

Comprehensive Construction of the Interface Structure and Pathways for Building a Sound Relationship between Government and Business

Yanbin Jiang¹, Wei Zhang²

¹ Law School of Central South University, China

² Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee and Deputy Chief Prosecutor, Lai Feng County People's Procuratorate, a third-level Senior Prosecutor, China

Abstract. The comprehensive and close relationship between government and business is a distinctive social connection where contemporary political power, administrative resources, and commercial activities interweave. This relationship is a requirement outlined in Article 25 of the 2023 "Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Promoting the Development and Growth of the Private Economy." The comprehensive and close relationship between government and business directly influences the national political and business ecology. This relationship manifests a significant interface structure and a boundary constraint system. The boundary consists of a boundary wall, boundary gate, permeability, and the law of boundary exchange. The boundary constraint system possesses specific functions and value pursuits. Power is the boundary, and interests are the shell; seeking profits through power, defending rights through interests. Power and rights form the interface structure of the political ecology of the comprehensive and close relationship between government and business; public and private interests constitute the boundary in the business ecology of this relationship; the integration of politics and business is reflected in permeability and the law of boundary exchange. The balance between power and interests forms the boundary in the political ecology of the comprehensive and close relationship between government and business. The expansion of private interests and the abuse of public power are boundaries; the exercise of power and its supervision are shells; profitability and gains are the boundary in the political ecology of the business ecology. Profitability and profits are boundaries; to be or not to be is the shell; political, legal, and business integration form the foundational construction of the comprehensive and close relationship between government and business, and it is also the path that structures the boundary system of this relationship. Constructing a boundary system for the comprehensive and close relationship between government and business can enhance the governance capabilities and levels of both the entire political and business ecologies. Political thinking, legal thinking, and business thinking constitute the thinking principles of an integrated government-business boundary system. Compliance, legality, and legitimacy form the integrated boundary structure path for the comprehensive and close relationship between government and business. Rules, systems, and culture can eliminate "politicking without principles and rules" and "business without moral and legal bottom lines." An integrated government-business boundary system can optimize the political-business ecology, creating a fair, transparent, and rule-of-law development environment and fostering a favorable atmosphere for the healthy growth of businesses.

Keywords: Comprehensive and Close Relationship between Government and Business; Boundary System; Governance Model; Thinking Logic; Synchronized Integration Path.

1. Introduction

"Opinions on Promoting the Development and Growth of the Private Economy by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council" (July 14, 2023), also known as the "31 Policies for the Development of the Private Economy," Proposes the Comprehensive Construction of a Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship.

The comprehensive and close government-business relationship, as presented in Article 25, is a political, business, and legal phenomenon—an enduring challenge with historical roots[1]. The nature



of government-business relations directly reflects the quality of the political, market, and legal environments, providing insights into the governance levels of the political, business, and legal sectors. The system and structure of the comprehensive and close government-business relationship determine its operational mechanisms. The regional proximity-clearing of government-business relationships significantly reduces non-productive expenses for enterprises, with a more pronounced impact on non-state-owned and small-to-medium-sized enterprises. On the one hand, the proximity-clear government-business relationship reduces enterprises' strategic charitable donations; on the other hand, it assists businesses in obtaining higher financing amounts and more government subsidies[2].

The inherent differences between government and business define the unique and diverse structures of government-business relations. Constructing a healthy and orderly comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship, enhancing societal governance capabilities and levels, requires innovative theories and methodologies. The boundary theory offers a new perspective to address this age-old issue, providing a fresh theoretical framework and methodology for deconstructing the structure and functions of the comprehensive government-business relationship[3], from an epistemological standpoint[4].

The boundary theory can establish a synchronized integrated comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship. By controlling boundaries and boundary gates, it can effectively eliminate collusion between officials and business, as well as corrupt practices, fostering a politically clear, government-clean, and morally upright political ecology. Simultaneously, it promotes a transparent, efficient business ecology, a fair and just legal ecology, and cultivates a positive social atmosphere of lawfulness, ethics, and virtue.

2. The Significance and Content of Constructing the Boundary of a Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship

The comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship is a unique social connection in contemporary China, where political power, administrative resources, economic interests, and market behaviors intricately intertwine. It is a significant relationship that directly influences the internal political life and political ecology of the party, as well as the political and market environments—a crucial nexus that cannot be overlooked. The exploration of its structure, functions, intrinsic features, and values holds critical theoretical and practical importance.

2.1. The Boundary Model and Structure of the Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship.

2.1.1. The Boundary Model between the Political Sphere and the Business Sphere in the Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship.

The boundary is a widely observed phenomenon in the natural world, referring not only to the specific boundaries of natural entities but also to protective mechanisms existing both inside and outside the system, serving as intermediaries engaged in systematic exchanges with the environment. Examples include the eggshell of an egg, the shell of a turtle, animal fur, skin, and more. The existence of boundaries is essential for defining the limits of a system[5]. The boundary is an integral part of the system, adjacent to the environment, and consists of boundary walls and gates[6]. Boundary walls safeguard the system, while boundary gates serve as channels for exchanges between the system and the environment. When nested layer by layer, boundaries form a boundary shell set. The boundary shell plays a decisive role in the generation, survival, and development of the system. The boundary shell system exhibits an open structure and mechanism, allowing resources, materials, and funds to flow between different systems. The degree of openness varies among boundary shell systems, each having distinct properties and quantities. The boundary exchange rate measures the system's ability to transform matter, energy, and information through boundary gates, representing the exchange ratio between the environment and the system. The structural elements supporting the survival of the

boundary shell are termed boundary shell supports, with their magnitude measured by supportiveness. A boundary shell with higher supportiveness can better resist external environmental disturbances, maintaining the stability of its own system.

The comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship is a complex system, influenced by various factors affecting the government-business boundary. The political sphere and the business sphere are two distinct legal entities with their own boundary systems. The government-business relationship implies the exchange of matter, energy, and information between the government and business through boundary gates. Therefore, the theoretical foundation, logical basis, operational mechanism, development mechanism, industrial mechanism, and other features and laws related to boundary gates, boundary shell supports, and boundary exchange rates in the comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship under the boundary theory are of great significance and value for understanding the strategic aspects of government-business relations[7]. The boundary model of the comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.

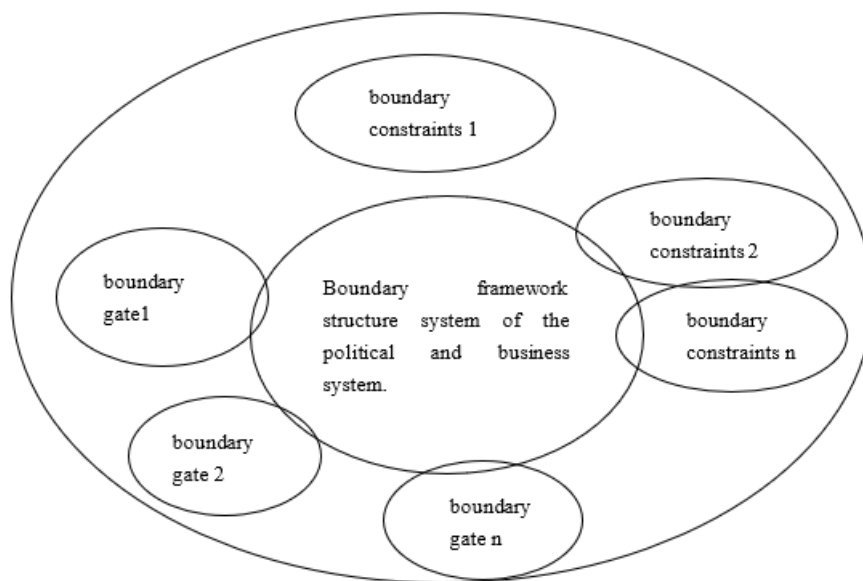


Figure 1. Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Political-Business Relationship Boundary Model and Boundary Structure Diagram

2.1.2. The Boundary Structure of the Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship.

The boundary system of the comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship originates from the integration of internal and external factors such as money, interests, power, authority, emotions, and intentions within the two major boundary subjects of government and business. These factors serve as both the guarantee for construction and development and the pathway for independent and innovative growth, constraining the survival and development of government-business relations. Each influencing factor in the development constitutes a system boundary, and multiple boundary elements form a boundary wall (where the thickness of the boundary shell represents stability and security)[8].

In this context, where money is involved, it is easily forgotten when spent; where interests are at play, they disperse when exhausted; where power is in play, it tilts when defeated; where authority is involved, it is abandoned when lost; where emotions are engaged, they harm when broken; only when intentions are aligned, a lasting relationship can be formed[9]. It can be observed that in this boundary system, both the boundary gates and walls have specific meanings. Once the boundary system is breached, if virtue does not match, disasters are inevitable[10]. Whether it is collaboration in business relationships or interpersonal interactions in administrative relations, one should cherish connections,

think positively, learn to be grateful, treat others sincerely, and build relationships with genuine intentions! Associating with the virtuous and walking alongside those of high moral standards, a proximity-clear relationship between government and business will undoubtedly yield positive outcomes!

2.2. Power and Rights: The Boundary Shell of the Political Ecology in the Comprehensive Proximity-Clear Government-Business Relationship.

The clarity and obscurity of world trends, the prosperity and decline of talents, are manifested in politics and reside in education. The comprehensive proximity-clear government-business relationship is a universally significant yet uniquely complex social relationship that forms through the interaction between party and government departments and commercial entities. It is a relationship that tightly integrates political power with administrative resources, market behavior, and business interests. These two major systems fundamentally exhibit clear and distinct boundary systems that set them apart, highlighting their inherent differences.

2.2.1. The Boundary between Power and Rights.

The boundary between power and rights consists of four distinct boundary shell systems. First is the subject boundary shell. The right subject is a general subject, including natural persons, legal persons, and non-legal entities, while the power subject is a special subject, mainly represented by state organs and their staff. Second is the nature boundary shell. Rights have a property attribute and can be abandoned and transferred according to the law, but power has an administrative attribute and must be exercised in accordance with the law and cannot be abandoned or transferred. Third is the action boundary shell. "Anything not prohibited by law is permitted" for rights, while "anything not specified by law is prohibited" for power. Fourth is the functional boundary shell. Rights generally reflect private interests, while power generally reflects public interests. Once the boundary between power and rights is misaligned and the boundary shell constraints are breached, the subject, nature, action, and function all become misaligned. Breaching the boundary shell constraints leads to the disorder of government-business relations, giving rise to chaos and undermining the government-business relationship. If power acquires property attributes, it will seek rent, breaking through the boundaries of the subject, nature, action, and function between government and business, resulting in a series of disorders and reversals in government-business relations, such as dereliction of duty, negligence, abuse of power, bribery, corruption, and occupation of duty.

2.2.2. The Shell of Power and Rights.

Power is the shell of the political ecology, referring to the coercive force given by the state and guaranteed by the state's coercive power to dominate others. Any society is a unity of certain power and certain obedience. There are two types of power: first, political coercive force, such as state power. State power is the coercive force of the state, determined by the national nature and political system of the state. For example, legislative power, judicial power, administrative power established by the National People's Congress is guaranteed by the state's coercive force (such as state courts, prisons, etc.); second, the power of duty governance, a power associated with certain duties, such as exercising the power of the president of a general meeting. Rights are a shell of the business ecology, referring to endowing people with power and interests, that is, having the qualification to maintain interests, including the right to request, use, and dispose of, manifested as the right of the business entity to demand certain actions and require others to perform certain actions[11].

