



Development Status and Analysis on the Research of "Double First-class" University Think Tanks

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DOI: 10.32629/jher.v3i1.645

Abstract: The key for achieving "two centenary goals" for the whole Party and country, is to modernize China's governance system and governance capacity in new Era. This paper writes about the background, development history and construction measures for "double first-class" university Think Tanks. Also this paper analyzes how to take advantage of complete disciplines, concentrated scholars, advanced academic, and the problem in systems' innovation when constructing the Think Tanks. It puts forward the idea that "double first-class" university Think Tanks should have discipline, academic, discourse system with Chinese characteristics, and should provide intellectual support to serve national development for "double first-class" universities.

Keywords: "double first-class" university, Think Tanks, Chinese characteristics

1. The background of Think Tanks in China

Think Tanks research has formed a boom in recent ten years in China. Since the report of 15th CPC National Congress suggested an idea "Two Centenary Goals", the whole party and the whole country have focused on improving the capacity and level of national governance and paid more attention to the construction of Think Tanks.

A series of policies and documents have been issued to promote the building of new types of Think Tanks with Chinese characteristics, especially from 18th CPC National Congress, such as "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform" "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics" "National High-end Think Tanks Pilot Project" "Opinions on the Healthy Development of Social Think Tanks".

In "2019 Global Go To Think Tanks Index Report", the total number of Think Tanks in China is 507 which is the 3rd in the world, only 2 less than the 2nd India, and 186 more than the 4th UK[1]. However, there are only 74 Think Tanks in China in 2008, ranking 12th globally[2]. It indicates the rapid development of Think Tanks in the past decade. Think Tanks have become an important support for scientific, democratic and law-based decision, an important part of the modernization of China's governance system and capacity, and an important component of China's soft power. In 2021, the forth Session of the 19th NPC required that education system should support major national reform tasks. University Think Tanks are being appreciated. This paper mainly introduces the development status of university Think Tanks, especially the "double first-class" university Think Tanks in China.

2. Development history of "double first-class" university Think Tanks in China

2.1 History of Think Tanks

In China, Think Tanks have existed in ancient, like courtiers in Xia and Shang dynasty. They were responsible for the management of political affairs and aimed at stabilizing feudal rule. Modern Think Tanks originated from the United States[3]. James G. McGann founded the Database of American Think Tanks in the University of Pennsylvania in the 1980s and the Global Development Network in 1990[4]. Think Tanks are public-policy research analysis and engagement organizations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues, thereby enabling policy makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy[5]. Think Tanks can be divided into 3 kinds, government, social and university Think Tanks.

2.2 Development of "double first-class" university Think Tanks in China

Modern Think Tanks originated from American universities, while in China Think Tanks started from the government and developed in universities. University Think Tanks first appeared in first-class universities and were mainly research-based Think Tanks. In 1986, Tsinghua University established the Chinese Academy of Sciences-National Conditions Analysis Research Center. In 1994, Peking University established China Center for Economic Research. In 2013, Renmin University

of China established the National Academy of Development and Strategy. First-class university set up research Think Tanks with goal of national strategic development and gradually promote the construction of the whole university Think Tanks.

In 2015, the first batch of 25 national high-end Think Tanks can be divided into four types. Among them, there are 12 professional Think Tanks based on universities and research institutions. In the same year, China started to push forward world first-class universities and disciplines (double first-class), which should be adapt to the need of the national major strategic, economic and social main battlefield, frontier science and technology. Social sciences are Think Tanks' mainstream discipline, mainly serving strategic research and policy advice. While many China "double first-class" university Think Tanks are natural sciences, focusing on economic development and technological innovation. 16 of the 42 first-round world first-class universities are natural science universities. University Think Tanks with Chinese characteristics take advantage of disciplines, scholars and academic.

3. Construction measures of "double first-class" university Think Tanks in China

3.1 Clear hierarchy of construction

(1) University-level Think Tanks. These Think Tanks mainly engage in major national strategic policies and cross-disciplines. They are usually approved by the government, co-built with provincial and ministerial units or coordinated by university. Such as Tsinghua University has established nearly 30 university-level Think Tanks.

(2) Department-level Think Tanks. It mainly serves the discipline orientation of each department. Some departments set up different types of Think Tanks. The number can reach hundreds for one university.

