

New-Type Think Tank System: Connotation, Characteristics, and Construction Approaches— Postprint

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Date: 2017-09-08T18:12:08+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] The construction of a new type think tank system is an urgent imperative for promoting the healthy and orderly development of various think tanks and enhancing their capacity to serve decision-making. [Method/Process] Based on the guiding ideology and overall objectives of new type think tank construction, and through comparative analysis of Chinese and foreign think tanks, this study clarifies the Chinese characteristics, main connotations, basic features, systematic composition, and practical explorations of the new type think tank system. [Results/Conclusion] To construct a new type think tank system, it is necessary to establish clear value orientation, build a scientific network organization, and improve relevant policies and institutions.

Full Text

Analysis on Connotations, Features and Construction Ideas for a System of New-Type Think Tanks

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Abstract:

[Purpose/Significance] Constructing a system of new-type think tanks is urgently needed to promote the healthy and orderly development of all kinds of think tanks and enhance their capacity to serve decision-making. [Method/Process] Based on the guiding ideology and overall objectives for building new-type think tanks, this paper clarifies the Chinese characteristics, main connotations, basic features, system composition, and practical explorations of the new-type think tank system through comparative analysis with foreign think tanks. [Result/Conclusion] To construct a new-type think tank

system, it is necessary to establish clear value orientations, build scientific network organizations, and improve relevant policy systems.

Keywords: new-type think tanks; think tank system; connotation; path

In 2014, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics* (Document No. 65 [2014], hereinafter referred to as the *Opinion*), which twice emphasized the concept of a new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics. First, in the guiding ideology: “strive to build a new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics that faces modernization, the world, and the future, to better serve the overall work of the Party and the state, and provide intellectual support for realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” Second, in the overall objectives: “by 2020, coordinate the development of party and government departments, academies of social sciences, party schools and administrative institutes, universities, the military, scientific research institutes, enterprises, and social think tanks to form a new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics that has clear positioning, distinctive features, moderate scale, and rational layout.” The former emphasizes the nature and purpose of building the new-type think tank system, while the latter points out its characteristics and pathways.

1.1 The Necessity of Strengthening Research on New-Type Think Tank Systems: A Review of Current Research

Domestic scholars began researching Chinese think tanks in the mid-to-late 1990s, with early contributions from scholars such as Xue Lan, Ding Huang, Ren Xiao, Zhu Xufeng, and Wang Lili. A search of CNKI using “think tank” or “think tank system” as keywords (as of August 13, 2017) reveals that annual publications remained below 100 before 2003, rose to approximately 600 by 2009, reached 1,174 in 2013, and surged to 1,747, 3,038, and 3,712 in 2014, 2015, and 2016 respectively, with 1,796 published in 2017 alone. This demonstrates that since General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important instruction on building new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics in April 2013, increasing attention has been paid to this topic by experts and scholars, laying a theoretical foundation for Chinese think tank research and initially showing academic consciousness in exploring development models within the Chinese context.

However, when searching CNKI for “think tank system” or “think tank system” as subject terms, the results show only 2, 1, or 0 publications before 2012, increasing to 7, 15, 31, and 67 in 2013-2016 respectively, and 29 in 2017. Many of these focus on specific types such as science and technology think tanks, strategic think tanks, language think tank systems, or evaluation systems, with few systematically examining the new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics. This indicates that despite the central government’s emphasis

in the 2014 *Opinion* on building such a system, insufficient attention has been paid by academic and think tank researchers.

