



**Think tanks in Spain:
Crisis as an opportunity for increased relevance?**

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**Country report for the “Think Tanks at a Cross-Road: Shifting Paradigms and Policy Dilemmas
in Southern and Eastern Europe”**

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1. Introduction

TTs in Spain are relatively new arrivals and are not a transition-related phenomenon. The economic crisis, surprisingly, does not seem to have deprived them of the necessary conditions for their development and growth. In 2011 there were around 55 TTs in Spain, currently they are around 60. And even though all of them are experiencing crisis-related financial difficulties, they nevertheless see in the crises (financial, economic, institutional, EU-related, etc.) opportunities for enhancing their relevance and strengthening their presence and influence in Spanish society.

While TTs seem currently in vogue in Spain, the TT concept itself is contested, with some TTs preferring to be called “laboratorios de pensamiento” instead. The “tank” part of the TT definition meets resistance within TT community, who often insist on drawing a sharp distinction between “think tanks” and “do tanks”, emphasizing the strict “separation of powers” between developing new ideas (the proper task of TTs, according to most of Spanish TTs interviewed) and promoting those ideas, trying to influence the political process, to lobby for policies, etc. This emphasis on the strict distinction between developing and promoting ideas has a bearing on the issue of legitimacy and relevance of TTs. There seem to be a general trade-off here: “promoting ideas” seems to be part of what “being relevant” means, yet the more TTs are seen as “ideas promoters”, the less are perceived as being unbiased, as being objective.

Another important feature of TT’s background in Spain is the relative weakness of civil society there, although the rise of a think tank like CIDOB was made possible thanks to the support of private donors in the last years of Franco’s rule. There is, further, no culture of private donations to TTs. Still prevalent is the strong habit of relying on the State, a practice that started with the democratic transition. Spain’s TTs are “hybrid” in nature: they are both research institutes and fora for discussing new ideas, with some TTs being hybrids in a further sense – combining academic research with public diplomacy and “representative” functions (hosting high profile events and organizing fora with the participation of high public officials and foreign dignitaries). TTs in Spain seek to influence the elits, yet despite this relative elitism, they seem to have little problems with their legitimacy. However, an important recent feature in the sector is the growing preoccupation of TTs with their independence. There is, nevertheless, a common perception within TT community, that state funding does not necessarily present a challenge to TT independence, but, rather, may uphold it. Securing core-funding, and not relying on project-based funding, is perceived as a guarantee that they may set and follow their own agenda rather than be overly reactive to pressures from donors – be they public or private. Reliance on public funding is not the only, not even the main challenge to TTs independence, as it is realized that the amounts and proportion of public funding in TTs budget are not necessarily related to

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how independent a TTs is perceived to be. The dangers of private funding are also acknowledge, though some TT prove to have little sensitivity the importance of transparency on funding.

There are relatively few genuinely ideological, not party-related TTs (like the neoliberal TTs in CEE, which seem to be central players in the field there), with all TTs putting a great stress on their neutrality, objectivity, impartiality, following a cross-party agenda, serving the general interest and civil society rather than partial interests.

If there is an ideology, shared by TTs in Spain, this is the welfare-ist agenda: this seems to be the ideological consensus shared both by the Spanish society, the political establishment, and by the TT community. If TTs in Spain are guardians of any ideological consensus, this is the post-transition consensus of a **unified, pluralist, welfare-ist, pro-European Spanish state**. Yet with the financial and economic crisis in Spain and the EU hitting hard, this consensus seems to be unraveling, with important elements in it (welfare-ism against pro- Europeanism) pulling at present in opposite directions. There seem to be relatively little sensitivity among TT community, however, that this tension within the consensus is affecting TT legitimacy, though it is certainly realized that the new developments put new issues on TTs' agenda. TTs in Spain shift their focus from specializing (the niches for independent TTs were mostly foreign affairs and domestic economic issues) towards a more generalist approach, bringing in new issues, as TTs realize that the dividing line between domestic and foreign policy is progressively being blurred with the Spanish domestic economic policies often being decided in Brussels.

An important consideration in evaluating the role of TTs in Spain is how influential they are/are perceived to be. Some TTs pride themselves by their presence at google.news, while others question this as a sign of being relevant, even less – as being useful. There seem to be a serious issue with both the relevance and the usefulness of TTs in Spain. Our “external” respondents identified its reasons in the TT product: not sufficiently policy-relevant, not adapted to the needs of policy-makers, too academic, in short. Contributing to this is the overwhelming use by TTs of the expertise of external academics, with the crisis further deepening this trend, on the one hand allowing TTs to share in the high trust and reputation of academics, but, on the other, detracting from the distinctness of TTs as a unique voice with a special influence in Spanish society.

TTs' independence is determined also by how is their agenda set. Though all TTs interviewed shared their experience of how their organizations try to make sure their agenda fits the agenda of society, it seems that TTs in Spain sometimes take the agenda of government as the agenda of society. External observers point out that the crisis has taken aback most of TTs, with the street (the 15th of May movement, the Indignados) rather than TTs putting new issues on the agenda.

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The effect of financial, political, institutional crises on the TT sector in Spain cannot be overestimated. Despite the serious financial difficulties, affecting all TTs, the crisis is seen as an opportunity for increased influence and visibility of TTs. The current situation of TTs in Spain may be simply described thus: less money but more ideas, with new areas of research opening. Thus the crisis is seen as an opportunity for increasing relevance of TTs.

There is a certain trade-off between relevance and legitimacy: the more relevant TTs become, the more citizens are sensitive to their activities and may start questioning their legitimacy. TTs often avoid legitimacy problems by sticking to the “think” rather than “do” part of the “thinktank” hybrid. Yet the price paid by TTs often is - losing relevance. With the crisis opening new avenues for increasing the relevance of TTs in Spain, the legitimacy issues may be expected to take more central place than they currently have.

Our case-study of TT in Spain focuses on the activities of 7 TTs: 6 Madrid-based and one Barcelona-based. We group them in 4 categories: party-related, government-related, ideologically-laden and independent. The party-related TTs we study are: IDEAS (Fundación Ideas para el Progreso), established in July 2008, related to the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) ranked 10th among top TTs with party affiliation, and FAES (*Fundación para el Análisis y los Estudios Sociales*), established in 1989 by José María Aznar and related to the conservative Partido popular (88 in top 100 non-US TTs in the world, GGTTs 2012). We study one government-related TT - El Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, established in December 2001 by Aznar’s PP government. It was ranked 42 among top TTs in Western Europe. The ideologically-laden foundation studied here is Fundación Alternativas, established already in 1979 and very active in the field ever since. It is defined as a progressive, left-oriented, yet not party-related. As we are mainly interested in how independent TTs fare in crisis, we focus on three TTs identified as “independent”, with diverse spheres of expertise and activity: CIDOB - Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, established in 1973 (as *Centre d'Informació i Documentació Internacionals a Barcelona*) with a focus on international affairs, ranked 18 among top 75 TTs in Western Europe, and 35 among top 100 non-US TTs in the world; FEDEA - Fundación de Estudios de Economía Aplicada, established in 1985 and dealing with economic policy and adjacent issues; and Fundación Ciudadanía y Valores (FUNCIVA), established in August 2006 and dealing mainly with human rights, constitutional and social issues. It issued the only “TTs in Spain Guide” – in 2 editions.

Another way to classify the studied TTs study could be along the axis specialised niche-oriented versus generalist TTs, with the political-party-related TTs (and to a lesser extent, Fundación Alternativas) falling in the generalist camp, while the international-affairs ones (Elcano and CIDOB), the economic policy one (FEDEA), and human rights, constitutional and social issues one (FUNCIVA) falling to a smaller or larger extent in the specialised niche camp.

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All TTs chosen for the study declare themselves to be fully independent, though some of them (markedly, the party-related and the government-related ones) are perceived as not independent both by the TT community in Spain itself and by external observers interviewed for this project. Nevertheless, the picture of TTs in Spain would not be complete without them: both because of their influence and presence in the field, and because public funding had historically been very important in setting up TTs -especially in the case of Spain - and cannot be taken as criteria for disqualifying them. So, one question this study wanted to address was to find out how such TTs manage their work in order to preserve their independence.

