

Embracing Scientific Decision Making: The Rise of Think Tank Policy in China

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Abstract

Increasingly complex domestic and international affairs have pushed the Chinese government to seek think tanks' intellectual support for "scientific policy making." While a number of authors have explored the mechanisms through which Chinese think tanks influence policy making, little is known about how the Chinese central authorities gradually came to accept and to promote the idea to construct "New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics" (NTTCC), i.e. the current policy line on domestic think tank development. Against the backdrop of the evolution of think tanks in China since the beginning of economic reform and opening-up in 1978, this paper traces the development of the new policy line on think tanks and its underlying ideas. The concept of think tanks got introduced into Chinese academic discourse in the 1990s, which also saw the start of studies on such organizations in China. Scholars increasingly considered how Chinese think tanks could explore their own distinct developmental approach, rather than just following Western templates, while global think tank rankings encouraged Chinese domestic think tanks compete with each other. The Global Financial Crisis also made the Chinese leadership realize the shortage of high quality policy analysis by existing think tanks. A window of opportunity for a new policy on think tanks finally opened up when new President Xi Jinping embraced in 2013 a research report on think tanks by the Development Research Center of the State Council. By late 2015, the new policy had led to the selection of 25 "pilot top think tanks" endowed with substantial top-up government funding in support of their research.

Keywords: think tanks, China, internal reference, academic advocacy, policymaking process

Introduction

Scholars have paid increasing attention to the roles of think tanks in the policymaking process over the recent decades.¹ Unlike the traditional think tank research that focuses only on the Anglo-Saxon political culture, emerging literature has acknowledged that the developmental patterns of think tanks vary in different political systems.² Think tanks tend to behave differently in distinct policy fields, such as foreign affairs and social policies.³ Despite the emerging literature, few studies explore the roles of think tanks in advocating for policies regarding themselves. This article aims to fill the research gap by demonstrating the policy-making process concerning the think tank policy that emerged in China. The rise and fall of think

tanks in contemporary China have been essentially regarded as the consequences attributed to the dynamics of state–society relations, in which the Communist Party of China (CPC) either relaxed or tightened its control over ideological domains. Since initiating the reform and opening-up policy, Chinese think tanks gradually emerged in the relatively relaxed political environment.⁴ However, after the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 initiated by a number of non-establishment think tanks,⁵ the Chinese government strengthened its supervision of the ideological sphere. Consequently, few new think tanks were established.⁶ In 1992, the southern tour speech of Deng Xiaoping deeply transformed the relationship between the party state and political public sphere.⁷ Non-establishment, independent, and private think tanks mushroomed and did not lack the space to express viewpoints in the traditional policy decision-making system in China.⁸ Extensive research has found the increasingly important roles played by Chinese think tanks in different systems and policy fields.⁹

Different from the past developmental trajectory of Chinese think tanks driven by the relaxation of ideological environment, think tank development has been recently promoted by policies targeted at think tanks although the ideological sphere seemed to be more tightened now than before. The Chinese leadership has specifically highlighted the construction of think tanks in China since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012. During the Central Economic Work conference in 2012, Chinese Party Chief Xi Jinping stated his intention to build a robust mechanism of decision and consultation and construct quality think tanks to assist in decision making. On April 15, 2013, Xi Jinping made significant instructions on the construction of Chinese think tanks. The decision made at the Third Plenary Session of 18th CPC Central Committee further demanded “to strengthen the construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics (NTTTCC) and build a robust mechanism of decision and consultation.” Strengthening NTTTCC can be regarded as an important strategic move to push the national modern governance system and capability. Both theoretical and practical circles in China were elated as “Chinese think tanks welcome a new spring of development.”¹⁰

Nevertheless, how the Chinese government gradually paid attention to, accepted the concept of “think tanks,” and formed the policy on NTTTCC remains unknown. This article regards a series of actions associated to the development of think tanks by the Chinese government as a typical policy-making process, in which think tanks and experts engaged in advocacy for think tank development. We further argues that the proposal and rise of NTTTCC policy are attributed to the interactions of multiple internal and external factors for a long period that triggered to open the window of opportunity.

