

Summer 6-19-2015

The Construction of Staffing Pattern of the Chinese Think Tank

Jinling Chang

School of information science, Zhengzhou Institute of Aeronautical Industry Management, Zhengzhou, 450000, China,
chang_jinling@zzia.edu.cn

Yanfang Hu

School of information science, Zhengzhou Institute of Aeronautical Industry Management, Zhengzhou, 450000, China,
920895789@qq.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/whiceb2015>

Recommended Citation

Chang, Jinling and Hu, Yanfang, "The Construction of Staffing Pattern of the Chinese Think Tank" (2015). *WHICEB 2015 Proceedings*. 27.

<http://aisel.aisnet.org/whiceb2015/27>

This material is brought to you by the Wuhan International Conference on e-Business at AIS Electronic Library (AISEL). It has been accepted for inclusion in WHICEB 2015 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISEL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

The Construction of Staffing Pattern of the Chinese Think Tank

*Jinling Chang*¹ *Yanfang Hu*²

School of information science, Zhengzhou Institute of Aeronautical Industry Management,
Zhengzhou, 450000, China

Abstract: Think tanks have become an important part of the country's soft power in the world today, and the construction of staffing pattern is one of the key factors of the new pattern think tanks in China. Focusing on the structure of the new type think tanks in China, this paper analyzed the development history and current status of the whole world think tanks firstly. Then the paper discussed the organization structures and staffing patterns of the leading international think tanks of the world, including Brookings Institution and the Rand Corporation. Thirdly, some suggestions were made to help to shape the staffing patterns of the China think tanks, such as establishing the stable long-term training mechanism, promoting multi-cross collaboration and integration, facilitating internal and external staff flow and establishing evaluation mechanism.

Keywords: think tanks, staffing pattern, evaluation mechanism

1. INTRODUCTION

The 18th National Congress of the CPC puts forward to adhere to the scientific decision-making, democratic decision-making, to make decisions, to improve the decision-making mechanism and procedures, to give full play to the ideological base. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC pointed out "strengthening the construction of new think tanks with Chinese characteristics and build a sound decision-making advisory system." Xi Jinping, General Secretary said "Building a new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics is an important and pressing mission. It should be targeted on promoting scientific and democratic decision making, promoting modernization of the country's governing system and ability, as well as strengthening China's soft power."^[1] Intelligence indicates that these two important expositions construction should be an important part of promoting national governance systems and modern governance capacity, but also for the construction of Chinese think tank pointed out the fundamental characteristics of the new direction proposed general requirements. As the situation develops, the role of think tanks will become increasingly large.

Think Tank, also known as brain bank, is defined by the multi-disciplinary experts for policymakers dealing with socio-economic, scientific and technological areas such as military and diplomatic issues advice, providing the best theoretical strategies methods and ideas of public research institutions. When the think tank was emerged in the United States during the Second World War, it simply meant a secure room or environment in which military planners and policy-makers met to discuss wartime strategy. In contemporary discourse, think tank generally refers to a non-profit-making, tax-exempt, non-partisan (not to be confused with non-ideological) institution engaged in research and analysis on one or more issues related to public policy, whether foreign or domestic^[2]. Today, think tanks have become an important force to influence government decision-making for promoting social development, and an indispensable part of the country's soft power. In China, the think tank has gradually become an important part of the national governance system, and is playing an increasingly important role in national governance.

However, compared with the top international think tanks, there is still a gap in construction of think tanks in our country. Seen from the development process, China's think tanks and research construction started late, in

Corresponding author, Email: chang_jinling@zzia.edu.cn., 920895789@qq.com(Yanfang Hu).

recent years, with the deepening of the reform of the political system and the development of civil society, think tanks appears diversified development trends for China's democracy-building as economic and social developments provide powerful intellectual supports. On the other hand, there exist some problems, such as imperfect legal system and external environment, inaccurate development positioning, unreasonable institutional settings, limited social influence, low quality of the employees, the backward development of non-governmental, serious official standard phenomenon, insufficient degree of openness. Therefore, we can see that the construction of staffing pattern of the Chinese think tank is urgent.

Strengthening the construction of staffing pattern of the Chinese think tank, the construction of the new type think tanks in China is an important issue, staffing pattern is the core of the think tank, no matter how perfect the design is. Without it, think tanks are like empty shelves without staffs.