2. Description of the organization and activities of TTs in Spain

A. Party-related TTs

FAES, Foundation for Social Studies and Analysis (<http://www.fundacionfaes.org/en/home>) is linked to the Partido Popular and is presided by José María Aznar. It pledges to “serve Spain and the values of individual freedom” by developing and promoting political ideas and activities, related to the liberal and reformist centre, committed to the values of political, intellectual and economic freedom, liberal democracy and humanism. It aims to offer “political alternatives to socialism and different ways of thinking”. Ideas are developed there with a clear view to turning them “into programmes of political activity by those in positions of political responsibility”. These aims are achieved through “discussion groups, seminars, lectures, summer conferences (FAES Campus), and training courses, by issuing electronic publications, a magazine (Cuadernos de pensamiento político, Journal of political thought), reports called FAES Papers, and books published by FAES and its publishing house Gota a Gota. It is also active in the field of international relations, collaborating with other foundations and think tanks in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, with experts and scholars worldwide.

Though created already in 1989 (together with the Partido Popular itself), in 2002 FAES consolidated the other foundations originally linked to the Popular Party (the Foundation for Analysis and Social Studies, the Foundation Cánovas del Castillo, Popular Latin America Foundation, the Institute of Training in Politics and the European Studies Foundation) to become *the* think-tank of the Partido Popular.

FAES has several departments: Economy and Public Policies (focusing on economic activity, tax and trade, education, immigration, health, the environment and other public policies), Constitution and Institutions (issues related to the constitutional

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system, the institutions of the Rule of Law, political philosophy, as well as the fight against terrorism), International department (international political affairs, security and defense), Training Department (responsible for courses in political training), Publishing Department (responsible for Foundation's publications, its documentation centre, Gota a Gota publishing house, and FAES' website). FAES has four specialised institutes:

Instituto Cánovas del Castillo (research and dissemination on the history of Spanish liberal-conservative thinking), Instituto Manuel Fraga (study of Spanish political affairs following the transition to democracy, it also manages publications and documentation resources relating to the Partido Popular and contemporary Spanish political affairs), Instituto Popular Iberoamericano (devoted to strengthening political and cultural relations between Spain and Latin America) and, finally, Institut Catalunya Futur (based in Barcelona, organising lectures and seminars and publishing on Catalonia-related issues).

The topics at the focus of Foundation's work are: 1. political thought: since political ideas support different social models, they must be studied and used to shape political agendas. Ideas and principles of liberalism are promoted: freedom, individual rights, liberal democracy, rule of law and western humanism; new anti-liberal trends with negative impact on the freedom of the individual are researched: populism, anti-globalisation, relativism, exclusive nationalism, etc. 2. Constitutional issues and rule of law in Spain: the focus is on upholding the constitutional framework of Spain (based on the 1978 Transition pact) as a pluralistic nation - a guarantee of freedom, equality and pluralistic coexistence, and on strengthening the rule of law institutions. Movements threatening this constitutional framework/related institutions are studied: Justice, the Civil Service, the Regional Governments, Local Authorities, citizen safety, etc. 3. International policy: promoting the concept of an open dynamic Europe. FAES is working to uphold the principles of freedom, democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Iberoamerica, held to be a part of the West, advocating "open, prosperous economies and bringing the region into the rest of the west as the best way of defending freedom, generating wealth and making progress in the fight against poverty". The link with the US is held to be a "key to the defence of freedom, democracy and the western way of life". The foundation's work reflects its acute awareness of what it perceives as the various threats to democracy around the world: advance of revolutionary populism in Iberoamerica, the anti-globalisation movements promoted by the left in Europe/the US, the radical branch of Islam, etc. 4. Fight against terror: ideas and strategies for ending coercion by terrorists and defending liberal-democratic principles and values "against the totalitarianism of terror" are developed. 5. Economy: believing in economic freedom and upholding private property, free trade and market economies, the Foundation promotes structural

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reforms aimed at guaranteeing free, competitive markets, privatization, anti-trust measures, fiscal stability and tax reforms, free international trade and globalization and policies guaranteeing minimum inflationary taxation. The Foundation studies the international, European and Spanish economy, and runs an “observatory” on Spanish economy, that has become an important source of data and ideas in the debates on Spanish economy. 6. Public policy: it aims to improve the quality of government policy, rationalise the public sector, enhance freedom of choice yet keep public services costs low, emphasizing at the same time that individual responsibility is closely linked to freedom. The analyses and policy proposals concern “infrastructure, education, immigration, science and technology, R & D, universities, energy, telecommunications, the information society, the audiovisual industry, land and housing, industry, domestic trade, financial regulation, agriculture, fishing, the environment and sustainability, sport, health, social security, consumer protection, the family, senior citizens, youth and social associations”.

The research and policy output of the FAES is impressive: in 2012 it has published a plethora of reports on diverse topics: *Rescuing the Euro*, the fiscal pact for Catalonia (*El mito fiscal. Razones para un debate*) and *Latin America. An Agenda for Freedom 2012*, etc. The four issues of its quarterly Journal of Political Thought (for which a paid subscription is required) in 2012 were devoted to issues such as populism and radical nationalism in Europe, corruption and anti-corruption measures, the future of institutions, fiscal discipline and economic growth, analyses of the implications for democracy of the 15 May movement in Spain, terrorism and the lessons of Northern Ireland, etc. The latest *FAES Papers* cover topics such as the multiannual financial framework of the EU, TAFTA, the crisis in Mali, analysis of the presidential elections in the US, arguments for the unity of the market as an imperative for regaining competitiveness, the anti-crisis measures of the EU etc.

The Foundation awards an influential FAES Freedom Award (recipient for 2012 was Mario Vargas Llosa). The Foundation also holds an annual summer FAES Campus, devoted to the study and analysis of most debated issues in Spain and the world by leading experts from Spain and abroad and “attended by hundreds of mostly young people”. The success of the format has prompted its expansion, with FAES campuses run in various countries in Latin America as well. In addition to the campus, FAES are organizing training in political action and communication courses for political activists. It also has a very popular and competitive annual internships program, with interns completing their training and working for a year at the Foundation. FAES also publishes books: a detailed map of the attitudes and values of Spaniards, analyzing the challenges to liberal reforms stemming from these attitudes; the challenges to Europe from the global economic crisis, on deconstructing of progressivism and on the left, etc. The books are published by FAES’ publishing house Gota a Gota and are not always freely available at the web-site.

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The Foundation has a well-run web-site, with the information provided there both in Spanish and in English in an easily accessible way. The activity reports of the foundation since 2003 are also found there, including an annual financial audit. However, one cannot find neither the list of sponsors of the Foundation, nor is there an indication of what activities do they sponsor. There is a call for private contributions, yet it is not clear what part of the funding of the Foundation is provided by the state (through the PP subsidy and other sources), by corporate sponsors and by private persons. The information on the site, while well-presented and ordered, is not plentiful. One cannot, for example, find links to the 4 institutes, linked to FAES, there is almost no information about the FAES Campuses organized annually in multiple places in Spain and Latin America. One cannot also find information on the web-site about the economic observatory. One has to search for such information in the section “press room”, where the presentation is in chronological order and one can hardly find the information one needs, unless the person already knows in advance where (approximately what event happened and when did it happen?) to look for it.

As with the other party-related TTs, what strikes the observer is the very economical in terms of human resources organization of FAES. Apart from the heads of three issue-focused departments (International, Economy and public policies, and Constitution and institutions), there is no research staff. Indeed, as FAES recognizes, it works with “a very reduced structure, merely comprising directors for the different areas and a small supporting staff”, choosing “a flexible model based on collaborators. Several thousand experts collaborate regularly with the foundation in its various activities. These collaborators are invited to meetings and seminars and are asked to prepare specific reports and other material which the foundation wishes to create and distribute.” Its “capacity to generate ideas lies in the expertise of its collaborators, high level experts who are characterised by their rigorous approach to work and their independent opinions.” Yet one does not find neither a list of these experts, nor a list of the institutions, with which FAES most closely collaborates on its projects, which further deflects from the transparency of FAES’s work.

