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MIRS Practicum Report 4

Introduction

My 2021 MIRS summer internship was conducted remotely through the University of Pennsylvania's Think Tanks and Civil Society Program (TTCSP). The director of the TTCSP program is Dr. James McGann. Over the course of the summer, I worked closely with Dr. McGann and Jan Magielski, the intern coordinator based in Poland on the Report and Presentation. Without them, the project would never have happened. As the Project Lead, I led the project management on a research report focusing on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), which is the region of my MIRS focus. My project is dedicated to comprehensively study think tanks in the larger CEE region.

I was tasked with leading a team consisting of seven intern researchers, who altogether represent 6 countries and 5 international Universities. Together we conducted a comprehensive literature review on think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe. Our team's assignment was to create the world's most comprehensive database and study of Central and Eastern European think tanks. This will manifest in our team updating previous reports, cleaning previous data, compiling new literature on think tanks in the CEE region, and data that we collected into a final report.

In this report I will be providing methodology, a summary of the report, literature review, and the database as well as the explanation of the working process. I will discuss finding, present the think tank landscape of Russia, and policy recommendations put forward based on our finding.

Report Policy Brief

Our TTCSP CEE 2021 Report was a comprehensive 487-page report on think tanks in the Central and Eastern European region (CEE). In this report, through a comprehensive literature review and data collection process, our team combined normative assessments of the CEE think tank landscape with historical narratives and empirically supported trends to create a more precise and refined distinction of the CEE regional think tank landscape. Every key issue central to the region and every country within it is presented in individual chapters, with aggregate data and generalizations about the region at large given an isolated focus as well. Thus, this report provides an overview of the relationship between issues of artificial technology and technology, COVID-19, democratic backsliding and corruption, divergent civil societies, European integration, lack of acceptance, underfunding, younger government, and those issues previously neglected in literature relevant to the CEE think tank landscape with statistics about the policy areas, budgets, staff sizes, democratization, GDP, and number of think tanks over time. This assessment

leads to 28 distinct opportunities for strategic development that CEE think tanks and actors may employ in response so they may address these issues successfully.

Objectives

In the 2021 CEE report, we seek to accomplish the following eight objectives:

- I.** Comprehensively summarize all existing literature examining the CEE think tank landscape by assessing the overarching issues such sources assess
- II.** Comparatively study the CEE think tank landscape as it relates upwards to the global think tank landscape and downwards towards a country-by-country level
- III.** Analyze internally collected data across a plethora of variables to derive empirically supported conclusions about the issues, characteristics, and opportunities facing the CEE think tank landscape
- IV.** Analyze the impact that prominent regional issues discussed in our literature review have on the development of the CEE think tank landscape
- V.** Derive policy recommendations based on empirical data and observations from its analysis, observed resource gaps, and issues identified in literature that can make the policymaking process in the CEE region more efficient as a result of increased think tank landscape growth and stability
- VI.** Conduct a detailed analysis of CEE think tanks by making country-by-country mapping profiles exploring historical development of economies and governments, cultural and demographic factors, and data across variables used in our methodology as they pertain to identifying characteristics of national think tank landscapes
- VII.** Create a comprehensive database of all think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe, contributing to the TTCSP's launching of a global think tank database
- VIII.** Alongside our evidence-based research, incorporate observations made by colleagues within TTCSP Town-hall Working Groups, the 2020 CEE Think Tank Summit, and 2021 CEE Think Tank Workshop.

TTCSP CEE Standardized Methods for Database

The TTCSP defines think tanks as public policy research analysis and engagement organizations that generate policy oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues, enabling policymakers and all actors relevant in a given policy area to make informed decisions.

Starting in May of 2021, the TTCSP CEE team began its months-long process of auditing and updating its Global Think Tank Database. The CEE team reviewed the corresponding section of the database to identify potentially closed institutions and new regional think tanks. Once a new preliminary list of regional think tanks had

been compiled, the team requested that all active institutions submit a profile for inclusion in the database.

Throughout the project from Spring 2021 to Summer 2021, our CEE team collected a list of 142 think tanks that it classified as likely closed. Each of these institutions met one or more of the following criteria: It did not have a functioning website. Emails to the institution bounced. It did not respond to calls. It had been absorbed by other think tanks. It could not be traced or found anywhere on the Internet. Either its website or other news sources indicated that the think tank had been closed.

The CEE team also identified new think tanks and think tanks that have not previously been listed in the TTCSP Global Think Tank Database. A total of 290 new or previously unlisted think tanks were identified. From May 2021 to June 2021. This auditing process has been made even more critical given the economic recession that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic, which will likely bring considerable hardship for many institutions including increased closures and mergers and reduced research activity.

For each institution where the information was available, the following data points were collected and used in this article: Institution name, the country in which the institution, the institution's annual budget, the year in which the institution was established, the total staff, the number of research staff, the number of administrative staff, a list of key research programs. To gain a more accurate historical map of think tank development in the CEE region, our team also noted the years founded for each think tank, based on transparency of think tanks reporting when they first opened.

In addition to these profile-based metrics, we classified each institution into 15 policy area categories:

- 1. Defense and National Security**
- 2. Domestic Economics**
- 3. Education**
- 4. Energy & Resources**
- 5. Environment**
- 6. Foreign Policy and International Affairs**
- 7. Domestic Health**
- 8. Global Health**
- 9. International Development**
- 10. International Economics**
- 11. Science & Technology**
- 12. Social Policy**
- 13. Transparency & Good Governance**
- 14. Food**
- 15. Water.**

The TTCSP considers the Central and Eastern European region to consist of the 21 following countries, which we have partitioned into the 8 following sub regions for research purposes:

1. Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)
2. Eastern Region (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine)
3. Former Czechoslovakia (Czechia, Slovakia)
4. Former Yugoslavia (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia)
5. Poland

6. Hungary

7. Southeastern Region (Bulgaria, Romania)

Afterwards, the Central and Eastern Europe team categorized all think tanks into three affiliation areas based on the standard typology of think tanks identified by the TTCSP: unaffiliated or independent, government-affiliated, and university-affiliated.

