

The Federation of Social Sciences: The Nexus in Constructing a New-Type Think Tank System (Postprint)

Authors: Liu Xizhong, Li Qiwan, Liu Shuangshuang

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To clarify the status and role of the Federation of Social Sciences in the construction of a new-type think tank system. [Method/Process] This paper examines the status, role, and potential functions of the Federation of Social Sciences in the new-type think tank system from three theoretical perspectives, investigates its functional roles from three practical dimensions, and systematically reviews the policy designs and local explorations regarding the role of Federations of Social Sciences in new-type think tank construction at the practical level. [Result/Conclusion] The Federation of Social Sciences should further identify its position based on its bridging status and linking function in the construction of the new-type think tank system, focus on developing traction-type, hub-type, and platform-type think tanks, and better fulfill its roles in seven aspects.

Full Text

Abstract

[Purpose/significance] This paper aims to clarify the status and role of the Federation of Social Sciences in the construction of a new-type think tank system. [Method/process] We examine the position, functions, and potential roles of the Federation of Social Sciences within this system through three theoretical lenses, analyze its practical functions across three dimensions, and summarize policy designs and exploratory initiatives at both central and local levels regarding the Federation's involvement in new-type think tank development. [Result/conclusion] The Federation of Social Sciences should leverage its bridging position and bonding function in building the new-type think tank system to further define its role, focusing on developing tractive, hub, and platform-based think tanks while better fulfilling seven key functions.

Keywords: Federation of Social Sciences; think tank system; link
Classification Number: C932

In local contexts, the Federation of Social Sciences serves as an academic people's organization under Party leadership, a union of academic social organizations in the philosophical and social sciences, and a bridge connecting Party committees and governments with social science practitioners. It is responsible for engaging the "five major forces" in the social science community and building an important "think tank" and "brain trust" for the Party and government. Since these five forces substantially overlap with the five main entities in the think tank world at the local level, the Federation naturally occupies a bridging position within the new-type think tank system. In May 2017, nine ministries including the Ministry of Civil Affairs jointly issued the "Several Opinions on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks," explicitly establishing a dual management system for social think tanks with provincial Federations of Social Sciences serving as the professional supervisory body for private social science research institutions (the primary component of social think tanks). This further strengthened the Federation's bonding function and pivotal status in the new-type think tank system.

Three Theoretical Perspectives on the Functions of the Federation of Social Sciences in the New-Type Think Tank System

The Federation of Social Sciences (also called the Federation of Philosophy and Social Sciences) is an academic mass organization under Party leadership, directly affiliated with Party committees at various levels and managed by publicity departments. Similar in nature and function to organizations such as the Women's Federation, Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Federation of Industry and Commerce, and Association for Science and Technology, it serves as the professional supervisory body for provincial-level academic societies, research associations, and private social science research institutions (including think tanks), acting as a bridge between Party committees, governments, and the social science community.

Unlike other mass organizations, no national-level Federation of Social Sciences currently exists, yet full coverage has been achieved at the provincial level. The vast majority of prefecture-level cities have established Federations, and county-level and university-based Federations constitute a considerable and growing proportion. Responsibilities and internal structures vary by region. The Jiangsu Provincial Federation of Social Sciences has primary responsibilities that include: guiding provincial social science practitioners to maintain correct political orientation; supervising and managing provincial academic societies while providing professional guidance to municipal Federations; organizing and coordinating academic activities and international exchanges; researching major

issues in political, economic, and social development to provide decision-making consultation for the provincial Party committee and government; promoting and popularizing social science knowledge; organizing evaluation of outstanding provincial philosophical and social science achievements under government commission; editing and publishing social science journals and managing affiliated institutions; and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of social science practitioners while understanding and reflecting their circumstances and opinions. Some provincial Federations have further clarified their think tank functions in response to new developments. For example, the Guizhou Provincial Federation's responsibilities include "strengthening the construction of new-type social science think tanks, establishing the Guizhou Think Tank Alliance, and promoting cooperative and coordinated development among think tanks from government, business, academic, and civil society sectors." Drawing on these institutional characteristics, this section employs three theoretical perspectives to examine the Federation's position, functions, and potential roles in the new-type think tank system.