Fundacion IDEAS (<http://www.fundacionideas.es/>) was a relatively young TT, established in 2008 by the former Spanish PM Zapatero, with a decision of the 37th Federal Congress of PSOE. We failed to interview representatives of this foundation, which at the time of our visit to Madrid (beginning of February 2013) was shaken by a fraud scandal, affecting its top management. The information on its activities are based on desk-top research and interviews with other members of the TT community in Spain and external observers. Shortly after IDEAS has been shut down. However the authors believe the gathered information still meets the purpose of the study because of the importance with which

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IDEAS was invested by the PSOE and because the rest of the institutions clustered under IDEAS' umbrella keep functioning as they were before the latter's creation.

In 2010 IDEAS integrated 4 older institutes, related to PSOE. The first is the oldest socialist-party related foundation - *Pablo Iglesias Foundation* (founded already in 1926, and re-established after the restoration of democracy in Spain in October 1977), devoted to promoting and disseminating the values of democratic culture, strengthening institutions and political parties, to democratic governance, and collaboration on reform with progressive parties. IDEAS also integrated *Ramón Rubial Institute*, founded in 1989 as "Spaniards in the world" foundation, specializing in citizenship and emigration policies. After its integration within IDEAS in 2010, it introduced a new activity area, with the objective to promote and safeguard the rights of immigrants in Spain, aiming at their full integration into Spanish society. *Jaime Vera Institute* (the third one) was established in February 1984 and after it became part of IDEAS in 2010 kept all its original objectives, specializing in training in progressive leadership and political communication, and dealing with economics, equality, policy and social rights issues. The IDEAS foundation also integrated the Global Progress Council (<http://www.fundacionideas.es/en/consejo-progreso-global>) focused on analyzing the governance factors of globalization and contributing to the definition of social democratic and progressive alternatives in the face of the challenges of globalization. The council is an off-spring of the Global Progress Commission, an initiative of the Socialist International at its 1996 congress in New York. Its objective was "to stimulate debate and establish new platform of ideas and policy proposals to address the new challenges and problems in a changing world" and Felipe González was then elected as its chair.

Former PM Zapatero was succeeded as IDEAS' president by Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, the then Secretary General of PSOE. According to the statute of IDEAS, its governing body is the Board of trustees, composed by the members of the Federal Executive Commission of the PSOE and presided by its Secretary General. The foundation is active both at the national and the international level and deals with diverse social (equality, solidarity), economic (state of the economy, sustainable development), political (rights), ecology, and other issues, producing qualitatively and quantitatively-based reports and papers (working papers, discussion and policy analysis papers), organizing conferences and seminars, etc. The foundation defined three general research areas: (1) "politics, citizenship and equality" – focusing on promotion of liberty as well as effective equality of citizens, encouraging citizen participation in politics, economics, culture and society. The aim of the research is "to generate proposals to contribute to debate, reflection and political action". More concretely, through analyses of political thought, electoral behaviour, civic engagement and equality and social inclusion, their studies aim to "help the power structure become more proportional ... to ensure more rights, freedom and equality to the citizens", to provide ideas on democratization, participation and social mobilization and propose measures to improve citizens' rights and living conditions. Two

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working papers were published in 2012 within this research area: on the persistent challenges to equality of opportunity in Spain and on the European Citizens Initiative. In the preceding years, the focus of publications was on immigration, its contribution to the economy and the integration of immigrants within Spanish society, as well as the issue of open government. (2) The “economics, sustainability and welfare” research area aims to contribute to an economic model change, where a greater welfare and social cohesion is achieved through more sustainable economic growth and higher employment. The reports and papers are on topics such as professional education and youth unemployment, the fiscal and Euro crisis, ideas for regulating the international financial system, economic governance in the EU. (3) The “international relations and cooperation” research area is aimed at analysing and designing “strategic policies to offer solutions to the great world challenges from a global, dynamic and progressive view point”. This area’s main objective was to position IDEAS “at the vanguard of progressive thinking ...for the challenges facing the world...” It focuses on three fields: European Union (economic and monetary union, social policies, security and justice, and foreign relations), development cooperation (proposals for efficient strategic policies for economic growth based on equality, esp. in Africa) and transatlantic relations (developing “a progressive agenda for progressives on the two sides of the Atlantic”). The publications are on development and social cohesion, the challenges to shared prosperity in Latin America, economic governance in the EU, improving the functioning of the financial markets and the world economy, etc.

The foundation also announces research topics open to private sponsorship – the so-called chairs. Six such chairs are open (3 already found their sponsors and are currently active): renewable energies and climate change, cultural industries, sustainable building construction, health and health systems, information society, and sustainable transport.

Given that the Foundation was established and has only operated during the economic crisis, hitting Spain especially hard, it is difficult to speak of changes in strategies prompted by this crisis. Nevertheless, from the brief overview of its activities and programs, it is clear that its main focus are the social, political, developmental, etc., aspects and implications of this crisis.

The web-site of the Foundation offers plethora of information on its structure, governance, publications and other activities. In view of this richness of information it is less clear why one cannot find activity reports (there is only one report – for the first year of foundations’ life - 2009), and no information at all about its funding, sponsors, statute, financial audits, etc. There is information about prospective members –who can sponsor a foundation’s activities, yet there is no indication how many members does IDEAS have, and what is the level of their support for its work.

Another striking feature of this foundation was the extremely limited research staff – it consists mainly of coordinators and research assistants, with the research itself being commissioned to external experts

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and academics. There is an obvious attempt to accumulate a research capacity under the “chairs” scheme, yet even these chairs seems to be part-time with the Foundation, having their main jobs in private companies, the academia, etc.

B. Government-related TTs:

El Real Instituto Elcano (Elcano Royal Institute, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org>), RIE is a private entity, independent both of the public administration and the private companies providing most of its funding. It declares itself non-partisan. It self-identifies as non-neutral: rather, it promotes the values by which it is inspired by producing multidisciplinary research aimed at “developing a global strategy and formulating policy proposals. The institute was established by Aznar government in December 2001 under the honorary presidency of HRH the Prince of Asturias with the aim to provide a forum for analysis and debate on international affairs and particularly on Spain’s international relations” and to provide useful ideas and policies to decision-makers, both public and private, active at the international level.

For its over 10 years, the Institute has developed into an important forum for debate, hosting high profile foreign affairs talks, seminars, conferences on topical issues in foreign affairs. It has a specific public role aimed at creating and disseminating ideas on foreign policy and generally improving the quality of public debate on these issues. It was created by the Spanish government during the golden age of post-transition Spain, when the economy was booming, and the institute was part of the ambitions of a powerful Spain which would finally have its international affairs institute – its own Chatham house analogue.

It may be described as “hybrid” TT (combining a traditional academic institute for the study of foreign affairs with a public diplomacy body, having the task of welcoming high public officials and other foreign dignitaries). The consolidation of public funding was meant to attract significant non-state funding, which indeed happened, with the state from the beginning providing only 25% of institute’s funding and the 75% being provided by roughly 20 big Spanish companies, contributing 150 000 Euros per year each. Its budget is roughly 3.5 mln Euro, which is relatively small by European standards (its sister institutes Chatham house and SWP being much more generously funded by their respective governments) but huge by Spanish ones. Elcano is financially and institutionally dependent on four ministries: The Defense Ministry, The Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ministry, The Economy and Competitiveness Ministry and The Education, Culture and Sport Ministry. While all are equal in theory, the Foreign Ministry has de facto the greatest influence on the Institute, since it is the Foreign Affairs Minister, who personally appoints the President of the Institute. The president himself

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then is free to appoint the institute's director. There is generally little interference from the Foreign Affairs Ministry: it has not developed a clear mandate for the institute, as it is clear from the very general terms in which the "definition and goals" of the institute are defined. Yet this lack of clear mandate, though leaving a wide scope for action to its governing body, may create problems at some point, as one of our interviewees noted.

The research in RIE is focused in a plethora of areas: Europe, Latin America, Mediterranean and the Arab World, Asia-Pacific, US-Transatlantic Dialogue, Sub-Saharan Africa, International Economics, International Cooperation and Development, Energy, Security and Defense, International Terrorism, Spain's International Image and Public Opinion, Spanish Language and Culture, and Demography and International Migrations.

