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Enterprise Think Tanks: Research Status, Problems and Agenda Postprint

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study reviews the research status of Chinese enterprise think tanks, identifies existing problems, and proposes a research agenda for Chinese enterprise think tanks. The purpose is to guide the academic research direction and provide theoretical guidance for the construction of Chinese enterprise think tanks. [Method/Process] This paper employs literature analysis to systematically review and analyze literature including research papers on Chinese enterprise think tanks, think tank research monographs, and think tank evaluations; it also utilizes expert discussion methods to analyze problems in Chinese enterprise think tank research and propose a corresponding research agenda. [Results/Conclusion] Research on Chinese enterprise think tanks lags behind both the practice of Chinese enterprise think tanks and research on other types of think tanks. The research agenda for Chinese enterprise think tanks encompasses strategic positioning, value activities, resource allocation, key capabilities, and influence, among others.

Full Text

Enterprise Think Tanks: Research Status, Problems, and Agenda

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This paper reviews the research status of Chinese enterprise think tanks, identifies existing problems, and proposes a research

agenda for Chinese enterprise think tanks, aiming to guide academic research directions and provide theoretical guidance for their construction. [Method/Process] We employ literature analysis to examine research papers, monographs, and evaluation reports on Chinese enterprise think tanks, supplemented by expert discussions to analyze problems and formulate a research agenda. [Result/Conclusion] Research on Chinese enterprise think tanks lags behind both their practical development and research on other types of think tanks. The proposed research agenda encompasses strategic positioning, value activities, resource allocation, key capabilities, and influence enhancement.

Keywords: enterprise think tank; literature review; research agenda; theoretical research on think tanks

The *Opinion on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics* issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council explicitly lists enterprise think tanks as a component of the new-type think tank system with Chinese characteristics. The document calls for “supporting state-owned and state-controlled enterprises to establish new-type think tanks that closely integrate industry, academia, research, and application, focusing on industry sectors and conducting decision-making consultation research on state-owned enterprise reform, industrial restructuring, industrial development planning, industrial technology direction, industrial policy formulation, and major engineering projects.” This paper reviews the research status of Chinese enterprise think tanks, identifies existing problems, and proposes a corresponding research agenda.

1. Conceptual Definition

An enterprise think tank is fundamentally a non-profit research and consulting institution established by an enterprise, typically bearing the enterprise’s name as its own, regardless of its specific legal form.

Enterprise-established research institutions fall into two broad categories. The first comprises research and development (R&D) institutions engaged in new technology and product development, commonly known as “central research institutes,” which do not belong to the category of enterprise think tanks. The second category consists of research and consulting institutions focused on industry, market, and major project studies, only some of which qualify as enterprise think tanks depending on whether they possess think tank functions.

Think tank functions refer to policy advice, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy. If an enterprise research institution exhibits these functions, we consider it an enterprise think tank; if not, we do not. For example, most securities companies have research departments that focus on industry, market, corporate, and project studies for securities investment purposes, serving only the securities company and its clients without fulfilling the aforementioned think tank functions.

Professor Zhu Xufeng of Tsinghua University defines “enterprise-type think tanks” as “enterprise legal persons specializing in policy research and consulting work.” These are for-profit consulting institutions that accept commissions from governments or other organizations to investigate social and policy issues and submit their findings as consulting reports to clients. However, “enterprise-type think tanks” are not necessarily enterprise think tanks. The determining factor is whether the founder or shareholder is an enterprise. If the founder is an enterprise, then it is an enterprise think tank—for instance, the State Grid Energy Research Institute and the China National Petroleum Corporation Economics and Technology Research Institute. If the founder is not an enterprise but a natural person or other institution, then it is not an enterprise think tank. Examples include the Center for China and Globalization, Pangoal Institution, and Analysys International, all registered as corporate legal persons but founded by individuals rather than enterprises, and therefore not enterprise think tanks.