2.3. Public Interest and Private Interest: The Shell of the Business Ecology in the Comprehensive Pro-Qing Political and Business Relationship

2.3.1. The Boundary of Public Interest and Private Interest

The boundary between the public and private realms is symmetrical, representing two distinct systems of social power allocation and property distribution, where there is either public or private. The public realm operates based on a sense of public duty rather than private gain. A virtuous person acts with

openness and sincerity, motivated by a public spirit (selflessness). A pure public spirit allows for a genuine and open relationship with the business sector, being "close" without becoming too familiar. Breaking the boundary between public and private entails a choice between working for the public or for personal gain, reflecting different life pursuits and institutional arrangements. While those driven by self-interest (selfishness) may gain personal benefits (private interests), those who wholeheartedly work for the public good (selflessness) find contentment. [12]The pursuit of personal interests is always constrained by the public interest in any society[13]. The higher the level of cordiality and transparency in regional government-business relations, the higher the level of strategic transformation for local private enterprises. This indicates that a favorable government-business relationship facilitates the upgrading of private enterprises, enhancing regional market vitality, and reducing financial constraints on businesses, ultimately leading to an increase in the level of strategic transformation for private enterprises[14].

2.3.2. The Shell of Public Interest and Private Interest.

The public interest and private interest belong to different categories, forming shells with no intersection. Once the boundary between public and private is breached, breaking the shell of the ecosystem, it can lead to the confusion of public and private personalities and the commingling of public and private property, disrupting the comprehensive and clean political-business relationship. If the interests of public and private are misaligned, the overlapping of these interests will accelerate the alienation of power. In some judicial cases, public officials moving to a certain place for office (public interest) may be associated with business owners moving there to make a fortune (private interest). Once this community of interests surpasses the boundary between public and private, it manifests as power-seeking private gains, leading to rent-seeking behavior. The "close" and "clean" aspects of the comprehensive and clean political-business relationship reflect the organic connection between political ecology and business ecology, requiring comprehensive planning to optimize the overall governance environment and market environment support.

2.3.3. The Boundary Wall between Public Interest and Private Interest.

In the interaction between politics and business, there lies a principle. To construct a comprehensive and harmonious political-business relationship, the boundary between public and private interests depends on a measure. The measure should neither be too deep nor too shallow; moderation is key. Striking the right balance in the integration of politics and business, the relationship with the business sector should be as pure and clear as a gentleman's friendship, "light and plain" like water. Adhering to regulations, discipline, and the law, maintaining the bottom line, avoiding the red line, and steering clear of high-pressure situations. The political realm, in the name of "clarity," should keep a certain distance from the business sector to avoid the appearance of negligence or indolence in governance. In the name of "closeness," being too intimate with the business sector risks diluting the fundamental differences between politics and business, blurring the boundary between public and private, and breaking through the shell of the public-private boundary, which could lead to the gates of imprisonment.

3. Balancing Power and Rights: The Shell of Political Ecology in the Comprehensive and Clean Political-Business Relationship.

Economic prosperity relies on the assurance of a clear political environment. The relationship between politics and business, acting as a "barometer" of political ecology, is crucial for the implementation of economic policies and the level of economic development[15]. In the context of a comprehensive and harmonious political-business relationship, the boundary between public and private interests forms the shell of the political ecology. To construct such a relationship and optimize the political environment, it is necessary to distance oneself from various cliques, nepotism, and cronyism. By eliminating the breeding ground for corruption where public and private interests are blurred, and power rent-seeking is prevalent, we can establish a boundary for a politically clear, governmentally clean, and morally upright political ecology. This will foster a virtuous and ethical

societal atmosphere, constructing the shell of a harmonious, civilized, democratic, and rule-of-law socialist state.

3.1. The Expansion of Private Rights and the Abuse of Public Power: The Boundary of Political Ecology.

The political and business sectors have distinct value pursuits and organizational rules, marked by evident boundary systems. However, there is a certain convergence of interests between political and business entities. The drive for interests may lead political and business entities to breach the boundary systems between the political and business realms, resulting in issues such as collusion between officials and businesses, transaction of power for money, bribery, and corruption, representing a scenario of being "close but not clean" or "clean but not close" [16]. To construct a comprehensive and clean political-business relationship, it is necessary to eliminate "hidden rules," guard against "covert operations," and secure both gates of interest between the political and business sectors.

3.1.1. The Gateway Through Which Nepotism Conveys Benefits.

Political figures, having breached the gateway of the political realm, face legal sanctions for transmitting benefits through nepotism and wielding power influence. [17] Chen Xuefeng and at least six others, once recognized as national role models, gradually deviated from the righteous path they were supposed to uphold in their subsequent developments. Despite their initial dedication in their roles, working diligently and even refraining from using state funds, the increasing allure of power led them to succumb to greed, breaching legal boundaries and venturing onto paths of misconduct and even crime.

[18] Officials from the political sphere investigated, apprehended, and business leaders who met a similar fate had all made outstanding contributions to the country and its people, earning various accolades. However, as their power increased, their values became distorted, breaking through the boundaries between the political and business spheres. They were either exploited by money or exploited money. Political figures failed to uphold their initial commitment to public service, and business figures breached ethical and legal standards. Through the gateway of nepotism, they facilitated the transfer of benefits, transcending the boundaries of politics, business, and law, disrupting the intended virtuous boundary system.

Effectively managing the gateway for the transmission of interests between the political and business spheres is crucial for preventing the erosion of the boundary system between politics and business.