In the following sections of this paper, we will first briefly summarize the history of the Chinese central authorities gradually came to accept the idea of think tanks in the policy making process since the beginning of economic reform and opening-up in 1978. In the next section, we will illustrate how the concept of think tanks got introduced into Chinese academic discourse in the 1990s. Furthermore, scholars debated how Chinese think tanks could explore their own distinct developmental approach, rather than just following Western templates. Then, we will further discuss

three stimuli that helped open the window of opportunity for a new policy on think tanks, such as the popularity of think tank rankings, the Global Financial Crisis, and an internal research report on think tanks by the Development Research Center of the State Council submitted to the Chinese top leadership. Finally, we will explore the developmental course of the new think tank policy and upgraded think tank management system after the Chinese government has decided to construct “New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics.” By late 2015, the new policy had led to the selection of 25 ‘pilot top think tanks’ endowed with substantial top-up government funding in support of their research, which demonstrate the new think tank management system has been primarily established in China.

Summoning Chinese Think Tanks

Chinese think tanks are stable, autonomous organizations that investigate policy issues to influence the policy-making process.¹¹ These organizations have gradually become important and active policy making actors in contemporary China.¹² Some milestones separate the entire developmental history of Chinese think tanks into several periods.

1978–1992

In the beginning of reform and opening-up, with the efforts to shift toward the strategic center of economic construction, the Chinese government increased the demand for professionals and technocrats¹³ and urgently required think tanks to provide consultations and suggestions for policy making in economic fields and political domains.¹⁴ Many leaders, such as Deng Xiaoping, paid significant attention to the recovery of many research institutes in social sciences. Deng Xiaoping supported the State Council’s Rural Development Research Center led by Du Runsheng. Du Runsheng’s field surveys and policy suggestions on rural reform have been regarded as a “saga” of a think tank that participated in the reform of “household responsibility system.”¹⁵ At the National Soft Science Research Forum in 1986, Vice Premier Wan Li put forward an issue of building a perfect decision-making consultant system, emphasizing that all policy research institutes and advisory institutes (at that time, soft science research organizations) should gather experts and advisers with different expertise and experiences to complement the shortage of decision makers’ personal talent, experience, and vigor.¹⁶ During this period, the 13th CPC National Congress and the Sixth Plenary Session of 13th CPC Central Committee respectively elaborated the party’s major decision-making mechanisms and sound democratic and scientific decision-making. With the establishment and progress of Sino-US diplomatic relations, the opportunity and space in China for participating in international affairs expanded.¹⁷ China has also improved its analysis of the diplomatic policies of different countries under the new situation with the help of foreign affair think tanks.¹⁸

The new problems faced by Chinese decision makers prompted them to pay attention to the studies on think tanks in the fields of economic, scientific, and diplomatic policy. For example, the Chinese central government established the

Development Research Center of the State Council and other think tanks to facilitate the development of national economic strategies and policies.

Under the Deng Xiaoping era in the 1980s, the Chinese non-establishment think tanks gradually emerged in the relatively relaxed political environment. Non-establishment think tanks acquired spaces to publish books, discuss many social problems (even those including political reform), and hold conferences, seminars, meetings, and short-term training courses.¹⁹ However, a number of these non-establishment think tanks attempted to mobilize student protests and elitist democratic movements, which finally developed into the Tiananmen Square Incident.²⁰ After the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, the Chinese Government strengthened its ideological controls and relatively few new think tank organizations were set up, while some existing think tanks were closed. As a result, between the late 1980s and early 1990s, think tanks in China experienced a two-year period of silence until the southern tour speech of Deng Xiaoping.²¹

1992–2002

In the Jiang Zemin era, China had gradually established a market economy system with Chinese characteristics. During this period, the report of the 14th CPC National Congress stated that scientific and democratic decision making is a key link to implement the democratic centralism in which all kinds of experts and research and consultation institutions should participate. In 1997, the report of the 15th CPC National Congress stated that major reforms and development decisions, as well as legislation, should gradually form a decision-making mechanism in which the feelings, opinions, and wisdom of the public are deeply understood, adequately reflected, and extensively pooled, respectively.