Conversely, enterprise think tanks are not necessarily “enterprise-type think tanks.” Many enterprise think tanks adopt the form of internal enterprise institutions rather than corporate legal persons, such as the China Minsheng Bank Research Institute and the AliResearch Institute.

Therefore, the essential criteria for defining enterprise think tanks are (see Table 1): (1) whether the founder is an enterprise; (2) whether it possesses think tank functions; and (3) whether it is a non-profit institution.

Enterprise think tanks typically adopt the enterprise’s name as their own, though rare exceptions exist, such as the French construction company VINCI’s enterprise think tank “City Factory,” established in 2010. Enterprise think tanks may take either the legal form of a corporate entity or an internal institutional form.

2. Research Status

We review the research status of Chinese enterprise think tanks from three perspectives: research papers (primarily from CNKI), think tank monographs, and think tank evaluation reports.

2.1 Research Papers: Limited Quantity and Average Quality

We examine both papers on “enterprise think tanks” and papers analyzing think tank research literature.

2.1.1 Papers on “Enterprise Think Tanks” : Representative Perspectives A CNKI search yields only several dozen papers on “enterprise think tanks,” far fewer than the 100,000-level results for “think tank” as a keyword. Upon detailed review, the overall quality is average. We select representative papers to briefly introduce their main content and arguments.

Park Seung-ho, President of Samsung Economic Research Institute China, stated in a 2008 interview with *New Finance* that “Chinese enterprises need to establish ‘their own’ think tanks” because enterprises require strategic thinking that managers lack the time and energy to undertake. He argued that establishing enterprise think tanks requires “first, most importantly, finding good thinkers as researchers; second, understanding and support from senior executives; third, continuous communication with the group; and fourth, establishing a mechanism for a knowledge creation center.” Regarding organizational structure, he suggested “first, allowing researchers to focus exclusively on research without other non-research tasks; second, enabling natural and smooth internal communication so researchers can freely interact with company personnel without rigid office systems; and finally, maintaining good external relations and communication.”

Wan Hong and Yang Zhaoming, in “Learning from International Experience to Accelerate the Construction of World-Class Energy Think Tanks” [4], clarified the importance and urgency of establishing China’s energy think tanks and offered recommendations: developing broad international perspectives; maintaining scientific, objective, and independent research; emphasizing distinctive features and brand building; gathering high-quality innovative talent; and reforming think tank management mechanisms.

Xu Yongfa and He Wenyuan, in “Reform and Innovation: Building a New Think Tank System for China National Petroleum Corporation” [5], proposed ideas for building CNPC’s new think tank system regarding its functions, framework, objectives, and construction path. They suggested functional positioning according to two types—technological innovation and strategic/policy research—building a multi-level framework; highlighting oil and gas professional characteristics and advantages to improve research quality and decision-making service capacity; innovating management systems and mechanisms to enhance internal development momentum; and strengthening organizational leadership with orderly progress focusing on characteristics and quality.

Zhou Yueqiu, in “Building New-Type Financial Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics” [6], offered specific suggestions from two aspects: “building a diversified and differentiated think tank system” and “establishing an efficient and dynamic think tank operation mechanism.” China’s financial think tank construction should aim to build three tiers: first, official think tanks, primarily established by financial regulatory departments or industry associations with strong public and official characteristics; second, commercial think tanks, mainly funded by financially strong financial enterprises with high market positions; and third, private think tanks, led by authoritative financial figures or social foundations with broad industry recognition. The think tank operation mechanism includes: high-level research teams as core elements, adequate material conditions as objective guarantees, effective operation mechanisms as necessary requirements, and a relaxed atmosphere as an important foundation.

Xu Dong, in “Discussion on Promoting the Construction of Large State-Owned

Enterprise Think Tanks” [7], summarized the working characteristics and practical experience of successful state-owned enterprise think tanks: (1) strong capabilities in collecting, accessing, processing, and analyzing data and information; (2) good external cooperation and exchange with strong international influence; (3) relatively stable and diversified funding sources; and (4) emphasis on leveraging media for dissemination. Additionally, the paper elaborated on effective approaches for promoting large state-owned enterprise think tank construction: ownership diversification, business diversification, cooperation diversification, talent diversification, and communication diversification.

