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## Research on Issues in the Social Dissemination of Government Think Tank Outputs: Postprint

**Authors:** Zhao Hengyu

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### Abstract

[目的/意义] The social communication capacity of think tanks is closely related to national soft power and constitutes an important component in building a global discourse system. As the most crucial component of China's think tank system, government think tanks should, in addition to providing decision-making support for Party committees and governments, disseminate the intellectual essence generated during the processes of investigation, analysis, and problem-solving to society, enabling the people to share new ideas, viewpoints, and knowledge from practical explorations, thereby enhancing public understanding of Party and government decision-making and strengthening social cohesion.

[方法/过程] This paper analyzes and examines the current status and challenges of social communication of government think tank outputs.

[结果/结论] Based on the practical experiences of domestic and international think tanks, the paper proposes several countermeasures and recommendations for the communication of government think tank outputs, arguing that government think tanks should embody their social responsibility as an ideological high ground for the Party and the people.

### Full Text

## Research on Socialized Communication Issues of Government Think Tanks

**Zhao Hengyu**<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Macao University of Science and Technology, Macao 999078

<sup>2</sup>Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, Guangzhou 510635

## Abstract

**[Purpose/Significance]** The socialized communication capacity of think tanks is closely related to national soft power and constitutes an important component of building a global discourse system. As the most crucial component of China's think tank system, government think tanks should not only provide decision-making support for the Party and government but also disseminate to society the valuable knowledge generated through investigation, analysis, and problem-solving processes. This enables the public to share new ideas, perspectives, and knowledge derived from practical exploration, enhances public understanding of Party and government decision-making, and strengthens social cohesion.

**[Method/Process]** This paper analyzes the current status and challenges of socialized communication of government think tank outputs.

**[Result/Conclusion]** Drawing upon practical experiences from domestic and international think tanks, this paper proposes several countermeasures and recommendations for disseminating government think tank outputs, arguing that government think tanks should demonstrate their social responsibility as ideological highlands for the Party and the people.

**Keywords:** Government think tanks; Achievement transformation; Socialized communication

**Classification Number:** G206.3

### 1.1 Overview of Think Tanks

The concept of think tanks originated during World War II in the United States as secure rooms where defense scientists and military staff could discuss strategic issues together. Later, its meaning was substantially extended to describe numerous policy analysis organizations in the United States and worldwide. In the world's first book on think tanks, *Think Tanks*, Paul Dickson defined them as policy research institutions where researchers conduct interdisciplinary studies on broad policy issues using scientific methods, characterized by stability and relative independence, and provide consulting services on policy issues closely related to government, enterprises, and the public. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* considers think tanks as institutes, corporations, or groups that conduct interdisciplinary research, typically serving government and commercial clients. Although academic circles both domestically and abroad hold various definitions of think tanks, there is general consensus that engaging in policy research, aiming to influence government policy choices, and maintaining independence and non-profit status constitute fundamental elements.

In China, professions similar to think tank researchers—such as “retainers,” “military strategists,” “private advisors,” “staff officers,” and “counselors”—existed as early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, along with institutional prototypes like the Hanlin Academy and Grand Council. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the formal modernization of Chi-

nese think tanks began with the establishment of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1977 and the Development Research Center of the State Council in 1981 [1]. According to the 2015 “Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics” issued by the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics are defined as non-profit research and consulting institutions that focus on strategic issues and public policy as their primary research objects and aim to serve the scientific, democratic, and law-based decision-making of the Party and government.

Think tanks can be classified in numerous ways. The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania publishes an annual “Global Go To Think Tank Index Report” that categorizes think tanks by continents, regions, countries, research areas, and special achievements. In China, the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council classify think tanks into seven categories: Party and government departments, academies of social sciences, Party schools and administrative institutes, universities, military units, research institutes and enterprises, and social think tanks. The Center for Think Tank Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences divides them into four categories: Party, government, and military think tanks; academy of social sciences think tanks; university think tanks; and social think tanks. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Evaluation Institute classifies them into comprehensive think tanks, professional think tanks, social think tanks, and enterprise think tanks. The government think tanks discussed in this paper refer to think tanks directly or indirectly led or managed by the Party and government, including Party and government department think tanks, academies of social sciences, and Party schools and administrative institutes, which provide public policy decision-making and consulting services for the government.

