Functional Positioning and Implementation of Intelligence in Think Tank Construction: Post-Print

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study explores the functional role of intelligence in think tank construction and seeks to expand the scope for development of intelligence research. [Method/Process] Taking the distinctions and connections between think tank functions and intelligence functions as the logical starting point, and examining the intelligence requirements during the early, middle, and late stages of think tank construction, this research investigates the functional positioning of intelligence and its implementation. [Results/Conclusions] Regarding the functional positioning of intelligence for think tank construction, the study examines the integration of intelligence with think tanks and the embedding of intelligence into think tanks. Based on this framework, it analyzes the implementation strategies of intelligence functions in think tank construction from three dimensions: early-stage resource support, middle-stage analytical assistance, and late-stage evaluation assurance. Finally, it discusses the new characteristics of these functions and new approaches to their implementation in the big data environment.

Full Text

Preamble

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Functional Orientation and Realization of Intelligence Studies in Think Tank Construction

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Abstract

[**Purpose/Significance**] This study explores the functional role of intelligence in think tank construction and expands the development space of intelligence research. [**Method/Process**] Taking the differences and connections between think tank functions and intelligence functions as the logical starting point, and examining the demand for intelligence in the early, middle, and later stages of think tank construction, this paper investigates the functional orientation of intelligence and its realization. [**Result/Conclusion**] Regarding the functional orientation of intelligence for think tank construction, the study explores the fusion of intelligence and think tanks and the embedding of intelligence in think tanks. Accordingly, from three aspects—early-stage resource support function, mid-stage analytical auxiliary function, and later-stage evaluation assurance function—the paper analyzes the implementation strategies of intelligence functions in think tank construction. Finally, it discusses the new characteristics of these functions and their new implementation means in the big data environment.

Keywords: think tank; intelligence study; functional orientation; functional realization

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1. Introduction

Overall, China's think tanks suffer from several shortcomings, including outdated data resources, imperfect evaluation systems, lack of knowledge integration capabilities, and a predominance of interpretive research over forward-looking research due to the delayed reference utility of government "mandatory" research assignments [1]. From the perspective of the early construction stage, insufficient data resources directly affect think tanks' macro-level policy control and strategic deployment. During the mid-stage analysis process, the lack of intelligence analysis and integration capabilities causes think tanks to lose operational capacity when facing problem-oriented political decision-making. As for the later-stage output of results, the absence of intelligence assessment capabilities makes it difficult for them to rank among top-tier institutions. Therefore, enhancing think tank capacity building from an intelligence perspective has become imperative.

Intelligence scholars were among the first to pay attention to think tanks, as the function of intelligence institutions to "transform knowledge into wisdom" coincides with the positioning of think tanks. However, due to the low profile of intelligence institutions [2] and the lack of proactivity in intelligence research, which passively accepts commissions from government or enterprises, intelligence has rarely contributed to think tank development. In the internet era with unprecedented information update speeds, the ability to acquire, utilize, and add value to information resources is the prerequisite and foundation for think tanks to

achieve policy consultation, analysis, and knowledge innovation services. Nevertheless, in policy consulting services, think tank experts' information acquisition capabilities, information asymmetry, and dependence on government public information resources remain the biggest obstacles to their public policy research, analysis, and consultation [3]. Additionally, as noted by renowned think tank evaluation expert James McGann, the biggest problem with Chinese think tanks is their "independence"—many think tanks operate like "black holes," unable to achieve broader exchanges and cooperation [4]. In the big data era, the scope of information and knowledge required to support government decision-making continues to expand, while think tanks have comprehensive characteristics that span fields, disciplines, and institutions and require collaborative cooperation. If think tanks lack communication and collaboration among themselves, and if think tanks and other institutions lack cooperation, docking, and coupling, they cannot overcome the limitations caused by the knowledge structure of a single organization or institution.