Focusing on the structure of the new type think tanks in China, this paper analyzed the development history and current status of the whole world think tanks firstly. Then the paper discussed the organization structures and staffing patterns of the leading international think tanks of the world, including Brookings Institution and the Rand Corporation. Thirdly, some suggestions were made to help to shape the staffing patterns of the China think tanks.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF THE WHOLE WORLD THINK TANKS

According to the "2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report" statistics ^[3], there are 6618 think tanks in the worldwide in 2014, representing a slight reduced in 2013. Among them, the North America (1989) has the most, followed by Europe (1822), the third is Asia (1106).

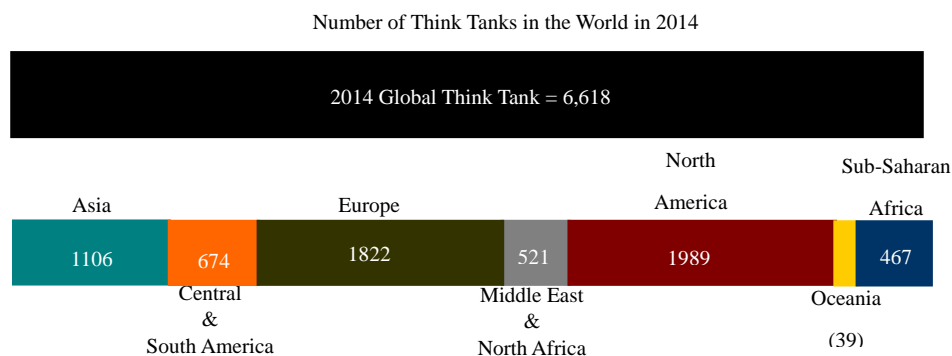


Figure 1. The distribution of global think tank

From the perspective of national, United States think tank, the largest number,1830,followed by China (429),United Kingdom ranked third, with 287. The top 10 countries who own the most think tanks in the world: United States (1830), China (429), United Kingdom (287), Germany (194), India (192), France (177), Argentina (137), Russia (122), Japan (108), and Canada (99)^[4].

Among the top 150 of the best think tanks in the world, the first one is Brookings Institution. Nowadays, the think tanks of United States have the most power influence in the world. Top five think tanks as follows: Brookings Institute ranked first global think tank, United Kingdom followed by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Carnegie Endowment for international peace, third, United States Center for strategic, fourth, Bruegel rose to fifth place. China has nominated 7 think tanks among the best top 150, respectively, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences(27), China Institutes of International Studies(36), China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations(40), the State Council's Development Research Center(48/99), the Center for Strategic and International Studies(61), Shanghai International Issues Research Institute(71) and the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies(106)^[5]. Compared with the world's think-tanks, China think-tanks

achievements level remains to be improved, the international influence of the majority of think tanks is still weak.

3. THE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURES AND STAFFING PATTERNS OF THE LEADING INTERNATIONAL THINK TANKS OF THE WORLD

3.1 The Brookings Institution

It is one of the oldest think tanks, Brookings Institute, as an organization focused on public policy research and education. Compared with other major think tanks, it features on more academic. In addition, the Brookings Institute not only ranked first, but also one of the most worth learning and most trusted think tanks, one of the America's oldest institute.

3.1.1 Structure and model

The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit organization. It's highest decision-making level is the board of directors with 83 members of board come from well-known entrepreneurs, bankers and academics.

Under the President, divided into two parts administrative management and academic research, the administrative consists of 5 departments, namely finance, operations, contact, development and publishing. Part of the research, according to the study area, is divided into five departments, respectively: the research on foreign policy, the global economy and the development of city, economic policy, urban policy, governance research. Each department has a Vice President, and consists of several research centers.

According to the annual reports of the Brookings Institute in 2013, the total number of the Institute is 270 people, including people living in the United States or abroad. Of which are more than 100 researchers, senior researcher, visiting fellow. Other staffs are managers or research support staffs, engaged in the conference and device management, information technology or library services, and support for the research work of researchers^[6].

Center for East Asia Policy Studies, for example, is an earlier established at the Brookings Institution center. It actually has only 2 official fellows, one is the director of the center. The center invites all countries from East Asia to the center. As many visiting scholars do research, their research also belongs to the center's research. Visiting scholars will hold a public seminar at the end of the visit on the eve of the center, and publish the results of their research. After that, their research will be published in the Society's website.