Ding Xuankai and Xu Zhiyuan, in “Quantitative Analysis of Chinese Internet Enterprise Think Tank Achievements: Taking Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent (BAT) as Examples” [8], demonstrated the development status of Chinese internet enterprise think tanks through quantitative analysis of their achievements from 2011-2015, analyzed their development potential in funding, technology, systems, and dissemination, identified existing problems, and offered recommendations for their development.

2.1.2 Analysis of Think Tank Research Literature: No Specialized Studies Ren Fubing, Bai Yuhan, and Li Danzai, in “Current Status, Problems, and Path Selection of Contemporary Chinese Think Tank Research” [9], conducted keyword searches yielding 516 think tank-related results (2001-2015) in Chinese journals, including 184 from core journals and CSSCI. Through detailed analysis of think tank-themed literature, they explored the development course, status, and path selection of Chinese think tanks. The paper discussed private think tank issues but did not address enterprise think tanks.

Tang Guoyuan and Lü Qing, in “Bibliometric Analysis of Chinese Think Tank Research Literature” [10], selected CNKI as the data source (1,916 valid papers from 1961-2015) and used bibliometric analysis with Excel and Citespace III to analyze Chinese think tank research characteristics. Among 426 papers studying seven think tank types (university, social, party-government, academy of social sciences, research institute and enterprise, party school/administrative college, and military), only 53 (12%) covered research institute and enterprise think tanks, with no specific data on enterprise think tanks.

Wang Chen and Wang Jianan, in “Visual Comparative Analysis of Domestic and Foreign Think Tank Research: On New Trends in China’s Think Tank Development” [11], selected CNKI as the data source (781 relevant papers as of April 1, 2016) and used Citespace III for visual analysis of cooperative institutions, keyword hotspots, and research trends. Among high-frequency and high-betweenness keywords, only “university think tank” appeared as a think tank type. The paper suggested that “university think tanks could serve as an intermediate platform connecting official think tanks, private think tanks, and social needs, forming an intermediate-platform model for think tank development.”

Wu Huijuan, Qin Wen, Han Lincong, and Sun Hongfei, in “Comparative Knowledge Mapping Analysis of Domestic and Foreign Think Tank Research Trends” [12], selected CNKI as the domestic data source, obtaining 1,509 papers as sample data. The analysis showed that “Chinese characteristics” was the most frequent keyword (145 occurrences), followed by decision-making consultation, comprehensive deepening reform, think tank construction, Brookings Institution, and new-type think tanks, all exceeding 30 occurrences. Statistical analysis of keywords from the past five years revealed frequent terms including new-type think tank, social think tank, operation mechanism, Chinese characteristics, university think tank, and new-type think tank with Chinese characteristics, reflecting research trends in the field.

2.2 Research Monographs: Only Scattered Cases

Approximately 30 think tank research monographs can be identified, divided into two categories: foreign think tank studies and Chinese think tank studies, authored by both foreign and Chinese scholars. None of these monographs focuses exclusively on enterprise think tanks. Only two monographs address specific think tank types: He Wuxing’ s *Government Think Tanks* [13] and Hu Guangyu’ s *University Think Tanks* [14].

Among Chinese scholars’ works on Chinese think tanks, no content specifically addresses enterprise think tanks, such as Wang Lili’ s *Intellectual Capital: The Core Competitiveness of Chinese Think Tanks* [15], Zheng Yongnian et al.’ s *Internal Pluralism and the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks in China* [16], and Wang Wen’ s *Strategic Planning: How Chinese Think Tanks Influence the World* [17]. Only Zhu Xufeng’ s *China’ s Think Tanks: Influence in the Policy Process* [18] discusses “enterprise-type think tanks” as one of four Chinese think tank types, but as previously noted, only some “enterprise-type think tanks” meet our definition of enterprise think tanks, and this book does not specifically study this subset.