## 1.2 Current Development Status of Think Tanks

According to the *2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report*, there were 7,815 think tanks worldwide in 2017. North America had the largest number with 1,972, followed by Europe with 2,045, and Asia with 1,676. The United States has the most think tanks globally with 1,872, while China ranks second with 512. The United Kingdom and India follow China with 444 and 293 think tanks respectively [2]. Overall, the construction of Chinese think tanks has accelerated year by year, securing a prominent position in the world.

## 2 The Significance of Socialized Communication of Think Tank Outputs

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has attached great importance to think tank construction in response to new situations and tasks,

proposing a series of new concepts, ideas, and strategies to achieve the “Two Centenary Goals” and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, thus forming “Xi Jinping’s Think Tank Vision.” According to incomplete statistics, since 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping has made over 50 important statements, instructions, and directives on think tank construction, including clarifying that think tanks constitute an important component and new channel for cultural exchanges between nations, emphasizing their vital role in consolidating the friendly public opinion and social foundations of state relations, and discussing their function as bridges and links in concept dissemination, policy interpretation, and public opinion communication.

### **2.1 Providing Support for National Soft Power Construction and International Discourse Power Competition**

Intellectual resources are the most precious assets of a nation and a people [3]. As ideological strongholds where national intellectual resources converge, think tanks are important carriers of national soft power and have become indispensable components of national governance systems, representing a crucial manifestation of national governance capabilities. Knowledge itself possesses non-exhaustibility, indivisibility, shareability, and unlimited value-added potential. Think tank outputs are ultimately intended for society and serve society, with the ultimate goal of solving problems, enhancing productivity, and promoting socio-economic development. The transformation of organizational knowledge into social knowledge and its multiplication among the public helps elevate the overall knowledge level of citizens, thereby advancing national soft power construction. On the other hand, media and think tanks are the two wings for enhancing discourse power: media serves as the channel and platform for disseminating discourse power. Telling China’s story well requires not only vivid media communication but also well-reasoned think tank arguments. When experts and scholars articulate their research fields and present corresponding academic viewpoints in their personal capacities, it benefits national image maintenance, clarification of relevant principles, and protection of corresponding rights and interests. Against the backdrop of China’s growing global presence, government think tanks need to provide more viewpoints and ideas.

### **2.2 Enabling New Ideas, Perspectives, and Knowledge to be Shared by the People**

Serving the people is the proper meaning of building new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. In the process of influencing and serving the scientization of public decision-making and addressing various problems and difficulties in China’s peaceful rise, think tanks collect new phenomena, situations, and emerging ideas, perspectives, and knowledge from around the world through investigation, intelligence analysis, knowledge mining, and theoretical sublimation. As an important component of new-type think tanks with Chinese charac-

teristics, government think tanks are obligated to select and transmit forward-looking, guiding, theoretical, and actionable decision-making achievements to society, ensuring that new ideas, perspectives, and knowledge are shared by all people. This enables achievements to serve practical purposes, facilitates the innovative diffusion from elite knowledge to popularized knowledge, and fundamentally enhances the overall ideological and cultural literacy of Chinese citizens.

### **2.3 Enhancing Public Understanding of Party and Government Decision-Making and Strengthening Social Cohesion**

In addition to “coming in and moving up” to provide consulting services for decision-makers, think tanks should also be able to “going out and moving down” to explain and publicize policies, perform the conversion function of public decision-making discourse, answer questions and dispel doubts for the public, enhance public trust and understanding of public decision-making, elevate public awareness and capacity for political participation, guide citizens and media to engage in social discussions more comprehensively and objectively, improve societal policy dialogue levels, promote the construction of socialist ideology with strong cohesion and guidance, and unite all people closely in ideals, beliefs, values, and moral concepts. This creates a powerful synergy for the entire society to care about and support the nation’s development plans, establishing a sound ecosystem for public policy decision-making and implementation.