1.1 Structural Holes Theory Perspective

According to social network theory, social networks are social structures composed of numerous nodes, and actors occupying key nodes possess more advantageous positions and influence. Burt's structural holes theory posits that social networks can generate both information and control benefits for intermediaries. Information benefits include access (obtaining valuable information), timeliness (accessing valuable information promptly), and referrals (gaining more opportunities). Control benefits refer to the advantages derived from the special position of a third-party coordinator. As shown in the diagram, when network participants B, C, and D have no connections among themselves but each connects to A, three structural holes emerge between BC, BD, and CD. Actor A occupies these structural holes, enabling non-redundant information acquisition from B, C, and D while playing a coordinating role among them, thereby gaining competitive advantage.

[Figure 1: see original paper] Schematic Diagram of Structural Holes

The Federation of Social Sciences, as a bridge connecting Party and government with social science practitioners, maintains extensive connections with the "five major forces" in social science research—universities, Party schools, academies of social sciences, military academies, and Party/government research institutions—while also supervising social science service organizations. These five forces encompass the majority of the new-type think tank system (with sci-tech think tanks being another important component), and social science organizations constitute the main body of social think tanks. Thus, the Federation serves as a critical node in the think tank network, connecting with most think tank units, particularly social think tanks, and occupying a key position in structural holes. This enables it to access more information and possess relative organizational advantages over other think tank entities. In this sense, the Federation is itself a

federation of the think tank community. Indeed, think tank scholars have called for establishing such a federation. For instance, Wang Wen, Executive Dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University, stated: “We think tank scholars must unite to become a true community of knowledge and ideas, and it would be best to establish a ‘National Federation of Think Tanks’ .”

1.2 Hub Organization Theory Perspective

The term “hub” originally refers to the pivot of a door and the handle of a vessel, metaphorically extended to mean the critical point of something or the central link connecting things, commonly used in transportation. Applied to organizational systems, it primarily connotes an organization’s bridging and bonding role among similar organizations. In recent years, the concept of “hub-type social organizations” has gained traction, referring to union-type social organizations that play bridging, bonding, and service functions among similar social organizations [1]. In terms of recognizing bodies, hub-type social organizations are primarily mass organizations under Party leadership. In terms of positioning, they mainly serve as bridges between the state and social organizations. Functionally, they aggregate, manage, and serve social organizations through project-based, socialized, and professional operational methods. Clearly, the Federation of Social Sciences exhibits characteristics of a hub-type organization throughout the social science and think tank system.

1.3 Platform Economy Theory Perspective

Platform economy originally refers to a virtual or physical transaction venue where the platform itself does not produce products but facilitates transactions between supply and demand parties. Its appeal lies in resource aggregation, restructuring the traditional linear upstream-midstream-downstream industrial chain into a circular chain centered on the platform. The platform bends the originally lengthy industrial chain into a circle, enabling direct connections among users at different ports and improving industrial efficiency by saving various links. Similar to platform economy, the Federation of Social Sciences, as a bridge between Party committees, governments, and the social science community, has built academic exchange platforms and established regular communication advantages, enabling it to facilitate connections between decision-making bodies and think tanks to some extent, thereby bridging the gap between policy and knowledge. However, unlike the profit-oriented nature of platform economy, the platforms built by the Federation, as a mass organization in the Party committee system, are public welfare-oriented and open.

Three Practical Dimensions for Observing the Functions of the Federation of Social Sciences in the New-Type Think Tank System

From practical and operational perspectives, the Federation's functions and position in the new-type think tank system can be understood through three dimensions:

2.1 The Federation of Social Sciences and Think Tank Entities such as Academies of Social Sciences

Public perception often confuses the Federation with academies of social sciences. The Federation is an academic mass organization directly under Party committees, maintaining close connections with various think tank entities and serving as the professional supervisory body for social think tanks (private social science research institutions), thus enjoying broader operational space in think tank construction. Academies of social sciences are comprehensive social science research institutions directly under Party committees and governments, representing a crucial think tank entity within the new-type think tank system but lacking functional business connections with other think tank entities. At the provincial level, most Federations and academies are separate organizations, with only a few such as Tianjin, Hebei, and Hainan operating under combined offices.

