

# *Developing the new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics, enhancing the vitality of China's policy science*

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**Abstract**—In order to realize the social identity of China's policy science, response to the question of governance during the current practice in China, then providing the best solution to solve the practical problems in China. To implement the theoretical innovation and localization, we have to use problem-oriented research as its realistic fulcrum, enhancing the consciousness of problem-oriented research, strengthening the ability of problem-oriented research, and then promoting the explanatory power and inclusiveness of the theory. Therefore, China's policy science is a subject which have a strong applicability of society, meanwhile it is also an area that need to theoretical investigation widely and deeply. This article is tried hard to use the development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics as the pointcut, exploring that how to enhance the vitality of China's policy science. First, explanation the development practice of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics in a comparative perspective. Second, depth analysis the bottleneck problems during the development of localization of China's policy science. Finally, to consider the point of strength that development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics promoting the development of localization of China's policy science.

**Keywords:** *New type of thin tank; Policy science; Vitality*

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing of public demand in modern society, the public issues are becoming increasingly salience and

complicated. Due to the market as the fundamental method to allocate resources in current society, public administration is becoming one of the most significant management. By formulation and execution of public policy to achieve the purpose of public administration. As an applied subject, the core mission of public policy science is to innovate public science steadily that promoting the progress of society. Talking about politic science and administration science, American scholar Jay ·D ·White and Gay ·B ·Adams used to point out that no matter tending to what kind of route, we have to response this question: Do we have superiority or necessity in our research area if we could not constructive contribute to solve the major issue in current ear?[1] Also, in order to realize the social identity of China's policy science, response to the question of governance during the current practice in China, then providing the best solution to solve the practical problems in China. To implement the theoretical innovation and localization, we have to use problem-oriented research as its realistic fulcrum, enhancing the consciousness of problem-oriented research, strengthening the ability of problem-oriented research, and then promoting the explanatory power and inclusiveness of the theory. Therefore, China's policy science is a subject which have a strong applicability of society, meanwhile it is also an area that need to theoretical investigation widely and deeply. The development practice of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics providing a particular opportunity that realizing the development of localization of policy science. In the Part 7 of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress which is "Strengthening

the cultural self-confidence, promoting the prosperous and recovery of socialist culture”, in this report mentioned that deepening the theoretical research and development of Marxism, acceleration structuring the philosophy and social science with Chinese characteristics, enhancing the development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, this article is tried hard to use the development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics as the pointcut, exploring that how to enhance the vitality of China’s policy science.

## II. A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE OF NEW TYPE OF THINK TANK WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Think tank is used to refer specifically to the academic policy research and facility which is stabilized and independent and professional. With the development of modernization of social administration, on the condition that public policy is becoming a fundamental method of social administration, think tank is produced as the non-profit academic facility which is independent of government and developing the policy analysis or policy research. Think tank is emphasized in research and analysis, providing the objective research report, avoiding the policy suggestions that are non-argument and strong subjective as possible as it could, and providing the rational policy analysis. This feature we could say that is the fundamental of development of think tank. In order to obtain the further development, every think tank is trying hard to make its policy more objective and scientifically.[2] Development and research result of think tank is not only have effected on the current selection of policy, but also have promoted the development of policy science in theory, thus policy analysis is become the professional feature that think tank/ must have. For instance, founded in 1948, Rand Corporation had begun to give wide publicity that applied the system approach into policy analysis in the beginning of 1950s. As a result, the Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS) by the Department of Defense of United States which was widely implemented in all departments of government of United States, thus making the technique of economics and operational research were widespread used in the area of policy research. Because of strongly initiating the idea of system approach by the think

tanks, promoting both the “operational research” and “cost-benefit analysis (CBA)” were widespread used, and raising a movement called “Public policy movement” which was for the area of scientific research. James · A · Smith published a book called “Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New policy Elite” in 1991, it was described uninterrupted growth of experts of think tanks after the “policy elite” experts and scholars under the political system of United States.[3] In the market of policy analysis, think tank raising its own research conclusions, discussing the policy of ideology, it has an influence that constantly reinforce to the establishment procedure of public policy.[4] With the research of think tank is deepening step by step, think tank is more and more emphasized on empirical analysis, scholars are payed more attention on the reality level of think tank, therefore beginning to establish two methods of empirical analysis which are qualitative and quantitative, raising that intellectual activity is playing a significant role in the procedure of establishing of public policy.[5] Abelson published a book called “Is it important? The assessment of influence on public policy research facility” in 2002, which analyzing the assessment method of influence by the think tank. In this book, by searching the media database during the procedure of analysis, by using the adoption rate of advice and numbers of participant to public hearings of congress by think tank as evaluation indicators quantification to analysis each kind of policy influence of think tank.[6] With the progress and development of society, in the global word more and more countries are becoming develop and focus on their own think tank. As the increasingly raising the influence and political status of think tank, the development scale of think tank is to be taken seriously by experts from the globe that have analyzed deeply, meanwhile publicity the research result in global conferences. These research result are promoted the constantly development of policy science theory.