In addition to the Standardized Methods, the Central and Eastern European (CEE) team conducted additional data collection and corresponding analysis in order to gain a more nuanced picture of the unique CEE think tank landscape. More specifically, the team conducted an array of bivariate analysis for the aggregate CEE region by assessing the breakdown of think tanks along two variables; policy area and budget, policy area and staff size, policy area and affiliation, budget and staff size, budget and affiliation, staff size and affiliation.

To gain a big-picture illustration of the CEE region's think tank landscape, the CEE team compared the region's think tank data totals by assembling and analyzing graphs side by side of country data. The resulting data was then aggregated to yield more general conclusions about the whole of the CEE region.

Based upon the data collected by the CEE team, it is estimated that there are 814 active think tanks in the region. Of these 815 think tanks, a sample of 451 or 61.87% of think tanks from 21 CEE countries was successfully created out of the institutions that completed the updated database profiles or had information found by interns through independent data collection. This sample reflects the diverse think tank landscape of the region and captures the wide variations between think tanks both within and among countries.

Transparency of accuracy of data collection

A major setback to the accuracy of the data is the availability of data on think tanks in specific countries and the region as a whole. With think tanks that had little to no data available, for example staff and budget size, the n size of these statistics was low, resulting in less accurate data and potentially biased conclusions towards think tanks that did provide data. Additionally, all data collected and think tanks analyzed is limited to that available online, as a vast majority of research was conducted through internet, website, and online literature sources. This results in the report mainly reflecting the think tank landscape of CEE think tanks that have an active online presence, which thereby may be excluding key information and differences derived from CEE think tanks with no online platform.

Literature Review

Apart from the collection of the most up-to-date data pertaining to CEE think tanks, research carried out by our team focused on providing an extensive overview of the previous literature examining the regional think tank landscape at large. A variety of scholarly sources gave us a broad perspective on both the environment in which think tanks have been functioning and the challenges they face. After assembling a database of all CEE think tank landscape relevant literature, we then read all sources and methodologically categorized them based on the issues and geographic scope that we found, sorting all sources to create country specific and issue specific chapters, which were included in the CEE 2021 report.

Having performed the literature review, we identified the following issues, and then an additional category for neglected issues we did not observe despite their prevalence elsewhere in the think tank landscape, as tightly related context for the think tank landscape of the region that frames the history, data analysis, and policy recommendations for all CEE countries:

1. Artificial Intelligence and Technology ^{L}_{SEP}
2. COVID-19 ^{L}_{SEP}
3. Democratic Backsliding & Corruption ^{L}_{SEP}
4. Divergent Civil Societies ^{L}_{SEP}
5. European Integration ^{L}_{SEP}
6. Lacking Acceptance ^{L}_{SEP}
7. Underfunding ^{L}_{SEP}
8. Younger Governments ^{L}_{SEP}
9. Neglected Issues ^{L}_{SEP}

Upon reflecting on these issues, we were able to capture various forces that shaping the reality in which CEE think tanks exist along with the challenges they are currently facing. Gaining a better understanding of these challenges is crucial to fully grasp the think tank landscape in the region.

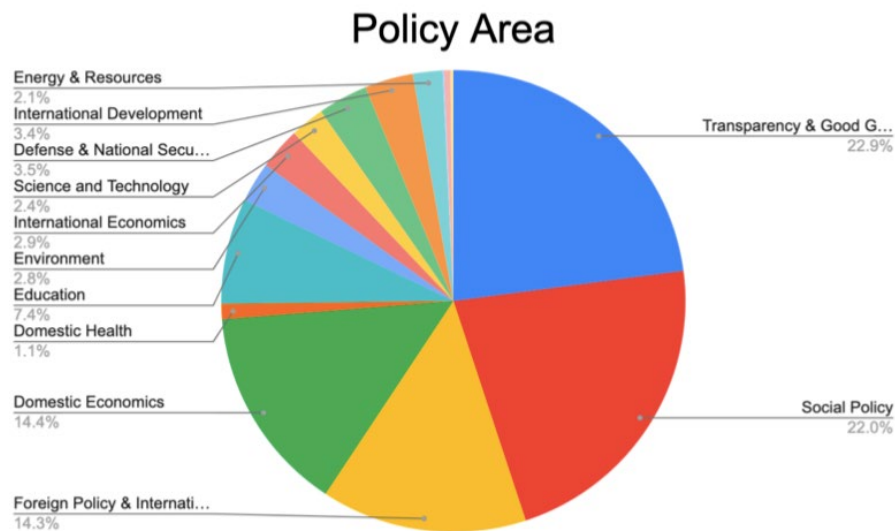
Summary of Key Findings

Data on policy areas was available for all 815 think tanks identified in the CEE region. The team was able to readily identify and categorize policy areas upon checking each think tank website throughout the first two phases of data collection when making sure an institution was still active. The team sorted think tanks into both primary and secondary policy areas if a second was applicable, then extended the primary area into the secondary area if the think tank focused on a single discipline. These values were summed and then divided by two, meaning the number of think tanks active in a particular policy area is better conveyed as a percentage, since a think tank may be represented across either one or two policy areas based on the diversity of its programming.

The best ranked think tanks in the Central Eastern European region are mainly in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, according to the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index, published annually by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP). In terms of think tank numbers, Poland leads with 60 of its registered think tanks in the ranking, standing well ahead of Hungary (46 think tanks), Slovakia and the Czech Republic (27 each). One think tank enters the spotlight when it comes to Central and Eastern Europe: The Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) in Poland, being the leading research institute among the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It ranks as the 61st best think tank in the world, and ranks among the top 10 in a number of categories, such as International & Domestic Economics and Social Policy.

Policy Area

Policy Area



As observed in the data, the two highest percentage policy areas are transparency and good governance (22.9%) and social policy (22.0%), foreign policy and international affairs (14.3%), and domestic economics (14.4%) are the four categories that are primarily researched. CEE countries needing to stabilize their economies and civil societies after the dissolution of former communist states can explain this trend.

Contrastingly, the policy areas that receive substantially lower attention in CEE think tanks are international development (3.4%), international economics (2.9%), domestic health (1.1%), science and technology (2.4%) and a handful of others.

Conclusively, CEE think tanks are focused more on state stabilization, growth and development of civil society than universal issues such as global health or water, despite their relevance domestically.