3.1.2. The Nexus of Interests Serves as the Gateway to Public Power.

The nexus of interests between government and business is the boundary gate of public power. If administrative power lacks a system of constraints, its inherent expansiveness, fueled by intertwined interests, provides the impetus for the abuse of administrative power. Once it goes astray, power can be misused, sought after for personal gain, and lead to corruption, ultimately causing the alienation of government functions. This, in turn, undermines the healthy functioning of political, market, and social mechanisms. The abuse of public power by administrative entities, breaking through the boundary system between government and business for power-seeking purposes, represents the most significant form of corruption. Administrative power, derived from legal authorization and the granting of authority, must be exercised with strict adherence to the law, without exceeding legal boundaries—what is not expressly permitted by law is thereby prohibited. [19] The rigorous exercise of power entails utilizing it for the benefit of the people, recognizing that all power belongs to the people, and that the authority is delegated by the people to state organs for their exercise, with public servants serving as the executors of the power delegated by the people.

3.2. Exercising Power and Supervising Power: The Shell of Political Ecology.

3.2.1. The Shell of Exercising Power

The exercise of power (administration) and the constraint of power (regulation) constitute a mutually restrictive force and mechanism. The intensity of administration and regulation determines the thickness of the boundary shell in the political ecology. The exercise of power must not exceed its own boundaries or break through its constraints (boundary shell and gate); it can only operate within its legal mechanisms (boundary system). The comprehensive promotion of clean and efficient political-business relationships is a crucial guarantee for the modern economic development in our country, playing a vital role in the growth and prosperity of the non-public sector (business community). In practice, initiatives such as the "Five-Type Government Construction," strengthening government service capabilities at all levels, "One-Stop Service" reforms, and "Internet + Government Services" facilitate a close and transparent interaction between the political and business realms, constructing an important measure for fostering a comprehensive, close, yet transparent political-business relationship[20]. With the rise of civil society, business associations, such as the Chambers of Commerce, which serve as communication bridges between the government and the business sector, are playing an irreplaceable role[21]. Gradually, this forms the shell of exercising power, where power operates orderly within its own shell.

3.2.2. The Shell of Power Supervision.

There should not be a lack of a boundary shell, where the political and business realms are not intimately intertwined like "shoulder-to-shoulder," nor should they completely withdraw into their shells with their backs turned to each other like "back-to-back." Only through the integration of power and rights within the framework of the power boundary system can the sustained, healthy, and stable development of the business sector be ensured. The supervision and constraint of power constitute the boundary shell and gate of the comprehensive and close political-business relationship. The personalized political-business alliance formed between the political and business realms has played a significant and positive role in constructing a comprehensive and clean political-business relationship, contributing to the rapid economic growth in modern China. Private enterprises (the private business sector) rely on personalized relationships with local government officials to protect property rights[22], but once there is a misalignment of power, the lack of constraint and supervision can lead to misconduct. The boundary system of the political ecology is designed to make supervision of power a norm and a conscious behavior, preventing the abuse of power within the boundary system. The formation of a boundary shell for power supervision is conducive to preventing individuals in power from going astray and regulating the operation of power. The self-aware constraint of the power boundary system depends on the personal knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, education, taste, and morality of the power users, as well as the character and comprehensive qualities of political leaders. The degree of self-discipline within the boundary system directly reflects the determination and extent of the power implementers (leaders) to maintain integrity, as well as the thickness of the boundary shell (the degree of tolerance in laws and policies). The governance of political-business relations in South Korea provides certain insights for China[23].

4. Balancing Profit and Gains: The Boundary Shell of the Business Ecology in the Comprehensive and Clean Political-Business Relationship.

The demands for transparency, rule of law, fairness, and efficiency in the comprehensive and clean political-business relationship are the essential manifestations of the boundary shell of the business ecology, with adaptability serving as the boundary of the business ecology[24]. The political and business realms can be interconnected, being "close" but not "sticky" and "friendly" but still "clean." Commercial entities inherently possess dependence, opportunism, and corrosiveness, and within the framework of the comprehensive and clean political-business relationship, the rules and values of interconnection serve as the boundary shell of the business ecology, exerting certain constraints on commercial activities to prevent them from crossing boundaries and breaking the shell. The rules of

interconnection involve what should and should not be done, while the values of interconnection revolve around operation and profit. A comprehensive and healthy political-business relationship must navigate the interplay between power and the market for what should and should not be, as well as the interconnection of operation and profit between power and commercial entities, ensuring that they do not exceed their boundaries and walk side by side in an amicable and clean manner[25].

4.1. For and Against: The Boundary of the Business Ecology.

4.1.1. The Degree of Adaptability for What Should and Should Not Be.

For and against represent two decision-making approaches for profit and gain in the business ecology, and whether profit is achieved in the process of making profits depends on the degree of adaptability between politics and business. Adaptability refers to the boundary of quantity, quality, and difficulty between one thing and another, one matter and another. [26] In practice, the grasp of "degree" follows the principle of the Middle Way, preventing excess and insufficiency, aiming for a balanced approach. [27] In business practice, adopting a middle-path approach facilitates successful practical activities. The core elements in the ever-evolving political and business realms are interrelated, mutually restrictive, and influential, following the laws of development and change. Both the political and business spheres adhere to the principle of "doing what should be done and not doing what should not be done," actively and diligently promoting development in a positive and desirable direction while preventing movement in a negative and undesirable direction. Positive "doing" and negative "not doing" require the establishment of an appropriate degree of adaptability to achieve the healthy development of the business ecology.