The institute has a wide, diverse and very rich set of publications, ranging from short forms (up to 1,000 words *expert comments* by the Institute's analysts in immediate response to international events, as well as up to 3,000 words analyses, on aspects of current international affairs relevant for Spain's foreign and defense policy, with some predictive ambitions), to middle formats – up to 12,000 words Working Papers (WP) of an academic quality, on relevant for Spain's foreign policy and security international affairs, to full-fledged books (aimed at the broader public and published either by the Institute itself, or in cooperation with partner organizations and publishers), the so-called Elcano Reports (a series of documents, aimed to promote debate on important topics in the international affairs field, with special relevance for Spain, resulting from a multidisciplinary and politically diverse working groups researching a particularly important topic and aimed at presenting policy recommendations), "Estudios Elcano" (monographs of high international academic quality, subject to blind peer review by leading specialists in the respective field) and yearbooks (regional analyses on strategic issues of interest to Spain's actions abroad, published annually). There are also a plethora of periodic publications: a monthly bi-lingual (in Spanish and English) Boletín/Newletter, an e-mail newsletter on the most recent publications on the Institute's website. It is a combined format of the previously published separately Spanish Boletín and the English newsletter, and has more than 19,000 subscribers currently. The monthly magazine Revista ARI contains at least four of the most interesting analyses (ARI) published the previous month, a full listing of the month's ARI and Working Papers, and a calendar of past and future events, as well as brief reviews of the Institute's latest publications. It also issues a Barometer of the RIE – a three-times-a-year survey of the attitudes of Spaniards on international affairs and Spanish foreign policy.

A further output of the Institute is The Elcano Global Presence Index (IEPG) - a synthetic index that orders, quantifies and aggregates the external projection of 50 countries – the biggest economies, the OECD and EU –member states, where country's global presence is assessed along three dimensions: economic, military and 'soft' (scientific, social, sportive, cultural...) presence.

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The IEPG is also connected to a different initiative of RIE, analysing Spain's international image: the "Spain Brand Project / Proyecto Marca España". The project is run by the Spain Brand Observatory (OME), performing rigorous and systematic collaborative (along with RIE, other diplomatic institutions and research organizations are involved) monitoring of the image of Spain in the world, based on various data sources - from analyses of the print press, the media and the internet to questionnaire surveys in different countries. The OME publishes a Barometer of the Mark Spain (BME), where the image of Spain is measured on representative samples of the populations in select countries.

RIE is a partner in the European Global Strategy project - a think tank-driven process, designed to stimulate debate on the future direction of the European Union's external relations. The project, initiated by the foreign ministers of Sweden, Spain, Poland and Italy, and collaboratively run by four think-tanks from the respective countries - RIE, Istituto Affari Internazionali, The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, is based on the premise that new strategic thinking is needed in times of crisis. The aim is through triggering political debate to lay the foundations of a common European strategic culture and to inspire creative thinking about a common strategy for EU external relations. The debate is encouraged through the publication of policy papers, academic articles, newspaper editorials, an interactive website and conference proceedings.

C. Ideologically-laden TTs:

Fundación Alternativas (<http://www.falternativas.org/en>) was established in 1997 as a channel for political, social economic and cultural reflection in Spain and Europe in the context of growing globalization. It is a forum for the discussion and creation of ideas and proposals, involving the "most dynamic and advanced actors" in Spanish society. Its main goal is "the analysis and definition of new ideas, aimed at engaging citizens and society as a whole", providing a bridge between different opinions. It also aims at making proposals to the political parties and other economic and social actors, so that they become part of the decision-making processes. The focus is from socio-economic issues (the growth model for the Spanish economy, family support measures, the welfare state) to quality of democracy and public security (fight against terrorism), as well as environment, culture, anti-discrimination, and foreign, security and defense policy.

The Foundation also has an ALTERNATIVAS LABORATORY (<http://www.falternativas.org/en/laboratory>), devoted to formulating policy proposals in response to citizen concerns. There are two observatories: the OBSERVATORY OF SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY (OPEX), analyzing and formulating proposals on Spanish foreign policy and monitoring it in the European/global context, and the CULTURAL AND COMUNICATION OBSERVATORY, making proposals in the spheres of

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culture and communications. The program - ESTUDIOS DE PROGRESO - is aimed at young researchers with fresh ideas and policy alternatives to contemporary problems.

The Foundation publishes annually four types of reports: the influential Report on Democracy in Spain, prepared by the Alternativas laboratory, the Report on the state of the European Union, the Report on the Spanish culture and its global projections, and, finally, from 2013, it started publishing the Report on the Inequality in Spain in 2013.

The Alternativas Laboratory (the research unit of the Foundation), established in 2002, works on the basis of three-year programs of study, approved by the Fundación Alternativas Board, aimed at the development of progressive ideas and their translation into public policies. The laboratory is exclusively privately sponsored by big companies, but there is no public information about these sponsors. This seems to give the Laboratory more freedom than does OPEX, which is mostly publicly funded, and has to produce papers, commissioned by the respective ministries, providing its funding.

The Laboratory is designed as a meeting-place for debate and collaboration between the academic world, researchers, people in positions of public responsibility and others. Public policies are analysed for their adequacy "in building advanced society, protecting individual and collective liberties, justice, social equity and economic progress". Studies and policy proposals are offered aiming to contribute to the decision-making process, engaging actors across the social and ideological spectrum. The studies undertaken are characterized by rigorous and balanced analysis of political, social and economic issues and the design of public policies, requiring constant adaptation to the new realities. The wide use of academics (external experts) with high expertise and impeccable reputation as external contributors is the modus operandi of the Laboratory. The output they produce is meant to be de-ideologised, aimed at providing unbiased, neutral, expert analysis.

The 2011-2013 Program of Studies builds upon the research in previous years, aimed to contribute to deepening the political and institutional framework of democracy, improving the model of economic growth and the social welfare policies. During this period, marked by economic crisis, the stress is on the study of inequality, with a new research project started in 2011, analyzing inequality trends, relation to employment and demographic change, and its redistributive effects. Thus, in addition to preparing the influential annual Report on Democracy in Spain and the annual reports on Corporate social responsibility in Spain, in 2013 the Laboratory issued the first Report on Inequality in Spain. The Laboratory issues approximately 20 working papers per year (covering topics such as the challenges to the social welfare in Spain, immigration, unemployment, public health, transparency and access to information, abstention and social exclusion, the organization patterns of right-wing parties in Europe, etc.). It also released in the last 2 years three collections in electronic format: Zoom

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Politico (short studies of social attitudes on different policy issues, the welfare state, the democratic process at the national and regional level, etc.); Zoom Economico (studies on economic issues and their effect on the quality of the political process and political institutions); and Comparative Politics (focused on decentralization and its effect on government control, the role of trade unions, the effect of political competition on institutions, etc.). The collections analyze political, economic and social issues, with first-rate academics sharing their knowledge and research with a more general audience – not only government, business, universities, political parties, but also with wider social organizations, the media and concerned citizens.

The Laboratory also organizes seminars and conferences (the most recent ones being on European and Spanish economy at the beginning of the crisis, the dependency care and unemployment, realities and expectations of synthetic biology, Spanish economic crisis in a global context: measures to recover prosperity, etc.).

Opex, established in October 2004, in contrast to the Laboratorio, has mostly public funding and works in close cooperation with several ministries (Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, Ministry of Defense, The Parliament, the Government, various economic and social actors. It was established with the goal to provide “impetus to Spain's foreign policy on all fronts: politics, security, economics and culture”, its ambition being to serve as “a centre of study, debate and dissemination of Spanish foreign policy issues from a progressive perspective”, advocating more peaceful and just globalization for Spain and for the world. Its general goal is “to shape in the medium term a coherent and progressive view of foreign policy” through multidisciplinary studies and activities useful to political leaders, as well as generate alternative ideas on Spanish foreign policy, contributing “to the adoption of correct policies with specific proposals that conform to rigorous intellectual standards, as well as “create an instrument of debate and citizens' participation in foreign policy” by informing both citizens and specialists on the main issues of foreign policy by monitoring developments in the field.