Affiliation

Both EU CEE countries and non-EU CEE countries' think tanks' are predominantly unaffiliated. The non-EU CEE countries have 7.2% more think tanks that identify as unaffiliated Think Tanks than EU CEE countries. In addition, EU CEE countries have more university-affiliated and government-affiliated than non-EU CEE countries respectively, indicating that international organizations provide opportunities for landscape growth across all sector affiliations. This also means that EU Think tanks may be more transparent in their affiliation. This increased percentages of institutionally partnered affiliations may likely be caused by the need on behalf of government and more globalized university systems to research less domestically centered agenda items.

Budget

Budget was one of the hardest data points for our team to find. So much so that out of 814 think tanks of our representative sample, only 195 think tanks reported their budget. It is clear that transparency remains an issue.

All financial values presented in this report are in USD (American Dollars). The common trend amongst CEE think tanks' budget sizes is a median budget of \$387,785. Bosnian think tanks have the smallest median budget of the CEE region at \$42,656. While Croatia's think tanks have a seemingly large budget in comparison with the CEE median, however our team have reasons to believe that this is an anomaly in the data.

EU member states have more think tank funding than their non- EU CEE counterparts. EU CEE countries' think tanks have a median budget of \$404,363 while the non-EU CEE countries' think tanks have a median budget of \$364,052. This disparity may be explained by the financial benefits that EU CEE countries experience by being members of the EU, giving organizations a larger platform to apply to for grants, find sponsorships, deepen networks, gain international recognition and legitimacy, and ultimately have a fiscal safety blanket.

An interesting data point that we found was that if we paired policy area and budget size, a few facts become evident. First of all, think tanks focusing on international economics have a comparatively higher budget than the other remaining 99% of the sample. We also found that social policy think tanks are the least well-funded, and therefore, social-policy think tanks are disproportionately underfunded, and in need of concentrating on financial planning and attracting potential donors. Finally we observed vast inequality amongst the CEE think tank budgets, with top tail

clustering suggests a concentration of resources in the hands of a smaller minority of more powerful think tanks.

Transparency of budget is a huge issue across the landscape, as it inhibits confidence in donors who do not know how their contributions relate to the operations of a think tank and it inhibits the ability of researchers, such as the TTCSP, to provide as precise recommendations as possible in our mission to help the think tank sector flourish so it may extend public policy efficiency across all sectors.

Staff

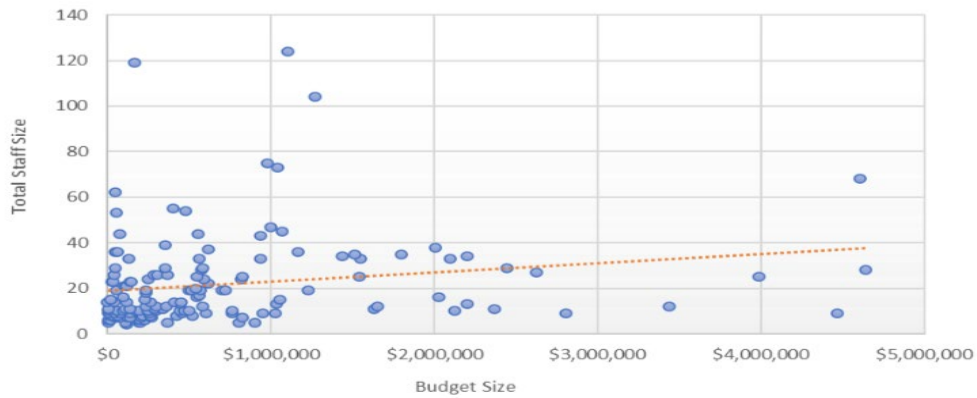
The CEE median staff size is 15 employees with most countries having concentrated median staff sizes within the range of 10-30 people. Russia and Poland are the two countries with think tanks that have median staff sizes over 40 people. The largest think tanks by staff include the Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation (Russia), Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) (Russia), Jagellonian Club's Centre of Analysis (Poland), and Labor Market Research Institute of Lithuanian Social Research Centre (Lithuania).

When measuring to see if there is a difference between EU and Non-EU countries, we find that, the staff sizes for think tanks within EU and non-EU CEE countries coincide with the budget size graph. The median staff size for non-EU think tanks is 12 people while the median EU think tank staff size is 15. As a result of their larger budget, EU think tanks can afford to employ more people in comparison to non-EU think tanks. Furthermore, greater integration into the wider European community may provide more human capital development opportunities. However, the think tank that has the largest staff is found in the Non-EU region.

The largest Central- and South-Eastern European think tanks in three categories (domestic economics, foreign affairs and international relations, and transparency and good governance) all have staffs of more than 200 people.

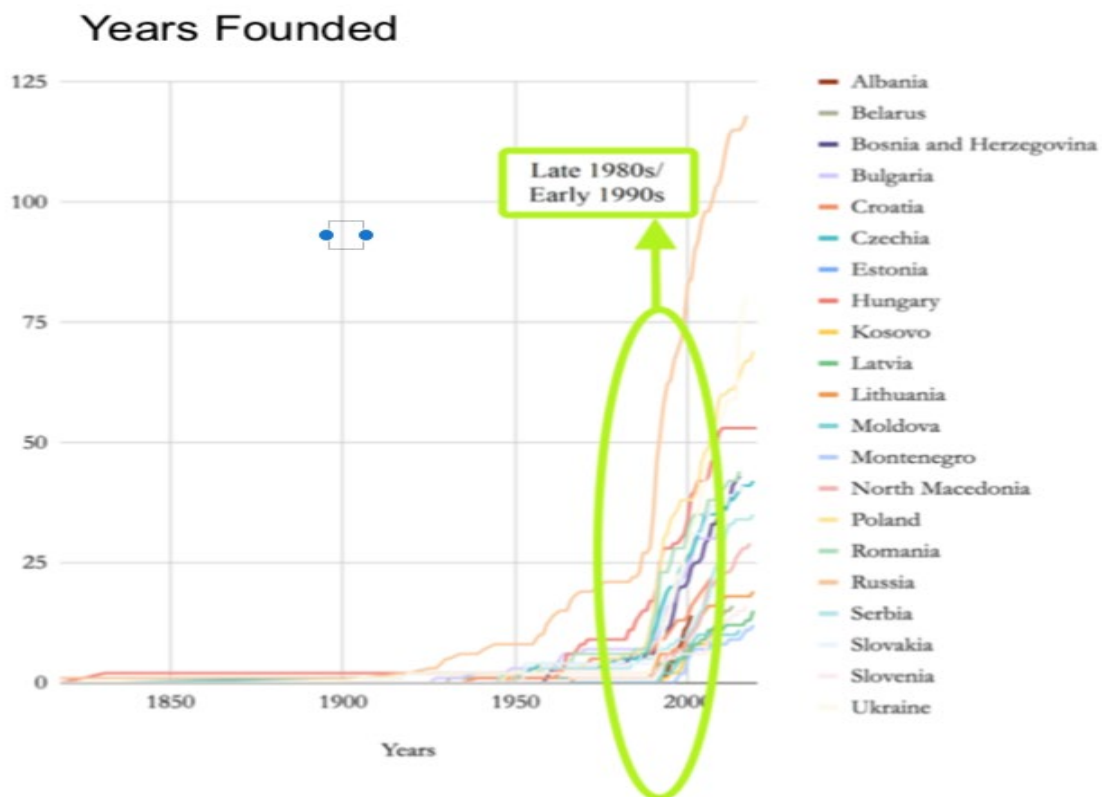
CEE think tanks' staff size data is not only more transparent than budget size, but indicates a greater variance within most policy areas and between policy areas as well. It should be noted that think tanks in the defense and national security, environment, international economics, international development, and science and technology were the least likely to disclose information about their staff size.

