

## Thinking about Tanking

With the rise of the knowledge economy, many occupations and businesses have seen unprecedented growth, as the business environment within this new economy is favourable to certain types of jobs. One sector of the economy that epitomizes the rise of the knowledge economy is think tanks. The total number of think tanks, the amount of people employed in this field, and the amount of countries that they are located in, are growing. Within this sector, there is a great deal of diversity, as numerous stakeholders, activists, institutions, and governments are creating these organisations. Think tanks have also become big business, generating significant profits as the demand for consulting both within and across numerous industries increases. We here at the Martin Prosperity Institute, a global think tank in its own right, are constantly examining how talent and technology influence the prosperity of regions, and this Insight analyses the geography of the world's think tanks that often develop talent and technologies. For analysis we used the data from the [Global Go to Think Tanks Rankings](#).

Total number of think tanks by country and U.S. state

Exhibit 1

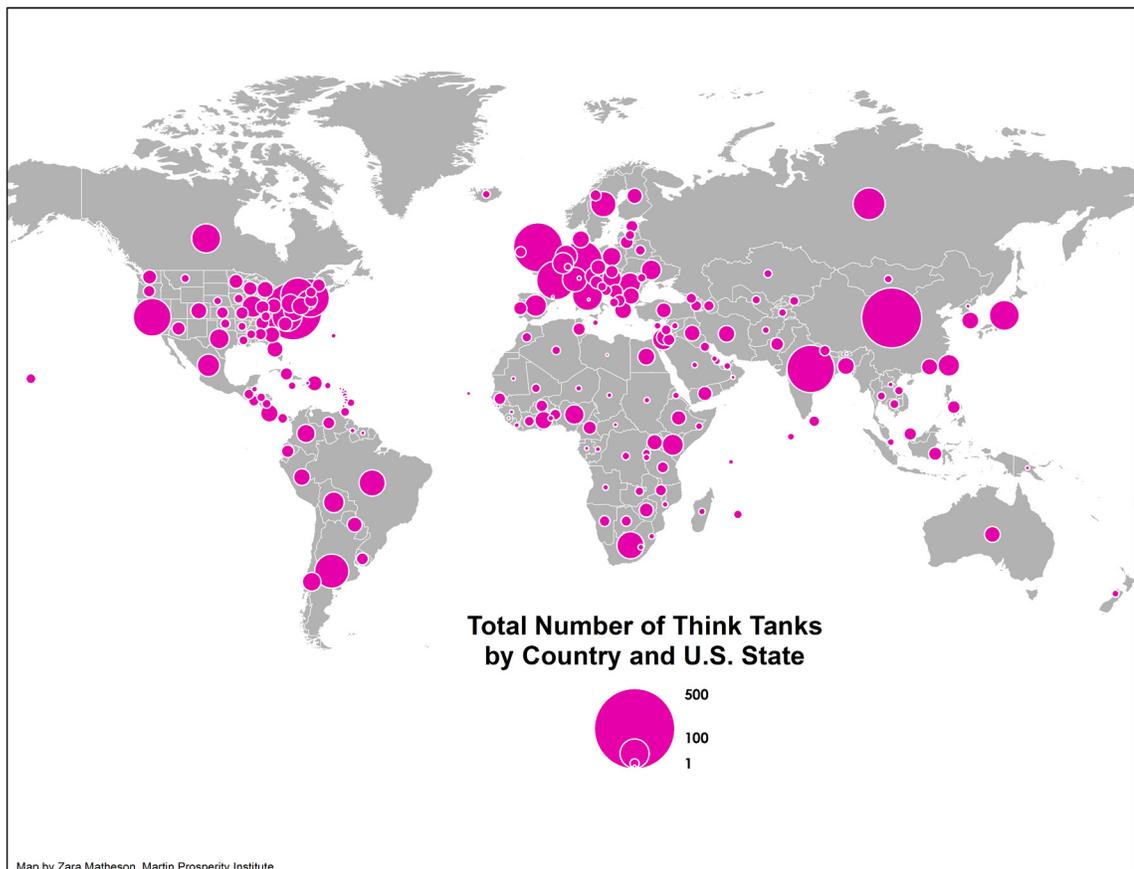


Exhibit 1 shows the total number of think tanks located in each country in the world, along with the results for each U.S. state individually. As presented within the map, the United States has the largest number of think tanks (1,815), followed by China (425), India (292), United Kingdom (286), and Germany (194). Canada is quite high on the list with the 11<sup>th</sup> largest number, or 96 think tanks. As Exhibit 1 displays, other than largely populated China and India, the countries with the largest total number of think tanks are generally located within the more developed regions of Western Europe and North America. Interestingly though, some of the developing countries that are growing at a high rate in regards to their GDP and patent outputs, also have significant numbers of think tanks including Argentina, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa. The African continent, however, performs poorly as a whole – with the greatest number of countries that fall in the bottom 30 lowest in terms of think tank numbers. As many think tanks rely on government funding, consulting fees or foundations, it would be harder to start and grow a think tank in these areas. The Middle-East, along with sections of Central Africa, are two regions in which countries with the lowest number of think tanks cluster together. This might be due to the lack of tolerance in many of the countries in these regions (along with economic factors), as to attract think tanks and researchers, there often needs to be an acceptance to new and diverse ideas as well as social issues, government criticisms and often radical recommendations.

Think tanks have become a huge industry, with many U.S. states having more within their borders than most countries. As shown in Exhibit 1, Washington D.C. has the most think tanks in the U.S. with 394, which is more than any country in the world except for China that has 425. This is not surprising though, as political strategy, public policy and many other issues come to the forefront in Washington, and it is very profitable for many research centres to locate within a close proximity to the government and military offices in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area. This is why Virginia, has the 5<sup>th</sup> most think tanks in the U.S. with 106 as it seems as if these organizations, like many other businesses, cluster together in regions that often cross numerous city or state boundaries. Massachusetts (176), California (170), and New York (143) are the other states within the top 5 in the U.S.