A synthesis of the limited research on think tank systems reveals several key perspectives. Ren Ping (2015) argues that the construction of new-type think tank systems remains in its initial stage, lacking unified national planning and management institutions, with many applied research organizations struggling to transition toward think tank-type institutions. Liu Dehai (2015) contends that because local think tanks are relatively independent and dispersed, particularly with lagging development of public platforms, they have not formed high-efficiency “integrated circuits,” resulting in suboptimal performance in policy advisory and public enlightenment functions. This urgently requires strengthening resource integration, promoting coordinated development, improving the think tank system, and forming powerful synergies. Li Jun and Li Xia (2015) propose countermeasures for building a modern new-type think tank system based on Harbin’s situation, focusing on strengthening think tank cooperation, cultivating and recruiting talent, emphasizing information network construction, and enhancing top-level design. Wang Xuejian (2015) suggests strengthening institutional innovation in new-type think tank systems through four aspects: implementing government information disclosure, enhancing inter-think tank cooperation, advancing evaluation system reform, and increasing investment. Yuan Lili and Yang Guoliang (2016) propose optimizing think tank layout by introducing competitive mechanisms and marketization, promoting institutional reforms for official or semi-official think tanks to gradually achieve operational autonomy in funding and management, thereby enabling coordinated development between official and civil society think tanks.

1.2 The Urgency of Strengthening New-Type Think Tank System Construction: An Analysis of Current Development Trends

Since 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made over 50 important statements, instructions, and comments on think tank construction. His requirements focus on several key aspects. First, actively exploring organizational forms and management methods for think tanks. As an important component of national soft power, think tanks will play an increasingly significant role with changing circumstances. China’s think tanks remain relatively underdeveloped and should play a greater role. We must actively explore organizational forms and management methods suitable for new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics, adopt effective measures to guide various think tanks in strengthening their own construction, and actively provide high-quality intellectual support for central scientific decision-making. Second, coordinating the development of new-type think tank systems with Chinese characteristics. With evolving circumstances, problems of think tank construction failing to keep pace and being ill-adapted have become increasingly prominent, particularly the lack of high-quality think tanks with significant influence and international reputation. We must coordinate the development of party and government depart-

ments, academies of social sciences, party schools and administrative institutes, universities, the military, science and technology institutes, enterprises, and social think tanks to form a new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics featuring clear positioning, distinctive features, moderate scale, and rational layout, focusing on building a number of high-end think tanks with greater influence and international impact while emphasizing specialized think tank construction. Third, the focus of think tank construction should be on improving research quality and promoting content innovation. In recent years, enthusiasm for building think tanks in the philosophical and social sciences field has been high with numerous achievements, providing helpful support for decision-making at all party and government levels. However, some think tank research suffers from emphasizing quantity over quality, some focus excessively on formal dissemination while neglecting content innovation, and others resort to formalistic practices such as building platforms, inviting celebrities, and organizing forums. The focus of think tank construction must be on improving research quality and promoting content innovation. Party committees and governments must attach great importance to think tank construction, strengthen information sharing and interactive communication with decision-making departments, closely integrate policy research by party and government departments with countermeasure research by think tanks, and guide and promote the healthy development and better functioning of think tanks.

Combined with the earlier analysis of the central *Opinion* and based on General Secretary Xi Jinping's important statements on new-type think tank construction, all emphasize the new-type think tank system. From the issuance of the central *Opinion* in late 2014 to the 2020 target for establishing the new-type think tank system, the current timeline is nearly halfway complete, making the task of achieving this goal extremely urgent.

Accompanying think tank development, research has deepened with noticeably improved quality and quantity. However, think tank development remains in a period of extensive, rapid quantitative growth. The process of survival of the fittest and transition to quality-oriented development will require considerable time, and the construction of new-type think tank systems still faces several bottlenecks. First, insufficient initial momentum for system construction. Local party committees and governments attach varying degrees of importance to think tanks, with some localities showing weak initiative in utilizing them, and the interface between think tanks and decision-making departments remains unsmooth. Think tank management departments lack unified authority, with ineffective vertical guidance and insufficient horizontal institutionalized communication mechanisms, resulting in serious problems of hierarchical management and fragmentation at the local level. Second, unbalanced development among think tank entities. Currently, China's think tanks are dominated by official and semi-official entities, with party, government, and military think tanks, academy of social sciences think tanks, and university think tanks comprising the vast majority, while social think tanks (civil society think tanks) account for only about 5%. In some localities, there exists a phenomenon of "only national teams,