3.1.2 Scholar Practitioner

Researchers at the Brookings Institution and many had worked in government departments and private companies, known as "Scholar Practitioner". For example, Strobe Talbot, the current president of the Brookings Institution. His career spans from journalism, government service to academe. He is also an expert on U.S. foreign policy, with specialties in Europe, Russia, South Asia and nuclear arms control. Talbot has served as director of the University Center of globalization, and has written several books, his recent book on global climate change^[7].

Like other prominent think tank, the Brookings Institution is an official talent pools or repository. Many officials will go to work here after the end of the term. On the one hand, their work in the government sector has the experience and connections to engage in the research. On the other hand, this do "charge" for the future have the opportunity to re-enter the government to do good knowledge base.

3.2 Rand Corporation

RAND Corporation is the first truly be called "think tanks" think-tank in the United States. On May 14, 1948, Project RAND—an organization formed immediately after World War II to connect military planning with research and development decisions—separated from the Douglas Aircraft Company of Santa Monica, California, and became an independent, nonprofit organization^[8]. Dedicated to furthering and promoting

scientific, educational, and charitable purposes for the public welfare and security of the United States, after 70 years to start-up grant doctorates degree "RAND Graduate School. Nowadays, the Rand Corporation is to provide a variety of places in the world to various researches, annually about 70% of the workload from the US government at all levels, while 30% come from all around the world.

As one of America's oldest think tanks, RAND Corporation in the management of its human resources has its own unique and successful experience.

3.2.1 Stable governance structure

Rand Companies "Board" under the leadership of president. RAND Board of Trustees is the highest decision-making body of the company, responsible for reviewing budgets and project establishment and main results of the audit firm and so on. Members of RAND Board of Trustees, come from retired government officials, academics and business personalities, etc., about one-third each.

3.2.2 Extensive staff structure

RAND Corporation currently has nearly 2000 employees from more than 50 countries, 58% have a doctorate, 86% has a master's degree study, and the average age is 35 years old and the average life span of eight years of work in the company. Researchers' professional background varied, as shown in Figure 2 below^[9]:

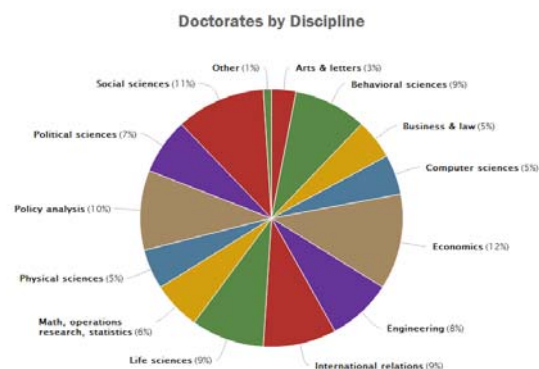


Figure 2. Rand Corporation employees subject background form

Figure 2 shows, Economics (13%), Social Sciences (11%), policy analysis (10%), behavioral science (8%), engineering (8%), together accounting for 60%, followed by mathematics, operations research, statistics (7%), international relations (7%), Political Science (7%), Computer Science (6%), business and Law (6%), art and Literature (6%), physics (5%), Life Sciences (4%) etc. In the Rand Corporation, engineers, physicists, mathematicians, systems analysts, computer specialists and other science experts, with planning and statistical experts, economists, sociologists, psychologists, legal experts, as well as writers such as Humanities and social science experts brainstorm, subjects are wide, interdisciplinary teamwork, inspired the clash of different academic perspectives, and made the study of RAND's creative.

3.2.3 Crossbar matrix management

RAND Corporation's organizational structure is not a common vertical management, but binary matrix organizational structure reflects the think tank "organization." All researchers are according to their professional disciplines under the Division of administrative system of management, and research business is under the system of the permanent research faculty^[10].

Rand implement matrix organization management is between researchers and research programs. All RAND researchers belong to the "global research think tank Department." According to the subject, it is divided

into 7 departments: Behavior and Sociology, Economics and Statistics, International, Management, Policy and Security Policy Division Policy and so on. These divisions are responsible for recruitment, appraisal, remuneration, promotion, training, warning, or dismissal, and so on. Meanwhile, according to research by the RAND Corporation, it has set up 11 business units, including RAND Education, RAND Health and RAND Gulf States Policy Institute, RAND National Security Research Division, RAND National Defense Research Division, RAND Project Air Force, and the Center, responsible for management of research projects and funding.