2.2 The Federation of Social Sciences and Think Tank Management Entities such as Planning Offices

Planning offices serve as the administrative bodies for social science planning leading groups, specifically responsible for managing local social science research planning and fund projects. Against the backdrop of new-type think tank construction, the national planning office established a Think Tank Liaison Division responsible for “planning and implementing national high-end think tank construction, organizing application, evaluation, and daily management of high-end think tanks, conducting surveys on domestic and international think tank development trends, and providing consulting services for central decision-making,” while also “organizing evaluations of post-funding projects and Chinese academic translation projects under the National Social Science Fund.” Across provinces, some planning offices have added think tank management functions to their original responsibilities, specifically coordinating and guiding think tank construction within their jurisdictions. In terms of institutional placement, most provincial planning offices are located in provincial (municipal, district) Party committee publicity departments, though some are housed within Federations of Social Sciences, such as in Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Chongqing.

Currently, think tank management departments are generally located in the theory divisions or planning offices of provincial Party committee publicity de-

partments, or in provincial Party committee research offices and reform offices. On one hand, because these agencies' think tank management functions are add-ons to existing responsibilities and staffing has not increased accordingly due to establishment constraints, they sometimes appear overstretched in think tank management. On the other hand, the relatively high administrative levels of units hosting think tanks or the parent bodies to which think tanks are attached create certain management inconveniences, making it imperative to standardize and strengthen think tank management and service work.

2.3 The Federation of Social Sciences and Sci-Tech Think Tank Management Entities such as the China Association for Science and Technology

President Xi Jinping has pointed out: “Organizations at all levels of the China Association for Science and Technology should adhere to their duty positioning of serving scientific and technological workers, serving innovation-driven development, serving the improvement of scientific literacy among all citizens, and serving scientific decision-making by the Party and government, and promote the construction of open, hub, and platform-type 科协 organizations.” Since the 18th Party Congress, the China Association for Science and Technology has actively promoted its affiliated societies to orderly undertake government-transferred functions, issuing policy documents such as the “Opinions on Building a High-Level Sci-Tech Innovation Think Tank” and the “13th Five-Year Plan for Building a High-Level Sci-Tech Innovation Think Tank.” These propose forming a national sci-tech innovation think tank pattern with the China Association for Science and Technology Innovation Strategy Research Institute as the core, supported by 10 local 科协 think tanks, 10-15 society think tanks, and approximately 5 university 科协 think tanks, characterized by prominent sci-tech features, distinctive 科协 characteristics, and resource sharing across disciplines, units, and regions. Under the unified promotion of the China Association for Science and Technology, provincial and municipal 科协 organizations have shown great enthusiasm, taken strong measures, and achieved remarkable results in promoting think tank development. The experiences and practices of the 科协 system in building sci-tech think tanks provide valuable references for the Federation of Social Sciences system in participating in new-type think tank system construction.

Policy Design and Practical Exploration by Central and Provincial Governments on the Role of Federations of Social Sciences in New-Type Think Tank Construction

Although the Federation's own research capacity is limited and it may not strictly qualify as a think tank entity, it possesses characteristics such as comprehensive disciplines, concentrated intellectual resources, extensive connections, large information volume, and smooth channels. With its “union” function and “integration” advantages, it plays an important role in new-type think tank

construction.