To examine which countries have the greatest amount of think tanks per capita, we took the top 30 countries with the most think tanks and calculated how many there are per million people as displayed in Exhibit 2. Switzerland has the most think tanks per million people with 8.9, followed by Sweden (8.4), Israel (7), United States (5.7), and Belgium (5.1). When examining think tanks per million, the larger developing countries that scored well on the overall total count, are at or near the bottom. For example, although China, Brazil, and India have high numbers of think tanks, when looking at the number of think tanks per million, they perform poorly.

Top ten think tanks per million

Exhibit 2

Country	Think Tanks per million
Switzerland	8.9
Sweden	8.4
Israel	7.0
United States	5.7
Belgium	5.1
Bolivia	4.9
Austria	4.9
United Kingdom	4.5
Hungary	4.0
Netherlands	3.4

This might also shed light on the entrepreneurial development ,environment, encouragement, and support to start a think tank in countries such as Switzerland and Sweden, as opposed to China or India, as when accounting for population the two former countries have a much larger amount of think tanks.

While the number of think tanks in a region is important, the work that they do and the impact that their publications and research has on the public, governments and society in general is of great importance. *Go to Think Tanks* also provides a yearly ranking of the top 30 think tanks in the world. They survey individual think tanks along with using an expert panel to create their rankings. The full ranking process can be found [here](#). The top think tank in the world is the Brookings Institution (U.S.), followed by Chatham House (UK), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (U.S.), Council on Foreign Relations (U.S.), and Center for Strategic and International Studies (U.S.). Within the top 30, the U.S. had the most think tanks with 12. Other countries with top think tanks are usually found in Western Europe (UK, Germany, Poland and Belgium), and some are located in countries such as Brazil, China, Chile and even in Kenya with the African Economic Research Consortium. Currently the top Canadian think tank is the Fraser Institute at 30<sup>th</sup> in the world.

Think tanks play an important role in regional prosperity as the public is provided with information from numerous fields that they might have not had access to otherwise. Think tanks can provide a measure of the openness to ideas and entrepreneurial strength as this Insight displayed that generally the countries with the highest patent counts and levels of tolerance often have the largest amount of total think tanks and per million people. As think tanks continue to grow, here in Canada and Toronto specifically, these organizations, if given proper support, will play an integral role in regional and national prosperity, innovation, and government transparency. [The University of Toronto](#) and [Rotman School of Management](#) supports its many think tanks, but the government must also, as policy decisions such as the cancellation of the long form survey will hurt the future of think tanks and their ability to research and transfer knowledge within our country. We here at the Martin Prosperity Institute see the value in providing the public with valuable research across a wide range of topics, and as we move forward, we will continue to do so.

*The Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management is the world's leading think-tank on the role of sub-national factors—location, place and city-regions—in global economic prosperity. We take an integrated view of prosperity, looking beyond economic measures to include the importance of quality of place and the development of people's creative potential.*