### **2.4 Shaping Mainstream Public Opinion and Expanding Influence on Public Decision-Making Consultation**

The “wisdom” of think tanks represents the “great wisdom” that concentrates people’s intelligence, while their “strategy” involves the centralized storage, processing, and purification transformation of mass wisdom. As bridges between government and the public [4], the socialization of think tanks and their outputs serves two positive functions: first, disseminating mainstream ideological values, strengthening mainstream public opinion, explaining Party theories, interpreting public policies, assessing social sentiment, guiding social hotspots, and channeling public emotions, thereby transmitting scientifically sound insights to the public and contributing to cultivating social rationality and intellectual progress; second, the bridging role of government think tanks also involves guiding public opinion, observing public sentiment, and reflecting the people’s voice through socialized communication processes, transforming public opinion into decision-making proposals, thereby improving decision-making quality, building social consensus, and ensuring effective implementation of policy recommendations.

### **3.1 Main Forms of Government Think Tank Outputs**

Chinese government think tank research outputs mainly include two types: material and non-material products [5]. Material products include decision-making

internal references for Party committees and governments at all levels, decision-making consulting for enterprises or social organizations, theoretical research projects, academic papers, academic monographs, and theoretical articles in newspapers and periodicals. Non-material products include viewpoints and propositions expressed through public opinion or social media, opinions and suggestions presented at forums and conferences, and daily interpersonal communication among experts and scholars.

### 3.2 Effectiveness of Socialized Communication of Outputs

The transformation and dissemination of think tank research outputs occur in two primary forms: first, policy transformation, where think tank outputs enter the public policy agenda and become embedded in public policies in appropriate forms, transforming into policy documents and legal systems of Party committees and governments to form policy productivity; second, socialized communication, where think tank research outputs are effectively disseminated and internalized as the people's ideological concepts and value recognition to form ideological influence [6]. The former focuses on "how to do," while the latter focuses on "why to do it this way." Different think tank output forms correspond to different communication channels, audiences, and effects. Currently, government think tank outputs are socially communicated through three main paths based on audience groups.

First, think tanks and scholars share their latest research breakthroughs with industry and academic circles through academic journals, forums, and seminars, building a research community. This form primarily targets experts, scholars, researchers, and government officials in specific fields, featuring strong professionalism and a relatively narrow audience but achieving good communication effects.

Second, think tanks and scholars release papers, reports, and other output texts through media outlets. This form targets the general public with a broad audience reach, but because the output texts lack secondary encoding, the content is often obscure for ordinary citizens and typically does not align with digital mobile media usage habits.

Third, think tanks and scholars analyze and interpret important viewpoints and conclusions of research outputs through social media, media interviews, press conferences, and public lectures, independently planning public agendas to internalize research outputs as people's ideological concepts and value recognition, thereby fulfilling the value of policy consultation and public enlightenment and forming ideological influence. This form achieves better communication effects for the general public but requires effective transformation from political discourse to social discourse, posing high demands on scholars' media literacy and institutional innovation within think tanks.

## 4.1 Main Problems

### (1) Passive Thinking in Communication Philosophy

Due to long-term orientation toward providing strategic decision-making consulting services for the government, with research projects primarily assigned by higher authorities, government think tank outputs largely remain at the stage of “submitting memorials” [7]. Contrary to Western think tanks that regard social influence as their lifeline, Chinese Party and government think tanks exhibit strong institutional dependence on government departments, with most being directly affiliated subordinate agencies. They generally hold unenthusiastic attitudes toward socialized communication of research outputs, demonstrating insufficient attention and limited skill in marketing their research internationally [8]. Government departments, as both demanders and regulators of think tank output transformation, also struggle to play active roles in this domain. In his speech at the Symposium on Philosophy and Social Sciences, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that some Chinese think tanks overemphasize formal dissemination while neglecting content innovation, while others engage in formalistic practices such as setting up platforms, inviting celebrities, and organizing forums. Some managers, concerned about limited resource investment and inadequate public opinion risk management in the new media environment characterized by diversified communication channels, rapid information diffusion, strong interactive transmission, and “public opinion backflow,” tend toward conservatism, resulting in delayed development of socialized communication [9].