3.1 Examining the Role of Federations of Social Sciences in Think Tank Construction from Provincial Implementation Opinions

The General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and State Council's "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics" clearly defined the responsibilities of Party schools, universities, and academies of social sciences in new-type think tank construction, and required people's organizations to "leverage their advantages of close contact with the masses and expand decision-making consultation service methods suited to their characteristics" [2]. Following the central guidelines, provinces and municipalities have successively issued implementation opinions. From officially published documents and media reports, the important role played by Federations of Social Sciences in local new-type think tank systems is evident. Shandong proposed establishing a "1+N" think tank system, where "1" refers to a hub think tank built by the Provincial Federation of Social Sciences, and "N" refers to unit think tanks comprising resources from universities, Party schools, academies, social science social organizations, Party/government research departments, and publicity system think tanks, striving to form a new-type think tank development pattern with systematic integration, complementary advantages, and coordinated development. Jiangsu proposed that the Provincial Federation should fully leverage its bridging function, organize and guide various social science research organizations, particularly social science societies (research associations), to strengthen their decision-making consultation orientation, encourage more high-quality social science resources to concentrate on think tank construction, and build the provincial social science community into a powerful think tank for decision-making consultation [3]. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region explicitly stated that "people's organizations should leverage their advantages of extensive mass contact and expand decision-making consultation service methods suited to their characteristics," and required "Federations of Social Sciences and Associations for Science and Technology to strengthen daily management of their affiliated think tank societies, associations, and research associations," while listing the Autonomous Region Federation of Social Sciences alongside the Inner Mongolia Party School, Academy of Social Sciences, and Development Research Center as pilot units for "advancing high-end think tank construction" [4]. Shaanxi proposed that the Provincial Federation should lead the establishment of think tank alliances based on relevant social organizations to promote interdisciplinary, cross-unit, and cross-field open cooperation among think tanks. Henan emphasized: "The Federation of Social Sciences should actively organize research on major political, economic, social, and cultural development issues, expand decision-making consultation service methods suited to its characteristics," and build the Provincial Federation's "Henan Development High-Level Forum" and other think tank brands. Hebei proposed giving full play to the advantages of the Provincial Federation of Social Sciences and the Provincial Academy of Social Sciences in terms of comprehensive disciplines, integrated

professional research, and concentrated research talent, enabling them to function as the core carrier and main platform for think tanks overall and become an influential Hebei central think tank among the 50-100 new-type think tanks prioritized for national construction [5]. Hunan Province clearly stated that “people’s organizations should leverage their advantages of close mass contact and expand decision-making consultation service methods suited to their characteristics” [6], while implementation opinions from Guangdong, Sichuan, the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and other provinces also put forward requirements for people’s organizations or Federations of Social Sciences.

Some prefecture-level cities in Jiangsu have assigned even more important roles to Federations of Social Sciences in their new-type think tank systems. Suzhou took the lead in issuing think tank construction documents, specifying that the Suzhou Municipal Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Sciences would provide overall organizational leadership for new-type think tank construction, with its office located in the Municipal Federation of Social Sciences, specifically responsible for coordinating, guiding, and managing think tank construction city-wide. Taizhou City in Jiangsu is building a “1+1+4+6” new-type think tank system, comprising one decision-making consultation committee for overall coordination, a group of municipal decision-making consultants for guidance, four key new-type think tanks as the main body, and six categories of innovative think tank development, with the office of the Municipal Decision-Making Consultation Committee co-located with the Municipal Federation of Social Sciences to handle daily operations.

3.2 Examining the Business Supervision Function of Federations of Social Sciences from the “Several Opinions on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks”

The Federation of Social Sciences has long been responsible for guiding and managing academic social science societies. In May 2017, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, and National Bureau of Statistics jointly issued the “Several Opinions on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks,” explicitly establishing a dual management system whereby private social science research institutions are supervised by provincial (autonomous region, municipality) Federations of Social Sciences as their professional supervisory body, further strengthening the Federation’s responsibility in think tank construction. Regarding provincial implementation, Anhui’s implementation opinion clearly states that the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs and the Provincial Federation of Social Sciences will jointly research and formulate guidelines for standardizing and guiding think tanks established by social forces, aiming to cultivate 10 socially influential think tanks within five years. In 2016, Anhui conducted think tank evaluations,

selecting 10 key think tanks and 5 key cultivation think tanks, among which one each supervised by the Anhui Provincial Federation of Social Sciences was selected: the Anhui Circular Economy Research Institute (private non-enterprise) and the Anhui Development Strategy Research Association (social organization). Guangxi proposed establishing a “1+1+6+4” Guangxi-characteristic new-type think tank system comprising one decision-making consultation committee for overall coordination, one think tank alliance for coordination, six categories of think tank construction as the main body, and four service platforms for support, emphasizing “leveraging the Guangxi Federation of Social Sciences’ management, coordination, and service functions for social think tanks” and “strengthening the construction of the Guangxi Federation of Social Sciences’ Southeast Asian Economy and Politics Research Center.” Henan, based on its actual conditions, proposed specific implementation opinions for the “Several Opinions” to guide social think tanks in contributing wisdom to Central China through multiple measures.