no civilian teams.” Social think tanks show varying degrees of activity nationwide, but few truly prioritize serving public decision-making, and their policy advisory capabilities remain insufficient. Third, insufficient vitality and synergy among think tank entities. Think tank boundaries are unclear, with ambiguous rights and responsibilities between think tank institutions and their parent organizations or sponsoring entities, resulting in slow progress toward substantive operation and affecting the enthusiasm, initiative, and autonomy of researchers. Various think tank entities remain relatively independent, dispersed, and operate in isolation, with lagging development of public platforms and notably insufficient cooperation and collaboration among think tanks. Fourth, poor alignment between supply and demand of intellectual products. Operational mechanisms remain “confined to old rules” and lack “contemporary characteristics,” with imperfect mechanisms for think tank participation in decision-making. Social science research organizations participating in applied research lack sufficient strength, and problems such as fragmented organization, dispersed resources, duplicated projects, and low-quality results persist. All these factors demonstrate that constructing a new-type think tank system is a clear requirement of the central government, an urgent need of the current situation, and the only choice for promoting the healthy and orderly development of new-type think tanks.

2. Connotations, Features, and Construction of New-Type Think Tank Systems

2.1 Chinese Characteristics of New-Type Think Tank Systems

For contemporary China, “think tank” is both an ancient and a novel term. Etymologically, it is an imported concept, yet its core meaning can be traced throughout Chinese history, which inevitably means that China’s current new-type think tank construction cannot simply follow Western development paths. Generally speaking, Western think tanks originated from the scientific spirit and rational concepts liberated by the Enlightenment, grew within increasingly complex social development environments since the Industrial Revolution, and gained greater emphasis on specialized thinking in economic development and public governance—these two factors form the foundation for the existence and development of modern think tanks. Regarding modern think tanks, their development constitutes an important component of national governance systems and reflects a nation’s intellectual and cultural soft power.

Examining Western experience, think tanks primarily exist as profit-making or non-profit social entities in market economies, closely connected to political and economic systems. European think tank development is tightly linked to technological revolutions, generally playing specialized roles in market consulting, planning, and enterprise management. American think tanks wield greater influence in social policy, with high-end talent rotating among research institutions, multinational corporations, and political circles. This has not only generated

good economic benefits for think tanks themselves but also enabled them to play important roles in public policy, producing many “behemoths” among global think tanks. Through long-term development, European and American think tanks have formed relatively standardized industry management measures, with governments establishing corresponding institutional systems.

Within such policy environments and industry self-regulation, various think tanks fully leverage their advantages to compete. In essence, European and American think tanks have grown in marketized environments, with individual think tank development depending on their own competitiveness cultivation under relevant policies, regulations, and industry self-discipline. Compared with developed Western think tanks, constructing new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics operates within completely different political and institutional environments. From the perspective of China’s current think tank development, think tank organizations within and related to the system constitute the main body of new-type think tank construction. Moreover, unlike the market-oriented survival strategies of developed Western think tanks, Chinese new-type think tanks show more obvious administrative orientation. Therefore, China’s new-type think tank construction should focus on building a comprehensive system encompassing multi-level, multi-field, and variously sized think tanks and think tank-type research institutions with distinctive features, as only such a system can meet the theoretical and practical demands of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

Constructing a new-type think tank system represents one of the core tasks of China’s current new-type think tank construction. The evolution from individual think tanks to a think tank system involves not merely a shift from individual to collective entities but, more importantly, addresses the current reality of coexisting research institutions at various levels and types, representing explicit requirements for structural reshaping and resource integration. For new-type think tank construction, while the quality and level of individual think tanks are important, greater consideration and planning should be devoted to optimizing and integrating existing think tank resources to form an operational system with 完善 structure, clear division of labor, and clear orientation.

