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Keeping Pace with the Times and Interactive Development: A Review of the Postprint of “Intelligence and Think Tank”

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Date: 2023-04-01T16:02:58+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] In the era of big data intelligence, how can intelligence and think tanks achieve dual success in academic research and practical development? Addressing this fundamental question, this paper introduces and evaluates Professor Li Lin’s new monograph “Think Tanks and Intelligence”. [Method/Process] Comprehensively employing methods such as content analysis, inductive and deductive reasoning, and comparative analysis, the distinctive features of the book are analyzed from aspects including its structure, research foundation, and research content. [Result/Conclusion] As China’s first comparative study monograph focusing on intelligence and think tanks, the book fills this gap, answers key questions regarding the connections and differences between intelligence and think tanks in terms of function, process, methodology, and evaluation from the perspective of intelligence science, provides new insights for the mutual learning and common development of China’s current intelligence institutions and think tanks, and lays a foundation for future related research.

Full Text

Close to the Times, Interactive Development—A Review of *Intelligence and Think Tank*

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] In the era of big data and artificial intelligence, how can intelligence and think tanks achieve satisfactory development in both academic research and practical application? Addressing this fundamental question, this paper introduces and evaluates the new book *Intelligence and Think Tank* by Professor Li Lin et al. **[Method/Process]** Using comprehensive methods of content analysis, inductive deduction, and comparative analysis, this paper evaluates the book's distinctive characteristics from the perspectives of writing structure, research foundation, and overall content. **[Result/Conclusion]** As China's first comparative research monograph on intelligence and think tanks, the book fills this gap in the field of information science. It answers key questions regarding the connections and differences between intelligence and think tanks in terms of function, process, method, and evaluation from the perspective of intelligence science, providing new ideas for the mutual learning and cooperative development of current Chinese intelligence institutions and think tanks, and thus building a solid foundation for future related research.

Keywords: intelligence; think tank; book review; big data and AI era

Classification Number: G250

DOI: 10.13266/j.issn.0252-3116.2021.21.009

Research that combines intelligence (functions) with think tanks is a recent trend that has emerged in the last few years, fundamentally driven by new characteristics in the development of intelligence science in the information age and new demands for think tanks arising from changes in government governance models. The increasingly complex decision-making environment and the urgent need for scientific decision-making form the foundation for the joint development of intelligence and think tanks, which are closely related from both practical and theoretical research perspectives. As intelligence agencies transform and domestic new-type think tanks are established, research related to think tanks in China's intelligence science field has shown continuous growth. However, most research outputs are in the form of papers, lacking in systematic and comprehensive depth.

As China's first academic work taking intelligence and think tanks as its research subject, *Intelligence and Think Tank* examines the impact of intelligence processes, data information assurance, and intelligence methods on think tank core capability building, think tank platforms, think tank methods, and think tank evaluation. It then discusses the influence of think tank development on intelligence agency transformation, and finally looks ahead to the positive interaction and development of intelligence and think tanks in the era of data intelligence. The book features the following distinctive characteristics and unique insights:

1. Well-Structured Arrangement with Progressive Logic

Although intelligence originated from military struggle, it has long since expanded beyond the scope of military intelligence. The book's organization follows the logical process of understanding phenomena, adopting a research path of "theoretical exploration → key elaboration → strategy outlook." The main content is divided into three parts: (1) it first introduces basic concepts and conducts theoretical analysis to help readers construct fundamental understanding; (2) it gradually develops comparative research on key issues to reach convincing conclusions; and (3) it proposes comprehensive development strategies for the joint development of intelligence agencies and think tanks in response to the challenges and opportunities of the data intelligence era, which is inspiring.

2. Solid Academic Foundation with Theory Closely Integrated with Practice

Intelligence science theoretical research is closely integrated with practical application. The monograph conducts comparative analysis of intelligence and think tanks from multiple perspectives—theory, method, and application. It includes historical tracing and progress tracking of domestic and international industries, synthesis and summarization of existing research findings, and incorporates the authors' rich research outputs, giving the book both academic value and practical guidance significance. The authors have also conducted solid literature tracking and investigation on the transformation of domestic and foreign intelligence agencies and think tank development, discovering that in the data intelligence era, U.S. intelligence agencies are pursuing the development of "agile intelligence" and launching new practices for comprehensive transformation. Based on these latest research findings, the new ideas proposed by the authors regarding the joint development of intelligence agencies and think tanks are naturally more persuasive.

The book's main viewpoints clarify issues debated among scholars in the field. For example, it studies the similarities and differences between intelligence and think tanks from the perspective of intelligence classification rather than from the nearly one hundred definitions of intelligence. Through in-depth research, it finds that with the arrival of the big data intelligence era, the intrinsic connections between intelligence and think tanks have become closer, theoretical systems increasingly perfected, and practical value continuously enhanced. China's characteristic scientific and technological intelligence work practices and think tank construction play an important role in promoting innovative development in intelligence science.