3.3 Practical Exploration by Federations of Social Sciences Across China in New-Type Think Tank System Construction

First, leveraging channel advantages to enhance endogenous motivation for think tank construction. This includes: (1) actively promoting effective matching between think tank product supply and demand. The Shanghai Federation of Social Sciences has built a “government-academia interaction” platform, establishing a dialogue mechanism between municipal leaders and social science workers on major issues in Shanghai’ s economic and social development. The Yunnan Provincial Federation implements a “social science experts to grassroots” project release format, where local Party committees and governments report development challenges to the Provincial Federation, which then selects experts from its database to address these issues, combining government question-posing with expert problem-solving [7]. (2) Actively promoting transformation of think tank research results. To smooth the reporting channels for think tank results, the Jiangsu Provincial Federation reports results to provincial leaders through its “Decision-Making Reference” publication, while Federations in Fujian, Chongqing, Beijing, Jiangxi, Hebei, Sichuan, Hunan, and Shanghai also have internal publications that provide think tank results access to decision-makers.

Second, leveraging union advantages to integrate various think tank resources. The Tianjin Federation of Social Sciences has established a social science expert database using information technology. The Shaanxi Provincial Federation has built databases of retired social science experts, young expert talent, and senior professional title experts to consolidate think tank community strength. The Guizhou and Jilin Provincial Federations are preparing to establish think tank alliances to promote collaborative innovation through co-building platforms, sharing resources, and sharing results. The Suzhou Municipal Federation has assumed think tank management functions: the Suzhou Municipal Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Sciences provides overall organizational leadership for

new-type think tank construction, with the Suzhou New-Type Think Tank Construction Office located in the Municipal Federation, specifically responsible for coordinating, guiding, and managing think tank construction citywide according to the leading group' s decisions and deployments.

Third, leveraging platform advantages to enhance exchanges and cooperation among think tanks. The Jiangsu Provincial Federation established the Jiangsu Think Tank Research and Exchange Center to organize think tank exchange activities, conduct think tank research, guide think tank construction, and cultivate think tank talent. Together with the Provincial Party Committee Publicity Department, it organizes the Jiangsu Think Tank Summit and the Jiangsu Young Think Tank Scholars Training Program and “Focus and High Quality” Young Think Tank Scholars Salon, becoming an important wing of the “one body with two wings” pattern in Jiangsu’ s new-type think tank system. The Sichuan Provincial Federation and Provincial Department of Education jointly established 59 key research bases that perform decision-making consultation and talent cultivation functions while actively transforming into characteristic think tanks [8]. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Federation of Social Sciences will build social think tanks by discipline, construct alliances of social think tanks with similar specialties, strengthen information technology development for social think tanks, and encourage orderly competition between social think tanks and between social think tanks and universities/research institutions.

Fourth, leveraging talent cultivation advantages to nurture new forces in the think tank community. Since 2015, the Hebei Provincial Federation has organized specialized training for academic backbone personnel in batches to meet talent needs for new-type think tank construction. The Guizhou Provincial Federation implements innovation team cultivation projects and social science master cultivation projects to develop internationally influential social science leading talent.