With the motivation of opening-up and liberation of thoughts, China has gradually participated in the international trade and division of labor extensively. The global economic integration has brought opportunities to Chinese economic development as well as new challenges in Chinese national strategy. Investigated from a domestic economic reform perspective, the restructuring of state-owned enterprises was then a major issue in building a Chinese socialist market economy. A large number of state-owned enterprises faced a serious problem of “laid off workers,” and the potential social conflicts were the problems challenging the national government.²² Market-oriented reforms in social welfare imposed multiple stresses on rural and urban low-income groups with regard to difficult access to schooling, medical treatment, and employment, which challenged the social and economic development in China.²³

The emergence of these problems demanded policy research institutions with expertise and experience to provide the decision reference for the social problems during the rapid economic development so as to exert a “stabilizer” role of the social policies.²⁴ During this period, many semi-official, university-based, and non-governmental think tanks, such as the Social Policy Research Center of China Academy of Social Science, the China Center of Economic Research at Peking University, the Unirule Institute of Economics, and China Economists 50 Forum were

founded researching on macroeconomic and social policy issues.

2002–2012

In the Hu Jintao era that began in 2002, the report of the 16th CPC National Congress stated that the expert consultation system must be improved, and investigation and accountability systems should be implemented during decision making. After the 16th CPC National Congress, the Chinese Communist Party leaders increased their attention on soliciting decision reference and consulting think tanks for the major decisions. On December 26, 2002, the Political Bureau of CPC Central Committee held the first collective learning. President Hu Jintao stressed that the collective learning system in the Political Bureau “must be adhered as a long-term system.” According to statistics, the 16th Central Political Bureau conducted collective learning 44 times; the 17th Central Political Bureau, 48 times. This system has been inherited by the 18th Central Political Bureau.²⁵ In 2007, the 17th CPC National Congress report primarily emphasized that think tanks should play a role in national decision making²⁶.

However, new social problems emerged with the extensive economic development. One of the salient problems is the dilemma in economic development and environmental protection. The complaints of the public on the deteriorating environment and environmental disputes posed external social pressures and drove the Chinese government to increase their attention on environmental protection.²⁷ In this context, China gradually increased the demand for decision and consultation from think tanks in environmental protection aspects. Many think tanks specializing in ecological and environmental aspects, such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (under the Ministry of Environmental Protection), the Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning (under the Ministry of Environmental Protection), and the Urban Development and Environmental Research Center (the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), have played important roles in the environmental governance in China.

The global financial crisis in 2008 and its aftermath largely influenced the overall development of Chinese export-oriented industrial and macro economy. These factors and the problems associated with the previous economic development process were intertwined to highlight the seriousness of complexity and uncertainty in national economic prediction and decision making. Considering the misjudgment of domestic think tank experts on the financial crisis in 2008, the decision-making leaders realized that the existing think tanks lacked progressive policy research.²⁸ The international community was also urging China to play a critical role. China needed think tanks to update the country’s international influence and provide intellectual support for the country to participate in global economic governance. As a result, the China Center for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE) was founded in 2009 as an international economic research, exchange, and advisory service institution, which is known as the “top-level think tank” because it was initiated by Zeng Peiyan, the former vice premier of the State Council.

The rise of Chinese think tanks can be perceived as a response to create a

scientific policy decision making process for the Chinese national government over the past decades. The Chinese leadership has increasingly demanded high level think tanks to conduct high quality studies to improve decision making, construct the national soft power, and participate in “track II diplomacy.”

Domestic Theoretical Discussions

As the Chinese government gradually embraces the concept of think tanks, advocacy by public policy scholars in domestic universities and think tanks as well as foreign think tank research communities has played distinct albeit equally important roles. Since the 1990s, Chen Zhenming, Xue Lan, and Ding Huang introduced the concept of think tanks into Chinese academic circle and launched the studies on think tanks in China.²⁹ Afterward, scholars in public policy, international relations, and information science began to research the think tanks systematically. Most of these researchers were decision and consultation expert members at different levels of central and local governments. Professor Xue Lan was the most typical scholar. In April 2003, Professor Xue Lan gave a lecture at the collective learning event of the CPC Political Bureau and also participated in the State Council’s expert forum for the economic situation in October 2003. These scholars performed both as the introducers of the concept of think tanks to the Chinese society and the experts in think tanks proposing policy suggestion to the government.