### (2) Quality Issues Arising from Government Affiliation

The quality of think tank intellectual products forms the foundation and origin of communication. Regarding quality issues, former Vice Minister of Commerce Wei Jianguo believes that current Chinese think tank products are mostly short-term, passive, and reactive. Most think tanks remain official or semi-official affiliated institutions, with research funding primarily derived from government fiscal allocations. This “support” approach has two major drawbacks: first, think tanks develop serious dependencies, lacking initiative and enterprising spirit; second, it breeds unhealthy practices such as networking and backdoor dealings [10]. Some decision-makers consider think tank outputs as purely theoretical, lacking pertinence and operability, with policy consulting often viewed as a tool for justification or used for “window dressing,” “posturing,” and “formalities.” Some knowledge products fail to meet requirements for social dissemination and promotion.

### (3) Lack of Institutional Mechanisms for Social Promotion of Think Tank Ideas

Wang Wen, Executive Vice President of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, believes that think tanks are like “idea factories,” where influence and external communication represent product sales capabilities. What Chinese think tanks currently lack most is not product quality but product marketing. Compared with American think tanks, the research capability gap of Chinese think tanks is not as large as imagined—China’s best

scholars are fully capable of rivaling America's best think tank scholars. The real gap lies in the overall marketing power of think tank ideas [11]. The promotion of think tank outputs is not mere "transportation" of research texts through media channels. Currently, communication subjects fail to deeply understand public demand for social information and cannot effectively answer fundamental questions such as "to whom to speak," "how to speak," and "why to speak." Specifically, think tanks face dilemmas in lacking insight into target audiences, transformation mechanisms for decomposing and reorganizing outputs for public comprehension, communication talents who understand internet communication patterns, mature output promotion and market expansion departments, and effective output transformation assessment and incentive mechanisms.

#### **(4) Absence of "Chinese Think Tank" Voices in the World**

Scholars Wu Ying and Zhang Jiehai conducted a text analysis based on 600 mainstream newspapers worldwide, finding that from the establishment of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1977 to the present, global mainstream newspapers have cited Chinese think tanks only 715 times, averaging fewer than 18 times per year [12], indicating insufficient overall international communication capacity. This partly stems from Chinese mainstream media's long-term disadvantaged position in the international media industry, with discourse power monopolized by Western media that control over 80% of global media discourse [13], making it difficult for Chinese think tanks to graft onto powerful media carriers for global communication. Additionally, Chinese think tanks rarely produce heavyweight research results with global influence, lacking leading concepts and viewpoints in content production and having few authoritative experts who master global discourse. Concepts and strategic terms that lead global discourse, such as "Clash of Civilizations," "Stakeholder," "G2 Model," "Soft Power," and "Smart Power," were all first proposed or promoted by American think tanks. Moreover, due to strict management and control of ideological aspects in government think tanks, few experts speak out in overseas mainstream media.

#### **(5) Difficulty Transforming Research Outputs into Texts Acceptable to Global Audiences**

James McGann, Director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, noted in a domestic media interview that although Chinese think tanks are showing interest and determination to go global, the global think tank community has few opportunities to understand them beyond word-of-mouth. The role and meaning of think tanks' existence lies in transforming complex and variable issues into texts acceptable to both policymakers and the public through analysis and interpretation, rather than making them more obscure. In terms of content, Chinese think tanks' multilingual talent development has not kept pace with their internationalization process, with most experts unable to effectively translate outputs into languages suitable for global dissemination. Second, global online communication construction lags behind, with many international scholars pointing out that they find it difficult to understand Chinese think tanks via the internet, as these think tanks either

lack websites or have purely Chinese-language interfaces. After all, global think tanks highly depend on internet technology, with numerous international conferences conducted through internet video annually, yet Chinese think tanks struggle to participate through such forms. “If Chinese think tanks truly wish to go global, they must invest more energy in information technology to thereby establish their credibility worldwide” [14].