The strategic origins and competitive soil of intelligence are natural transformation tools for decision-makers, inherently bearing the color of policy consultation and maintaining a seemingly distant but actually close relationship with the government. The traditional functions of intelligence research—information resource construction, information platform building, and technical evaluation services—along with its policy consultation service attributes and prior service experience [5] can undoubtedly fill and remedy the limitations and defects of think tank development. In view of this, intelligence research, which "shares the same aspirations" as think tanks, should appropriately bring its advantages in information resources, information collection, processing, analysis, deep information mining, integration of characteristic data resources, and disciplinary evaluation into full play in think tank construction.

2. Related Research Analysis

Attention to think tanks has expanded the space for intelligence research. Since 2011, intelligence scholars have paid sufficient attention to the correlation between intelligence and think tanks. Current research results can be broadly divided into three categories: The first category concerns the role of intelligence in think tank construction, focusing primarily on the construction of intelligence service systems in think tanks. For example, Professor Wang Shiwei analyzed the front-end role of intelligence work in think tanks from six aspects [6], which can be roughly summarized into three categories: construction of intelligence service entities, development of service products, and design of service methods and content. Similarly, Wu Yuliang analyzed the front-end role of intelligence in think tank construction from three aspects: basic services, recommended services, and evaluation services [7]. The second category involves the analysis of the relationship between intelligence and think tanks, which generally affirms the close connection between intelligence and think tanks in terms of basic functions and internal mechanisms. For instance, Professor Li Gang explored the

relationship between intelligence and think tank construction from four aspects: institutional relationship, external conditions, internal mechanisms, and disciplinary association [8], ultimately confirming a win-win relationship between intelligence and think tanks. Zhang Jianian believes that intelligence work is an important foundation for the operation mechanism of think tanks [9]. The third category concerns the transformation of intelligence services toward think tanks, including both the transformation of basic service models—for example, Professor Huang Ruhua proposed that intelligence services can provide knowledge consulting services, intelligence technical support, information measurement services, and think tank output reuse for think tanks [10]—and research on the transformation of intelligence institutions, such as Professor Wang Yanfei's view that intelligence institutions possess the basic conditions for think tank transformation and may potentially evolve into new types of think tanks suitable for modern decision-making requirements [11].

The aforementioned research results affirm the basic role of intelligence in think tank construction but mostly concentrate on the study of intelligence service content and models. Service content cannot replace service function. Correct functional orientation, based on the design orientation of service content and models, can make service content more systematic and focused. The functional orientation of intelligence is to clarify the unique position and role of intelligence in think tank construction based on the matching of intelligence capabilities with think tank construction demands.

3. Functional Positioning of Intelligence in Think Tank Construction

The functions of think tanks themselves and those of intelligence have both differences and connections. The differences lie in that: when facing the same policy, different types of think tanks will analyze it from different disciplinary perspectives, whereas intelligence research emphasizes a comprehensive analysis without focusing on a specific discipline; intelligence functions emphasize "planning," while think tank functions emphasize "decision-making" [2]; and compared with intelligence, think tanks attach greater importance to the influence of their own functions. These differences constitute the complementary advantages between think tanks and intelligence, promoting the correlation, fusion, and embedding of intelligence in think tanks.

3.1 Correlation Between Intelligence and Think Tanks

Think tanks, also known as think factories or brain trusts, conduct research and consultation on public policy, provide intellectual support and suggestions for decision-makers, and deliver wisdom services to meet the intelligence needs of government and enterprise clients. Therefore, think tanks should fundamentally be decision-making consultation institutions whose core objective is policy research and which require corresponding academic research support [12].

Intelligence institutions, meanwhile, process massive amounts of information to produce high-quality intelligence products that provide information support and assurance for decision-making bodies. In today's information-networked environment, intelligence institutions have further advanced into information mining and deep processing, undertaking tasks such as intelligence services, organization, mining, management, and analysis, covering many fields similar to think tank functions, including sci-tech novelty searches and customized services. Here, the decision-making consultation function of think tanks and the "eyes, ears, and brain" utility of intelligence share the same purpose and are essentially identical.