Budget/Staff Size



The relationship between budget and staff size is both predictably and evidently positive. However, in order to make it clearly visible on a chart (i.e., trend line not flat), it is necessary to remove the single largest and the 10 wealthiest organizations from the dataset. Albeit weak, a correlation exists between the two indicators which logic can explain by highlighting that most of the staffers require a salary.

Years Founded



As displayed in the graph, the CEE region shares a general pattern of when think tanks were founded throughout the years. This graph was created by aggregating available data on years in which think tanks reportedly opened. The graph suggests

not all think tanks in the landscape may be represented if they did not disclose this information.

The common kink point in all the trend lines is approximately in the year 1991, after which a huge spike in the rate of new think tanks opening is observed. This is a result of the dissolution of the communist regimes of the former Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia, and former Czechoslovakia, in conjunction with waves of liberal policies sweeping the region and the rise of the Internet. Thus, the need for third-party policy advice dramatically spiked and think tanks filled in the vacuum. Furthermore, minor spikes may be observed in the post WWII era as power and regimes were reoriented broadly, and throughout the 2000s in key years corresponding to waves of EU accession efforts by CEE countries, such as 2004, 2007, and 2013. Moving forward, it is expected that many think tanks will be forced to close in the region due to lacking domestic and international funding due to the COVID crisis and the need to deviate from traditionally accentuated policy areas towards the fields of domestic and global health. Therefore, the dissolution of former communist regimes, the rise of the Internet era, and the advent of the European Union may be understood as the three pivotal factors that sparked substantial acceleration in the historical development of the CEE think tank landscape.

EU CEE & Non-EU CEE Think Tank Characteristic Differences

For think tanks in the CEE region, 1989 is a defining year that propelled the growth of many think tanks due to the dissolution of the communist regime and the Soviet influence in the CEE region. As of 2020, in terms of total number of think tanks, there are 378 EU CEE think tanks and 437 non-CEE think tanks. The roles were reversed in 2008, when there were more EU CEE think tanks than non-EU CEE think tanks (266 and 215 respectively). In terms of think tank affiliation, EU CEE think tanks are 10.3% government-affiliated, 13% are university-affiliated, and 76.7% are unaffiliated. On the contrary, non-EU CEE are 6.9% government-affiliated, 9.2% university-affiliated, and 83.9% unaffiliated. As such, unaffiliated think tanks seem to dominate the CEE landscape; there are more non-EU CEE that are unaffiliated than EU CEE think tanks. In the entire region, Russia has always dominated in terms of think tank numbers.

Key policy areas researched by think tanks in the CEE region are Foreign Policy and International Affairs, Transparency & Good Governance, Domestic Economics, and Social Policy. EU CEE think tanks tend to focus more on Foreign Policy & International Affairs. In the CEE think tank landscape, there is a minimal number of think tanks (regardless of EU status) in the policy areas of: Food, Water, and Global Health, Energy and Resources and Domestic Health. For example, in the aforementioned areas, only Albania's think tanks are involved in the policy research area of Water. Research priorities are a direct reflection of regional history, development, and contemporary political challenges.

On the other hand, compared to EU CEE think tanks, there are more non-EU CEE think tanks that focus on Transparency & Good Governance, Domestic Economics, and Social Policy, perhaps due to more pervasive problems regarding these issues in non-EU CEE countries. According to the EU Democracy Index Score, non-EU CEE have a lower score than their EU counterparts; although in 2019, the democratization score for EU CEE has dropped (7.13 in 2018 to 6.46 in 2019), whereas the non-EU CEE score has remained relatively stable (5.18 in 2018 to 5.11 in 2019). As such, EU CEE think tanks tend to prevail in terms of number in all policy research areas except the aforementioned two, which are more so dominated by non-EU CEE think tanks.

In terms of staff size, even though EU CEE countries show more variability than non-EU CEE staff sizes, the staff size distributions for both groups overlap, indicating that there is not much difference between the EU CEE and non-EU CEE staff sizes. On the contrary, the median staff size for EU CEE (15) countries is higher than for non-EU CEE (12). As such, EU CEE staff sizes are likely to be bigger than their non-EU CEE counterparts (not considering outliers). When looking at the distributions of budget size, the distributions of EU CEE and non-EU CEE budgets overlap, meaning that there is not much difference between the two groups (at least this difference is not significant). However, when looking at the median budget size of EU CEE (\$404,363) and non-EU CEE countries (\$364,052), the median of the EU CEE group lies outside the interquartile range of the non-EU CEE budget distribution. As such, EU CEE and non-EU CEE budgets are likely to be different; EU CEE budgets are likely to be higher than those of non-EU CEE (not considering outliers). Furthermore, EU CEE budget sizes show slightly more variability than non-EU CEE budgets. In general, budget sizes and staff sizes are associated with one another and EU CEE think tanks enjoy higher numbers for both of these factors, given the data that was collected.