3.4 Analysis of Limitations and Bottlenecks in the Participation of Federations of Social Sciences in New-Type Think Tank System Construction

Despite the important role played by provincial Federations of Social Sciences in new-type think tank system construction, several challenges exist: the absence of a national-level Federation, combined operations of Federations and academies in some provinces and cities, incomplete establishment of Federations below the prefecture level (especially at county level), and the loose structural connections within Federations themselves. These factors pose challenges for provincial Federations in promoting new-type think tank system construction. First, there is a lack of top-level design and upper-level impetus. Most initiatives remain in a state of spontaneous exploration without policy guidance. Inter-provincial exchanges mainly occur through point-to-point communications and national Federation of Social Sciences cooperative meetings with club-like

characteristics, lacking fixed communication mechanisms. Second, there is a lack of specialized internal institutions for promotion. Due to varying functions and institutional structures across provincial Federations, most lack departments corresponding to think tank development and specialized forces for sustained promotion, particularly lacking organizational coordination capacity, results transformation capacity, and platform-building capacity. Third, there is insufficient resource support. Resources for promoting think tank development are relatively scarce, limiting the space for functional performance and lacking means in resource leverage utilization, talent cultivation, and brand building.

Strengthening the Tractive, Hub, and Platform Roles of Federations of Social Sciences in New-Type Think Tank System Construction

Given the Federation's bridging position and bonding function in new-type think tank system construction, it is necessary to further define its role under new circumstances by focusing on building tractive, hub, and platform-type think tanks to better fulfill seven functions [9].

4.1 Strengthening Functional Roles to Identify Focus Points for Participating in the New-Type Think Tank System

Due to the absence of a national Federation and varying responsibilities across provincial Federations, participation methods differ. Under the overall coordination of Party committees and governments, Federations should base themselves on their own functions, identify their positions, fulfill their duties properly without overstepping or neglecting responsibilities, and contribute to local new-type think tank system construction. Within the new-type think tank construction system, the Federation should fully leverage its advantages to strengthen communication and resource integration among the five major forces and seven types of think tank entities in the social science community while serving as the professional supervisory body for social think tanks, building the social science community into a powerful think tank for decision-making consultation. It should connect "upward" with Party committee and government decision-making bodies and core think tanks under publicity departments to better grasp decision-making needs and achieve precise matching of consultation demands; connect "downward" with grassroots think tank research institutions and experts to provide precise services for idea production; connect "inward" with affiliated societies, research associations, social think tanks, and grassroots and university Federations to provide precise support; and connect "outward" with various practical work departments and peer organizations to strengthen horizontal collaboration and achieve precise coordination through multiple forms such as co-building think tank alliances.

4.2 Strengthening Tractive Role to Guide Healthy Development of New-Type Think Tanks

The Federation's tractive role in new-type think tank construction manifests in two aspects: first, ensuring think tanks maintain correct political orientation. Guiding social science practitioners to maintain correct political orientation is an important Federation responsibility. In local new-type think tank construction, following the principle of Party management of think tanks, it must firmly grasp the fundamental task of "two consolidations," use the latest achievements of Marxism adapted to Chinese conditions to guide think tank construction, and ensure healthy development along the correct path. This particularly involves strengthening management of social science societies, research associations, and civil organizations, and guiding social think tanks to comply with the national constitution and laws while maintaining correct political orientation. Second, adhering to problem-oriented think tank construction. Issues that think tanks focus on and research should be major theoretical and practical problems arising from practice, not concepts, categories, or data models. Moreover, these should be issues in emerging trends and developments, focusing on what is being done and will be done, reflecting precision, timeliness, practicality, and foresight [10]. Provincial Federations can guide think tanks to focus on major decisions and deployments of Party committees and governments through commissioned projects, academic seminars, and outstanding think tank results evaluation.

4.3 Strengthening Hub Role to Connect Think Tanks with Various Sectors

The role of provincial Federations of Social Sciences should be reflected not only in basic social science research but more importantly in applied research and decision-making consultation, becoming a hub connecting Party committees and governments with think tanks, among various think tank entities, and between think tanks and the public. It should strengthen horizontal collaboration among think tank entities, enhance connections between think tanks, maximize information collection and open utilization, promote resource sharing and information exchange among think tanks, and achieve higher-level coordination in serving local Party committee and government decision-making. It should strengthen connections between think tanks and practical work departments by better understanding government decision-making needs to guide effective research, achieve joint research on major issues, and timely transformation of important results. It should serve as a bridge for popularizing think tank products among the public, emphasizing the use of think tank research results as important content for social science popularization and employing modern communication methods to expand the coverage of think tank result popularization.