Throughout history, from the earliest intelligence agency of the Ming Dynasty's Eastern Depot to the Tang Dynasty's Zhongshu Menxia Province that resembled think tank decision-making bodies, the principle of "intelligence serving decision-making" has been followed. In today's U.S. decision-making mechanism, both intelligence agencies and think tanks are relied upon to advise decision-makers. The relationship between intelligence agencies and think tanks is not merely "complementary and mutually restraining"; in the future, they will pursue a relationship of "deep cooperation and mutual benefit." Intelligence is the foundation and guarantee for decision-making formulation, and the function of intelligence agencies is to provide decision-makers with specific intelligence information necessary to support decisions. Think tanks are decision-oriented, and their function is to leverage the utility of "crowdsourced wisdom" to offer suggestions to decision-makers, providing policy research and consultation services for government, enterprise, and other clients. Evidently, think tanks and intelligence are closely related in terms of their functions and their essence of serving decision-making.

Moreover, think tank research tends to focus on applied research, as does intelligence research. Both share application characteristics that are goal-centered and problem-oriented, and their respective features and service concepts are closely associated. Regarding think tank construction and intelligence research, multi-disciplinary and multi-field integration is the disciplinary characteristic and basic requirement for both to fulfill their functional missions. Consequently, intelligence science serves as an important supporting discipline for think tanks, and their disciplinary association is reflected in intelligence's "information presentation" (information organization and utilization), "document representation" (document retrieval and novelty search), "knowledge discovery" (knowledge mining and discovery), and "intelligence reflection" (intelligence analysis and services) in think tank information assurance [8]. In summary, think tanks rely on intelligence resources as strong support for their output, and intelligence products can enhance their influence through think tank promotion. The two not only have a close relationship but also depend on and influence each other alternately, forming a virtuous cycle in disciplinary orientation.

3.2 Fusion of Intelligence and Think Tanks

Think tanks and intelligence have been closely connected since their inception. From the perspective of their service objects, objectives, methods, and mechanisms, the two have always presented a state of perfect integration. The construction of think tanks, due to its dual development tasks of theory and practice, can solve the problem of disconnect between theory and practice in intelligence science and, to some extent, lead the development of intelligence science. The rich resources and diversified disciplinary characteristics of intelligence institutions provide information assurance for think tanks to deliver innovative knowledge and strategic decision-making services, playing a foundational and supportive role in think tank construction. Their fusion is reflected in the ubiquitous presence of intelligence in think tanks' concepts, emergence, and operations:

(1) **Intelligence Capabilities of Think Tanks**. The current call for transforming intelligence institutions into think tanks and the notion that intelligence institutions themselves are think tanks originate from the fact that think tanks inherently possess strong intelligence capabilities. Serving decision-making as an important attribute of think tanks, their capabilities such as perception of the external environment, emergency response to external changes, forward-looking prediction of external situations, acquisition of competitor information, supervision and analysis of competitors, formulation and evaluation of policy strategies, and information security and self-protection are essentially all intelligence capabilities. The two basic functions of intelligence—first, interpretation and explanation, and second, prediction and evaluation—are precisely the essential attributes that think tanks should possess to provide decision-making services. In other words, think tanks have a natural demand for intelligence capabilities.

(2) **Intelligence Activities of Think Tanks**. Internationally renowned and mature think tanks regularly and irregularly provide decision-makers with deep, high-quality "intelligence products." The production process of such scientific and effective "intelligence products" is accompanied by corresponding intelligence activities. The workflow and decision-making strategies of think tanks generally follow the "five-step" principle of in-depth investigation, data collection, analytical research, plan formulation, and continuous attention, which precisely reflects and corresponds to the activity flow of intelligence collection, analysis, and services, emphasizing the accumulation and integration of dispersed intelligence. With the increasing development of information networks, intelligence products have extended toward integration, electronics, and networking, gradually being refined into "primary," "secondary," and "tertiary" products, as well as "thought-type" and "information-type" products. Think tanks have consequently formed their own relatively mature intelligence product systems, research methods, and formation mechanisms to support decision-making

demands [13]. In this environment, think tank intelligence activities have also expanded into cyberspace, risk management, public opinion monitoring, and other fields, continuously filling, activating, accumulating, and updating existing intelligence banks to avoid the absence of critical intelligence. Intelligence activities play a key role in supporting the effective output of think tank products and services.