Opex's work is focused in three subject areas: Security and Defence, Economic Affairs and Development Cooperation, as well as in six geographical areas: European Union, Latin America, Asia, North Africa and Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Transatlantic Relations. Opex's most ambitious output is the annual “State of the European Union report,” initiated in 2011. Its last 2012 issue, prepared and published in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's Madrid office, “analyses a decisive year in the project for Europe”: when the viability of the euro and the very existence of the European Union is under threat. The adjustment policies, impairing the social conditions, sparked growing distrust of institutions among European citizens. In addition to the rigorous analysis of the health of the European Union, a series of recommendations are offered, aimed at informing decision-making and thus contributing to the debate on the future of the European Union.

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The most recent working papers published by OPEX deal with issues such as: the impact of the economic crisis on national defense, the EU Banking union from a Spanish perspective, Tax reform and the new development model in Latin America: the cases of Peru and Colombia, the civil-military cooperation in multilateral peace-keeping operations, proposals to address the remaining challenges to the Spanish development cooperation policy towards Africa, the contribution of the member-states for a common European security and defense policy, etc. Opex's outputs include also memoranda (brief prescriptive analyses on current issues of Spanish foreign policy, containing a diagnosis, scenarios, options and proposals on the issues covered), prospect notes (brief analyses - alerts on social, political or economic changes, indicating under-surface trends, likely to affect Spain's and/or EU foreign policy), fichas electorales [electoral files] (brief analyses conducted in collaboration with the Electoral Observatory of Arab-Islamic countries (TEIM) of the Autonomous University of Madrid, that alert to under-surface social, political or economic changes likely to affect Spain's external action and/or the European Union.), etc. The Observatory also drafts proposals for positions to be taken by the Spanish Government in important international and EU summits: the last such being a resolution, signed by the Council for European Affairs of the Alternativas Fundacion, recommending to Spanish government a position to take at the European Council meeting in October 2012.

D. Independent TTs

FEDEA (Fundacion de Estudios de Economia Aplicada) is an independent research centre, established already in 1985, "to produce quality, objective and independent economic analysis" with the aim to make economic and social policy proposals. The Foundation's funding comes mainly from private sponsors (10 big Spanish corporations provide the bulk of its budget), its own investments and commissioned projects by national and international bodies. Their budget is according to an interviewee from the Foundation, approximately 10 times smaller than that of the party-related TTs. Its agenda always aimed to reflect the problems of Spanish society: from issues relating to the labour market, pensions and economic development in its early years, to innovation, the environment and immigration, more recently. The foundation prides itself in being the only fully independent TT in Spain dealing with economic issues: independent not only from the state, but from their private sponsors. Thus, despite the financial difficulties, FEDEA are trying not to let companies impose their own agenda on the agenda of FEDEA. Our interviewee was adamant that if they would let themselves being used to promote, to lobby for a position, that would be a suicide: and that is the reasons they often refuse sponsorship when there are conditions attached to it. To be credible, TTs must be independent, is the credo at FEDEA. In order to maintain and enhance their independence, they look for more sponsors: diversifying, increasing the number of sponsors is a guarantee, that even when

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sponsors want results (establishing an observatory on an area, let us say) their independence will not be compromised. A further guarantee of independence, we were told, is to always have analysis behind one's position, to support it with facts-based arguments .

This TT also claims to be fully non-ideological, which is supported, they believe, by the fact that FEDEA is being identified as left-leaning from the right, and as right-leaning from the left. They do not adhere to any ideology, rather, they are driven in their research by objective knowledge of how things work in the market. Being non-ideological, for them it is not a challenge to ensure their agenda matches the agenda of society. This is, furthermore, relatively easy during times of economic crisis, when the problems present themselves on the streets and urgently ask for solutions.

There are three types of activity within FEDEA: the main line of activity is conducting high quality research. The result is influential monographs, reports, papers. The second is preparing policy proposal (to the government and other stake-holders. Recently, policy proposals were drafted (on labour market reform and pension reform) after meetings with numerous decision-makers and experts. The aim of these meeting to come up with a consensual document: a couple of persons being responsible to present the issue and possible solutions, to revise them in light of the discussions, until the final product meets with consensus. Only after that is the product ready to be presented to the media. The process, again, is fully independent: at the discussions there are party and government representatives present, yet the result is not controlled by them, rather, it is a collaborative product, which needs to reach a consensus. The last type of activity is various forms of participation in the public debate, where the goal is influencing the political debate so that better policies are produced in the economic sphere.

The research within FEDEA is organized around several research programmes (called Research Chairs if funded by a Sponsor). Set within 5 years frame, and led by respected researchers, influential research groups in the respective field are identified and brought together in a network with the aim to make significant contributions in that field, with the results being disseminated to interested audience: the academia is addressed by publishing results from research in an international academic journal, and more general publications are intended for the non-specialist audience. The results are also disseminated in international meetings, both with researchers and other stake-holders.

In the recent past there were the following research chairs: **Fuentes Quintana** chair (three research lines: *Immigration and Its Economic Impact in Spain*, *Women and the Labour Market* - how the Spanish economy is managing the massive incorporation of women into the labour market and *Educational Increase, Mismatch and Wage Inequality* - to what extent the labour market has correctly absorbed the enormous educational increase that has taken place in

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the last 20 years in our country. The most recent publications of this research program are : The Effect of Public Sector Employment on Women's Labour Market Outcomes (2011), The Timing of Work and Work-Family Conflicts in Spain: Who Has a Split Work Schedule and Why? (2009) Does Immigration Raise Natives' Income? National and Regional Evidence from Spain (2008) , Immigrants' Responsiveness to Labor Market Conditions and their Impact on Regional Employment Disparities: Evidence from Spain (2007). **FEDEA-IBERDROLA** (Economy of Climate Change) Chair had as its main objective to study the most relevant economic questions related to energy and climate change, mainly focusing on the analysis of post-Kyoto scenarios (effects on regulatory alternatives for the control of greenhouse gas emissions); the ex-ante and ex-post assessment of real/hypothetical policies implemented in this field; economic evaluation of the impact of climate change. Recent publications include: Public Preferences for Climate Change Policies: Evidence from Spain (2011), An Integrated Approach to Simulate the Impacts of Carbon Emissions Trading Schemes (2009), Climate Change at Times of Economic Crisis (2009). **Chair Fedea – Abengoa** (Energy and Climate Change Research Program) was active for 3 years till June 2011, its research focusing on energy efficiency and innovation in renewable energies (sustainable energy technology), and their economic and environmental consequences. **Chair Fedea - La Caixa** (Healthcare Economics and Habits research program) studies health economics, with emphasis on habits and their impact on individual and social welfare The research topics include: demand for health, habits, obesity and its economic consequences, disability, long-term care, ageing, illness and technology evaluation, health markets. The recent publications include: Intergenerational and Socioeconomic Gradients of Child Obesity (2012), The Influence of BMI, Obesity and Overweight on Medical Costs: A Panel Data Approach (2012) A Matter of Weight? Hours of Work of Married Men and Women and Their Relative Physical Attractiveness (2011) Health, disability and pathways into retirement in Spain (2010), etc. **Chair Fedea-Banco Santander** in Human Capital and Employment (Economics of Education and Labour Economics program) focuses on four main research areas: Higher Education, Education Policies, Active Labour Market Policies and Labour Market Institutions. Recent publications include: Dual Labour Markets and the Tenure Distribution: Reducing Severance Pay or Introducing a Single Contract? (2012) Study Time and Scholarly Achievement in PISA (2012), The peer group effect and the optimality properties of head and income taxes (2011), etc. **Chair Fedea-Banco Popular** (Immigration research project) focuses on the economic effects (employment, consumption, housing, financial system, public services, etc...) of immigration in Spain, analyses different models of managing the migration waves to developed countries and aim to develop policy recommendation in this area. Publications include: Spain 2011 Pension Reform (2012), Tradable Immigration Quotas (2011),

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Multilateral Resistance to Migration (2011). **Chair Fedea - Abertis** (Research program in Transport Economics) focuses on airports and air transport, Public-Private Partnerships, Economic evaluation of transport projects, Liberalization and competition in transport, Economic regulation in transport markets. Recent publications include: Trade-offs between environmental regulation and market competition: airlines, emission trading systems and entry deterrence (2012), Infrastructure investment and incentives with supranational funding (2011), etc.