2.2 Main Connotations of New-Type Think Tank Systems

Generally speaking, a “system” refers to a whole composed of similar entities combined according to certain order and internal connections within a certain scope. A think tank system first involves the question of moving from individual think tanks to think tank groups, but more importantly, the think tanks within the system do not operate through market-oriented competition but form an organic whole with division of labor, cooperation, clear hierarchy, and orderly operation. From a systems theory perspective, individual think tanks can more effectively play their roles within a think tank system. Examining local new-type think tank system construction makes it easier to clarify the structural content included in the think tank system. Horizontally, think tank-type organizations

are distributed across party and government departments, academies of social sciences, party schools, universities, enterprises, professional research institutes, and various social sectors, forming a horizontal think tank system with clear division of labor and close connections among them. Vertically, corresponding to China's administrative management levels, certain think tank-type organizations also exist at provincial and municipal levels. Although these think tank organizations have loose administrative subordination relationships, their research functions provide relative advantages in vertical collaboration, forming a vertical think tank system.

From a connotative perspective, the new-type think tank system is first a systematic system corresponding to the five major constructions of economy, politics, society, culture, and ecology, and adapted to the needs of party and government decision-making and the public, serving as an important component of national governance system and governance capability modernization. Simultaneously, it is an integrated system composed of different think tank entities, platforms, and elements, possessing professionalism, systematicity, integrity, and integration. The construction of China's new-type think tanks does not lie in quantity or even the level of individual think tanks but in the rationality of the overall think tank structure and stratification, and in having a complete set of systems regarding think tank market access standards, compliant consulting behavior, standardized and legal procedures for government adoption of consulting opinions, and 完善的 evaluation and accountability systems. Therefore, we attempt to conceptualize the new-type think tank system as follows: a new-type think tank system is an organic whole that follows the basic requirements for constructing new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics, breaks through regional, institutional, disciplinary, and identity boundaries based on the functional positioning of various think tank entities and platforms, promotes optimal allocation of think tank talent, funding, projects, and achievements, realizes vertical and horizontal integration of think tank entities, linkage and connectivity of think tank platforms, optimal reorganization of think tank elements, and institutional innovation in think tank management, cultivates a group of interrelated high-end and specialized think tanks, and forms a system with clear positioning, distinctive features, moderate scale, and rational layout that demonstrates local soft power and provides strong intellectual support for economic and social development.

2.3 Main Components of New-Type Think Tank Systems

Based on the above analysis, new-type think tank systems mainly comprise three dimensions: think tank entities, think tank platforms, and think tank elements. Each dimension includes a series of components. Constructing a new-type think tank system primarily requires scientifically defining the functions and reasonably dividing responsibilities of the entities, platforms, and elements within each dimension, and achieving horizontal connectivity.

First, the think tank entity dimension. In light of comprehensive deepening

ing reform and advancing law-based governance, we should strengthen macro-level planning and scientifically adjust and reposition the functions of various think tank entities. We should further increase investment in think tanks, promote joint interaction and collaboration among party and government organs, academies of social sciences, party schools and administrative institutes, universities, social think tanks, and federations of social sciences, and promote coordinated development to maximize the effectiveness of decision-making consulting functions.

Second, the think tank element dimension. The key to establishing a new-type think tank system lies in aggregating think tank elements from different systems, fields, and entities to achieve cross-boundary cooperation and collaborative innovation. These elements mainly include think tank research talent, research funding, various projects, and research achievements. Particularly for research talent and funding resources, we should break departmental and regional boundaries, allocate resources according to research directions and topics, and enhance the professionalization, specialization, and high-end development of new-type think tanks.

Third, the think tank platform dimension. Think tank development requires information sharing platforms, project research platforms, and achievement transformation and exchange platforms. We need to strengthen collaboration among platforms and implement cooperation among platforms at different levels, regions, and types. We should emphasize the role of collaborative innovation centers established by the state at the local level and explore better ways to leverage the functions of provincial collaborative innovation centers and various research bases as think tanks. The new-type think tank system primarily refers to the collaboration and coordination among various think tank entities but also includes the formation of systematic and industry think tank systems through the construction of various think tank platforms, creating systematic synergy and professional advantages.

