Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and non-traditional security: governance entrepreneurs in Asia* **(Palgrave Mcmilan, 2016) Pp. 213.**

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The ever growing progress in globalization and regionalization has caused challenges for both the nature of security in Asia and the governance of states. Espoused with liberalization and democratization in several Asian states, they have also borne the impact of the ongoing security threats. The influence of the non-state actors has increased manifold and has evaded the characteristic of state-centric security precept. "states in the region increasingly found their attention drawn to trans-boundary sources of insecurity stemming from economic, political, social or environmental factors"(P.4).

Nonetheless, states still retain their primacy and make it essential to act in solidarity. The cross boundary cooperation and cross- regional integration to counter trans- national terrorism and trans-national threats has become essential.

Since the states have little or no experience of trans-regional solidarity, the space thus provided is exploited by non-state actors inflicting damage on the governance of states as well. This has enhanced the ideational role of think tanks as well as governance entrepreneurs. They offer new modes of security governance with little political authority and work on the periphery of the political process.

By using the case studies, book answers four basic questions on the ideational capabilities of the think tanks; problem framing by engaging in discourse, agenda setting, networking and institutionalization. It analyzes the historical and political circumstances of prevalent dilemma in the governance of the Asian countries.

How can non-traditional networks and think tanks contribute to the future of the security governance in Asia is the focus of the study. The

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political environment is still non-conducive for "political actors, such as think tanks, and [to] structural and ideational change" (P7). The author has used the theory of constructivism which emphasizes on "the social construction of institutions and the power of ideas with an acknowledgement of the constraining and enabling power of institutions" (P.9)

Asian think tanks have also changed themselves. Their numbers have expanded at an astonishing rate, and a landscape once dominated by government owned policy institutes has been transformed into an increasingly diverse policy community.

The writer has used three discrete ways of describing the role by updating and going beyond the period of 1990's and 2000, contrary to the earlier writings by government authorized organizations particularly, in non-democratic states. With the mushrooming of the non-governmental Think Tanks in Asia, the policy community has also diversified.

The spread of democratization in the Asian countries has increased the demand for policy advice. The increasingly crowded international fora have provided greater chances of interaction for the think tanks with the government policy makers.

The book also highlights the changes within the government-owned think tanks which have started toeing the line contrary to the government policies, particularly in Asia. Thinking community is noticeably altered with a new constraining and enabling power of the institutions. The philanthropic and active civil culture has greatly benefited from the ideational threshold of the think tanks. This however, is to secure the funding as well as to maintain their relevance.

The pseudo-institutionalization of the networks established by think tanks and network-centric structure has greatly contributed to the globalization and democratization. The political thinking in Asia has assorted hence forth. They have evolved from legitimate advisors to developers and new form of security governance.

The first chapter of the book has largely discussed the role of International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) and the MacArthur Foundation's Asia Security Initiative (ASI) as outside the traditional concept of Track II diplomacy. Think Tanks provide an important discursive space for non-traditional security (NTS) ideas as de facto centers for NTS analysis. They get benefit from specific ideas. This consequently endows them with the authority to define security in Asia by describing specific political responses. As a result, they continue to play the 'informal actor' of the Track II diplomacy. The comparative study of the growing prevalence and power of these Think Tanks makes the book an interesting study on their role.

In the second chapter, the author has situated his analysis in the broader literature of international relations. The author has successfully articulated the power of ideas as a catalyst for changing the institutions. He has given credit to the institutionalists and the constructivists alike for this reformation.

The book also identifies discursive institutionalism (DI) as a tool for policy analysis in order to help explore alternate political locations. "They have opened up analytical space for the evaluation of non-governmental and extra-structural actors". (P 40) This helps in controlling regional security paradigms in order to ensure elicited policy responses.

Think Tanks in Asia are different from their counter-parts in the Western world. Asian Think Tanks have been able to accede to political processes significantly. They have assumed the role of governance. They even discuss the alternate security ideas and help re-shaping them according to strategic needs.

The book is the only record of comparative study on think tank networks in Asia. Non-traditional security (NTS) has been particularly targeted since the idea has largely been promoted by all think-tanks. The study is concurrent with the changing political paradigms in Asia. The forethought of the epistemic community to promote transnational network of knowledge-based experts which can help the decision makers is a very modern idea. Policy solutions and their outcomes could be

effectively assessed henceforth. The experts hold the ability of determining the future security culture of Asia with their logical ideas.