about the local expertise at the institute especially when it comes to certain research areas that are new such as in the field of oil and gas. The organization therefore depend on foreign expertise from all walks of life, some from America, Nigeria, Senegal, Tobago and Trinidad. According to my informant, they are very expensive to hire. He recalls that an expert invited from Trinidad charged five million dollars which but for the intervention of the WB the organization could not pay. This information also reveals that ISODEC cannot totally do without the WB.

The research showed that all the three think tanks engage in normal roles unique to all other think tanks and in line with McGann's (2007) argument that they exist to perform certain basic roles. However, the activity of think tanks under study resonate Stone's (2000) argument that their roles are reshaped in light of specific agendas. The think tanks under study emerged with the democratic dispensation as part of neoliberal reform. CEPA and CDD emerged with and exist to entrench democracy and employ the Good Governance Framework (GGF). ISODEC emerged as a service delivery organization in social reform programmes and transformed into a research and advocacy institute in social reform programmes but later combined this with institutional reform programmes. Thus, it employs both the Right Based Approach (RBA) and the GGF in the delivery of its services. According to Dr. Zach, "other partners seek to contract projects that must be done in the light of the good governance" which means that they are compelled not only to fight civil rights but hold government accountable. Thus, the RBA commits ISODEC to demand civil rights in areas of donor interest while the good governance commits the organization to hold the government accountable in areas that reflect donor interest. According to Shivji (2007), rights have been construed as needs and developmental obligations construed as the basic rights of citizens. Policy research institutes respond to sensitive developmental issues which demands basic right advancement, and promote government responsiveness and accountability in the utilization and distribution of resources and to build capacity of various actors not only to improve management search of resources but imbue organizations and individuals in the execution of these interventions (Whitefield. 2002; Cornwell and Nyamu-Mesembi, 2004). The organizations are compelled to adopt these approaches to embark on their roles and achieve results. However, their roles are better achieved when organizations move beyond the local level

and interact at the national, sub-regional and international level (Stone, 2000; Kelstrup, nd).

The organizations under study are involved in a number of networks or coalition either with their donors or like-minded organizations. The motive varies from information access, cost management, project promotion and facilitation, and objective achievement. However the underlying factor common to all of them is to consolidate themselves in order to establish influence. This does not only make them prominent or influential at the national level, but also to win the trust of donors for continual funding access. All the three organizations also affirmed that with such consolidated relationships, donors come directly to work with them rather than they going through cumbersome 'donor call' process.

With respect to the scope of activities carried out by think tanks in relation to policy dialogue, the research revealed that the think tanks under study have limited core funds making it difficult for them to pursue their core objective. However, project funding is common but strictly associated with donor themes or topics and leaving no room for think tanks to manoeuvre to pursue other objectives. After a research work is done and published majority of publications go to donors who also determines what the copies should be used for (either storage or distributed to specific groups). Although all the respondents complained bitterly, they all claim they have no choice since the project funds seem to be the only means of sustenance.

Again, the think tanks under study are sponsored by different donor organization under different programmes. Although all the donors have a mandate of developing the underdeveloped world the aim is to make them competitive at the global level and raise

goods and services to a global standard. However, they all employ civil society as a tool to embark on their agenda.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Regarding factors that led to the emergence of think tanks and the influence of concepts of civil society on theories about think tanks the researcher found out that the three organizations under study owe their existence solely to neoliberal reforms associated with state power curtailment and assumption of its social obligations by CSOs as argued by Whitefield (2002). This led to the establishment of organizations such as ISODEC in the delivery of social services in the first face of the neoliberal reforms. However, CSOs were politically inactive around this period as opined by Agyemang Duah (2008). By the 1990's, there was availability of donor funding to empower specialized CSOs that were not only interested in state accountability and responsiveness but had well equipped expertise for policy research analysis, recommendations and advocacy towards institutional reforms as opined by McGann (2005) and Whitefield (2002). This has led to establishment of think tank institutions such as CDD and CEPA who Ohemeng (2005) describes as having vested interest in neoliberal reforms while ISODEC transformed from service delivery to research and advocacy institute that seek to influence policy towards social reforms. Hence, a dichotomy between think tanks that pursue social reform on one hand those that pursue institutional reform on the other hand.