## 4.2 Severe Challenges

When think tanks lack socialized communication capacity and become “voiceless” in both domestic and international societies, numerous severe challenges arise.

### (1) Western Think Tanks Entering Chinese Government Decision-Making Consulting Services

As decision-making information markets open up, competition among think tanks begins at the level of brand and social influence. In recent years, several think tanks from developed Western countries have entered the Chinese market, leveraging their global reputation and credibility, either cooperating with domestic think tanks or operating independently to undertake decision-making commissions from the Chinese government. For example, the RAND Corporation has cooperated with Tianjin Binhai New Area and Guangdong Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development to conduct collaborative research. On one hand, these think tanks compete directly with domestic think tanks using advanced service capabilities, management levels, and strong international influence, impacting the previously closed government decision-making service market and creating market survival pressure for local think tanks. On the other hand, through field research and literature investigation in cooperation with the Chinese government, these Western think tanks gradually acquire relevant intelligence materials, invisibly increasing government information security management risks.

### (2) Western Think Tanks Accumulating Influence in China

Since 2000, China researchers at American think tanks have actively promoted the translation, publication, and dissemination of their research outputs in China and accepted media interviews, striving to exert influence. After the publication of relevant Chinese research outputs, they have quickly attracted attention and generated significant impact. For instance, in June 2015, Li Cheng from the Brookings Institution was interviewed by a China News Service reporter on the prospects of China-U.S. relations. The interview was immediately republished by major Chinese websites including Sina News, Sohu News, Reference News, China Youth Net, and NetEase News. According to CNKI statistics, by 2016, China expert Kenneth Lieberthal had published over 30 articles in mainland newspapers and periodicals, with more than 100 citations in Chinese journals. Well-known American think tanks such as the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace have begun constructing Chinese-language websites and releasing research outputs in Chinese, with increasing publication volumes. If Chinese government think tanks do

not intensify socialized communication efforts and establish new media communication platforms to further consolidate mainstream public opinion positions, there exists a possibility of being “supplanted” by Western think tank influence over time.

### **(3) Western Ideology Penetrating Domestically Through Think Tanks**

Due to their market-oriented operational characteristics, Western think tanks invest more resources in socialized marketing with more diverse and flexible integrated communication strategies. In recent years, Chinese think tank agents supported by European and American foundation capital have continuously penetrated domestic ideology through their knowledge outputs. For example, the Unirule Institute of Economics founded by Mao Yushi has received funding from the American Ford Foundation since its establishment. The Ford Foundation is a private tax-exempt foundation closely connected with the U.S. government, intelligence agencies, and foreign policy groups. For a long time, the function of the Unirule Institute has been to serve as a “contractor” and money-laundering machine for the CIA to control Chinese political, academic, and public opinion circles through foreign foundations.

### **(4) Think Tank Silence Exacerbating International Discourse Power Decline**

In the context of globalized communication, think tanks and media have formed an increasingly close strategic community. On one hand, to demonstrate objectivity and authority in reporting on other countries, media often quote think tank experts or directly hire them to “speak out.” On the other hand, think tank experts and viewpoints can diffuse through media to society. Therefore, think tanks have a significant “amplification” effect on media communication content. Without strategic planning for the synergy between think tanks and media, allowing Chinese think tanks and media to become “voiceless” internationally will make national image vulnerable to distorted construction. For example, when China’s Shenzhou-9 completed its rendezvous and docking with Tiangong-1 in 2012, *Foreign Policy* magazine, sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, published a commentary titled “Red Moon Rising,” projecting an image of China planting its five-starred red flag on the moon and framing China’s manned space program within the discourse track of “China military threat.” Currently, globalization concepts face challenges and obstacles, while China remains a staunch defender of globalization. Consequently, it is particularly urgent for government think tanks to cooperate with national strategy in disseminating the “Chinese voice” on the international stage.