CEE & Western European Think Tank Characteristic Differences

Characterizing the CEE region as a whole, in relation to Western Europe, the number of think tanks is significantly smaller than those of Western Europe; the number of think tanks in Western Europe is twice as large as the number of think tanks in CEE (1731 and 805 respectively), with both regions experiencing similar trends in terms of growth rate. The nature of CEE think tanks is more independent than its Western counterpart, with 80% of think tanks being classified as unaffiliated compared to the Western 59%; Western European think tanks are more likely to be government or university affiliated.

In terms of budget size, at first glance, Western European think tanks seem to enjoy a greater budget size, perhaps due to better access to EU funds. When comparing the median budget size of think tanks in Western Europe (\$5,052,600) and CEE (\$431,056), the Western median lies way above the interquartile range of the CEE budget distribution. As such, Western European and CEE budgets are likely to be different; EU CEE budgets are likely to be higher than those of non-EU CEE (not considering outliers). Furthermore, Western European budgets show slightly more

variability than EIU Democracy Index Score compared to the CEE region, which may give an explanation as to why CEE think tanks are more prevalent in the areas of Social Policy and Transparency & Good Government. For the year 2020, the score was 8.43 for Western Europe and 5.98 for CEE, although scores for both regions have decreased over the past couple of years, more so for CEE than for Western Europe (6.31 and 8.63 respectively for the year 2012). Perhaps, due to its lower democratization score, CEE think tanks direct their efforts towards Transparency & Good Governance in order to address this issue. Furthermore, GDP per capita varies enormously between the two regions. As of 2020, Western Europe and CEE have a GDP per capita of \$38,921 and \$12,154 respectively; as such, GDP per capita is approximately three times higher for Western Europe than that of CEE.

By Country Think Tank Mapping

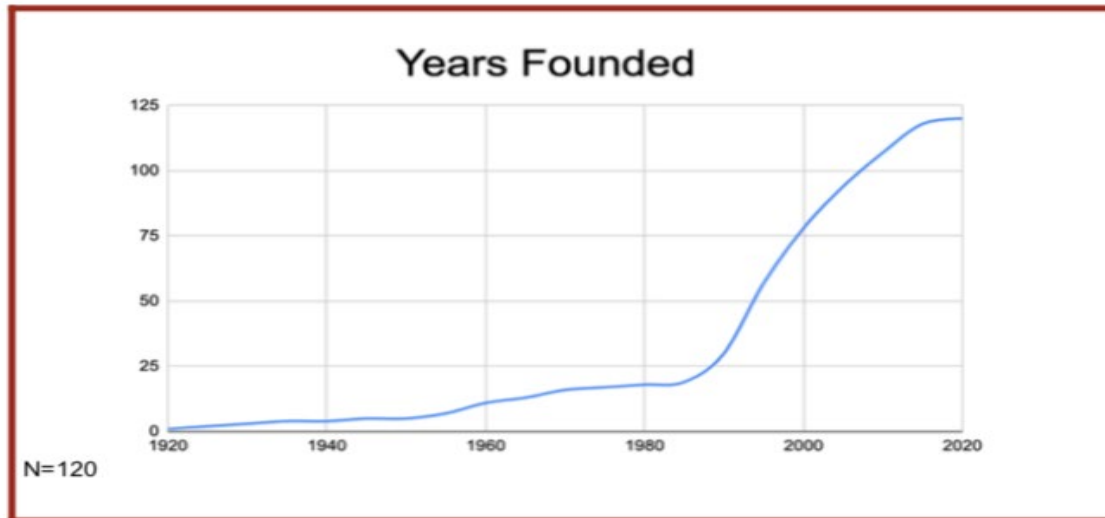
The individual think tank landscape of every CEE country is presented in the subsequent half of the report to provide an even more precise distinction of the unique issues, characteristics, and opportunities facing its think tank sector.

For the sake of brevity, I will present information on only Russia in this MIRS Practicum Report as it was presented in the CEE 2021 Report. The section will cover the data visualization of the think tank landscape, the analysis of characteristics derived from the data, and finally policy recommendations for think tanks in that country.

As I had the deepest connection with Russia on the team, I volunteered to work on this country alone, so throughout the project I did the data and analysis on this country. With other countries in the CEE there was more collaborations between interns. Russia had the largest data set, and as the project leader, I wanted to show leadership, so I chose to take the most challenging country. That was another factor in my decision.