Among Chinese scholars’ works on foreign think tanks, several include case studies of foreign enterprise think tanks. Xu Zhixian and Xu Dan’ s *Japanese Brain Trusts* [19] introduces four enterprise think tanks in Part II: Nomura Research Institute as the “typical” modern Japanese think tank, Mitsubishi Research Institute as a “super brain trust,” Mitsui Information Development as an “explorer of Japan’ s fourth industry,” and Nikko Research Center as an “expert in predicting Japan’ s industrial future.” Ke Yinbin and Lü Xiaoli’ s *How Think Tanks Are Made: Case Studies of Internationalization of Foreign Think Tanks* [20] details and briefly comments on 10 foreign think tanks and their internationalization processes, including Japan’ s Nomura Research Institute and South Korea’ s Asan Institute for Policy Studies (funded by Hyundai Heavy Industries). Huang Zhi’ s *Major Power Think Tanks: The Arena of Wise Men* [21] introduces industry think tanks created by consortia and enterprises, including Nomura Research Institute (“research, insight, service, cooperation, adaptation”), Mitsubishi Research Institute (“unprecedented creativity”), Sam-

sung and LG Economic Research Institutes (“dynamic incubators of technology and strategy”), and Germany’ s Institute for System Engineering and Technology Innovation (“source of enterprise innovation”). Wang Peiheng and Li Guoqiang’ s *Overseas Think Tanks: Investigation Reports on Major Countries’ Think Tanks* [22] introduces multiple Japanese and South Korean enterprise think tanks. “Enterprise-funded think tanks” constitute one of four Japanese think tank categories, alongside official, semi-official, and private think tanks, with detailed introduction of Fujitsu Research Institute. In South Korea, “private think tanks are mainly research institutes established by large enterprises; there are few private research institutions without large enterprise support, and few research institutions established by individuals. There is no precise statistics on the personnel scale of research institutions affiliated with large South Korean enterprises, with an average of about 100 people per institution.” The book highlights LG Economic Research Institute and notes that “research institutions established by large enterprises and consortia” constitute one of four French think tank categories, alongside official national research institutions, official higher education research institutions, and independent private think tanks. “Since the 1990s, large French enterprises and multinational corporations have established their own research institutions for their development. These institutions conduct research not only around their own businesses but also involve some social science disciplines and even marginal disciplines, promoting the adaptation of social sciences to modernization.” However, the book does not introduce specific French enterprise think tanks.

Among foreign scholars’ think tank research monographs, no specific themes or content on enterprise think tanks were found, such as James G. McGann et al.’ s *The Power of Think Tanks: How Policy Research Institutions Promote Social Development* [23], Tang Lei’ s edited volume *Knowledge Production in Contemporary Think Tanks* [24] (translated from over 10 English papers), and Raymond J. Struyk’ s *Managing Think Tanks: A Practical Guide for Maturing Organizations* [25].

Notably, Xie Shuguang and Cai Jihui’ s *Directory of Chinese Think Tanks (2015)* [26] includes a specific “enterprise think tank” category with 43 institutions. However, according to our definition of enterprise think tanks, only 4 meet the criteria. Other institutions are either social or government think tanks registered as corporate entities, consulting companies (which may have internal think tank departments), or R&D institutions established by large enterprises.

2.3 Think Tank Evaluation Reports

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania has published the *Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* for nearly 10 consecutive years, including a ranking of Best For-Profit Think Tanks (or private sector think tanks). The 2016 list includes 50 think tanks globally (none from China), of which 10 belong to enterprise think tanks as defined in this paper [27]: (1) McKinsey Global Institute (MGI); (2) Deutsche Bank Research; (3)

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU); (4) Nomura Research Institute (NRI); (5) A.T. Kearney Global Business Policy Council (GBPC); (6) Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI); (7) Accenture Institute for High Performance; (8) IBM Institute for Business Value; (9) Daimler Benz Future Research Unit; and (10) Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.