## **5 Innovative Strategies for Socialized Communication of Government Think Tank Outputs**

Against increasingly severe domestic and international environments, government think tanks represent the nation’s most strategically valuable knowledge resources and bear the historical mission of national rise and rejuvenation. Therefore, while objectively, neutrally, and rationally treating foreign think tanks and

their research outputs and fully leveraging the principle of “making foreign things serve China and ancient things serve present purposes,” Chinese think tanks should implement introduction, digestion, absorption, and re-innovation, adopting excellent think tank communication experiences for their own use, gradually breaking through institutional limitations, and advancing the enhancement of government think tanks’ socialized communication capacity.

## 5.1 Innovation in Communication Philosophy

### (1) Institutional Philosophy

Although government think tanks are directly led or managed by the government and operate “within the system,” the “free market of ideas” knows no institutional boundaries. Especially under current circumstances of severe Western ideological penetration and diversified social values, if we do not occupy public opinion high ground, opponents will. Whether government, university, or civilian think tanks, all should fully play the active role of authoritative publishers, interpreters, and disseminators of theoretical thought and practice with Chinese characteristics. They must both eliminate sensationalism and avoid overly specialized and obscure communication, committing to continuously issuing genuine insights to society and engaging in dialogue with the people while maintaining correct political direction. This emphasis on communication must be built upon a strong sense of historical mission, social responsibility, and service to the people.

### (2) Individual Philosophy

At the micro level, every scholar should widely disseminate various academic achievements formed during scientific research based on solid investigation. Li Cheng, Director of the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institution, once stated: “It is difficult to find a day when major newspapers worldwide do not contain interviews with the Brookings Institution and its scholars, and major radio and television stations worldwide also find it difficult to go a day without seeing the Brookings Institution’s name. Media is an important channel for think tank scholars to spread their viewpoints, influence public discussion, and indirectly affect public policy decision-making, so many think tank scholars attach great importance to establishing relationships with journalists and making their voices heard through media” [15]. Currently, most Chinese scholars treat publishing papers and completing projects as the endpoint of research, neglecting the importance of using social networks to “broadcast” intellectual essence in the era of socialized media where “everyone has a microphone.” Individual scholars should also cultivate strong media literacy and communication awareness, promoting output dissemination while maintaining correct positions and values, enabling greater impact and benefiting the public, and actively assuming the role of “opinion leaders.”

## 5.2 Innovation in Communication Content

### (1) Accelerating Direct Transformation of Research Output Texts

First, regarding research reports, addressing the shortcomings of insufficient openness in Chinese government think tank outputs, institutions should conditionally select and recommend a batch of authoritative, innovative, and widely influential research outputs for promotion while ensuring national information security. Based on different degrees of openness, various access forms such as open access, paid access, and authorized access should be developed.

Second, regarding books and monographs, actively promote the “Internet + Publishing” communication strategy innovation. Currently, some top-tier foreign think tanks have signed publishing contracts with global e-book vendors including Amazon Kindle, Google Books, Sony e-reader, and Barnes and Noble Nook, allowing e-book users to preview and purchase these think tank publications online. Therefore, Chinese think tanks should accelerate the digital publishing process, using these global digital publishing platforms to enable global public downloading, studying, and sharing of Chinese think tank ideas, thereby expanding communication channels.

### (2) Promoting Indirect Transformation of Research Output Texts

Currently, some high-end foreign think tanks have developed media content production capabilities. For example, the Hoover Institution’s cartoon series *Intellections* uses animation to explain public knowledge such as presidential elections, environmental protection, and international disputes to teenage audiences, while its television series *Uncommon Knowledge* has attracted up to 3 million viewers. Therefore, Chinese government think tanks should strengthen their docking capabilities with mainstream media, accelerate media cooperation, provide original content for media to conduct secondary production, processing, and distribution, and enhance immersive experience in knowledge innovation diffusion through forms such as animations, feature films, documentaries, and even interactive games, cultivating think tank media content production capacity.

Second, think tanks must select and transform discourse according to different media positioning, content products, and target audiences. On important issues, they should form close strategic partnerships with media, layout early, strengthen planning, concentrate resources, and focus on real and significant issues concerning national strategy [16].