Think Tank Landscape in Russia Analysis - Characteristics Derived from Data

Number of Think Tanks in Russia over time

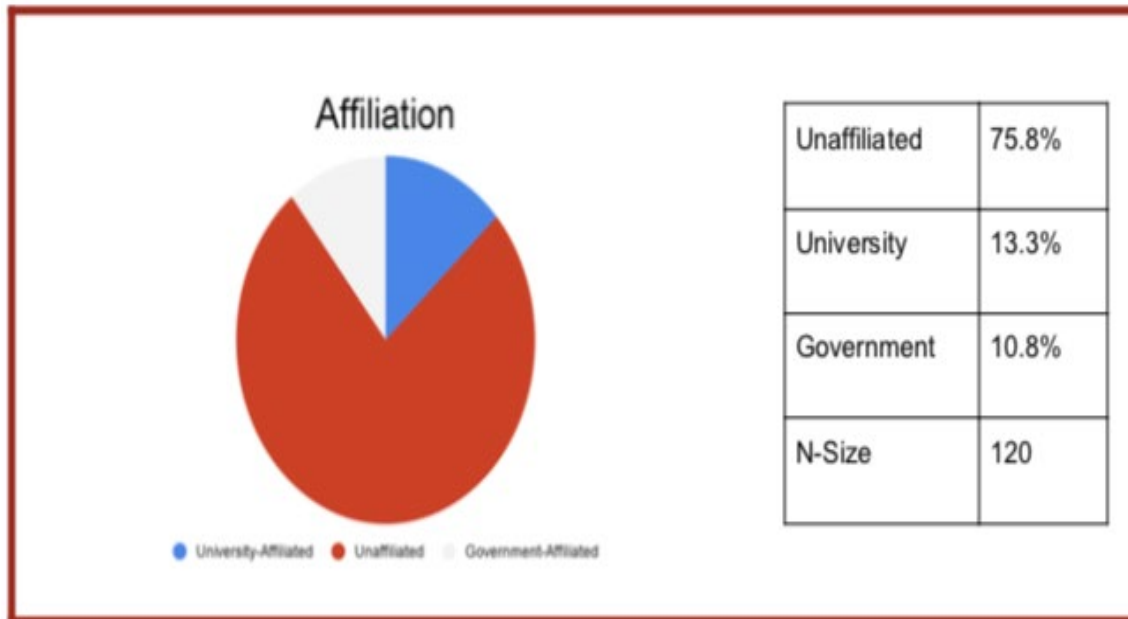


As for the number of think tanks over time, three kink points may be identified. First, 1925 - three years after the formation of the USSR and the end of the Russian Civil War. The country and its economy were in ruins, having not yet recovered from the First World War. For the sake of rebuilding the economy, it was decided to step back from the centralized economic system for a while and allow some extent of liberalism and free markets. New Economic Policy, a return to a limited capitalist system, was adopted as small businessmen were allowed to keep their enterprises, peasants were free to save grain for personal profit, and forced requisition of grain was replaced by a specific tax in kind. At the same time, it was necessary to reconcile economic liberalism with a strong and centralized government. For that reason, the Institute of State and Law at the Russian Academy of Sciences was established. Furthermore, this set a precedent of research in accompanying and monitoring public policy.

The second kink point that can be identified from the graph is 1957. The USSR had almost recovered from the devastating Great Patriotic War (1941-45) and the Stalinist era had come to the end. After Khrushchev gave his memorable speech "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequence" defying Stalinist legacy, the period of de-Stalinization began. Restrictions on civil societies and censorship were alleviated, and people were able to engage in the public domain with less fear of retribution, enabling think tank growth in government and universities deemed acceptable under the national administration. However, this was still the heyday of the Soviet state, so while people enjoyed relative freedom in absolute terms, the society was very far from democratic. Therefore, for the most part, criticism of the government, liberal thinking, and independent organizations promoting their own agenda were still largely prohibited.

The last pivotal moment in the history of Russian think tanks is 1986. The Chernobyl disaster demonstrated to Gorbachev that the country demanded major changes. Subsequently, he introduced liberal policies, glasnost and perestroika, aimed at shaping a freer and more proactive society and a more accountable government. Specifically, a law “On Individual Labor Activity,” approved the use of private enterprises to manufacture some consumer goods. The same year, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union was ready to disband the Warsaw Pact with the simultaneous exit of NATO, proposed a 15-year plan on abolition of nuclear weapons, and guided the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to issue an Appeal to Parliaments and People of the World about global nuclear disarmament. The next year, Gorbachev and Reagan would shake hands at the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The end of the Cold War marked a leap from obscurity and the “iron curtain” towards internationalism, openness, and liberalism. Accordingly, as the country was on the verge of drastic changes, its need for brains that would guide the transition and solutions that would facilitate it resulted in a spike in the number of new think tanks founded.

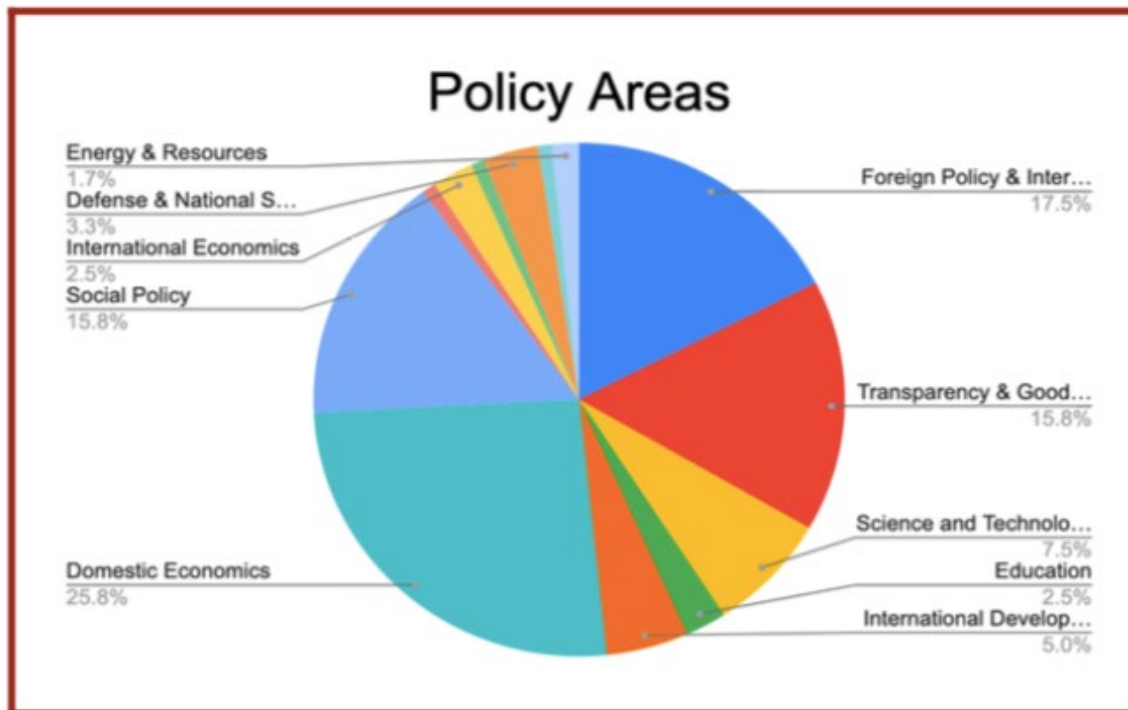
Russian Think Tanks Affiliation



75.8% of Russian think tanks are unaffiliated. 11 of them, which present themselves as independent, are affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences, supervised and funded by the government. This trend must be noted across the CEE region as university affiliation blends with government affiliation when universities are themselves public institutions or institutions that facilitate state-building processes. Additionally, some think tanks that are listed as unaffiliated de facto receive funding from the local and city governments. University-affiliated think tanks, such as MGIMO or HSE research centers constitute 13.3% of the total think tank landscape in Russia.