4.1.2. The Rules of Adaptability for What Should and Should Not Be.

The "doing" in the political and business realms involves being "daring" and "swift." [28] As long as the political realm acts in the interest of the public good, it can decisively take action. Otherwise, hesitation and delaying opportunities can lead to a shift from "doing" to "not doing" or "overdoing." In cases of "not doing," there may be difficulty in evaluating new developments under the inertia of compliance thinking, an inability to see the future direction and pros and cons clearly, resulting in a decision to "put it off" or "give it a try." Sometimes, a lack of proper understanding leads to hasty or even rough "doing," violating the laws of development of things; thus, "not doing" essentially becomes a form of "doing." Some instances of "not doing" are necessary, and some instances of "doing" are also necessary[29]. This kind of "not doing" in the political realm is about releasing constraints on market entities, unleashing market vitality, precisely what the business realm is "doing." The key between the "doing" and "not doing" in the political and business realms lies in the rules of adaptability. "Standing at a strategic height, being adept at politically understanding and judging the situation, observing and handling issues, being able to see through the complex surface phenomena, grasping the essence of things and the inherent laws of development... always taking the overall situation as the starting point and foothold for observing and handling issues, pursuing the highest value of the overall interest" is crucial in this regard[30]. The choice of adaptability between the boundary shells of the political and business realms, the rules of adaptability in the comprehensive and clean political-business relationship, is clear-cut: decisively "do" when it's time to "do" and resolutely "not do" when it's time not to.

4.2. Profit and Gain: The Shell of Business Ecology

In the "Differentiation of Easily Confused Words": "Profit: seeking profit." "Gain: that is, profit, the obtained profit." [31] In the business ecology, the political ecology is in gain, while the business ecology is in profit. Gain and profit are the boundary gates of the political and business ecologies in political-business relationships, with just one word difference but worlds apart. The exchange law of the boundary shell between profit and gain reflects the degree of integration and misalignment of the two ecologies.

4.2.1. Profit in Operation: The Value of Political Ecology

The value of political ecology is manifested in operation, forming the foundation for the business ecology to gain. The government is one of the crucial customers in the market, yet government customers often purchase public goods. Business entities achieve business gains by managing government demand and participating in government regulatory activities. While the government and policies may not directly provide benefits to business entities, they offer channels and pathways for gaining, such as franchise rights, monopoly policies, dividend policies, tax exemptions or reductions, tax refunds, and including government procurement and projects. As long as businesses are adept at management, they can profit. Business entities seek profits through profit-seeking activities. To "profit" is to seek. In Han Yu's "Sending the Poor," the phrase "Flies thrive, and dogs scavenge; drive them away, and they return." suggests that the activities of "thrive" (profit-seeking) are synonymous with drilling and seeking. [33] Profit-seeking includes making profits and seeking profits, both aiming to gain benefits. Denying profit-seeking leads to "non-profit," as seen in Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs). Unlike profit, the value of political ecology is realized through operation.

4.2.2. Profit in Winning: The Value of Business Ecology

Commercial ecological value is reflected in commercial profit (profit). Profit has two meanings: one is profit, the other is profit. Winning refers to profit after deducting costs, and profit refers to operating income. For example: "War State Policy • Qin Policy Five": "Return and call the father said: How many times the benefit of farming? Said: ten times. How many times do pearls and jade win? A hundred times, [34] Profit here is profit. The second kind of win is just an increase in earnings, not necessarily a profit. For example, "Shang Junshu • Outside and inside" : "The effort of agriculture is the most bitter and less profitable." Profit in the "Chinese Dictionary" said profit, profit includes dividends, surplus, negative is loss, loss. Profit is "profit after revenue and expenditure". In the political ecology, "profit-making" refers to "profit-seeking", aiming to make money as the purpose of behavior and behavior target, but not necessarily to make money, emphasizing the process (behavior crime in criminal law); [35] "Profit" in business ecology refers to earning money, not losing money, and surplus, emphasizing results (result crime in criminal law [36]). The "friendly" and "clear" relationship between government and business can affect earnings management by restraining the improper political connection between government and enterprise. The "friendly" and "Qing" relationship between government and business leads to the decline of the overall earnings management of enterprises and the improvement of earnings quality [37].

5. The Path to Constructing a Comprehensive 'Close and Clean' Relationship between Politics and Business: Building an Integrated Framework System

The concepts, rules, and institutions governing the relationship between politics and business (the relationship between power and capital) in any country are influenced by a multitude of factors, including the specific historical context of the country, the power dynamics between politics and business, economic development conditions, and the influence of traditional cultural elements. As a result, different regions and countries exhibit distinct characteristics in managing this relationship.[38]

In the context of China, constructing a comprehensive 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business involves distinctive features and requirements. It requires the optimization of both political and business ecosystems. Employing new thinking, new concepts, and new institutional frameworks in a synchronized manner is essential to drive the design and innovation of political-business systems. This aims to establish a scientifically, reasonably, and justifiably integrated boundary system for political-business relations, enhancing the overall governance system and improving societal governance capabilities.[39]

Under the frameworks of political, legal, and business thinking, each component operates independently yet cohesively. Bridges remain bridges, roads remain roads, and together they form a seamless pathway. The integration of political systems, legal systems, and business systems

constructs a comprehensive boundary system for the 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business. This system is designed to support a fair, just, and compliant mechanism.[40]

5.1. Politics, Law and Business Integration of the Shell Thinking Path

The pursuit of constructing a comprehensive 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business is driven by the goals of development, fairness, and efficiency. The logic of synchronized integration in political, legal, and business domains forms the foundation for establishing paths and models of social governance. In China, the political system and business sector operate as two separate systems, with a clear demarcation—businesses are generally kept apart from politics, and officials are discouraged from seeking personal wealth while in office. In contrast, in the United States, the wealthiest 100 individuals can influence the formulation of laws. China's political system is not bound by business interests, and this isolated governance system requires new thinking and approaches to construct a new 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business. Political thinking, legal thinking, and business thinking constitute three frameworks for the comprehensive boundary system of the 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business. Different thinking patterns address different types of problems and should not be mixed or misaligned.[43]