The basic challenge of the three organizations has been financial constraints. Although ISODEC has an agenda of pursuing social reforms in the area of water and sanitation, it has encountered funding opportunities from donor agencies that seek to promote institutional reforms. Thus, the organization has widened its scope and operates under a

wide range of themes from economic, to social, political, health and legal issues through the right based approach and now the good governance approach. CEPA stood for neoliberal reforms and could boast of funding opportunities from donors such as the WB, USAID and ACBF. However, the organization is facing competition from other think tanks in the publication of its annual flagship, “Ghana: Macroeconomic Review and Outlook”. The ACBF in a CEPA-ACBF Grant Agreement has cautioned the organization to broaden its scope and become innovative to include other aspects of economic management and governance such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) for Ghana. According to Agyemang-Duah (2008), the APRM, is an initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) launched in 2001 as a framework for political and economic development in Africa designed to monitor and evaluate country progress in instituting the standards contained in the declaration on Democracy, Economic and Good Political and Corporate Governance. While this situation has become very challenging for the organization, it is restructuring to move into social reform programmes in contrast with ISODEC which is now pursuing institutional reform programmes. CDD is also affiliated to institutional reform and do not have difficulty accessing funds. However, the funds are project based and do not cater for institutional needs. The institution is not only faced with issues of maintenance but payment of salaries posing sustainability threats.

This is a major issue common to all the organizations and limits their choice of getting into other areas. For instance, at CDD, election contracts have specific concentrations such as conflict monitoring or peace resolution. Meanwhile, the organization will want to research into issues pertaining psychology of supporters but limited due to funds. At

ISODEC, the organization is constrained because donors depict the areas of focus.

According to one of the respondents,

“He who pays the piper detects the tune, donors detect the areas we should work, gone are the times when we had core funding but now its project funding which constraints us. Often people come with an agenda that are not your agenda. The country has more problems that need attention and we would like to look at issues around unemployment, agricultural industry are collapsing, we want to work with farmers and peasants, but we don’t have NGOS helping to do this. They promote reproductive health in ways that suit them, to provide medicine and condoms as a way of promoting their commodities and expanding their markets. International support for water and sanitation is about helping external organizations secure contracts in water systems and manage water project. It doesn’t help us” (Dr. Zach, 2014; Heartwill, 2014).

In effect, although the organizations are pursuing roles common to all think tanks such as capacity building, research, advocacy and consultation, organization of conferences and workshops and the publication of research outcomes (mostly for the donor who either take all the copies or decide what the copies should be used for), as expressed by McGann (2007), it endorses the notion of Whitefield (2002) who states that their roles are geared towards an objective of entrenching democracy and economic reform through the good governance framework (GGF). Thus they exist to reify the agenda which serves as the basis for network formations and coalitions at both the local, national, sub-region and international level either with donors or likeminded institutions. The aim for this collaboration is to access information and cut cost, to achieve objective which would enable them win trust of donors and access donor funds easily. The organizations also affirmed that with such networks they enjoy donor protocols. This means that donors

come directly to work with them rather than them responding to donor calls which come with cumbersome processes. Donors also contribute creatively (ideas) and in capacity (expertise) wise where necessary.

Another fact that asserts to the point that they exist to reify the neoliberal agenda is that the scope of their policy dialogue is embedded within the neoliberal framework of economic reform and good governance. Although all the organizations claim that they are independent of donor influence, all their projects are either propelled by the donor or compelled to work within donor framework, even when they have their own project area. Their major limitation with issues of funding is linked to the fact that they are limited when it comes to developmental problems they are really passionate about or which is in the interest of society. They are thus driven by donor interest rather than popular interest.