It is important to note that policy and research proposals are often designed by the research departments, that are not registered under the government as analytical centers, separate from their teaching roles. Government-affiliated think tanks represent only 10.8% of the total landscape. However, the percentage might not be accurate enough because these are only those analytical centers, which receive the greatest share of funding from the government or that exhibit explicitly their connections to the federal government. Finally, there are no corporate (for-profit) think tanks on the graph because, in Russia, organizations that carry out the functions of analytical centers yet do it for profit fall under the category of consulting centers rather than think tanks. However, as the contemporary definition and typology of think tanks expands globally, this Russian consideration may yield new insights about the blurred line between these types of research institutions.

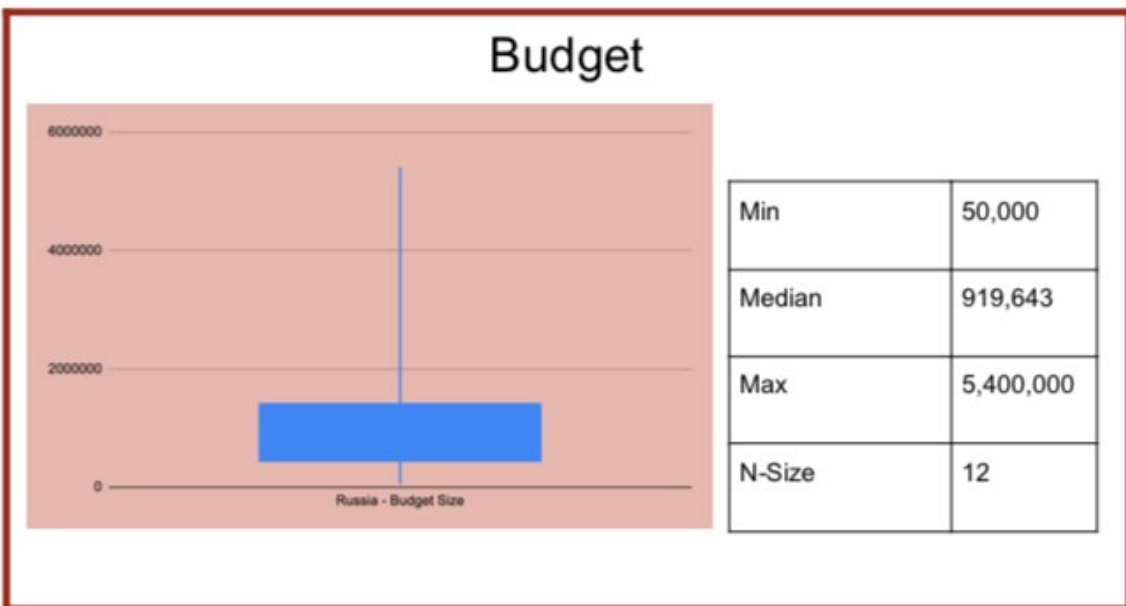
Policy Areas in Russian Think Tanks



The top 3 areas of focus of Russian think tanks are Domestic Economics (25.8%), Foreign Policy and International Relations (17.5%), and a tie between social policy (15.8%), and transparency and good governance (15.8%). Many think tanks pride themselves on covering multiple policy areas, yet these are most often classic combinations. Domestic economics/transparency and good governance, social policy/transparency and good governance, domestic economics/social policy, or transparency and good governance/foreign policy and international affairs are all common combinations of primary and secondary policy areas. These think tanks rank higher on the TTCSP Global Go To Index as they possess various international clients they advise and strong online-publishing presences that lead to their

legitimacy because of their stronger international recognition These combinations are similar to the ones that could be found in other CEE countries with an overwhelming primary focus on economics and a secondary focus on transparency and good governance. One may observe that think tanks in Russia lack focus on International Economics (2.5%), energy and resources (1.7%), Global Health (>1%), Water (>1%) and environment (>1%). The data shows that Russian think tanks are more inward looking when it comes to health and economics, preferring to focus on domestic issues. This may explain the lack of Global Health and International Economics focused think tanks in the Russian Landscape.

Budget Size and Staff Size in Russia



One may observe that Russian think tanks do not enjoy bountiful funding or large staff numbers. Independent analytical centers have never been the government's priority and, therefore, not much investment was directed towards development of

the sector. Similarly, as the general public only begins to get engaged, think tanks do not yet benefit from widespread civil involvement and funding. The main sources of funding are the regional governments, private foundations and corporations, and interested individuals. As for the outliers on the chart, “elite” governmental and unaffiliated think tanks enjoy federal and private donors’ funding, and the latter usually exist on the authorized capital of their founders.

There are not many large think tanks in Russia, the median staff size being 22 people and median budget \$919,643 USD. Most government-affiliated analytical centers are confined to a narrow circle of trusted personnel and are hard to get in. As for the unaffiliated and university-affiliated categories, they tend to have fewer than 100 constant researchers but often rely on the help of fellow researchers, interns, guest scholars, and university professors willing to participate. These categories are not considered as staff and, therefore, are not reflected on the box-and-whiskers plot as they are human capital sources distinct from financial needs.

Policy Recommendations for Russian Think Tanks

The Russian think tank community is the most dynamic, developed, and active in Eastern Europe. Yet, it faces an uphill battle against government corruption, subversion, and underfunding. We provide four recommendations for think tanks in Russia in order to create a more hospitable environment for think tanks in Russia to succeed.

First, clarity should be introduced in the classification of Russian think tanks. The “Affiliation of Think Tanks” graph might be not appropriate in the Russian context because some think tanks choose to be legally labeled as enterprises instead of non-profit organizations to avoid increasing state control of politically active non-governmental organizations and civil society. Generally, it is a common practice to adjust the legal status of an organization on paper to avoid not only state, but also fiscal control or pressure from any interested groups. Alternatively, following Western metrics, university faculties sometimes appear as think tanks, though they only conduct research and do not influence policy decisions. Therefore, think tanks must be distinguished from “university-based research institutes, government research organizations, and research outfits attached to particular interest and lobby groups.”⁶⁶² Similarly, the “Staff Size” and “Budget Size” graphs may have certain limitations because, when it comes to Russian think tanks, organizational boundaries can be obscure, and experts frequently collaborate with and belong to multiple analytical centers. For the above-mentioned reasons, when studying and classifying Russian think tanks, profound research should be done to determine the de facto status of an organization and its researchers.