Today, China is being underwent the most widely and deeply social transformation in our history, current practice and innovation have provide widely space and a strong driving force for philosophy and social science. In the rapid growth of globalization and new reality, China is already becoming a significant country in the world, the development of China is closely linked the situation of the whole world. President Xi

Jinping clearly mentioned that the development of China's philosophy and social science need "Based on China and learning from overseas", both the localization and internationalization are important. In the new reality, demanding the education of public administration have to become more comparative perspective, based on deeply revelation that the procedure of reform in governance and innovation in policy by different countries which have various backgrounds of culture, reforming the educational content and method of public administration, lecturing the Chinese story well. China is undergoing the Reform and Opening-up and a scientific movement of social administration, which have already brought the development of think tank as a new scientific pointcut of China's policy science. In November 2002, at 16th CPC National Congress clearly mentioned that "Reforming and improving the system of policy as a significant status, strengthening the system of specialist consulting, promoting the system of reasoning and responsibility to make policy". In October 2007, in the report of 17th CPC National Congress mentioned that "Leading the philosophy and social science to play a consultative role for the cause of CPC and people". In November 2012, in the report of 18th CPC National Congress mentioned that "Persisting in making policy which is scientifically and legally and democratically, strengthening the system and procedure of policy making, functioning the role of think tank". As a new concept, "Think tank" was the first time appeared in the report of CPC National Congress. In April 2013, President Xi Jinping gave a significant instruction for developing the think tank with Chinese characteristics. It was the first time mentioned that developing "The new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics" as the target, developing the think tank as a significant component part of China's soft power, also rising it to the level of Chinese national strategy. This is supreme leader of China gave the most important instruction for developing think tank which is clearly and substantial connotation. In November 2013, the 3rd Plenary Session of 18th CPC Central Committee mentioned that "Strengthening the development of think tank with Chinese characteristics, developing the complete system of policy consultation". It was indicated that strengthening the development of think tank with Chinese characteristics, that is becoming a component

part of modernization for the system and ability of state governance. In July 2014, President Xi Jinping hosted a consultant symposium of China's economic situation, during the symposium he said that "The consultant symposium of China's economic situation is a significant embodiment that is implementing the requirement of the 18th CPC National Congress and the 3rd Plenary Session of 18th CPC Central Committee which requiring to strengthen the developing of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics, establishing and improving the system of policy consultation is a significant embodiment that reflecting the CPC's decision to deploy, hoping numerous experts and scholars can constantly produce high perspicacity achievements, which could advice and suggest the CPC Central Committee and the State Council for scientific policy making." With the pushing by President Xi Jinping himself, the development of China's think tank is clearly acceleration. In January 2015, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council have already issued "The opinions on strengthen development of the new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics or Opinions", "Opinions" suggested that the general of development target of China's think tank is 2020, establishing a system of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics which is clear positioning; distinctive characteristics; moderate scale and rational layout, focusing on developing a numbers of high-end think tanks which have great influence and international popularity. "Opinions" issued that promoting China's think tank is already risen to the level of national strategy by President Xi Jinping's Governance.

### III. THE PROBLEM OF CHINA'S POLICY SCIENCE DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALIZATION

Since the starting in 1980s, with the deep development of Reform and Opening-up, China's policy science has already obtained a significant development. However as a whole, the knowledge production of China's policy science has to face the bottleneck including: insufficiency of academic interest on the reality problem of China, facing the squeeze of managerialism and instrumental rationality, theoretical research become fragmentation.[7] From the view of problematic knowledge production, with the historical opportunity by Reform and Opening-up, China's policy science have already accelerated learning from western especially the knowledge system of