Another issue of concern is the fact that think tanks receive funding from multiple donors. None of the three organizations have one specific donor agency. However the different donor agencies and organizations have varied developmental agenda and interest but all employ good governance as a framework towards good governance as a prerequisite to development. The usage of Good governance is employed as means to an end and an end in itself. Thus, the concept is employed on the one hand as a frame work to achieve good governance as a goal on the other hand. Therefore, the concept is both evasive and elusive, ideally employed to achieve basically everything and anything that is believed to promote development.

### **5.3 Final Conclusion to the General Study**

This chapter tried to find out whether the set objective has been achieved and to proof the hypothesis. Considering the conclusion drawn from the above, it is evident that all the three think tanks under study emerged as a result of neoliberal reform as an attempt to liberate them and assert their autonomy. Thus, they are not only autonomous of the state but organizationally independent which gives them the liberty to apply for donor aid. However, once they access the aid (funds (core/project), technical or intellectual) they are obliged to work within donor framework and themes designed to reify institutional reforms. CDD is passionately affiliated with the GGA and operates solely in this line which makes its susceptible to donor dictates. CEPA and ISODEC have also shifted from one reform programme to the other due to funding constraints. However, they all assert their autonomy from the state and have some level of institutional control.

According to Kelstrup's (nd) think tanks need to be organizationally independent and non-representative but influential while Stone (2000) argues that they can only become influential when they open up to new ideas to become innovative and globally competitive. While funding constraints commits the think tank organizations under study to diversify, concentrate on new areas and employ new frameworks and strategies, Kelstrup argues that this kind of manoeuvring is healthy and a characteristic that makes them mercurial. In contrast to the WB's perception of think tanks as a representative force, their affiliation to particular ideological agenda has been proved to be unpredictable, a situation which makes them non-representative and versatile, and a virtue which strengthens their autonomy. Hence, while the neoliberal reform has ushered in the valorization of think tanks in Ghana, they are institutionally autonomous and their relationship with the state is one characterized by independence. Also they are at liberty to

access donor aid irrespective of the agency and what they represent. However, donor conditions erodes their autonomy in a competitive knowledge based global economy.

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## **INTERNET SOURCES**

[http://www.cepa.org.gh/about\\_cepa.php](http://www.cepa.org.gh/about_cepa.php).

<http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>

<http://civilsocietygh.org/wacsi-html/web/view-cso.php?id=1038>

<http://isodec.org.gh/articlepage.php?idnews=54>

<http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.SVREtA0X.dpuf>

<http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.DF8pHphn.dpuf><http://www.modernghana.com/news/70936/1/ghana-must-develop-its-own-macroeconomic>

[model-iso.html](http://www.modernghana.com/news/70936/1/ghana-must-develop-its-own-macroeconomic-model-iso.html); Modern Ghana.

<http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>

<http://civilsocietygh.org/wacsi-html/web/view-cso.php?id=1038><http://www.isodec.org.gh/program.php>

<http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>

<http://www.cddgh.org/cdd-ghana-people/faqs>

<http://www.isodec.org.gh/aboutus.php#sthash.DF8pHphn.dpuf>.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/call-for-nominations-civil-society-group-for-health-nutrition-population>

<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission/vision/values>

<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are-/usaid-history>

<http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work>

<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission/vision/values>

<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/usaid-history>

<http://blog.usaid.gov/2014/standing-with-civil-society>

<http://www.starghana.org/grantees>

<http://www.starghana.org/grantees/democratic-governance>

<http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/outputs-and-keyprinciples/>

<http://www.starghana.org/about-star-ghana/outputs-and-key-principles/>

<http://archive.corporateeurope.org/index.html>.

**NAMES OF RESPONDENTS:****CENTRE FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE.**

1. Frank Oduro - Deputy Director
2. Mr. Paul Abrampah Mensah – Research official and Programs Director
3. Mrs. Nana Ama Nartey – Researcher and Librarian.

**CENTRE FOR POLICY ANALYSIS**

4. Dr. Joseph L.S. Abbey - Executive Director.
5. Mr. Lawrence Apaloo-Research Officer and Economic Policy Manager.
6. Dr. Oduro Abena - Research Officer in international trade and social affairs.

**INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE.**

7. Dr. Yakubu Zakaria - Director of Programs and Research Officer
8. Dr. Steven Manteaw- Research Official and Campaign Coordinator.
9. Mrs. Heartwill Samba-Research Fellow and Library Assistant.

**STAR GHANA:**

10. Mr. Daniel Alimo

**PARLIAMENT:**

11. Hon. Mohammed-Mubarak Muntaka, Majority Chief Whip:

**APPENDICES****INTERVIEW GUIDE****1. Interview Guide for Think Tank Institutes**

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

This research is intended to explore the position of think tanks in relation to the neoliberal agenda and the extent to which they enjoy autonomy in making choice as far as their donors are concern. This institution has been selected as one of the organizations where information can be sourced. The information gathered is solely for research purpose and would be treated confidentially. The analysis would be done anonymously unless the respondent willingly asserts the disclosure of his identity. I would therefore be glad to solicit your assistance in gathering the necessary information for this course.

**SECTION A: Profile of Respondent**

Name of Organization:.....

Position of Respondent.....

Duration of service in the position:.....

**SECTION B: History, Operations and Activities of the Organization****QUESTIONS:**

1. Can you narrate the history of this organization; when it started, the brain behind its establishment, the nature of the political environment at the time?
2. What is the ideological orientation of the institute?
3. What are your core objectives and how has it changed over time?
4. What are the administrative units or departments within the institutes?
5. What is the numerical strength of your staff and their educational level?
6. What is the nature of your research?
7. Who are your targets?
8. What means do you employ to get your agenda across?

**SECTION C:****Funding source for think tank activities and its implications**

1. What are your sources of funding?
2. Who are your external donors?
3. Are there strings attached to donor aid?
4. Why are they interested in funding you and what are their expectations?
5. Are you able to meet donor expectations?
6. What is the nature of relationship between the organization and its donors?
7. Do you solicit support from the government and what is the relationship between the organization and the government?
8. How do you survive when a donor program comes to an end?
9. Can you enumerate some achievements that you can solely claim ownership?
10. What challenges do you face as a private policy institutes?
11. How do you seek to manage these challenges?

**SECTION D****Donor influence on policy think tank activities**

1. Who are your funders and what is the reason for funding the organization?
2. What is the nature of relationship between the donors and the organization?
3. Do you pursue any specific agenda?
4. What serves as your lens or framework through which you work?
5. Do you by any means pursue alternative policies?

## **2. Interview Guide for Policy Makers**

Researchers Name: LAUREL BRIGHT

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

This research is intended to explore the position of think tanks in relation to the neoliberal agenda and the extent to which they enjoy autonomy in making choice as far as their donors are concern. This institution has been selected as one of the organizations where information can be sourced. The information gathered is solely for research purpose and would be treated confidentially. The analysis would be done anonymously unless the respondent willingly asserts the disclosure of his identity. I would therefore be glad to solicit your assistance in gathering the necessary information for this course.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the history of the evolution of private policy institutes in Ghana?
2. What is the relationship between the government and think tank organizations?
3. Are these organizations funded by the government?
4. What is government's perception of think tanks?
5. What is government's expectation as far as think tanks are concerned?
6. Do they have the freedom to pursue alternative policy analysis and recommendations?

### **3. Interview Guide for Donor Organizations**

Researchers Name: LAUREL BRIGHT

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

This research is intended to explore the position of think tanks in relation to the neoliberal agenda and the extent to which they enjoy autonomy in making choice as far as their donors are concern. This institution has been selected as one of the organizations where information can be sourced. The information gathered is solely for research purpose and would be treated confidentially. The analysis would be done anonymously unless the respondent willingly asserts the disclosure of his identity. I would therefore be glad to solicit your assistance in gathering the necessary information for this course.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the relationship between the donor agency and think tank organizations
2. What is the motive for sponsoring think tanks organizations
3. Are the think tank organizations able to meet the expectation of the donors as far as funding is concern?
4. Do you have a standard framework which can serve as a lens for the organizations?
5. What provision is made for think tanks that have proposals which does not coincide with donor frame work but needs funds to embark on a project?