4.4 Strengthening Coordinating Role to Form Overall Synergy in New-Type Think Tank Construction

Think tank development requires strengthened resource integration to effectively enhance concentration and collaboration, creating effects where $1+1>2$. The Federation should better play its role in think tank resource integration, actively exploring and grasping think tank development patterns and internal requirements. It should coordinate and organize experts and scholars from different disciplines and fields, particularly research-oriented, management-oriented, and business-oriented scholars, to gather in relevant think tanks, optimize and improve think tank functions, and enable independent operation and sustainable development. It should strengthen alliances between think tanks, promote the establishment of think tank alliances, coordinate provincial think tank resources, fully leverage the advantages and specialties of various think tanks, organize and guide them by field and level to avoid redundant research and resource waste.

4.5 Strengthening Platform Role to Enhance Think Tank Results Exchange

Provincial Federations of Social Sciences possess the function of “organizing and coordinating academic activities in the social science community and conducting international and domestic academic exchanges,” making them important forces in building local new-type think tank platforms and promoting cooperation between local and domestic/international think tanks. They should strengthen “Internet Plus Think Tank” thinking, serve and promote information disclosure by government departments, create and build big data platform hubs, and expand and innovate various high-level forums and academic conferences. Through special report channels, websites, journals, WeChat, and Weibo, they should expand publicity, promote think tank results exchange, and facilitate think tank-think tank collaboration, think tank-government interaction, and think tank-media integration, providing broad stages and favorable environments for amplifying think tank functions [11]. Simultaneously, they should adhere to the combination of “bringing in” and “going out,” strengthen connections with foreign think tanks and research institutions, hold high-level international seminars, promote philosophy and social sciences to the world, and cultivate a batch of locally influential think tanks internationally.

4.6 Strengthening Cultivation Role to Promote Think Tank Development and Growth

The central “Several Opinions on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks” clearly designates provincial (autonomous region, municipality) Federations of Social Sciences as the professional supervisory body for private social science research institutions. The Federation should fully leverage its advantages as a hub-type organization to establish and improve the cultivation and incubation mechanisms for social think tanks. It should encourage qualified societies to conduct decision-making consultation activities within the scope of national

laws and policies, and undertake third-party evaluation of major reform implementation plans and major decision-making processes. In particular, it should properly manage, develop, and guide social think tanks, focusing on cultivating a batch of socially influential social think tanks and orderly promoting the construction of high-end, mature, growing, and potential social think tanks to fill gaps in social think tank development. It should intensify the cultivation and support of outstanding think tank talent through training, project funding, academic exchanges, social science awards, and talent programs to actively cultivate academic innovation teams and renowned scholars that demonstrate think tank strength and standards.

4.7 Strengthening Leverage Role to Aggregate High-Quality Social Science Resources

The Federation of Social Sciences serves as an important guide in innovating social science research result evaluation mechanisms, leveraging its role to mobilize more resource elements for think tank construction. Seizing the opportunity to build new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics, it should establish and standardize evaluation and incentive mechanisms, incorporating the selection of outstanding think tank results and talents into provincial philosophical and social science outstanding achievement awards. Based on social science awards, it should establish an outstanding think tank results database to enhance the incentive, transformation, and comprehensive social benefits of award work. It should increase rewards for decision-making consultation results, appropriately increasing the proportion of decision-making consultation achievements in provincial outstanding social science awards, and actively promote the establishment of provincial decision-making consultation achievement awards. It should establish a scientific think tank evaluation system to assess new-type think tank organizations, results, and talents, improving the practical application rate of think tank results, enhancing the core competitiveness of think tank research teams, and strengthening think tanks' capacity to serve Party committees and governments.

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Author Contributions:

Liu Xizhong: Conceived the writing approach and revised the final manuscript;

Li Qiwang: Collected materials and drafted the initial manuscript;

Liu Shuangshuang: Collected materials and drafted the initial manuscript.

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