The *China Think Tank Influence Report (2016)* released by the China Think Tank Research Center of Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences in October 2016 [28] identifies “firms-funded type” as one of seven operational models for Chinese think tanks. However, the report’s “sub-item influence ranking” does not include a special ranking for “firms-funded think tanks,” covering only national, local, university, social, and Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan think tanks.

The *2015 China Think Tank Report: Influence Ranking and Policy Recommendations* released by the Think Tank Research Center of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 2016 [29] includes a third category of systematic influence ranking covering university think tanks, local research institute think tanks, party-government-military think tanks, and social think tanks, but not enterprise think tanks. Other influence rankings similarly exclude enterprise think tanks. Only in “Appendix III: Overview of the First Batch of National High-End Think Tank Construction Pilot Units” does it introduce an enterprise think tank—China National Petroleum Corporation Economics and Technology Research Institute.

In December 2016, the China Think Tank Research and Evaluation Center of Nanjing University and the Think Tank Research and Release Center of Guangming Daily released the *CTTI Source Think Tank MRPA Evaluation Report (2015-2016)* [30]. Among the 489 think tanks indexed in the China Think Tank Index (CTTI), only two are enterprise think tanks: China National Petroleum Corporation Economics and Technology Research Institute and AliResearch Institute.

On January 7, 2017, the China Think Tank Big Data Report Research Group of Tsinghua University released the *2016 China Think Tank Big Data Ranking* [31]. In the “TTBI2016: WeChat Official Account Influence Ranking,” only three enterprise think tanks appear in the top 50: Phoenix International Think Tank (ranked 3), CBN Research Institute (ranked 12), and AliResearch Institute (ranked 21). In the “TTBI2016: WeChat Citation Influence Ranking,” only two enterprise think tanks appear in the top 50: Zero2IPO Research Center (ranked 20) and State Grid Energy Research Institute (ranked 38). In the “TTBI2016: Weibo Expert Influence Ranking,” only one enterprise think tank appears in the top 50: CBN Research Institute (ranked 17). Combining these three indicators, only two enterprise think tanks appear in the top 50 of the “TTBI2016: Think Tank Big Data Ranking” : CBN Research Institute (ranked 8) and Phoenix International Think Tank (ranked 36).

3. Main Problems

Problems in any field or theme fall into two categories: problems within the research itself, and problems between research and practice.

3.1 Problems in Enterprise Think Tank Research Itself

Based on the above description and preliminary analysis of the research status, we identify the following problems: (1) Compared with other types of think tanks, research output is small in quantity and average in quality, with no specialized monographs; (2) Most research 成果 are merely illustrative introductions, with few genuine case studies and no theoretical analysis or research based on cases; and (3) Enterprise think tanks are almost ignored in Chinese think tank evaluation research.

Why do these problems arise? Preliminary analysis suggests three factors: (1) Most Chinese scholars studying think tanks come from social science fields, with enterprises and enterprise think tanks falling outside their research scope; (2) Research clues on think tanks mainly derive from media information, while Chinese enterprise think tanks have serious deficiencies in media communication; and (3) Most Chinese think tank researchers focus on the United States, where the think tank system lacks enterprise think tanks.

3.2 Problems Between Research and Practice

Overall, research on Chinese enterprise think tanks lags far behind their rich and colorful practice, manifested in two ways: First, the number of Chinese enterprise think tanks is estimated to be in the hundreds, but this is not reflected in research and evaluation work. Second, a few excellent enterprise think tanks produce innovative research 成果 and methods, but these have not attracted researchers' attention or study.

Our preliminary investigation yields a classified list of Chinese enterprise think tanks (42 institutions) as shown in Table 2 , with clues derived from three sources: (1) materials from the Central Enterprise Think Tank Alliance meeting on May 27, 2016; (2) queries on the official websites of China' s top 100 enterprises; and (3) information obtained from relevant individuals during exchange activities.