(3) **Intelligence Mechanisms of Think Tanks**. The internal mechanisms of think tanks involve functions such as strategic policy advice, social opinion guidance, and high-end talent reserves [8]. High-end, excellent think tanks enhance the effectiveness of their mechanisms through a broad intelligence vision. In other words, the effective performance of think tanks' policy advisory and public enlightenment services must rely on the integration and improvement of intelligence mechanisms. The core of think tanks' internal mechanisms is influence, which depends on the quality of their products and services. Quality assurance is built upon the foundation of intelligence product demand, design, collection, analysis, processing, evaluation, and utilization. Thus, the intelligence mechanism of think tanks is an embodiment of the entire process of intelligence product design and development [14]. To ensure the effective performance of think tanks' internal mechanisms, the intervention and integration of intelligence mechanisms must be strengthened.

3.3 Embedding of Intelligence in Think Tanks

As mentioned above, think tanks and intelligence have a close relationship and deep origins. In today's rapidly developing information network environment, traditional think tanks need to leverage the embedding of intelligence to intervene at the front end of think tank work, analyze at the mid-stage, and improve at the back end, playing a role that keeps pace with the times and helping think tanks adapt to the knowledge demands of the new era of big data and Internet Plus. The new environment creates new demands. Traditional intelligence research that provides theoretical guidance for think tank construction through literature investigation and analysis, helping them lock in research fields and focus on hot issues, can no longer satisfy the broad-perspective knowledge service and decision-making demands that future think tanks face. Intelligence research has increasingly embedded its own concepts, elements, mechanisms, methods, technologies, and services into think tank research and work, gradually strengthening the effective combination of the intelligence discipline framework with think tank construction.

(1) **Embedding of Intelligence in Think Tank Construction**. The most basic need of think tanks is for information and intelligence resources. Intelligence science can provide sources such as strategic, military, patent, competitive, and public opinion intelligence, creating convenient channels for think tanks to engage in dialogue with the outside world. Using its "fully functional information collection and analysis system," it first be-

comes the information bank, knowledge bank, and intelligence bank for think tanks [15], serving as the foundation and guarantee for think tank construction. In addition, intelligence's collection, organization, analysis, and utilization of documents, information, and knowledge comprehensively intervenes in think tank construction in aspects such as project analysis and research, product quality monitoring, decision value evaluation, and outcome preservation and assessment.

(2) **Embedding of Intelligence in Think Tank Research**. This embedding approach is reflected in the integration of intelligence research tools, methods, technologies, and services into think tank research. For example, quantitative and qualitative information methods and tools in intelligence research, such as informetrics and webometrics, information analysis, and data mining, are advantageous supports for think tanks to assess situations, interpret hot issues, and even evaluate think tanks. Emerging personalized services in intelligence research, such as information customization and push services, embedded in think tank research can help think tanks study issues like futurology and signal discovery, which are connected with the internal mechanisms of intelligence and think tanks. In terms of information retrieval, the embedding of intelligence can meet think tank research needs through information representation, resource allocation, and search result prioritization technologies. In the field of knowledge management, think tanks' innovative knowledge service models and mechanisms for integrating expert wisdom give them inherent knowledge attributes. Brookes' "knowledge equation" reminds us that the high-quality output of think tank products must rely on the embedding of intelligence research through knowledge organization, knowledge utilization, and knowledge creation. Additionally, the dynamic evolution of think tank domain expert teams from a knowledge management perspective is also worthy of monitoring and attention by intelligence research.

(3) **Embedding of Intelligence in Think Tank Operations**. Almost all renowned and excellent think tanks have their own various thematic and characteristic databases, such as RAND Corporation's thematic database "RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents" and thematic methodology library "California Air Pollution Mapping Tool" [16]. This is the most basic embedding approach of intelligence in think tank operations. Moreover, in the organizational structures of various think tanks worldwide, the establishment of specialized information and intelligence service departments and full-time information coordination supervisors, the construction of thematic network information platforms and databases, and the publication of various intelligence products have become important components of think tank work [6]. The front-end support of intelligence for think tank operations is a universal trend and law in the development of globally renowned think tanks. The embedding of intelligence in think tank operations not only provides support and assurance for the data, resources, and decision-making needed by think

tanks but also demonstrates the high-quality, high-end hard power of think tanks.