The man responsible for the project according to the nature and needs of subject, to the project as the baseline, according to the main properties of hanging in a research department, and according to need to knowledge and expertise in different disciplines, to each department to recruit the deployment of researchers, research team composed of concentrated work, be subject after researchers back to their original department. Project Manager according to the nature of the problem and the needs to project as a baseline, according to its main character hanging in a Research Department, involving knowledge and expertise from different disciplines as needed, to the Division of each deployment to recruit researchers, formed a research group to focus its work until the end researchers to return to their original Division.

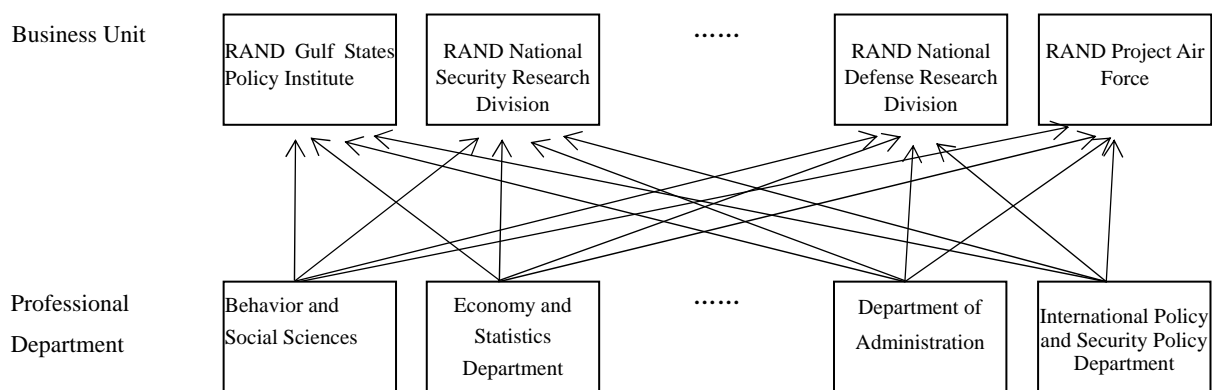


Figure 3. Matrix organization structure of Rand Corporation

The matrix management model of scientific research conducted in a task group, interdisciplinary research. Once the project is completed, there will be new research portfolio. This management model to promote the exchanges and cooperation between the various disciplines and learn from each other, both for research team specializing in the training and discipline of the whole building and is consistent with the research projects need to focus on characteristics of multidisciplinary experts to work together, thus it becomes a modern ideal organizational form of think tanks.

3.2.4 Multi-channel recruiting

Rand has a significantly important employment standard: "A qualified policy analyst must have profound knowledge background and master a variety of different analysis techniques in the social sciences and natural sciences, and have the ability and confidence to engage in interdisciplinary research." This employment standard was reflected in Rand that regardless of what science the Rand researchers do, it can have some sort of knowledge in the industry. Rand absolutely emphasizes on cooperative ability of researchers. All experts require researchers to have good language skills to design their own mathematical models, to write computer programs and computer operations, to have good verbal ability, etc.

Rand researchers are mainly from three aspects: (1) left senior officials and experts from government departments. (2) elite young doctor. (3) other prestigious renowned experts in other organizations.

Rand also widely adopts two part-time jobs. First, it hires well-known academics as advisers which are

attended to 300 people a year and the workload is equivalent to 60 full-time senior researchers. Second, Rand researchers act as part-time teachers in some research institutes and universities or the government, company, expand to access to human resources and information resources of Rand Corporation and promote the application and impact of research results^[11].

3.2.5 Ongoing staff training

Rand pays highly attention to the training of human resources. First, it internally provides a plenty of public training courses, such as project leadership, learning how to deal with a variety of roles in leading a project. Second, it provides a variety of training and communication channels, or the research staff goes to part-time work and work in the government as a visiting scholar; or send the employees to other domestic and foreign think tanks for "oversea study" by the specified research objectives, or to understand the decision-making process, which let the researchers have regular contact with the policy leaders and policy planning group. Every researcher has a month's paid vacation per year so that they can go to universities or other research institution lectures and share experiences and actively support researchers in various academic conferences and conduct investigation in business-related, issues-related field trips. The mid-1970s, it began to selectively accept foreign scholars as visiting researchers^[12].

