



*German Think Tanks:
Advisory Expertise and Lobbyism
in Economic and Science Policies*

Katja Patzwaldt

University of Bielefeld; Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences

Outline

■ Thematically:

- Typical think tank sector: Economic policy think tanks/ labour market reform
- Atypical think tank sector: Science policy „think and decision“ tanks/ higher education reform

■ General questions addressed:

- Where do policy ideas come from? Think tanks' influence
- Dominant actors
- Political function

1. Economic policy think tanks

Scientific landscape

- Universities, Max Planck Society, Helmholtz Association
- Leibniz Association: applied research
- DFG: all German research entities
- Science Council: from the above

1. Economic policy think tanks

Construction of “policy relevance“

- Governance structure
- Nature of research

→ ***focus on federal government***

1. Economic policy think tanks

Labour market reforms

- ***Temporary commissions substituting and ordering institutes and interest groups' knowledge***
- ***intensified medialisation + political changes***

→ ***some institutes as independent political voices***

2. Science policy lobby

- No think tanks involved in policy making
- Policy relevance by levels
 - Strategic: Science Council
 - Programmatic: Commissions for government
 - Technical: Cartel of big old universities

2. Science policy lobby

Higher Education Reform: “Initiative of Excellency” (total 1.9 billion € 2006-11)

- Lighthouse: int'l visibility; SPD modernity
- Evolution of policymaking reinforces structures of science governance
- ***Munich 2x, Karlsruhe, Aachen, Berlin, Freiburg, Konstanz, Göttingen, Heidelberg,***
- ***Tübingen, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Würzburg, Bonn (Dresden, Bremen)***

Conclusion

Typical German think tanks are:

- ***(still) servants of government, but rarely agenda setters***
- ***Change in gov – change in rules of the game***
- ***not yet professional with mass media***

Science organisations are:

- ***lobbyists in the robe of experts***
- ***monopolize construction of policy ideas and distribution of finance***