Under this context, the Chinese academic circle began to explore the operation and influence of think tanks on the policy-making process from several perspectives. Zhu Xufeng studied the social functions,³⁰ influences,³¹ internationalization, and roles in “track II diplomacy” of Chinese think tanks.³² Wang Lili investigated the “revolving door mechanism” of American think tanks³³ and emphasized the intelligent capital and think tank competitiveness during the establishment of think tanks in China.³⁴ Many think tankers, such as Hu Angang³⁵ and Wang Wen, advocated the practical experiences and policy suggestions on quality think tanks.³⁶ The theoretical research on Chinese think tanks deepened the awareness of modern think tank operation among the scholars, think tanks, and policy-making sectors.

Theoretical studies on and practical development of think tanks in China have been increasingly strengthened through comparison with foreign think tanks. No studies and comparisons based on the think tank practices in China can avoid the issues of independence and influence of think tanks. The domestic and foreign scholars have argued the merit of independence of Western think tanks and believed that the largest problem of Chinese think tanks is the lack of independence from the CPC and the government.³⁷ The conceptual definition of Chinese think tanks always leads to the question how many “real” think tanks exist in China.³⁸

Different from the general opinion on the relationship between independence and influence, Zhu Xufeng argued that autonomy and neutral point of view are the basic preconditions for a think tank, rather than independence. A policy research institute with certain autonomy (it can decide on the mission, scope, and period of research to undertake by itself) can be identified as a “think tank” even though it is non-independent from the political party or the government.³⁹ He further emphasized

that the influence and independence are a common value that the think tank pursues, which are not contradictory but complementary. On one hand, independence is the basis of influence, and well-maintained independence can obtain the trust of government and society for great influence. On the other hand, influential think tanks can increase the demand for knowledge products, eliminate single financial source, and further promote independence.⁴⁰ Such judgments brought the dilemma to the theoretical and practical circles of Chinese think tanks who used to question the issues of independence. Consequently, the academia started to consider that Chinese think tanks can explore their distinct developmental approach rather than pursuing the ones employed by think tanks in Western countries.⁴¹ Domestic theoretical discussions on independence and developmental approach of Chinese think tanks became the basis of the policy concept of think tanks with Chinese characteristics.

The Stimulus from Global Think Tank Rankings

Another external factor that pushed the Chinese government and the society to highlight think tanks was the global ranking report of think tanks. The think tank rating team led by James McGann from the University of Pennsylvania has begun to publish Global Think Tank Report since 2008. In early 2009, the 2008 Global Think Tank Report was released, which firstly ranked Chinese think tanks and was initially concerned with Chinese think tank practice and academic circles. The annual report showed that the current total number of global think tanks was 5465. Among these think tanks, 1777 were from the USA, followed by the UK and Germany with 283 and 186 think tanks, respectively. India housed 121 think tanks, India ranking top in Asia, followed by Japan with 105; China had only 74 recognized think tanks.⁴² The number of think tanks in China was rather lower than expected.

The attention on think tanks has led to its expansion. With the improvement of the methodology,⁴³ in 2010, the 2009 Global Think Tank Report counted 425 Chinese think tanks in total and ranked some top Chinese think tanks in different policy fields. Since the 2010 Report, the number of Chinese think tanks has been stable between 420 and 430, indicating that the Chinese think tank community has grown to become the second largest one in the world. Nevertheless, the report contended that the capability and influence of individual Chinese think tanks were at relatively lower levels than those in other countries.

The report stimulated competition between Chinese domestic think tanks. Top-ranked think tanks capitalized on their good standing and widely publicized their rankings in promotional materials and on their websites, whereas low-ranked ones criticize the evaluating methodology. Despite the poor ranking methodology, the University of Pennsylvania's Global Think Tank Report has drawn much attention to Chinese think tanks from the mass media and the public.

Moreover, the report was frequently quoted and used to analyze the difference between Chinese and world's well-known think tanks by most Chinese think tank researchers and practitioners. The Global Think Tank Report allowed the Chinese society to deepen their understanding of the shortcomings of Chinese think tanks. The report was also conducive for scholars and practitioners to reflect on how to improve

the development level and influence of Chinese think tanks. The report had become an external stimulus for agenda setting of think tank policy and become a driver of the Chinese government to strengthen the construction of think tanks.