In summary, achieving collaboration and coordination among think tank entities within the system requires functional definition and optimal combination of various entities, platforms, and elements across the three dimensions. Through institutional and mechanism innovation, we should break down compartmentalization and departmental limitations, coordinate the development of various think tanks, optimize the allocation of research resources according to objective laws of think tank development, and truly give play to the integrated and specialized think tank functions.

2.4 Basic Features of New-Type Think Tank Systems

Based on the above connotative definition, new-type think tank systems should possess the following characteristics. First, clear and distinct development orientation. New-type think tanks are rooted in the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In coordinating the development of new-type think tank

systems, we must always uphold Party leadership, maintain correct political orientation, highlight reform orientation and problem orientation, and adhere to serving the overall work situation. Second, integrated yet differentiated organizational structure. A think tank system differs from a think tank group. Establishing a think tank system does not mean simple superposition of institutions and personnel but should achieve transformation and upgrading from traditional to new-type think tanks through repositioning functions and optimizing elements of various think tank entities. We should emphasize the leading and driving role of key high-end think tanks to achieve point-to-area effects and fully play their powerful intellectual supporting role in national and social governance. Among various think tank entities, we should emphasize differentiation as the foundation, focusing on highlighting advantages, defining functions, clarifying division of labor, and developing in different positions; and emphasize integration as the goal, focusing on resource integration, highlighting specialization and professionalization, establishing cross-departmental and cross-field teams, achieving organic integration, and maximizing effects. Third, moderate overall scale. The coordinated development of new-type think tank systems must adapt to economic and social development stages and particularly to the decision-making consulting needs of party committees and governments at all levels. We should break down parochial consciousness, establish a development system with vertical connectivity across management levels and horizontal collaboration among think tank entities. We should emphasize moderate scale and rational layout, implement a “small core, large periphery” model, cultivate a group of high-end and specialized think tanks, and form core competitiveness. Functionally, current think tanks primarily serve party and government decision-making, but while continuing to strengthen this function, they should also better play roles in enlightening the public, guiding public opinion, and influencing society and citizens. Fourth, coordinated advancement in development strategy. New-type think tank system construction should focus on resolving the current homogenization problem among various think tank entities and requires strategic coordination of various think tank development. We may explore establishing leadership coordination groups, liaison promotion institutions, expert advisory committees, and think tank alliances, emphasizing the guiding role of internal think tanks within party and government departments and the liaison and coordination role of federations of social sciences organizations in new-type think tank construction, and pay greater attention to think tank-think tank interaction, think tank-government interaction, and think tank-society interaction. Fifth, reform and innovation in operational management. New-type think tank systems place greater emphasis on achievement transformation and value realization, uphold scientific spirit, encourage bold exploration, promote standardized development, and provide a more relaxed and orderly environment and more convenient channels for think tanks to function, oriented by decision-making needs, market demands, and social needs.

2.5 Practical Explorations in Constructing New-Type Think Tank Systems

At the national level, the primary approach is high-end think tank-driven development. In 2015, the Deep Reform Group approved the *Pilot Work Plan for National High-End Think Tank Construction*, selecting the first batch of 25 units to form a “national team” for new-type think tank construction and establishing the National High-End Think Tank Council. At the local level, following the requirements of the central *Opinion* issued in early 2015, various regions began formulating implementation plans for think tank construction within their jurisdictions and systems. According to incomplete statistics, from June 2015 to December 2016, provinces including Jiangsu, Hunan, Hebei, and Guangxi successively issued implementation plans for new-type think tank construction in line with the *Opinion*.

First, regarding management institutions, most are led by provincial Party Committee Propaganda Departments, as seen in Jiangsu, Hunan, Jilin, Zhejiang, and Heilongjiang. Jiangsu established the New-Type Think Tank Construction Work Guidance Committee, with the Jiangsu New-Type Think Tank Construction Office (co-located with the Jiangsu Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Office) specifically responsible for coordination, guidance, management, and service work for provincial new-type think tank construction. However, some provinces and municipalities are led by provincial decision-making advisory committees. Sichuan proposed using the provincial Party Committee and Government Decision-Making Advisory Committee as the backbone and leader to strengthen think tank construction in the “five-in-one” overall layout and Party building, constructing a new-type think tank system to support scientific decision-making with scientific consulting. Guangxi proposed a “1+1+6+4” characteristic new-type think tank system: one decision-making advisory committee for overall coordination, one think tank alliance for coordination, six types of think tank construction as the main body, and four service platforms for support. Hebei specially established a think tank construction leading group headed by a provincial Party Committee leader in charge.