American policy science, also acquiring to make rapid progress in normative research. But it is not to be ignored that the knowledge system we learned and referenced is the knowledge production which provided by American think tank, even the experience of sublimation or the theory and generalization from the practice of western policy science, in addition the western theory which could be used for reference is not immature, therefore bringing a significant problem of academic beginnings whether the theoretical model and analytical method is fit with Chinese circumstances or not? That is to say that we study the question whether is the practical problem which is under the state governance of Chinese circumstances or presupposing and popular theoretical problem which is come from the knowledge system of western policy science? Public policy is a subject with a strong practicality, the vitality of public policy is should be responded to the practical problem during the political reforming and social developing in China. Now, a number of research facilities are not transforming their research focus into the reality problem of China, most of them are staying on the theoretical introduction of public policy which come from western countries. A series of western treatise that translated by domestic scholars of Chinese, such as “Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning” by American scholar Carl · Parton & David · Savage, “Public Policy Analysis An introduction” by William · N · Dunn, “Public Policymaking An introduction” by James · E · Anderson, “Systematical Analysis and Policy Sciences” by R · M · Krone, “The Policy Making Process” by Charles · E · Lindblom, “A Dictionary of Public Policy” by E R Kruschke, “Policy Formulation in Advesity” by Yehezkel · Dror, “Encyclopedia of Public Studies” by Stuart · S · Knuckle, in a word that the research approach or discourse from western academia is out of reality of Chinese circumstances. Because of the insufficient of responses from academic research on the reality problem in China, lacking a global vision to the development of transformation of the State, division of modern subjects are becoming more specialization, the theoretical foundation of China’s policy science is still feeble, the theoretical system is lacked of innovation, research content is required to be plentiful, research method urgently need to improved, research quality need to be improved.[8] Therefore, how to base on the

condition of China and formation the localization theory of China’s policy science? Also, how to structuring academic autonomy and international discourse right combine with global vision and domestic condition and historical dimension, which requiring us to research further and strengthening.

Practice is the only fountainhead of theory produced, it is the only standard to detect the truth. According to the view of historical materialism, all the form of knowledge by human come from practice essentially. As a form of knowledge, China’s policy science first have to face on the academic fountainhead that provided from the practice of public life, the production of this subject has to explain which is satisfied the consistency of logical and rationality under the social circumstance, also growing and maturation that admitted by the society. At present, a number of researchers are completely immersion in study, most of them using the research method of non-empiricism. The method of non-empiricism can yet be regarded as a research technique, when the proportion of application of this method is too large and become a mere formality, it could be caused the research of public policy that limited in the level of fundamental theory. Due to the lacking of combination between quantification research and qualitative study, thus caused the structural unbalance that come from the research result of public policy, lacking the operability. Experts and scholars who worked in the research of public policy are attached the study of theory but ignored the practice, most of them are doing the “keep indoors” research, the decision maker and exerciser of public policy are often attached the practice but ignored the study of theory. It caused that the theory and practice of China’s public policy is disjointed, the rate of the application and adoption that come from the result of public policy research in China is low. We introspect the accomplished research with brave that facing the problems, although the research of China’s public policy is faced a few difficulty and problems under the current environment and circumstances, but the development of policy research is the general trend and it will be never stopped which have diversity and systematic and scientific.

#### IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TYPE OF THINK TANK WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALIZATION OF CHINA'S POLICY SCIENCE.

One of the most significant functions of think tank is making the policy analysis to become a specialized activity of research., the development of think tank promotes the policy science that become maturation and perfection. Meanwhile, think tank is established on the base of policy science, it required the theoretical support from policy science. The influence of think tank is to provide its scientific knowledge and professional skill and policy ideology, and these aspects have to obtain by policy analysis, it means that using the policy analysis to achieve the cognition of an entire process which including the making and executing and evaluation of public policy. As the core of policy analysis, think tank is required that maintain its credibility in professional and reputation which as the storeroom of policy knowledge. To make sure that happen, the main researchers of think tank are required the training of professional knowledge, thus promoting the development of education of public policy. In a sense that professional training of public administration are all set up a core course called "public policy science".

New type of think tank with Chinese characteristics is the non-profit research and consulting facility that taking the strategic issue and public policy as its target of research, servicing to the policy decision which is democratic and legal by CPC and government as its purpose.[9] Think tank is the ideology and consciousness that is mean stream and progressive which could be leaded the future development of society. The vitality of China's policy science is also just with a view to the reality problem during the practice of governance, researching on the practice with localization research and international dialogue. In recent years, the development of think tank of China has been achieved a great progress. The development of think tank is not only able to raise the ability of nation's governance and the quality of public policy in China, but also a significant way to increase the soft power and international influence of China. The ideology market which is active and liberty and specialized is the foundation that to produce the top-ranking think tank. Raising the international discourse right and the scientific level of policy making of

China are also depend on it. On the one hand that we have to further opening and raising the ideology market of think tank. On the other hands that we have to make the effective regulation on it and progressively formation the ideology market of think tank with Chinese characteristics.[10]