Second, Russian think tanks should adjust their course of action. As the government does not fully trust the analytical centers, they should educate society and target those parts of the political elites, which are willing to accept their opinion. This lends to the think-and-do model of think tank actions. Additionally, instead of

confronting or pressuring the government to accept their recommendations, analytical centers ought to cooperate with it. Russian think tanks serve as elements of the nation's soft power with the aim of promoting a positive image of the country and its policies abroad. This is the objective they are poised to achieve and the one where the interests of the government and politically active society converge.

Third, Russian think tanks should develop a long-term agenda so as not to be contingent on the current government. According to Bacon, “the most recent two presidential terms in Russia— that of Dmitrii Medvedev (2008–2012) and Vladimir Putin (2012–2018)—have been marked by differentiated political discourses and an evident shift in the think tank landscape as regards to closeness to the incumbent president.”⁶⁶⁵ Indeed, the life cycle of most analytical centers is short: after fulfilling the goals set by the government, they depart from the landscape. The issue might be that many think tanks are initially set up to conform to the current government’s agenda. While this might be a quick ride to success, such an approach constitutes a limitation in the long-term development of the sector and its utility as a legitimate source of policymaking and implementation advice across a range of policy areas.

Last but not least, Russian society and governing approaches are quickly modernizing. Think tanks should not lag behind. Many are already adopting an objective and comprehensive approach towards research and management in line with the values of good governance and transparency, gaining tools and skills to convey their ideas efficiently, incorporating both traditional and the most modern methodologies and means of communication, and creating new platforms for and formats of society-government dialogue. However, to demonstrate their efficiency to the government and civil society, think tanks need to be one step forward, not behind. Instead of being reactive, it is crucial that these analytical centers turn into drivers of change, be the first ones to devise and test new strategies and technologies, and thus display to those in power that they are worthy of trust and consideration. They must respond to contemporary and evolving challenges, such as COVID-19, with speed, variety across a range of dissemination channels, and with creativity by employing cross- national learning opportunities and adopting regional focuses to adapt to specific contexts with greater efficiency.

Policy Recommendations for CEE Region Think Tanks

The following section succinctly summarizes key policy recommendations that are broadly advisable for the think tanks of the CEE region and those outside the region who may endure similar issues, face similar challenges, or perceive cross national learning from the CEE region as a potential method for operational enhancement. Recommendations were gathered from the comprehensive literature review on CEE think tanks.

These policy recommendations can be understood as opportunities for think tanks as they suggest deviations from the status quo of their missions and functions that could guide beneficial development. While country specific and issue specific recommendations are included in previous chapters, the following section can be used as a brief guide with bullet pointed recommendations serving for adaptability in how any particular institution adopts them. Furthermore, as many recommendations apply to multiple issues or country specific contexts, these recommendations are not listed in any particular order of importance or relevance. Nonetheless, think tanks that will survive and prosper in the wake of the new, evolving issues elaborated upon in this report will be those institutions that prioritize speedy adaptability and innovative implementations of the following recommendations.

1. The diversification of think tank participation mandates the inclusion of a wider range of actors including think tanks of a smaller size, a wider range of research agendas, a wider range of roles in the policy formulation process, and a wider audience ^[11]_[SEP]
2. Think tanks must reflect upon their organizational structures in order to respond to logistic and capital resource needs from personnel to funding to infrastructure. ^[11]_[SEP]
3. The diversification of funding between the private and public sector, large institutions and individual donors, will only help hedge risks against economic shocks and the loss of research
4. Independence and research agenda autonomy should be prioritized as think tanks undergo increased partnerships with academic, governmental, and private institutions in the search for legitimacy and funding. ^[11]_[SEP]
5. CEE think tanks in EU member states should explore funding opportunities provided by the European Commission. ^[11]_[SEP]
6. Public engagement initiatives and intercultural dialogues will help think tanks in post-conflict and/or post-communist societies overcome negative stigmas.
7. Transparency, the maintenance and establishment of ethical codes, empirically

supported research, operational and methodological reflection, and good governance are preconditions for the think tank sector if they seek to promote similar values in government, which in turn will help the sector thrive. Think tanks should “model organizationally what they seek to achieve in a democracy.” Think tanks that seek to build prosperous and fair democratic societies need to show that good governance begins in domestic environments with engaged, effective, and accountable boards.

8. Think tanks must adapt to the digital era, using the internet, social media, and translation software as tools that aid in the dissemination of information and the inclusion of a wider audience.

9. In countries where authoritarianism does not allow for active engagement in policy-making, think tanks should shift focus to building strong democratic culture with civil society.

10. Independent policy institutions are in the greatest shape to benefit from networking compared to governments and universities; they are smaller, more agile and far more likely to adopt successful international management and research activities

Conclusion

The CEE database now has a list of 815 active think tanks in the CEE region. There is still much work to be done to continue updating the database with more up to date information and filling in information gaps. As mentioned before a significant amount of staff and budget information is missing from the dataset and future work needs to be done. The next CEE team will have to also spend additional time analyzing the substantial amount of data and literature that was collected with our team’s effort. Time needs to be taken to fully analyze and digest the information available in the CEE data storage.

The aim of our CEE 2021 Think Tank report is to provide the most comprehensive information on Central and Eastern European think tanks. With our comprehensive approach to identify and reach out to all active think tanks in the Central and Eastern European region, we have produced a data set of regional think tanks that is unparalleled in both detail and range. This allowed us to create evidence backed recommendations and graphical visualizations of our data that tells a persuasive story of think tanks in the CEE region.

After viewing our report, one may arrive at a conclusion that after decades under a totalitarian regime, democratic backsliding, corruption, and activity-wise, insufficient civil societies pertaining to this region have heavily impacted the think tank environment and their possibility of further growth. These factors pose a series of challenges described in the report which CEE think tanks have to face: democratic

backsliding and corruption, and underfunding. They all accurately define the region, capturing the nature of the environment of the CEE think tanks.

We hope that the data and the recommendations that we put forward will ultimately help these think tanks combat the challenges of democratic backsliding and corruption.

There is plenty to be optimistic about. After all, Think tanks play a vital role in the transformation of political thought. In the post-communistic reality of the Central and Eastern Europe region, these organizations took an active part in the formation of civic society. Furthermore, pro-liberal think tanks that grew in popularity may be considered as a counter reaction to the decades of communistic centrally planned economy. Thus, in countries such as Hungary or Poland, a large potential is present for positive change.

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