3.2.6 Powerful auxiliary team

Senior researchers are the main think tank. In order to ensure the efficiency of research, Rand takes great attention to the rational allocation of Rand researchers and pays attention to the role that the secretary and research assistant, which exceeds the researchers on the proportion of the numbers. Composed of Rand's work has the following broad categories: (1) administrators; (2) senior researcher; (3) research assistants; (4) general staff; (5) the executive secretaries; (6) editors, librarians, and other service personnel^[13]. It is these auxiliary staff who deals with various chores that the researchers were able to concentrate on research.

4. NEW THINK TANK TALENT TEAM CONSTRUCTION WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Think tank belongs to knowledge intensive industry which based on knowledge and governance as the basis of survival. The quality of personnel directly determines its competitiveness. It can be said that the first-class talents create first-class think tank. Without efficient management team and high-quality staffing pattern, think tank can not output a high level of achievement.

4.1 Establishing the stable long-term training mechanism

For our country, the construction of the modern significance of the new think tank is still a new thing in the staffing pattern. The other key sector is to establish a stable long-term training mechanism.

Currently, the knowledge structure of staffing pattern of Chinese think tank is not too reasonable and staffing updates and enriches the efficiency is relatively slow. The more highlighted in the academic staff, the less applied staff originated from policy makers. The more professionals in specializing a particular subject area, the less comprehensive researchers across different disciplines. It still exists a great distance in the construction of staffing pattern of the Chinese think tank. Therefore, the construction of staffing pattern of the Chinese think tank must take staffing pattern as the center by increasing the intensity of training and introducing, respecting for knowledge, creating a good environment for research scholars. At the same time, enhancing to cultivate researchers in a different way and develop and make use of composite and comprehensive staffs.

4.2 Promoting multi-cross collaboration and integration

The core competence of think tank is the collaborative innovation. It needs different field's experts to conduct collaborative work. Only a variety of different academic views mutually collide, stimulate and match in a tacit way can produce innovation. America think tank is extremely particular about the rationality and scientific of personnel allocation. That is the essential factor why they can achieve success.

Researchers should be derived from different respects: graduate or postgraduate, research institutions, experts and scholars in Institutions of higher learning or related industry, other excellent think tanks and government resign officials^[14].

For our Science and Technology information Institute, nowadays, we can adopt the mode of operation of the "small core, big network" to integrate internal researchers to be the core of research by cooperating with high-learning university think tanks and non-governmental think tanks, and visiting researchers etc to extend large and multi-levels research net. Setting up think tanks can take in government officials, business executives and well-known experts in the course of the study as a consultant or members of the project group, established advisory committee, the top experts in library field, visiting scholar research system.

Diversified researchers have multi-cross knowledge. Using a "problem" rather than "discipline" to oriented an interdisciplinary platform construction, is helping to break through the existing barriers to the subject as the center and promote to form the collaborative innovation alliance with problem-oriented. It authentically makes think tank for achieving disperse intensive, from closed to open, from the single joint research to shift operations, cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, cross-sect oral, inter-regional and even cross-border portfolio optimization, etc, to continually stimulate the innovation and vitality of think tanks.

4.3 Facilitating internal and external staff flow

According to the experience of American think tanks, every think tank has their own unique human resources management system in accordance with its own characteristics who generally thinks highly of the flowing and training of staff.

First, think tanks and personnel exchanges between the government and think tanks play a crucial role. If think tanks have more former officials or personnel who can be put into the government departments, it will have more competitive advantages. Our country should gradually establish a similar mechanism for the flow talent, build the Chinese "revolving door", establish a bond and bridge ties between knowledge and power and strengthen the effectiveness of think tank Policy Research and Consulting Services^[15].

Second, the researchers of think tanks have maintained regular connection with government departments, and have understood the decision-making process to better master the demand trends and maintain the timeliness of the research results.

Third, send researchers to universities or other institutions for communicating and learning. For example, the RAND Institute of Rand Corporation is the training institution dedicated to all kinds of talents.