With the stimuli of the Global Think Tank Report on the theoretical and practical circles of Chinese think tanks and the reflection to the poor methodology of the Report, some Chinese think tanks attempted to carry out their own research and evaluation reports on think tanks. The Think Tank Research Center of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences began to focus on ranking and development for Chinese think tanks and ranking methods for think tanks. The center released the first domestic “Chinese Think Tank Report—ranking of influence and policy recommendations” in January 2014. The Chinese Think Tank Report intended to extend the study on Chinese think tanks, comprehensively understanding the status quo, characteristics, problems, and bottlenecks of Chinese think tank development, to increase attention on Chinese think tank’s survival conditions and further improve the decision-making consultation system in China.⁴⁴

Since then, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Academy of Social Sciences of Sichuan Province, and the Research Institute of the Zero Survey Group have successively released think tank evaluation reports with different styles. For example, the evaluation report by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has expanded the think tank rankings from domestic think tanks to the world, with the apparent intention of competition for the right to speak on global think tank evaluation against James McGann’s Global Think Tank Report. The Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences realized a think tank evaluation report focusing on “think tank influence within Great China,” including think tanks in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. As an enterprise non-governmental think-tank, the Zero Research Institute launched a “Chinese Think Tank Influence Report” in 2014 based mainly on objective data searched from the Internet, rather than on the methodology of subjective evaluation used in think tank reports by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and the University of Pennsylvania.

Despite the varying degrees of methodological deficits, the aforementioned think tank ranking reports by different agencies had positive significance to increase the number of Chinese think tanks who are knowledgeable of the gap from well-known think tanks overseas. Such reflection was helpful to the theoretical and practical circles of Chinese think tanks to understand how to enhance the levels of development and the influence of Chinese think tanks.

The Internal Report that Opened a Window of Opportunity

Xi Jinping, the current Chinese party chief and president, pays considerable attention on the development of Chinese think tanks. The official report of the 18th CPC National Congress put forward the adherence to the scientific and democratic policy decision making and legislation by ensuring that decision-making mechanisms and procedures are robust and encouraging think tanks to play significant roles. At the central economic work conference in December 2012, Xi Jinping emphasized the building of a robust mechanism of decision making and consultation as well as

construction of quality think tanks with the goal of facilitating decision making.

In this context, the Development Research Center of the State Council, a high-ranked official think tank, submitted the internal report “Suggestions on Accelerating Construction of Policy Consultation Think Tanks in New Ages in China,”⁴⁵ and the internal report carried out the instructions of Xi Jinping on April 15, 2013.

Xi Jinping’s instruction pointed out that “Think tanks are important components of the soft power of a country and play an increasingly critical role with the changing situations. We must pay considerable attention to and actively explore the organizational patterns and management mechanisms of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics.” This incident was the first time a Chinese decision maker proposed the concept of “NTTTCC,” which highlights that think tanks are important components of the soft power of a country, implying that think tanks should help spread Chinese idea and exhibit the image of responsible power in international forum.⁴⁶ Xi Jinping’s instructions prompted the Chinese central leadership to focus on the issues concerning the construction of think tanks. Li Keqiang, Liu Yunshan, Liu Yandong, and other leaders followed the instructions; the government and the whole society attended to the construction of Chinese think tanks.

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in October 2013 issued the “Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reform,” which highlighted “strengthening the NTTTCC construction and building a robust sound decision and consultation system.” The decision also called for formulating a national, modern governance system and enhancing governance capability. After the Third Plenary Session of 18th CPC Central Committee, the Xi administration has carried out a series of important reforms to the policy-making system, including setting up the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms. Helmed by Xi himself, the Central Leading Group is in charge of “designing reform on an overall basis, arranging and coordinating reform, pushing forward reform as a whole, and supervising the implementation of reform plans.”⁴⁷

The Sixth Session of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms on October 27, 2014 deliberated and approved the “Opinions on Strengthening NTTTCC Construction.” Xi Jinping stressed, “We should focally build a number of high-end think tanks with considerable and international influence and pay attention to the construction of professional think tanks.”⁴⁸ On January 20, 2015, the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued “The Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics” (i.e., the “Opinions”).⁴⁹ The “Opinions” redefined and classified Chinese think tanks into seven categories: think tanks affiliated with party and government departments, academies of social sciences, schools of party and administration, universities, militaries, science and technological research institutes, and enterprises and social organizations. The “Opinions” also targets the establishment of several highly influential and internationally well-known top think tanks by 2020 and aims for Chinese think tanks to play important roles in consultative

suggestions, theoretical innovation, public opinion guidance, social services, and public diplomacy. The document also proposes the establishment of 50-100 national top think tanks and the selection of a few think tanks in different policy fields and regions as pilot think tanks. As a general policy document, the “Opinions” did not provide details as to how these objectives can be achieved.