4. Realization of Intelligence Functions in Think Tank Construction

The complete think tank activity and workflow can be summarized into three steps: early-stage resource acquisition and information collection, mid-stage policy research and decision analysis, and later-stage plan formulation and idea output. This process actually embeds the intelligence processing workflow. Think tank information resources typically come from investigation and research, experimental research, various open data sources, and database resources of library and intelligence institutions [17], which requires drawing on intelligence collection strategies and techniques. Providing decision-making consultation services for government departments is the core function and business capability of intelligence work [18], which strongly guarantees policy research and decision analysis in think tanks. The final products of think tanks are strategic decision-making and innovative knowledge services, while decision formation and knowledge innovation follow the evolution path and laws of the information chain in intelligence theory [9]. From this perspective, the three stages of the think tank workflow sequentially require the support of intelligence resource acquisition function, intelligence analysis and processing function, and intelligence evaluation and utilization function.

4.1 Early-Stage Resource Support Function of Intelligence for Think Tanks

A large amount of information, resources, and data is the prerequisite for think tanks to carry out consulting work, especially for the implementation of big science and big engineering projects, which requires think tanks to fully leverage their information resources and intellectual capital advantages [19]. Intelligence research can play an early-stage supporting role through resource construction, information activation, provision of intelligence products, and construction of intelligence information networks. Well-known foreign think tanks have their own characteristic thematic databases. For example, the RAND Corporation in the United States has developed the CalWORKs dataset, Background Data Library, Public Health Reserve Database, RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident Database, and RAND Jihadist Sound Database [20]. In China, policy analysis lacking "big data" awareness causes think tank resources to always rely on external statistical data, with insufficient sensitivity to the long-term accumulation and development of thematic data. Intelligence research can guide information construction according to think tanks' information needs, reserve resources, and provide guarantees for think tank construction.

First, based on specific think tank needs, original characteristic thematic databases for policy analysis can be built to accumulate primary data and

information. Second, the secondary information and regular data generated and produced during think tank operations should be effectively organized and preserved for the accumulation of regenerated data and information. Finally, "sharing platforms" should be developed and made public, "intelligence source" channels should be opened, and think tanks' public influence should be enhanced. Helping think tanks build knowledge banks, thought banks, and strategy banks, and continuously tracking, updating, and accumulating these thematic data, the next step is to activate the reserved data and information, mining both explicit and implicit information from available resources. This requires intelligence personnel to grasp the macro-development trends of the nation and science and technology, adopt a problem-oriented approach, strengthen their grasp of information laws, and innovate applicable intelligence analysis methods and tools according to the distinctive characteristics of problems. The foundation of information construction and the processing of information activation are both aimed at forming information products. Products generated from intelligence analysis, such as research reports, analysis reports, newsletters, announcements, and annual reports, can not only support the early-stage construction of think tanks but also serve as important components of the think tanks' own series of research outcomes. In addition, building international intelligence information networks and constructing think tank decision support systems are also development trends for high-end think tanks. For example, besides its headquarters in California, the Stanford Research Institute has offices in Washington, New Jersey, the Middle East, Japan, and Hong Kong, China [21]. Intelligence research can better support think tank intelligence services by constructing global information networks and decision support systems.

In the big data era, intelligence support for think tanks is developing toward standardization, processization, collaboration, and integration, and think tank intelligence sources have expanded to all available network, data, and human resources. The acquisition and utilization of massive and heterogeneous information in the big data environment, as well as the sharing and fusion of multi-source information, have become advantages of intelligence support for think tank resources. Think tank construction can leverage intelligence methods to conduct full-sample analysis to discover new variables in current policy changes under big data environments, excavate explicit correlations among unrelated variable data, and mine more causal explanation mechanisms to improve the timeliness and scientific nature of think tank products [22]. Moreover, the sharing, utilization, and phased management of big data resources have become key to intelligence support for the construction of think tank decision-making systems and information processing centers. Helping think tanks build, accumulate over the long term, and continuously track knowledge banks and thematic databases can transform intelligence's information advantages into think tanks' decision-making advantages, enhance the quality of their ideas and decision-making influence, and help think tanks achieve scientific decision-making services at different levels [23].