3.2 Clear direction of construction

Different university Think Tanks' direction will be different according to different predominant disciplines.

(1) To serve major national strategies. National strategy is the highest level strategy. Relying on the advantage of multi-disciplines and multi-scholars, comprehensive first-class universities build Think Tanks serving major national strategies, such as sustainable development, innovation-driven development, ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River basin.

(2) To serve regional development. "Double first-class" universities with geographical advantages, support regional development by Think Tanks base on coordinated regional development strategy, such as coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region, Yangtze River Economic Belt, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and so on.

(3) To serve disciplinary development or major scientific research issues. There are 137 "double first-class" universities and 465 disciplines in the first batch. Through Think Tanks construction, large-scale integration of resources is a good way to strengthen world-class discipline and overcome the bottleneck research issue.

(4) To serve interdisciplinary sciences. Taking Tsinghua University as an example, the Future Laboratory carry out research on science, technology, humanities and arts disciplines. With first-class disciplines, university Think Tanks explore new mechanisms, promote interdisciplinary integration and innovative development, and stimulate new disciplinary growth points.

(5) To serve the army. There are a large number of advanced technology research for national defense in "double first-class" universities, Think Tanks can promote the application of scientific and technological advances.

3.3 Clear construction mode

(1) University-ministry cooperation Think Tanks. These Think Tanks serve major national needs and can be university or department level. They are mainly built in the form of research institute/center. Under the joint leadership of university and ministry, professors act as dean or chairman.

(2) University-government cooperation Think Tanks. Many "double first-class" universities has cooperated with local government, like Xiongan New Area, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Zhuhai and Tianjin, helping industrialization of university achievements and serving development of local economy.

(3) University-company cooperation Think Tanks. In "2019 Best University Affiliated Think Tanks" for China from "2019 Global Go To Think Tanks Index Report", Think Tanks, which are from 2rd to 4th in top 6, are this kind. University-company cooperation model can introduce global advanced concept, combine with Chinese reality. These Think Tanks' cooperation changes from scientific research to multi-level.

(4) University-society cooperation Think Tanks. They are industry-university-research integration research institutions and adopt enterprise management mode, such as Tsinghua University Enlightenment Innovation Research Institute.

(5) Discipline or scientific issue Think Tanks. They are mainly based on science and engineering disciplines and served some bottleneck research issue. Some Think Tanks are national, provincial, ministerial or regional key laboratory.

(6) University-army cooperation Think Tanks. With military-civilian integration as its main direction, these Think Tanks mainly are Defense Key Laboratory or research center to undertake national defense projects and cultivate talents.

3.4 Different forms of organization

(1) Entity. Entity Think Tanks in university usually have several modes, such as college, research center, advisory committee, board of directors and council, etc. There are research posts and management posts in these Think Tanks. The research posts are usually composed of fixed staff, floating staff and expert consultants. Management post belongs to auxiliary personnel, managing daily management, technical support, media communication and other affairs. The research work mode can be project working group or individual research, corresponding to different assessment and incentive methods.

(2) Non-entity. It's a operating mechanism, often affiliated with industry association, department, or jointly built with army, government or company. The chairman is a professor from university, and research results will be shared.

4. Conclusion

The international influence of Chinese Think Tanks on policy research is gradually increasing. Several "double first-class" university Think Tanks are in "Top Think Tanks by Area of Research"[1].

(1) The construction of "double first-class" university Think Tanks should give full play to discipline advantages. It should strengthen the interdisciplinary sciences in predominant and basic disciplines, find the right entry point based on the university's advantage, focus on institution construction.

(2) The construction of "double first-class" university Think Tanks should give full play to scholar advantages. It can explore the revolving door mechanism with Chinese characteristics, enhance the resource advantages of industry, university and research, push talent flowing by project.

(3) The construction of "double first-class" university Think Tanks should give full play to academic advantages. It will make effort to expand transformation channels and build high-end publishing platforms.

The "double First-class" universities enhance the ability to serve national development through the construction of Think Tanks. We will strive to build a system of "double first-class" university research high-end Think Tanks with Chinese characteristics that face modernization, the world and the future.

Acknowledgments

This paper is funded by Project of Opening to the Outside World in Educational Sector.

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