Fourth, think tanks keep close personnel and academic exchange activities to other well-known think tanks, organizations and even governments. Such as, the Rand Corporation, the Brookings Institution and so on all establish a frequently exchanging relations with foreign countries even through personnel exchanges between think tanks influencing other countries' decision-making bodies. Our think tank can develop by organizing a high-level forum, organized a high level of academic lectures and other forms, with various domestic and international think tanks and strengthen the economic and social development of well-known experts and scholars in various fields of contact, exchange and cooperation. Continuously absorb the thinking dynamic, practical experience and policy research capacity of professionals to the think tank ranks, think highly of interdisciplinary or complex talents, and change the unitary of guidance to multi-structure-oriented^[16].

Fifth, encourage the flow of think tanks and develop learning activities in internal different department of think tanks. It can enhance the collaboration of researchers and increase the cohesion of think tanks.

4.4 Establishing evaluation mechanism

Reaching out through such complex, multifaceted policy structures is one of the key challenges faced by think tanks^[17]. Regardless of the Brookings Institute, RAND Corporation or Stanford Research Institute, they all focused on staff assessment and established a perfect evaluation system for staff. They evaluate researchers on

professional quality, research and analytical ability, professional knowledge, customer satisfaction surveying, and so on. The results esteemed as the bases of the payment, assessment, promotion, elimination of a research, which is also used as a strict checking level to promote the effectiveness and capability of work for researches. Researchers' payments are in direct proportion to their contribution.

For example, in the 1970s the Stanford Research Institute had made a checking-evaluation system which is called "the development and compensation plan of researchers and specialists professional". It has been divided into five including six levels. This system is used to assess the professional quality, research skills, analytical skills, domain expertise, customers' satisfaction and so on.

The content of think tank is a high degree mental work. To scientifically assess the think tanks, we can get all kinds of various and intuitive information. The situation of work changes from intangible to tangible. It can be more intuitive and scientific. Those can shape the assessment result and help to promote overall development of think tanks.

REFERENCES

- [1] (2014). Xi calls for new type of think tanks. news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-10/27/c_133746282.htm.
- [2] Donald E. Abelson. (2014). Old world, new world: the evolution and influence of foreign affairs think-tanks. *International Affairs*, 90(1): 127.
- [3] (2015). 2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. www.ccg.org.cn/Effect/View.aspx?Id=1640.
- [4] (2015). China and globalization think tank (CCG) shortlisted for the world's most authoritative rankings--the global think-tank report 2014. repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=think_tanks.
- [5] (2015). The global think tank index report(2014) main points of analysis. earth.sysu.edu.cn/share/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=1083.
- [6] Zhou Qi.(2013). the US think-tank organization structure and operation _ with the Brookings Institution as an example. *People's Tribune*, 426 (35): 8-16.
- [7] Strobe Talbot. (2014). Strobe Talbot. www.brookings.edu/experts/talbotts.
- [8] (2015). History and Mission. www.rand.org/about/history.html.
- [9] (2014). Rand Corporation Chinese official website. www.rand.org/zh-hans/about.html.
- [10] Wang Jicheng. (2012-09-07). Rand Corporation Human Resource Management. *China Economic Times*.
- [11] Wang Jicheng, Feng Wei.(2012). qualified policy analysts is how tempered -- human resource management Rand Corporation. *China development observation*, (9): 23-25.
- [12] Wang Jicheng. (2012). Wang Jicheng: the secret of success of the Rand Corporation (on) (2). www.71.cn/2012/1022/691182_2.shtml.
- [13] Wang Jicheng. (2012). Wang Jicheng: the secret of success of the Rand Corporation (lower) -- Rand mystery four. www.chinareform.org.cn/gov/system/Experience/201210/t20121019_152798.htm.
- [14] Lan Jie. (2013). On the operation mechanism of American private think tank and significance in China. *Hu Nan: Hunan Normal University*, 20-35.
- [15] Rong Tingting. (2014). Five points on the construction feature of the new China think-tank. *Globalization*, (04): 56-64.
- [16] Hu Ruijun, Bao Chengguan. (2013). Globalization creates China feature of the new think tank—improving the think tank construction seven mechanism. *People's Tribune*, 426 (36): 3-9.
- [17] Benjamin Hawkins, Jim Mc Cambridge. (2014). Industry Actors, Think Tanks, and Alcohol Policy in the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Public Health Hawkins and Mc Cambridge*, 104(8): 479.