Chair **Fedea-BBVA** aims to foster public debate and disseminate ideas on issues relevant to the international economy, based on rigorous economic research. Three main areas are its focus: International reallocation of resources, Human Capital and Growth and Conflicts and democratic changes in sub-Saharan Africa.

There are also chairs devoted to the study of Talent, Effort and Social Mobility (researching the determinants of the economic and social progress of individuals, with a particular emphasis on the Spanish economy), a chair devoted to the study of Small and medium enterprises in Spain; one devoted to the study of macroeconomic issues related to Spain and its international context, etc.

In addition to the Research Chairs, Fedea initiates or participates in research networks (in Spain and at the international level), which create a common research space and facilitate joint research by research centres and individuals. As a body, Fedea participates in a plethora of research networks: Sociedad Abierta (on-line opinion forum for socio-economic issues, created by FEDESA as part of a consortium led by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), aiming to encourage prestigious economists to discuss the main problems facing Spanish society currently); CONSOLIDER Project, Enepri (The European Network of Economic Policy Research Institutes (ENEPRI), a consortium of 22 European research bodies, disseminating the research conducted in the centres, coordinating their research plans and encouraging common projects, was created in 2000 at the initiative of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and has participated in 5th and 6th Framework Programmes of the EU); Redg (Research in Economic Dynamics - a network of researchers on macroeconomic issues from a dynamic perspective, disseminating their results through FEDEA). Red Vivienda (“Housing Network” is a multidisciplinary group of researchers working on the relationship between housing and other spheres of the economy and society –demographics, geographical mobility, construction, real estate, financial sector, social policy, fiscal policy, etc. The project is funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and is coordinated via FEDEA). Red de Credibilidad de los Regímenes Cambiarios (RCRC), set up to contribute to the empirical literature on the optimum choice of exchange rate regimes, is funded by the Ministry of Education and Science.

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Another range of activities are the so-called FEDEA Observatories, conducting research on particular social and economic issues of high importance for Spain and beyond. FEDEA ran several observatories: Observatorio Fedea de Redes de Nueva Generación en España (Observatory on new generation ie fiber-based broadband internet in Spain), the program was in force till 2011, Observatorio de Cambio Climático de FEDEA (Observatory on Climate Change), active for three years until June 2011.

Currently active are the following Laboratories:

Observatorio Laboral de la Crisis (Labour Observatory of the Crisis) aims to understand the evolution of the employment status of workers in Spain as the current economic crisis unfolds, providing quarterly information (in Bulletins Observatorio Laboral de la Crisis, published quarterly since October 2008), complementary to that of the National Statistics Institute's Labour Force Survey. Observatorio Empresarial de la Crisis (Business Observatory on the crisis), studies the evolution of various indicators for the fragility of the Spanish business (like default rates in the banking sector, the firm's outputs and debt ratios, bankruptcy rate, etc.) with special emphasis on the current economic crisis. It also publishes its own quarterly Bulletin.

FEDEA has a wide range of publications, both on-line and in-print: its main publication are *the working papers* of FEDEA, where FEDEA researchers and its affiliates publicize their work, also included are collections of the research results of the Research chairs. The most recent publications are on topics such as migrations flows and the influence of the European crisis, public healthcare, education policy, pension reform and its effect on the labour markets, etc.

The Fedea Brief is a quarterly publication, summarizing the on-going research in a non-formal language, with a focus on 2-3 projects of particular interest, the last such Brief being published in November 2009.

The Economic Reports contain the main results of the FEDEA research projects, with a focus on the Spanish economy, and aimed at a wider audience. The recent topics include: the 2011 pension reform in Spain, the indeterminacy of budgetary information of autonomous communities in Spain, cost-benefit analysis of the implementation in Spain of the Austrian capitalization fund, etc.

The Bulletin, an academic quarterly, summarises the most important working papers published during the period. The two crisis-related observatories – the Labour and the Business – publish their quarterly bulletins.

A new initiative at FEDEA is to produce Brookings-type papers biannually. Topical issues are selected (for 2013 the topics are unemployment in Spain – causes and solutions, and fiscal reform is

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Spain) and after a concept paper is prepared by the researchers at FEDEA, it is discussed in a conference with high-profile academics, experts and policy-makers, with the proceedings published in a series of papers.

The economic crisis has a double effect on FEDEA's work: funding has decreased, yet because of the enthusiasm of high-profile academics from Spain and abroad (influential American and UK universities and research institutes included) who are eager to study the problems of Spanish economy and offer solutions, FEDEA can commission research and get papers of very high quality (such quality that FEDEA cannot in ordinary circumstances afford to pay for). This paradoxical effect of the economic crisis is perceived by the institution as unsustainable, yet it gives a serious boost to FEDEA's credibility and influence.

FUNCIVA (Ciudadania y Valores Fundacion, <http://www.funciva.org/>) was established in August 2006 by two former MPs - one from the Partido Popular and one - from PSOE, as a "completely" independent, non-ideological, non-party-political TT with the aim "to encourage intellectual reflection and public discussion on the moral, cultural and legal roots underlying western democratic societies" with a special focus on human rights promotion. Its activities are premised on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Spanish Constitution and other international conventions signed by the Spanish state. It is meant to be "a meeting place for professionals from different disciplines and orientations, who are concerned about supporting some permanent and universal values, by developing their study and dissemination through an honest and open dialogue with everyone." The Foundation has four more specific purposes: (1) human rights promotion, (2) promotion of the values of democratic co-existence, of social and political pluralism, (2) promotion and respect to human dignity (through dialogue and exchange of ideas) and (4) women rights, sustainable development, immigration and "construction of Europe". It focusses on the following research areas: Socio-economic issues, political issues, legal issues, human rights, communication, and state and autonomy. The Youth Forum is set up as "a meeting place for young professionals...[committed] to their society, [promoting] the values the Foundation stands for". In 2012 the Foundation established "The freedom of Expression Observatory" (<http://libex.funciva.org/>), which published the same year two reports: "Freedom of Expression and Political Correctness" and "Freedom of Expression in Spain". Within the framework of the Observatory, its director - the journalist, writer and academic Justino Sinova - has a blog on freedom of expression.

A favourite activity form at FUNCIVA is "jornada de expertos": an important issue is debated among 10-15 experts in the field, the debate is based on a specially drafted document, conclusions are drawn and policy recommendations offered, summarized in a short report of the event. In 2011, there were 6

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such days of the experts, on topics ranging from regional TV channels, energy efficiency, financial sector reform in Spain, strategies for clean energy, the autonomous state, etc. In 2012, the days of experts included discussions on the “Restructuring of Europe”, “The actual economic situation in Spain”, “The Labour reform”, “The reform of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary”, “Criteria for a Law on Transparency”, “Strategy for Energy Independence”, “The Nuclear Energy in Spain”, “Funding Renewable Energy Projects”. Symposia – national and international are also regularly organized. In 2011, the topics included: globalization and immigration, immigration and political participation, the new NATO strategy and international politics, etc. In 2012 the topics were: immigration, racism, xenophobia and exclusion; the transatlantic relations in the context of the global crisis, the role of UN tribunals in international conflicts, are human rights solely an academic matter, the presidential elections in the US.

The Youth Forum held 3 discussions in 2011: on the role of G20, the regional TV channels, the security in Nuclear Power Stations, and, as seems from the activity report for 2012 – none during the last year.