Furthermore, in the era of rapid socialized media development, follower counts have become important indicators of think tank influence. The Heritage Foundation’s Facebook account had over 400,000 followers in 2011, while the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ Facebook followers surged from 14,000 to 150,000 in 2012 alone [17]. Currently, few domestic government think tanks open social media accounts as institutions, with some appearing “hollow.” While some subordinate departments and scholars are relatively active, WeChat information push content remains rich but lacks interaction with netizens [18]. Based on this, government think tanks should accelerate the opening of official

self-media accounts domestically and overseas, occupy new media propaganda positions, and conduct secondary encoding of research outputs based on the “five characteristics” principle of news importance, prominence, timeliness, proximity, and interest. They should initiate topic marketing based on current affairs and politics, increase global public media contact points with Chinese think tanks when mainstream media communication channels are blocked, develop new overseas communication positions through a “surrounding the cities from the countryside” strategy, actively conduct “relationship-based communication” globally, develop global user networks, expand global reputation capital, and use new media platforms to disseminate Chinese think tank propositions, enabling people worldwide to better understand Chinese think tanks and their ideas.

### 5.3 Innovation in Communication Mechanisms

#### **(1) Accelerating Cultivation of Composite Communication Talents**

Think tanks’ greatest asset is their concentration of experts with various specialties. Future ideological competition will be globalized. In addition to traditional requirements for high academic qualifications and strong research capabilities, think tank researchers also need strong external communication and social activity abilities. Researchers confined to dealing with single research objects and topics can no longer adapt to future competition trends. Therefore, to enhance government think tanks’ communication functions, we must start with talent, break the current predicament of surplus research-oriented talent but shortage of lobbying and promotion-oriented talent, and accelerate the cultivation and introduction of composite talents with international vision, media literacy, and multilingual communication capabilities who can flexibly use various communication methods to promote ideas and dialogue with the public.

#### **(2) Establishing Specialized Institutions for Output Promotion and Transformation**

The socialized communication of scientific research outputs is a complex and concrete project requiring the integration of specialized forces from news communication, library and information science, and information technology departments to establish permanent institutions for social transformation of scientific research outputs. These institutions should build professional media operation teams, clarify communication objectives, formulate communication tasks and plans, prepare communication budgets, manage official platforms, interface with mainstream media, innovate communication strategies, and form full-process management mechanisms for research output submission, selection, editing, translation, dissemination, and database construction, achieving coordinated management from research teams to media distribution.

#### **(3) Forming Cross-Institutional Collaborative Communication Mechanisms**

First, sign strategic cooperation agreements with media to establish close collaborative relationships, gradually exploring content resources and talent sharing

mechanisms. Through forms such as media interviews, editorials, theoretical articles, special programs, and live “connections,” research outputs including investigations, projects, and theoretical articles can be continuously disseminated and transformed to society, enhancing media influence while achieving penetration of intellectual products across different social strata.

Second, establish strategic cooperative relationships between think tanks. Through think tank alliances, build a cross-institutional communication platform for Chinese think tanks, such as following the development model of “China Think Tank Net” to provide 加盟 interfaces for different think tank websites, aggregate the communication power of Chinese government think tanks, enable international audiences to form holistic cognition of Chinese government think tanks, and comprehensively understand the process, information, outputs, and experts of Chinese think tank construction.

#### **(4) Gradually Incorporating Communication Performance into Evaluation Systems**

First, the government should strive to create and maintain a policy environment conducive to think tank output transformation in terms of institutional arrangements, legal conditions, and even investment, maximizing the effectiveness of scientific research resources and mobilizing the enthusiasm of all participants in the think tank output transformation process.

Second, jointly guarantee the social dissemination of outputs through index-based “pull” and incentive-based “push” mechanisms [19]. Current government think tank research evaluation systems and incentive mechanisms are overly traditional and require innovative methods. Index-based “pull” refers to incorporating researchers’ output social transformation into research assessment indicators to ensure a basic quantity of institutional output transformation. Incentive-based “push” refers to encouraging researchers to actively promote their research outputs to society through research rewards and other forms, even considering incorporating socialized media application into the incentive system to generate internal motivation for researchers to strive toward desired goals.

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