The leading authors, Li Lin and Chu Jingli, are both renowned scholars in this field. Researcher Li Lin is a senior expert at the National Innovation Institute of Defense Technology of the Academy of Military Sciences, one of China's first batch of high-end think tanks. She has worked silently in the field of scientific and technological information for over 30 years and has been appointed

as a doctoral supervisor in intelligence science at Peking University since 2008. As a “cross-disciplinary” expert with both practical experience and academic accomplishments, her unique academic, professional, and research background laid the foundation for this book. Professor Chu Jingli and his team have conducted fruitful research on think tank journal publishing, think tank studies, and think tank evaluation in recent years. In addition, Professor Su Xinning provided specific guidance multiple times during the three-year research and writing process, further ensuring the quality of the research.

3. Grasping Era Trends and Leading Future Development

In *Intelligence and Think Tank*, the authors provide a resounding answer to the core question of how intelligence and think tanks should develop in the big data intelligence era: pursue innovation and change, and seek development through positive interaction. This conclusion has rich theoretical and practical significance:

(1) Positive Interaction in Theoretical Research. Intelligence empowers think tanks to achieve leapfrog development, while think tank research enhances the value of intelligence and promotes the development of intelligence science as a discipline. Classic intelligence science research findings—represented by generalized intelligence systems, intelligence processes, classic intelligence methods, information resource organization and management, and comprehensive integration thinking—have strong referential value for think tank operations, think tank methodological systems, think tank characteristic information database management, and think tank evaluation. Conversely, think tank research absorbing intelligence science achievements can provide fertile ground for the verification and development of these theories.

(2) Positive Interaction in Practical Development. Data intelligence technology will drive the continued differentiation and transformation of intelligence agencies and the innovative development of think tanks, continuously enhancing the decision-support capabilities of both intelligence and think tanks, ultimately becoming the “right-hand man” of strategic decision-making. Facing the common challenges of the big data intelligence era, the development of intelligence science and think tanks cannot proceed independently. Intelligence and think tanks both originate from the common soil of serving decision-making and now face the same development environment, making their relationship increasingly close on the path of mutual reinforcement.

For example, to better understand the different transformation models of various intelligence agencies, the monograph divides them into two categories: “security-oriented intelligence agencies” and “development-oriented intelligence agencies.” The former’s core function is intelligence information collection and analysis. The main development direction for this type of agency is to achieve integration of the intelligence community in the big data era, strengthening collaborative intelligence analysis through cross-agency, cross-regional virtual

interaction spaces to enhance the “decision-support capability” of the entire intelligence community. The latter’s transformation goal is to better assume advisory responsibilities for decision-makers at all levels. Against the backdrop of China’s characteristic new-type think tank construction, think tanks’ pursuit of “producing ideas” provides new options for the transformation of this type of intelligence agency. Many of China’s scientific and technological intelligence agencies possess natural advantages and conditions for transformation and have therefore taken the lead in transforming toward think tanks. Think tank construction has become a national strategy, and as intelligence agencies and intelligence work are closely related to think tanks, they now have an even better practical platform. Building consensus on supporting strategic decision-making and coordinating the joint development of “agile intelligence” and “think tank advisory” will become the main theme for intelligence and think tanks.

In conclusion, *Intelligence and Think Tank* is a monograph published at a critical moment in the big data intelligence era, during China’s intelligence agency transformation and the construction of characteristic new-type think tanks. It demonstrates Chinese intelligence scholars’ sense of responsibility and keen perception of disciplinary development and key social issues, as well as the characteristics of intelligence science being rooted in social practice, keenly perceiving technological change, and providing intelligence references for major national decisions. Simultaneously, it provides a scientifically sound research foundation and corresponding measures and recommendations for the joint development of China’s intelligence and think tank endeavors, making it highly worthy of study and reference for scholars engaged in intelligence science and think tank research.

References

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English Abstract (as provided in original)

Purpose/significance: How can intelligence and think tank achieve satisfactory development in both academic research and practical development in the era of big data and artificial intelligence? Focused on the basic question, this paper introduces and evaluates the new book *Intelligence and Think Tank* written by Professor Li Lin et al. **Method/process:** Comprehensively using methods of content analysis, inductive deduction and comparative analysis, this paper evaluated the distinct characteristics of the book from the perspective of writing structure, research foundation and overall content et al. **Result/conclusion:**

As the first comparative research book on intelligence and think tank in China, it fills a gap in the information science area. The book answers several key questions from the perspective of intelligence science, like the connection and differences between intelligence and think tank in the aspects of function, process, method and review. Moreover, it provides new ideas for the mutual learning and cooperative development of current Chinese intelligence institutes and think tanks. And therefore, it builds a solid foundation for future related researches.

Keywords: intelligence; think tank; book review; the era of big data and artificial intelligence

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

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