The foundation publishes a plethora of relatively short, up to 15 pages documents on various topics within the above research areas: on right to freedom of religion, the pension reform, the development of solar energy in Spain, the regional implications of Turkish Kurdistan, the end of transition, the impact on the economy of the energy policy decisions, proposal (propuestas “indignada”) for improving democracy in Spain, Spanish security strategy, the role of the EU after the Lisbon treaty, the electoral law reform, etc. The most current documents published include: “Report on proposals for reform of the central state administration”, “The new challenges to energy efficiency”, “Freedom of expression and freedom of information in jurisprudence”, comments on the presidential elections in Venezuela, the financial crisis in Cyprus, the Arab Spring two years later. In 2012, several reports were published: Five proposals for a constitutional reform in a federalist key, ideas on energy policy, strategy for Gibraltar, proposals for the economic situation in the EU, as well as shorter documents: on the 2012 Senate reform, the security in the world in 2011: events and trends; the IMF and the Eurozone crisis, the Fiscal pact, From the Arab Spring to the Islamist Winter, etc.

3.TTs in Spain: main features and important concerns

An important feature of TTs in Spain is that they are relatively new arrivals: they have been mushrooming only during the last 10-15 years, and are in no way a transition-related phenomenon (as are TTs in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)). Further, the TT concept itself is contested. Thus some of the TTs we interviewed preferred to be called “laboratorios de pensamiento” rather than TTs, as for them the “tank” part is problematic. A further, and related, important observation with regard to the

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self-identification of TTs in Spain concerns the distinction between a “think tank” and a “do-tank”. Generally, there is resistance within TT community to identify themselves as “do tanks”. For some of their representatives, it is the parties alone, who are do-thanks. It is indicative in this regard that the only TT which did not insist on sharply drawing that distinction, and readily admitted to being a do-tank is the Partido Popular’s-related TT - FAES. Most of our interviewees were very careful to emphasize the strict “separation of powers” between developing new ideas (the proper task of TTs, according to them) and promoting those ideas, trying to influence the political process, to lobby for policies. For them the latter seem to be the exclusive task of the “do tanks” – the political parties themselves. This emphasis on the strict distinction between developing and promoting ideas has a bearing on the issue of legitimacy and relevance of TTs. There seem to be a general trade-off here: “promoting ideas” seems to be part of what “being relevant” involves, yet the more TTs are seen as “ideas promoters”, the less they are perceived as being legitimate.

Another important feature of TT’s background in Spain is the relative weakness of civil society there. The legacy of Francoist dictatorship may have a bearing on the relatively low levels of social capital (mainly “bonding rather bridging”), with Spanish society being characterized by strong family values rather than support for civil society values. There is, further, no culture of private donations to TTs, with Spaniards preferring to donate to concrete projects (hospital, church, bridge, etc.) than for developing new ideas. The private funding of TTs in Spain comes mostly from big companies, yet even they are not ready and willing to always support TTs, since they have their own foundations. Thus, even private funding of TTs in Spain often needed “encouragement” from the state.

Prevalent are the strong statist attitudes, testified by the high levels of trust in state institutions and offices. Interestingly, trust in NGOs is relatively high (yet this may be the result of a kind of myopia, since people may just not identify NGOs as a distinct entity). The political culture is also quite elitist: elites are enclosed in inner circles, deeming themselves self-sufficient and rarely feeling a need to reach out to society. This elitism of the political class is among the reasons for the declining, and currently critically low levels of trust in representative institutions – the Parliament and, notably, the political parties. Yet one of the reasons quoted by our interviewees for TTs not being a transition-related phenomenon in Spain was that elites there were better prepared (than in CEE) for the transition and thus needed less “external” support, since both information and know-how, and funding was available within Spain. Thus there was no need to rely on external donors to promote the transition agenda.

Another feature of TTs in Spain (though they are not unique in this) is their “hybrid” nature: they are both research institutes and fora for discussing new ideas, with either one or the other playing more prominent role in different TTs. Some of TTs are hybrids in a further sense – combining research with representative functions.

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TTs in Spain are elite-oriented, with promoting citizen participation in the political process not being part of Spanish TT agenda. Despite this relative elitism, TTs in Spain seem to have little problems with their legitimacy. One reason for this may be that, apart from party-related TTs, they do not seem to be perceived as part of the establishment. The fact that TT community in Spain does not seem to have legitimacy-related problems may explain why TTs seem to an external observer somewhat complacent. There is relatively little sensitivity, for example, to issues about donors transparency - a concern that haunts those TTs (notably, in CEE) that are being attacked as illegitimate channels promoting foreign agenda, serving covert interests, etc.

Another important feature is the growing recently preoccupation of TTs with their independence. This has not traditionally been so. The focus on independence issues is readily understandable with respect to the party-related TTs, which were the relatively few TTs in Spain, existing in one or another form already during the transition, receiving strong state support, generous funding and having easy access to other resources. Not surprisingly, they are perceived by both external and internal to the TT community players as not independent, as being part of the party system. As such, their legitimacy is being questioned as part of the general trend towards declining trust in the institutions of representative democracy in Spain.

Another (striking for an observer from Eastern Europe) observation concerns the common perception within TT community, that state funding does not necessarily present a challenge to TT independence, but, rather, may uphold it, since (especially if it is not project-based, but, rather, secures its core-funding, may help TT set and follow their own agenda rather than be overly reactive to immediate and passing fashions and concerns among TT donors – public and private.

Another (again striking for an Eastern European) feature of the TT space in Spain is that there are relatively few genuinely ideological, not party-related TTs (like the neoliberal TTs in CEE, for example), Fundacion Alternativas being probably the only exception. All TTs put a great stress on neutrality, objectivity, impartiality, on following a cross-party agenda, serving the general interest and civil society rather than partial interests, and even though some TTs may be accused of being neo-liberal in ideology (by trade-unions or others) the fact that they are being also criticized as being on the left, only shows their neutrality, objectivity, lack of bias, etc. On the contrary, the welfare-ist agenda seem to be the ideological consensus shared both by the Spanish society, the political establishment, and by the TT community.

In fact, an external observer is left with the impression, that if TTs in Spain are guardians of any ideological consensus, this is the post-transition consensus of a **unified, pluralist, welfare-ist, pro-European Spanish state**. Yet with the financial and economic crisis in Spain and the EU crisis more generally exacerbating, this consensus seems to be put to test, with important elements in it (welfare-

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ism against pro-European-ism) pulling at present in opposite directions. There seem to be relatively little awareness among TT community, however, that this tension within the consensus is affecting their legitimacy, though it is certainly realized that the new developments put new issues on their agenda. For example, the foreign affairs-centred TTs are driven out of their specialized niche towards a more generalist approach, bringing in new issues: as these TTs realize that the dividing line between domestic and foreign policy is progressively being blurred with the Spanish domestic economic policies often being decided in Brussels.

Another source of independence-related concern is the relations of TTs with government and different level state institutions. Representatives of government-related structures often sit on the governing bodies of TTs and the important issue is how those TTs manage to maintain their independence vis-à-vis the state. Different state institutions often support TTs by commissioning studies, with TTs claiming to retain full control over the product and government only setting the agenda. The interesting question is how do TTs may remain critical, may raise sensitive issues for government, when being dependent on those commissions.

Reliance on public funding is not the only, not even the main challenge to TTs independence. Public funding was perceived as crucial, as the TT community realizes that without it, TTs may not have started to exist at all (even if the situation may have changed now). It is further realized that the amounts and proportion of public funding in TTs budget are not necessarily related to how independent a TTs is perceived to be. The dangers of private funding are also realized. Thus, some TTs refuse donations when a pressure to promote lobbyist interests is being detected or even suspected. The survival strategy (without independence, we were told by a respondent, a TT is finished) is to try to diversify sources of private funding to avoid dependence. So, TTs try to attract many big companies with smaller contributions rather than fewer companies with significant ones (the latter strategy was quoted as the reason why one of the big TTs is experiencing serious financial difficulties, threatening its existence). Another strategy is to attract “socios” – individual members who donate and support a TT with small amounts. Often the representatives of big donors sit on the TT board and thus may influence its work, but they rarely do it. Interestingly, some TT do not disclose their private sponsors (Fundacion Alternativas, FUNCIVA, the party-related TTs), while others do (FEDEA, CIDOB, ELCANO), yet a general trend is that TTs rarely publish detailed information on who the sponsors of the respective study, report, WP, etc. are. TTs also rarely publish on their websites financial reports (the exception here being FEDEA and FAES), even activity reports are not always found there. This shows, we think, that transparency on funding and on activity is not a major preoccupation in the TT sector. Most importantly, however, in neither of TTs researchers seem exposed to sponsors’ pressure.