On the new historical conditions, currently the governance in China is a system of national governance which is filled of high complexity, the system is contain that promote balanced economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress, and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy that making comprehensive moves to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, deepen reform, advance the law-based governance of China, and strengthen Party self-governance. In this massive and complex system that any view of a signal subject of philosophy and social science could not be able to hold, using the new type of knowledge form that crossing the barriers of subjects and methodological system to comprehensive analysis in multidimensional and panoramic ways. The foothold to develop the new type of think tank in China is that base on the practice of governance and orienting by the practice of governance, establishing creativity a knowledge form that opening and containing which in the localization recounting of policy science. As the general secretary Xi Jinping indicated that "Today in our country, governance system of China is the result by long-run development; gradually improvement; endogenous evolution which is based on the historical heritage; cultural traditions; development of economy and society." [11] The practice of governance from endogenous evolution would be leaded a great deal of localization of scientific programs. About "The new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics", according to the spirit of CPC Central Committee the fundamental demand in the level of political and value theory is that adhere to the leadership of the CPC; adhere to the socialism with Chinese characteristics; abide by the Constitution and laws of the state; must be based on China's national conditions and focus on the development of China; preservation the interests of State and its people as the fundamental starting point; responding the challenge of China by theory of China; must be closely around the work of the CPC and the state, providing the constructive advice and suggestion for policy decision of CPC and government.[12] In the paper "Policy Thoughts

Embodied in the CPC Central Committee's Governance and Construction of Policy Sciences with Chinese Characteristics" by Chen Zhenming, from the view of subject construction of policy science, systematical combing the key documents of governance by CPC, analyzing the inspiration to the localization theory of policy science.[13] From the list of 25 think tanks as the first batch of experimental facility for developing the national high-end think tank we can see that 10 comprehensive research facilities directly under administrating by CPC Central Committee; State Council; the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC, 12 professional think tank which are supported by universities and research facilities, 1 enterprising think tank which is supported by large monopoly state-owned enterprise, 2 social think tank. The first batch of experimental facility of types of think tank including economic; political; scientific; legal; military; diplomatic; party affairs of CPC, containing 20 major area of research like the strategy of state's development; national governance; national security; public policy; macroeconomy; financial issues; party development of CPC.[14] The State Council had been authorized think tank to launch the third party assessment for the major policy implementation in these area: streamline administration and delegate power to the lower levels; promoting widespread entrepreneurship and innovation; increasing the supply of public product and service; financing the substantial economy; comprehensive support the development of small and micro enterprises. Drafting of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress always closely connection with research and investigation, asking the related departments of governments and 25 units of experimental facility which are national high-end think tank to submit the professional research report. These achievements of research and investigation laid a solid foundation for the drafting of the report.

Good system of operation and administration of think tank is one of most significant contents for the development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics, involving these areas of think tank like: system and mechanism; administration of scientific research and personnel; releasing of research achievements. Development of new type of think tank is not just to "physical combination" the original scientific research facility, is not changed a name or hung a label, mostly is to

established the system of operation and administration which is flexible and efficient. For instance, promoting the council system; (Chief Technology Officer) CTO responsibility system; think tank funded system, all of these systems are inspired for the intrinsic activity of think tank. The CPC Central Committee clearly mentioned that coordinating and promoting the various aspects for development of think tank, "Establishing the system of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics that orientation clear; distinguishing characteristics; appropriated size; reasonable layout". It raised that development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics have to service for consultation of policy decision in the research area like: research direction; research paradigms; subject placement; system and mechanism. Which requiring to reintegration the academic resources, providing the suggestion of policy and strategy which is systematic and substantial support of academic theory and methodology, establishing the system and mechanism which is benefited to launch the good achievements by think tank. Think tank is focusing on the key subject which have to be settled urgently by CPC and government. Thus, promoting the prospective research that could be provided the theoretical back and feasibility analysis for the related policy decision, also promoting in depth to policy research which is targeted and stored, think tank required that stabilized personnel; stationary premises; constant support of funds, providing the research achievements which are scientific and timely and systematical and sustainable for policy decision of departments of CPC and government as its core businesses, therefore think tank must be focused on improving the ability of comprehensive judged and strategic planning.

## V. CONCLUSION

As advancing the development of new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics, the new type of think tank which service for the policy decision of CPC and government must have independency and expertise and originality of information and data, also the sustainability of motivation mechanism. This would be also enriched and developed the analytical model of policy of China form each segment of policy such as: policy subject; policy impact; policy process and so on. Especially focusing on the professionalism of organization of public policy, including professional features

of service locator, professional norms of operational process, the core business is reflected expertise of “Focus question”, and providing the consulting to solve the problem. Focusing on the policy consultation could not without the foundation data sources, in the era of big data, because of the direct data have exclusive and controllable and purposeful so that it is irreplaceable during the research process which become a competitive advantage of contemporary think tank. Focusing on the nongovernmental think tank which is rooted in the society with neutral interests and have high independence that is a power supply for sustainable development, this is a useful supplement for governmental think tank, and also the indispensable part of multiple subject of governance of China. Therefore, inspiring the vitality of theory of China’s policy science.

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