Second, regarding managed objects—that is, provincial key think tanks—most are system-internal think tanks, with extremely few social think tanks. For example, Jiangsu focuses on promoting the construction of 9 key high-end think tanks and 15 key cultivation think tanks, initially forming a “9+15” “goose formation” layout. Hunan’s key think tanks include the Hunan Academy of Social Sciences, Hunan Provincial Government Development Research Center, Hunan Provincial Party School (Hunan Administrative Institute), National University of Defense Technology, Central South University, Hunan University, and Hunan Normal University. Hebei has only one key think tank, the Hebei Academy of Social Sciences. Sichuan proposed building 19 thematic new-type think tanks in economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological construction research fields but did not specify a think tank catalog.

Third, regarding management and coordination mechanisms, most involve new-type think tank alliances or think tank work joint conference systems led by management institutions. These focus on coordinating government departments and promoting positive think tank-government interaction. For example, Jiangsu, Jilin, and Zhejiang have established think tank work joint conference systems; Guangxi, Hunan, and Heilongjiang have formed new-type think tank alliances or forums; and Hebei, Liaoning, and Sichuan have their provincial Party Committee Policy Research Offices undertaking major coordination and communication functions. In terms of management and development platforms, Jiangsu has constructed a “one body, two wings” work pattern, with the “one body” being the Jiangsu New-Type Think Tank Construction Council and the “two wings” being the “Think Tank Research and Evaluation Center” built by Nanjing University and the “Think Tank Research and Exchange Center” built by the Provincial Federation of Social Sciences.

3. Organizational Models and Institutional Design for Constructing New-Type Think Tank Systems

Constructing a new-type think tank system requires combining contemporary characteristics, practical demands, and current think tank development status, examining the construction of network organizations that support the new-type think tank system from new perspectives, and improving the policy systems for new-type think tank operation and management.

3.1 Organizational Models for New-Type Think Tank Systems

3.1.1 Gradually Breaking Bureaucratic Hierarchies to Establish Organizations Adapted to Knowledge Production Bureaucratic hierarchy suits workshop management and traditional administrative operations but does not fully adapt to think tank knowledge production requirements. Power and knowledge must maintain a certain distance, separating knowledge production from think tank operations to preserve the relative independence of knowledge production. The management system for new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics must avoid bureaucracy and hierarchical systems, establishing organizational forms and management methods suitable for think tank characteristics to form organizational structures that are both relatively stable and fairly flexible, conducive to ideological innovation and knowledge production, and continuously improving think tank management and operational efficiency.

3.1.2 Gradually Breaking Circle-Style Closed Structures to Establish Network-Style Open Structures The so-called circle structure refers to the closeness between think tanks and decision-makers and the smoothness of “think tank-government channels,” rooted in China’s unique cultural soil and social relations. Generally, policy research institutions directly under party, government, and military systems occupy the inner circle, maintaining naturally close contact with decision-makers. Think tanks from academies of social

sciences and natural sciences occupy the middle circle, with less proximity than the inner circle but still relatively smooth channels. University think tanks occupy the outer circle, primarily conducting decision-making consulting research based on fundamental theories. Some rapidly growing social think tanks (including system-internal think tanks receiving social funding) are non-uniformly distributed across various circles but mostly occupy the outermost circle, playing an important “catfish effect” in activating China’s intellectual market.