The research and communication activities of these enterprise think tanks vary significantly in performance and level. Many publish 20-30 research reports annually with considerable influence in their industries. However, these rich practices have not attracted researchers' attention. Some central enterprise think tanks lack dedicated official websites, have low social influence, and are even unknown to outsiders.

4. Research Agenda

The above research status and problems clearly cannot meet the future development needs of Chinese enterprise think tanks. This situation must change. Researchers should proceed from practice, employ case studies as the primary method, summarize the practical experience and development models of Chinese and foreign enterprise think tanks, and thereby provide practical and effective theoretical guidance and intellectual support for the development of Chinese enterprise think tanks.

Based on the analytical framework proposed in our paper *Strategic Positioning and Operation Model of New-Type Think Tanks in China* [32] and combined with enterprise think tank practice, this paper proposes a research agenda for enterprise think tanks. The main content includes five components, forming a “five-in-one” model of the enterprise think tank research agenda: (1) strategic positioning—whom to serve and what intellectual products to provide; (2) value activities—what value-creating activities to undertake; (3) resource allocation—what resources and combinations are needed; (4) capacity building—how to effectively use resources to conduct value activities; and (5) influence enhancement—how to form and enhance influence among target audiences and within the think tank community (see Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]).

4.1 Strategic Positioning

Strategic positioning must answer the following questions: (1) **Who are the target service objects?** New-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics must “serve the scientific, democratic, and law-based decision-making of the Party and government,” while state-owned and state-controlled enterprise think tanks should “focus on industry sectors.” Specifically, which decision-making departments should enterprise think tanks serve? This is the primary question of strategic positioning. Research and consulting institutions serving only enterprise strategy and business development are not “enterprise think tanks” as defined in this paper. Enterprise think tanks must serve industry and industrial policy decision-making, government public policy decision-making, and possibly global economic governance policy decision-making. (2) **What functions should be primarily realized?** New-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics have “important functions including policy advice, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy.” Which of these five functions are primary for enterprise think tanks? What is their order of importance and specific content? Which functions may be absent? What additional functions are needed? (3) **What are the main research fields and topics?** The general requirement is to “conduct decision-making consultation research on state-owned enterprise reform, industrial restructuring, industrial development planning, industrial technology direction, industrial policy formulation, and major engineering projects.” For specific enterprise think tanks, the specific subjects and content of these research fields and topics need clear definition. Meanwhile, to provide better intellectual products, are there topics

beyond these fields? What should these topics be? How should they be selected and determined? (4) **What is the value proposition?** The answers to the above three questions constitute the external expression of the value proposition, primarily involving vision, mission, and core values: vision describes what the enterprise think tank aims to become in the coming years as a strategic goal; mission states the reason for the enterprise think tank's existence; and core values are the value principles that the enterprise think tank must uphold to regulate and constrain its systems and behaviors.

4.2 Value Activities

To achieve the above strategic positioning, think tanks must undertake a series of value-creating activities. These value activities form a “value ring” composed of research, exchange, and dissemination (see Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]). We need to focus on the following issues: (1) **Independent value activities:** research, exchange, and dissemination. Research activities include project initiation, team building, research process, and 成果 review. Exchange activities include topic-specific and non-topic-specific exchanges in content, and interpersonal and organizational exchanges in form. Dissemination activities include self-media and other-media channels, and research 成果 and think tank brand content. This represents the traditional value creation process of think tanks. (2) **“Two-in-one” value activities:** research/exchange, research/dissemination, exchange/dissemination. When an activity simultaneously creates value in two areas, it is “two-in-one.” For example, research/exchange includes all exchange activities related to projects and 成果, research/dissemination includes allowing target audiences to join research teams and disseminating interim research 成果 through media to solicit opinions, and exchange/dissemination mainly refers to the convening and dissemination of brand conferences. (3) **“Three-in-one” value activities:** research/exchange/dissemination. When an activity simultaneously creates value in all three areas, it is “three-in-one.” Logically, such activities should create the greatest value, but they are rare in practice.