Since the issues of Chinese think tanks are essentially related to the development of social sciences and ideology, the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee has been designated as the key agency in charge. Other bureaucracies involved include party school, education, and military sectors. In 2015, the Central Propaganda Department was reviewing and shortlisting all candidates of pilot think tanks. In November 2015, the 18th meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms approved the scheme of “National Top Think Tank Pilot Program” (hereafter referred to as pilot program).⁵⁰ In December 2015, the Work Plan for Pilot National High-end Think Tanks Construction was issued officially, in which 25 pilot high-end think tanks were determined.⁵¹ The instructions from the Communist Party’s highest leader on the think tanks have driven the subsequent issuance of policies for the construction of NTTCC.

The pilot program made important institutional adjustments to the think tank management system. First, the Leading Group for the National Philosophy and Social Sciences Program, whose director is Liu Qibao, Minister of the Central Propaganda Department, has been tasked with providing macro guidance to think tank development. Second, under the Leading Group for the National Philosophy and Social Sciences Program, the Top Think Tank Council was founded, with council members from various central comprehensive decision-making ministries and departments and representatives of some top think tanks. The Council’s mission is to formulate top think tank criteria and evaluate the performance of pilot think tanks. Third, the general work of the top think tank pilot program is led by the Central Propaganda Department. The National Social Science Planning Office (a bureau level agency in charge of the Social Science Research Foundation) is responsible for daily work and communication. Under the National Social Science Planning Office, the Secretary Division of Think Tank Council was established. Fourth, the mechanisms to facilitate improved decision-making consultation of selected pilot think tanks are set up. The Chinese central government will assign research tasks to these think tanks while giving them a free hand in selecting other research topics. Reports on the progress are made by The National Social Science Planning Office in its internal journal *National Top Think Tank Reports*. The Top Think Tank Council invites third party organizations to evaluate these selected pilot top think tanks, and the Social Science Research Foundation provides each selected pilot top think tank with an annual RMB10 million to support their research. The authority selected 25 think tanks as the first batch of pilot top think tanks by the end of 2015, officially establishing the comprehensive management architecture of think tanks in China.

Conclusion

Since the reform and opening-up, the new problems in different historical periods

have brought the emerging demand for decision reference and consultation and inherently driven the proposal of the policy-making process of strengthening the construction of think tanks in China. Since the mid-1990s, Chinese scholars have been advocating the philosophy of think tanks with Chinese characteristics. The 2008 global financial crisis prompted the Chinese leadership to realize the limitation of the traditional think tanks in supplying quality policy analysis. The ranking by the Global Think tank Report from the University of Pennsylvania also formed an external stimulus for the policy agenda of strengthening the development of think tanks in China. Under such context, the Development Research Center of the State Council submitted an internal report and became an important driving force to open the window of opportunity for the policy of strengthening the construction of NTTTCC. Finally, with the instruction of China's top leader, the Chinese government fully initiated the campaign to establish the NTTTCC along with the comprehensive management architecture of think tanks in China. The significance of emergence of think tank policy and establishment of the comprehensive management architecture does not lie in the selection and management of pilot high-end think tanks. The upsurge of attention to the construction of think tanks drove the governments at all levels to encourage the participation of think tanks in the policy process.

This article investigated the policy-making process of “strengthening the construction of NTTTCC” put forward by the Chinese government, exhibiting Chinese political actions of embracing scientific decision making in response to increasingly complicated domestic and international public affairs. The NTTTCC concept and policy actions were not put forward by the Chinese government overnight; rather, they are interactive results involving many actors, such as politicians, academics, and international communities, within the dynamic contexts of national governance and global economic integration. The participation and interaction of multiple entities during the policy-making process are stemmed both from the inherent governance pressure faced by the governments at all levels and the advocacies and stimuli of foreign academic communities. This finding also implies that the open policy process is gradually improved through the participation of multiple entities within the policy-making process in China.

Notes

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