3.1.3 Establishing an Organizational Framework System Under Unified Leadership and Guidance of Think Tank Management Institutions

First, increase the intensity of coordinated advancement of new-type think tank systems. Party committees and governments should focus on the overall situation of new-type think tank development, strengthen leadership and coordination of new-type think tank construction, further reinforce the responsibilities and capacities of think tank management departments, and provide greater support in resources and platforms for think tank development. Second, enhance the decision-making service capabilities of policy research institutions affiliated with party and government organs. While conducting their own research, party and government research institutions at all levels should regularly release decision-making demand information to society regarding key work of party committees and governments, guide relevant think tanks to conduct research, strengthen communication and contact with other think tanks, attach great importance to and fully utilize research results from various think tanks, and broaden transformation channels to improve transformation efficiency. In decision-making consulting services, party and government think tanks should effectively play a core leading role in gathering strength, enhancing connotation, and broadening channels, guiding the orderly development of various think tanks and promoting the formation of a new-type think tank system featuring both overall diversity and rational division of labor and complementarity. Third, play the linking role of federations of social sciences organizations in new-type think tank construction. Federations of social sciences at all levels are united organizations of social science workers, serving as bridges and links between party and government and the social science community, playing an indispensable important role in new-type think tank system construction by performing traction, hub, and platform functions. In constructing new-type think tank systems, we should emphasize effectively leveraging and mobilizing the enthusiasm of federations of social sciences.

3.2 Improving Institutional Design for New-Type Think Tank System Construction

Constructing a new-type think tank system requires strengthening relevant policy design, continuously improving and innovating think tank construction mechanisms, breaking through constraints of original research and transformation mechanisms, achieving multi-level, multi-field, and multi-framework operations, and building a 完善 and efficient think tank system.

3.2.1 Advancing Think Tank Supply-Side Reform to Enhance Policy and Institutional Supply for Think Tank Systems The think tank community also faces supply-side structural reform issues, including excess low-end capacity, fragmented intellectual products, and detachment from reality. The think tank industry, like other industries, needs transformation and upgrading, developing think tank clusters and strengthening think tank development chains. Through institutional design, we should stimulate and release decision-making departments' demand for consulting services, issue follow-up supporting documents such as opinions on government procurement of decision-making consulting services, and clarify the scope, procedures, and responsibilities of both parties. We should advance administrative system reform, improve the mechanism for expert participation in major decision-making, and smooth the ways and channels for expert participation in major decisions, forming a full-process participation mechanism before, during, and after decision-making.

3.2.2 Co-Constructing and Sharing Data Platforms to Enhance Organic Cooperation Among Multiple Think Tanks We should build effective communication channels among government practical work departments, policy-making departments, and relevant think tank departments to achieve cross-field, cross-departmental, and cross-think tank information exchange and achievement sharing. Party and government departments and practical work departments should proactively set research topics, guide think tanks to focus on reality in their research, and timely release information on decision-making consulting demand and supply. We should emphasize applying modern information technologies such as big data and cloud computing, and utilize natural science methods like model design and sand table exercises in think tank research to enhance the modern character and scientific nature of decision-making consulting research.

3.2.3 Strengthening Platform Carrier Construction and Improving Think Tank Achievement Exchange and Transformation Mechanisms We should smooth the exchange, cooperation, and communication mechanisms between think tanks and party and government departments at all levels to improve the relevance and effectiveness of think tank research results. While effectively utilizing internal references and special reports to offer suggestions to party committees and governments, think tanks should also actively innovate carriers, forms, and distribution channels, comprehensively utilizing interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication, particularly strengthening cooperation with news media, enhancing agenda-setting and shaping public opinion to effectively improve decision-making influence and public opinion guidance capabilities.

Strengthening research on the operational mechanisms of new-type think tank systems constitutes important content for constructing new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. In the future, with further development of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics, new changes and characteristics

may emerge in think tank operational mechanisms, requiring continuous dynamic research on think tank operational mechanisms to continuously rationalize the operational mechanisms of new-type think tank systems, achieve scaled and clustered development paths from individual growth to group rise, create think tank groups with respective specializations and expertise, meet the multi-level and multi-field decision-making needs of the Party and government, and promote the modernization of national governance systems and governance capabilities.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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