5.1.1. Political Thinking under the Boundary of the 'Close and Clean' Relationship

Political thinking under the boundary of the 'close and clean' relationship involves a specific political entity's active reflection on political phenomena within a defined boundary of values and functions. It is the subjective cognitive activity of political entities processing and organizing material from reality, forming rational understanding, and proposing solutions to political problems. The essence of politics lies in the standardized management and governance of society. Politics is a process of collective decision-making for various groups, especially with regard to the rule of a political entity, whose decisions are constrained by its own boundary system. Political thinking under the boundary system is historically contingent. Politics, as a specific behavior of various power entities in the superstructure, involves the maintenance of their own interests and the formation of specific relationships. It is a significant social phenomenon that has emerged at a certain stage of human historical development, exerting a social force that affects the interests of all members of society and dominates their behavior. It is the result of the continuous development of social management, tending towards large-scale, standardized, procedural, clear, precise, and codified governance.[44] The political system under the boundary system has its own specific modes of thinking and rules. 'Politics' refers to correct leadership, while 'governance' refers to correct management. 'Politics' provides direction and subjectivity, while 'governance' involves means and methods, revolving around politics. Political problems under the boundary are solved through political thinking, not through business or legal thinking.

5.1.2. Business Thinking under the Boundary of the 'Close and Clean' Relationship

Business thinking under the boundary of the 'close and clean' relationship is a guide for business model actions, embodying the wisdom of making correct decisions and smoothly operating to create value. Business is an organized activity that provides goods and services to meet customer needs. Business originated from the exchange behavior of bartering in primitive societies, with its essence being exchange based on people's recognition of value. It has its own boundary constraint system. The essence of a business model is a group of stakeholders investing their resources and capabilities to form a transactional structure. Through the transactions within this structure, new value is created, and this value is then distributed according to a certain profit-making method. Therefore, the structure of this transaction forms the boundary structure of business thinking. Most business activities aim to profit by selling goods or services above cost. Companies like Huawei, Microsoft, Sony, IBM, China Unicom, Sany, BYD, etc., are representative examples of profitable business organizations. Some business activities are non-profit and only aim to provide funds for operating the business, such as various foundations and the Red Cross. National competition is a competition between entrepreneurs from two countries, where the mindset of entrepreneurs determines the pattern of national competition;

their perspectives determine the strategic level of national competition; and their investment in research and development determines the foundation of national competition. The world is bustling for profit, and all clamor is for gain. Business problems and their solutions are approached using business thinking, evaluating issues based on cost and efficiency, rather than misaligning thinking by using political or legal approaches to solve business problems. Using business thinking to address political problems ensures that cost and efficiency are the standards by which issues are judged[45].

5.1.3. Legal Thinking under the Boundary

Legal thinking under the boundary of the 'close and clean' relationship is a specific type of thinking referring to the abstract and generalized cognitive tendencies of professional legal groups regarding individuals and their actions based on legal considerations. It is a mindset shaped by legal consciousness and operational methods, influencing the perception of social phenomena. Legal thinking under the boundary is a result of the rule of law. Laws and regulations are fundamental guarantees for economic development and operation, with their own prerequisite, foundation, and boundary constraint system for operation and development. The boundary constraint system of legal thinking is reflected in three aspects: first, legal thinking is normative thinking; second, legal thinking is a method of thinking that considers all actions from the standpoint of the potential evil in human nature; third, legal thinking is a practical, interest-seeking method of thinking. For example: Without democratic rule of law, the hand of power will become an idle and uncontrollable hand; without democratic rule of law, we are all walking on the road to prison; without democratic rule of law, any wealth is nothing but clouds. Economic attention focuses on the effective output of social wealth, while the rule of law focuses on the fair distribution of social wealth. Legal thinking realizes legal values through a series of principles, such as the cultivation of the rule of law thinking concept, the enhancement of rule of law thinking capabilities, and the assessment of the performance level according to legal duties. Therefore, the legal baseline is the core boundary constraint for the 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business. Legal issues are resolved using legal thinking, with fairness and justice as the standards. Legal issues cannot be resolved by misaligning thinking with political or business thinking.

5.2. Integrated Construction Path of Compliance, Legality, and Legitimacy Boundaries

The integrated path of compliance, legality, and legitimacy constructs a comprehensive boundary constraint system for the 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business. It requires political thinking, business thinking, and legal thinking to address various relationships within the political and business domains, establishing effective models and paths for social governance.

5.2.1. Compliance Boundary

The compliance boundary is a normative boundary constraint system that encompasses the subjects, behaviors, rights and powers, public and private aspects of political and business entities. The normative social management boundary constraint system includes six aspects: first, the normative management boundary system of human resources. This mainly involves the rules for the allocation of human resources, such as labor laws, etc.; second, the normative management boundary system of natural resources. This mainly involves the rules for the allocation of natural resources, such as land resources laws, environmental protection laws, etc.; third, the normative management boundary system of intellectual property rights. This mainly involves the rules for the allocation of intellectual property rights, such as intellectual property protection laws, etc.; fourth, the normative management boundary system of behavior. This mainly involves the restrictive rules of economic behavior, such as environmental protection laws, safety production laws, criminal laws, civil laws, marriage laws, contract laws, company laws, and various regulations, laws, and rules; fifth, the normative management boundary system of property. Examples include property rights laws, inheritance laws, etc.; sixth, the normative management boundary system of organizational structure. Examples include company laws, administrative litigation laws, state compensation laws, conscription laws, etc. A 'close and clean' relationship between politics and business requires a delineation of the boundary

constraints that separates public and private interests, promoting innovation for enterprises. The nature of property rights and the industry in which a business entity operates influence the impact of the 'close and clean' relationship on business innovation. [46]The 'close and clean' relationship promotes business innovation through mechanisms such as increased bank loans, government subsidies, tax incentives, and the reduction of rent-seeking costs. Power and capital are mutually reinforcing contradictory entities. Compliance is a historical challenge and a global challenge. The development of the private economy outlined in the '31 Measures for Developing the Private Economy' issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council in 2023 provides profound insights and a clear understanding of how to comply with the phenomenon of the mutual alienation of power and capital. The 'close and clean' theory delineates the compliance constraints of the complex relationship between political power and business capital, clarifying the social roles and responsibilities of both political and business domains. The compliance of political-business relations addresses the constraints of the mutual capitalization of power and capital, resolving the dual paradox of 'close but not clean' and 'clean but not close' political-business relationships. It provides new ideas, new concepts, and new paths for the development of the business sector, especially for the healthy growth of private business entities, under the conditions of the socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics[47].