4.2 Mid-Stage Analytical Auxiliary Function of Intelligence for Think Tanks

Beyond the foundation of early-stage resource construction, the effective performance of intelligence functions in think tank construction is also reflected in providing research and analysis services through its own technical methods and statistical tools to help meet government decision-making needs. The mature methodological system and excellent computational tradition of intelligence research provide powerful auxiliary support for think tank decision analysis, enabling think tanks' analytical tools and research methods to break through the limitations of traditional bibliometrics and patent analysis. Through research methods such as context awareness, PEST, decision trees, hierarchical analysis, and visualization, think tanks can address problem-oriented knowledge discovery, knowledge reasoning, public opinion monitoring, and information extraction. Big data-based intelligence analysis tools and technologies have been continuously integrated into think tank construction, such as HPCC, Pentaho BI, Splunk, Apache Drill, Hadoop, etc. These tools, on the one hand, expand the breadth and depth of think tank intelligence functions, and on the other hand, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of think tanks' intelligence analysis research. Furthermore, for important decision-making consultation and deployment research, the fusion and collaborative analysis of intelligence research and think tanks in terms of methodology conform to current research paradigms of scientific and technological innovation, not only achieving complementary advantages but also optimizing think tanks' decision support mechanisms. Intelligence research on contexts and strategic environments, as well as dual analysis of technology and humanistic contexts, promotes the expansion of think tanks' interactive intelligence functions under humanistic concepts. Real-time analysis and prediction of data by intelligence research have high-value suitability for think tanks' short-term decision support, especially for deliberate and dynamic emergency situations, and can enhance the precise, reliable, yet timely demands placed on think tanks' capabilities by policy consultation.

4.3 Later-Stage Evaluation Assurance Function of Intelligence for Think Tanks

Think tanks produce practical knowledge for society and serve government decision-making, a function derived from the creative labor of "thought output" and "knowledge innovation." Therefore, their production outcomes must be based on objective, scientific, and comprehensive intelligence analysis for evidence and assurance. Intelligence analysis that provides later-stage assurance for think tank research outcomes involves complex correlations of contextuality and humanism, the realization of which requires judgment based on experts' knowledge and wisdom. As a platform for outputting ideas, decisions, and knowledge, think tanks also need to absorb experts from different disciplinary backgrounds, as valuable and in-depth suggestions from high-level experts are the basic guarantee of think tank brands. Evidently, the assurance function of

intelligence for think tanks has inherent suitability and a sense of mission. To produce research products that respond quickly to decision-makers and achieve the fusion of their behavior and attributes, the support of an intelligence assurance system is essential.

While big data-based intelligence analysis can indeed trace the patterns and origins of events, data resources and technical methods only provide an integrated platform for think tank intelligence products from a front-end perspective. The wisdom needed for the later-stage construction of think tanks, decision-making plans with foresight and insight, and in-depth interpretation should also rely on intelligence decisions brought about by experts' intelligence literacy and awareness. The collective wisdom and collaborative efforts of experts are the key guarantee for producing high-quality think tank products. China's unique cultural background has long caused controversy over whether think tanks should serve "decision-making" or "decision-makers." Solving interference issues such as the "politicization of intelligence" in think tanks and avoiding decision dissemination that caters to superior preferences in a "leadership-only" manner is key to intelligence's later-stage assurance for think tanks [25]. Specific practical measures should also rely on intelligence to assist in the construction of expert think tanks, establishing two types of expert team models: internal training and external hiring, gathering elite experts across backgrounds, disciplines, professions, industries, fields, regions, and forms, constructing high-quality and perfect team resource combinations, and building interactive platforms for expert wisdom sharing and collision to achieve optimal selection of problem solutions and realize interconnection and interaction between intelligence producers and decision-makers. Intelligence can provide services such as execution team optimization, performance evaluation measures, assurance mechanism construction, and expert weight ranking to guarantee the construction of think tanks' expert databases and achieve the mutual strengthening and balance between research and policy similar to the U.S. "revolving door" mechanism. Additionally, an important function of intelligence's later-stage assurance for think tank construction is the later-stage supervision and evaluation of think tank research outcomes. A scientific and reasonable evaluation system is an essential tool for optimizing think tanks' social functions and ensuring effective organizational output. Only by accurately positioning think tanks' social functions, achieving reasonable expectations, and reasonably evaluating think tanks' level, impartiality, objectivity, and scientific nature can think tanks be guided toward neutral, objective, and professional development [26]. Intelligence can leverage its advantages in situational analysis and competitive comparison analysis in the evaluation field of think tanks, exploring diversified think tank and outcome evaluation indicator systems for different think tanks and outcome types, laying a foundation for evaluating future think tank construction effectiveness. Intelligence research's traditional expertise can be introduced to conduct quantitative evaluation of think tank reports, calculating think tank product output and click-through rates to measure think tank scale and influence; qualitative evaluation of think tanks' participation in international affairs conferences and