All these different types of value activities involve partners. Therefore, partner selection, cooperation content and methods, and cooperation effectiveness evaluation are all important research topics. For a specific think tank, we should first collect documents and materials on all value activities, then classify and organize them according to the above value ring model, and finally summarize the success factors of different types of value activities based on activity effectiveness.

4.3 Resource Allocation

To conduct value-creating activities such as research, exchange, and dissemination, enterprise think tanks require diverse resources as input conditions. We need to study the development, allocation, use, and management of these resources. (1) **Funding and fundraising:** Funding is the basic resource for think tank survival and development. Generally, think tank funding sources

fall into two categories: fixed income, such as fund investment returns, property rents, founder budget allocations, and membership fees; and non-fixed income, such as research contract income, donation income, and publication sales and operations (training, consulting) income. For enterprise think tanks, founding enterprises are the main funding providers, primarily through capital investment, annual budget allocations, and commissioned research contract income. Research questions include: funding source structure and sustainability; funder interest demands and think tank research independence; and fundraising capacity and its enhancement. (2) **Human resources and organization:** Human resources are the core resource for think tank survival and development. Generally, think tank organizational structures include: (a) boards of directors or trustees as decision-making bodies; (b) academic or expert committees as consulting and evaluation bodies; (c) management as executive bodies; (d) researchers conducting specific project research, usually belonging to different research departments in full-time, part-time, and visiting capacities; and (e) service support personnel responsible for executing exchange and dissemination activities, fundraising, and financial administration. What are the characteristics of human resources and allocation in enterprise think tanks? How to motivate and unleash the creativity of internal enterprise researchers? How can enterprise think tanks maintain good communication with relevant research and consulting institutions such as board strategy committees, company advisory committees, policy research offices, and strategic development departments to form an integrated think tank system? (3) **Knowledge and management:** Knowledge resources are unique resources for think tank survival and development. Here, knowledge is broadly defined, including data, information, knowledge, models, and methods, existing in two forms: in researchers' minds and in organizational databases, case libraries, information systems, and decision support systems. Think tanks are "producers" of ideas and policies, with knowledge resources as important "production materials." Think tank competitiveness largely depends on the possession, borrowing, and application of knowledge resources. For enterprise think tanks focusing on industry and industrial future development, the importance of knowledge resources is even more prominent and obvious. The following topics require specialized research: how to develop various electronic information databases? How to conduct knowledge management holistically? How to cooperate with other think tanks and research consulting institutions to borrow external resources?

4.4 Capacity Building

Capacity is the ability to use resources to conduct value-creating activities. In reality, value activities, resource allocation, and capacity building form an integrated whole: value activities require resource use and capacity support; resource allocation aims to conduct effective value activities depending on various capacity levels; and capacity building is realized through value activities and resource allocation.

Logically, the think tank capacity system is multi-layered, including basic capacities, professional capacities, and core capacities. Think tank basic capacities can be described from the two dimensions of value activities and resource allocation, as shown in Table 3. Think tank professional capacities are unique capacities formed by a think tank in its specialized research field, building upon basic capacities. Think tank core capacities are professional capacities that a think tank possesses, are difficult for other think tanks to imitate, and can create value.

For a specific enterprise think tank, what is its capacity system status? Does it meet strategic positioning needs? Which capacities need enhancement? How to enhance these capacities? These are all worthy research topics.

4.5 Influence Enhancement

Think tank influence research and evaluation is a major topic in think tank research and construction, with numerous evaluation rankings using similar or different methods and indicators. These studies and evaluations have two characteristics: (1) they basically do not distinguish types, using the same set of indicators and methods to evaluate all sample think tanks; and (2) they rarely use case methods to conduct in-depth internal research and evaluation.

This paper only explores influence enhancement issues from the perspective of specific enterprise think tanks. At least the following topics require investigation, analysis, and research: What are the components of think tank influence? What is the relationship between think tank brand, strategic positioning, and influence? What is the relationship between value activities, resource allocation, capacity building, and influence? What are the effective pathways and methods for enhancing influence?

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

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