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A further important issue regarding TTs' independence is how is their agenda set. It is a subtle question: if TTs want to be relevant, they have to closely match the agenda of society. However, we were left with the impression that sometimes the agenda of society is mistaken for the agenda of government, where little critical reflection is devoted to the possible conflicts between following the agenda of society and serving the governmental agenda.

The position of our external to the TT community in Spain respondents is pertinent here: according to two of them, the economic and EU crisis has taken aback TTs. TTs failed to foresee the societal problems and be useful in preparing Spanish society as to what lay ahead, because they were too close to the establishment. According to one of our external observers, it is the street (15th of May movement, the Indignados) that had put new issues on the agenda, not the TTs, who were rather reactive.

A further important consideration in evaluating the role of TTs in Spain is how influential they are/are perceived to be. It was stressed times and again by our interviewees that representatives of the TT community are rarely invited to consult MPs or present their findings in Parliament. Furthermore, even if they meet members of the cabinet and the ministries, being part of working groups, the Cabinet is more often paying lip-service than really taking TTs' work into account when deciding on its policies. Revealing in this respect is that until very recently, officials and diplomats had to consult with government *before* talking to TTs. Thus one possible explanation as to why there is relatively little interference from government with TTs (even when these are publicly funded), is that they are not taken to have too much impact on governmental policies, providing expertise on demand but not promoting their own agenda with a discernible impact on policy formulation. One may be tempted to even conclude that often the guarantee of independence is irrelevance, though the case of TTs in Spain hardly supports such a strong conclusion. Some TT-generated ideas are included in the electoral programs of both parties, taken over without giving credit.

There is little jealousy among the TT community if their output is used by different stake-holders without giving them a credit. Quite the contrary: all of the TTs we studied had very well-developed communications offices, even in some cases it seemed that there is little more than a scientific board, deciding on what research to be undertaken, and to what researches to be outsourced, and, then, most of their focus seemed to be on how are these results to be best communicated to the public – both general and the specialists. This is so with respect both of the party-related ones and the smaller independent FUNCIVA. Most TTs have active blogs - Elcano, Alternativas (this NGO enjoys considerable visibility with their spot at the blog of the influential daily *El País*: <http://blogs.elpais.com/alternativas/>), FEDEA, etc.

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Despite such considerable publicity efforts, there is relatively little evidence of *direct impact* of TTs on legislation and policy making, making it indeed difficult to measure influence. While some TTs are proud of their overwhelming presence at google.news, for example, external observers of the sector in Spain question this as a sign of being relevant, even less – as being useful. The general lack of research on TTs in Spain help little in this regard: apart from a few newspaper articles in *El Pais* and other journalistic works on the influence of TTs in Spain, noone of those interviewed was aware of serious academic work being published on this issue nor were any scientific articles on the TTs in Spain quoted.

Despite the general lack of rigorous academic research on TTs in Spain, based on our interviews with both internal and external to the TT community observers, we may venture some general remarks.

There seem to be an issue with the relevance as well as with the usefulness of TTs in Spain. The reason quoted by our external interviewees for this is the TT product itself: it is often perceived as not sufficiently policy-relevant, too academic in character, not adapted to the needs of the policy-makers. Further shortcomings of TT activities accounting for their relatively modest influence is that the “revolving door” instruments are not well used. As a result, there is relatively little technical knowledge in the TT community itself as to how institutions actually work, and such knowledge is crucial in order to know how to propose relevant policies. It is interesting to note in this regard, that TTs rely vastly on the expertise of external academics, with the crisis further deepening the trend of TTs having few if at all permanent, in-house researches. TTs generally outsource considerable part of their academic and policy work to influential members of the academia and the expert community. On the one hand this practice accounts for the high academic quality of their output (and, indirectly, to TT legitimacy, since state universities and academics in general enjoy very high levels of trust in Spanih society). Yet, on the other, it also contributes to the relative irrelevance of the TT sector, which often fails to be sufficiently distinguished (through its research products, its staff and its policy outputs) from the academia.

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4. Conclusion

The effect of the financial, political, institutional crises on the TT sector both in Europe and in Spain seems considerable. All TTs we interviewed recognize the serious financial problems for all in the sector, pressing ubiquitously for personnel and other cost cuts. Yet if there is a common theme in the crises-related discourse of TT community in Spain, it is that the crisis and the ensuing financial challenges for their activity are not perceived as threatening their existence or viability= The reason for this optimism is the growing demand for the products of the TT sector. As one of our respondents put it

“In times of crisis, government (and others) are desperately looking for new ideas in important areas, without having the money – that is when you look to TTs!”

The crisis itself gives new ideas. So the current situation of TTs in Spains is: less money but more ideas, with new areas of research opening. Thus the crisis is seen *as an opportunity for increasing relevance of TTs*.

We would like to conclude our report on TTs in Spain with a cautionary note. There seems to exist a certain trade-off between the relevance and legitimacy of TTs generally. The more relevant TTs become, the more citizen become sensitive to their activities, the more they start questioning their legitimacy. Thus, TTs often manage to avoid legitimacy problems by adamantly sticking to the “think” rather than “do” part of the “think-tank” hybrid. Yet the price paid by TTs often is: losing relevance. With the crisis opening new avenues for increasing the relevance of TTs in Spain, the legitimacy issues may be expected to take more central place than they currently have. The challenge for the viability of the TTs sector in Spain how successful they will be in responding to these mounting demands for legitimacy.

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Appendices

I. List of interviews

1. Senior representative of Fundacion Alternativas – February 4, 2013, Madrid
2. Senior representative of the research team at Fundacion Alternativas – Febr. 4, 2013, Madrid
3. Senior representative of Real Instituto Elcano – Febr. 4, 2013, Madrid
4. Senior researcher at Real Instituto Elcano – Febr. 4, 2013, Madrid
5. Senior representative of Ciudadania y Valores (FUNCIVA) – Febr. 5, 2013, Madrid
6. Senior representative of FEDEA – Febr. 5, 2013, Madrid
7. Senior representative of FAES – Febr 6, 2013, Madrid
8. Senior representative of CIDOB - March 20, Sofia
9. External observer, a writer and journalist, a former director in the Department of Studies and Analysis with the Government of Spain - Febr. 6, 2013, Madrid
10. External observer, representative of a pan-European think-tank in Spain, Febr. 5, 2013, Madrid
11. External observer, representative of a German think-tank in Spain, Febr. 4, 2013 Madrid

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II. Comparative tables

Table 1: TTs by funding structure

	Almost exclusively private	Predominantly private	Roughly equal shares private/public	Predominantly Public
	FEDEA FUNCIVA	Alternativas (70%) Elcano (83%)	CIDOB 40/60	FAES (exact figures not known?) IDEAS (the same)

Table 2: TTs by structure of research staff

No researchers on a permanent contract	Only some heads of research units on a permanent contract	Some heads of unit and researchers employed, but mostly outsourcing	Most research done in-house	All research done in-house
FUNCIVA	FAES, IDEAS (?), FEDEA	Alternativas (?)	ELCANO CIDOB	None

Table 3: TTs by profile

	Generalist	Mixed	Niche
	FAES IDEAS	Alternativas (mostly domestic issues, but without a specific focus) CIDOB (mostly foreign affairs, but also some domestic issues) FUNCIVA (constitutional and human rights issues, but also social and economic questions)	FEDEA (economic issues) ELCANO (foreign affairs)

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Table 4: TTs by transparency of funding, sponsors, activity report (published on their web-sites)

	Publish the names of their sponsors	Publish financial reports	Publish financial audits	Publish activity reports
	FEDEA	FEDEA	FAES	FEDEA FUNCIVA FAES Alternativas CIDOB (not for all years)

Table 5: TTs by communication channels

	Public communications office	Institutional blogs	Periodic bulletins published on-line	Institutional spots at influential dailies and TV programs
	FAES, IDEAS, Alternativas, FEDEA, FUNCIVA, Elcano, CIDOB	FEDEA, Alternativasq, Elcano	all	Alternativas, CIDOB

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