decision-making activities, focusing on think tanks' promotional activities and attention levels; and using research methods to test the effectiveness of think tank reports, based on examining the factual authenticity and objectivity of report viewpoints and suggestions to evaluate the credibility and scientific nature of research products and reports [27].

From a developmental perspective, the construction of China's new-type think tanks must possess intelligence capabilities and vision. As think tank construction faces the big data-ization of intelligence sources, diversification of intelligence channels, automation of information processing, and collaboration of operational mechanisms, intelligence functions are gradually penetrating and integrating into think tank operational mechanisms [28]. By providing services such as data acquisition, processing, organization, preservation, and presentation, knowledge consulting services, intellectual resource reuse, measurement methods for evaluation systems, and performance management, intelligence can integrate its characteristic functions into think tank construction [10], highlighting the importance of intelligence work in the early, middle, and later stages of think tank construction, and helping think tanks enhance their influence and establish social credibility. On the one hand, it can effectively play its foundational supporting role; on the other hand, it can participate as a core force in think tank policy consultation services.

Therefore, future intelligence work should focus on three aspects: First, transform intelligence institutions into important national think tanks. Among the 602 institutions included in the Chinese Think Tank Index, fewer than 5 are intelligence institutions [29], and most provincial intelligence institutions are not included. Going forward, provincial intelligence institutions should systematically review their service functions, pay closer attention to political, economic, and scientific and technological development trends, be adept at predicting and discovering strategic needs and major issues in various fields, and strengthen their management transformation in think tank mode through departmental reorganization, institutional mechanism construction, and service capacity building. Second, intelligence research should strengthen its ability to analyze factual data and policy documents. On the one hand, intelligence research should emphasize the analysis of factual data such as numerical data, laws and regulations data, news report data, directory data, scientific research output data, technology output data, and government and enterprise R&D investment data [30] to provide data support for think tank decision-making. On the other hand, intelligence research should closely monitor policy documents across fields, levels, and regions, conduct in-depth mining and correlation analysis, and provide strategic support for think tank decision-making. Third, strengthen the platform-based construction of intelligence services and enhance their influence through brand building and proactive awareness cultivation.

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Li Pin: Conceptualization and writing;
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Functional Orientation and Realization of Intelligence Studies in the Construction of Think Tank

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Abstract: [Purpose/Significance] To explore the function of intelligence stud-

ies in think tank and expand the development space of intelligence studies. [Method/Process] This paper made a logical starting point of difference and relation between think tank function and intelligence function, took the demand for intelligence at the earlier stage, medium-term and later stages of think tank construction as the analysis objects, and explored functional orientation and realization of intelligence studies. [Result/Conclusion] This paper analyzed the functional orientation of intelligence studies in think tank construction, including the fusion of intelligence and think tanks and the embedding of intelligence in the development of think tanks. Besides, it explores the realization strategies of intelligence function in think tank construction from three aspects, which including pre-period resource support function, mid-term auxiliary function and post-period assessment function. Finally, it discusses the new features of the above three functions and their new implementation strategy in big data environment.

Keywords: think tank; intelligence study; functional orientation; functional realization

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