5.2.2. Legality Boundary

The legality boundary refers to the solidified legal boundaries constraining various behaviors within the fixed political-business relationship. Both political and business entities must not cross the legal baseline, regardless of being public or private. Laws and regulations set legal boundaries (allowed, permissible, prohibited) for behaviors within the fixed political-business relationship. Political-business exchanges have a legal 'degree' (intentional, negligence, force majeure, etc.). Both political and business entities need to clarify their functions and boundaries, grasping the 'degree' of communication and integration effectively[48]. Nanjing's Jianye District has introduced the 'Positive List for Standardizing Political-Business Interactions,' constructing a boundary system for normal interactions between politics and business, promoting proactive and regulated actions in both political and business domains under the dimensions of 'close' and 'clean' legal regulations, thereby driving rapid socio-economic development[49].

5.2.3. Legitimacy Boundary

The legitimacy boundary is a system of constraints constructed through institutions and culture, establishing boundaries that prevent 'politics without principles and rules' and 'business without moral and legal baselines.' [50] In the early stages of China's institutional transformation, positive political-business relationships brought significant resources and information to businesses, especially the transformation of the 'four assets' (resources, assets, capital, funds). With the transformation of social governance systems, politically motivated relationships that focus on utility cannot adapt to modern socio-economic development. The legitimacy boundary system becomes a new requirement for societal development. To address the challenges of globalization in the new era, it is necessary to construct a legitimate, 'close and clean' political-business relationship that combines instrumental and pro-social motivations. [51] Optimizing the political-business ecosystem involves creating a fair, transparent, and rule-of-law development environment and fostering a conducive atmosphere for the healthy growth of businesses. This establishes a legitimacy boundary constraint system for the political-business relationship. The comprehensive 'close and clean' political-business relationship requires six mechanisms to enhance the legitimacy of the boundary constraint system. These mechanisms include: 1) an education and guidance mechanism; 2) a political participation and consultation mechanism; 3) a financing service mechanism; 4) an entrepreneurship and employment mechanism; 5) a government-enterprise communication mechanism; and 6) a rights protection service mechanism. [52] Both the political and business realms must maintain a clear distinction between public and private, uphold personal integrity, and advocate for the rule of law. This promotes the formation of a virtuous political-business cultural ecosystem characterized by compliance, transparency, dedication, and a sense of shame for corruption. Internalizing these values becomes the

moral conscience and behavioral boundaries for both political and business entities, thereby driving economic and social development and providing assurance for the people's aspirations towards a better life.

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This paper represents a phased achievement of the research project "Modern Environmental Legal Governance Model and Business Environment Optimization in the You Shui River Basin" conducted in 2023 by Central South University and Lai Feng People's Procuratorate. Additionally, it contributes to the phased results of the key project "Research on Mechanisms, Models, and Choices of Military-Civil Fusion" (XSP19ZDA002) of the Hunan Provincial Social Science Achievement Evaluation Committee in 2019.

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- [1] "Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Promoting the Development and Strengthening of the Private Economy" (July 14, 2023), Article 25: Comprehensive Construction of a Close and Clean Political and Business Relationship. The implementation of building a close and clean political and business relationship requires the establishment of a two-way close and clean unified new type of political and business relationship between party and government officials and private entrepreneurs. Leaders at all levels should interact with private entrepreneurs openly and sincerely, take proactive actions, provide front-line services, solve problems and handle practical matters for private enterprises and entrepreneurs in accordance with laws and regulations. They should uphold the bottom line of interactions, guard against corruption risks, and achieve a relationship that is close yet restrained, clean yet effective. Private entrepreneurs should actively communicate with party committees, governments, and relevant departments at all levels, speak the truth, express the real situation, offer constructive suggestions, maintain a clean image, operate businesses transparently, and abide by laws and regulations. Article 25 provides important policy basis for the development of private enterprises and the construction of a comprehensive political and business relationship, calling for a need to strengthen theoretical research on comprehensive political and business relationships.
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- [3] The boundary shell theory is a general theory of system boundaries applicable to analyze various phenomena in society. Systems establish boundaries through boundary walls, gates, and boundary shell support systems. The theory explains the permeation, superposition, and fusion between different systems through the exchange rate of boundary shells formed by the flow of matter, energy, and information. The organic connection between political ecology and business ecology can coordinate and plan various system elements of the political environment, market environment, and legal environment for the overall optimization of a close and clean political and business relationship.
- [4] Political issues are solved with political thinking, business issues with business thinking, and legal issues with legal thinking. The three thinking models have their own conditions and paths for development and application. If there is a slight deviation in thinking and problem-solving, as well as in the paths and models, significant differences in function and effect can occur.
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- [8] Boundary wall refers to the thickness of the boundary shell. The thicker the boundary wall, the more perfected the self-protection mechanism of the system, the more stable the system, and the stronger the resistance to external erosion.
- [9] Refer to Master Xingyun: "Master Xingyun: Cultivate This Heart."

- [10] "Discord in ethics and norms leads to decline; virtue not in harmony with its position will bring calamity." from "Zhu Zi's Family Maxims." Also found in the "I Ching": "An accumulation of good deeds in a family will surely bring extra blessings; an accumulation of evil deeds will surely bring extra disasters."
- [11] Power corresponds to responsibility, and rights correspond to obligations.
- [12] Being close without being overly familiar, being firm when desire is absent, manifested as being close within bounds and clean without being distant, just and impartial, proactive yet cautious.
- [13] Legal systems that restrict private gain through illegal means or limit private interests in an obligatory manner, such as tax systems, administrative fees, fines, confiscation systems, etc.
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- [24] The establishment of a comprehensive close and clean political-business relationship involves the technical design of permeability and rules. The technical aspect of ecological permeability is the degree of information exchange between the political and business sectors. The standard for the degree of exchange between the boundary shell and boundary gates of political-business relationships is the exchange rate of the boundary shell, namely, permeability.
- [25] Song Kairong. "Political and Business Each in Its Place, Close and Clean Accompanying Each Other." (N) *Entrepreneur Daily*, 2016-05-11(002).
- [26] Permeability refers to the ability of things to maintain their existence within a certain range. If it exceeds a specific range, it may transform into its opposite. Practical rules represent the middle path.
- [27] The middle path is the fundamental position in Buddhism. It transcends extremes and attachments to dualities such as existence and non-existence, increase and decrease, suffering and joy, love and hatred—a path of moderation and righteousness.
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- [29] Policy requirements for caution. In practice, the logic of caution may translate into postponement, suspension, cessation, or even prohibition. Some non-action in the political sphere is a positive institutional measure, such as decisively reducing unnecessary administrative approvals and eliminating unnecessary inspections and acceptances that interfere with businesses.

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- [31] Profit refers to the economic benefits obtained by using money, financial resources, labor, etc., as capital. Profit can be defined in two ways: first, it is the profit obtained after deducting costs; second, it refers to the income generated through operations. In "Shang Jun Shu - External and Internal," it is stated: "Therefore, the labor used in agriculture is the most arduous, and the profit is less than that of merchants, traders, and skilled individuals." Gao Teng's annotation: Profit refers to the surplus gained. In "Wei Shu - Records of Food and Commodities," it is mentioned: "Looking back at the restrictions imposed by the previous dynasty, they did not casually compete with common people for profit." Tang Han Yu's "Inscription on the Tombstone of the Late Wei Gong, the Observing Inspector of Jiangxi in the Tang Dynasty" states: "Gathering materials and tiles in the field, estimating their expenses for assessment, without seeking profit."
- [32] "When procuring public goods, one must never seek profit from it." Alternatively: "When procuring public goods, one must never seek profit from it."
- [33] According to international conventions, the most crucial aspect for Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) is that they must not pursue profit as their objective. In other words, NPOs must not seek profit; they are deemed "non-profit." NGOs emerged roughly in the 1980s in the United States and later gained prominence globally.
- [34] Witnessed by Lv Buwei from Puyang, he traded in Handan and encountered a person from the state of Qin named Ziyi. Upon returning, he reported to his father, "How many times is the profit from farming?" His father replied, "Tenfold." "How many times is the profit from pearls and jade?" His father replied, "Hundredfold." "How many times is the profit from establishing the country and becoming its ruler?" His father replied, "Countless." Lv Buwei said, "Now, despite working hard in the fields, we cannot afford warm clothing and surplus food. If we establish a country and become rulers, we can leave a legacy to the world. I am willing to go and accomplish this."
- [35] Actus reus refers to the completion of harmful conduct as the objective criterion for the completion of a crime. As long as the perpetrator completes the criminal act stipulated by criminal law, the objective aspect of the crime is considered complete, and the crime is deemed accomplished.
- [36] Result crimes refer to crimes in which both the harmful conduct and the harmful result together constitute the objective aspect of the crime. The completion of a result crime requires not only the commission of a criminal act but also the occurrence of a legally prescribed criminal result. Without the harmful result, the objective aspect of the crime lacks completeness, and the essential elements of the objective aspect of the crime are not fulfilled.
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- [42] Kenneth L. Fisher: "Glorious and Sinful: 100 People Who Influenced the U.S. Financial Markets," China Youth Publishing House; June 1, 2008, 1st Edition. It tells the story of them being pioneers in the U.S. financial markets; the path they have taken is the formation of the U.S. and even international financial markets; their story is the history of U.S. finance. Half angels, half devils, they are greedy, cunning, combative, manipulating billions in capital at their fingertips, resorting to any means to defeat opponents. They are focused, daring, tenacious, quick-witted, able to discover huge business opportunities amid a myriad of possibilities, earning enormous wealth. They are not capitalists in the modern sense but great pioneers in financial history.
- [43] Cognitive dissonance is a misalignment judged by different standards and rules. Just as tomorrow's sun will never dry today's clothes, today's sun will never dry tomorrow's clothes. Cognitive dissonance can be highly detrimental, with high costs, leading to the complexity and amplification of events.
- [44] Politics, from the beginning of history, has revolved around state power, manifesting as activities involving the acquisition, maintenance, construction, execution, and restriction of state power. After the emergence of political phenomena, through thousands of years of development, it has matured significantly. In modern times, politics is a tremendous social force that affects the interests of all members of society and dominates their behavior. Politics is

viewed as the "management of public affairs," managing public affairs. Representative figures include Sun Yat-sen and Mackenzie. Reference: source.

- [45] Politics emphasizes rules and governance, business emphasizes costs and efficiency, and law emphasizes fairness and justice. Therefore, these three may not be on the same plane unless concentrated on people, in which case they converge. Hence, politics, law, and business all have the potential for integration but with different focuses.
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