

## Pros and Cons of Chinese Public Servant Career Temptation -- Consideration on the Hot Phenomenon of Civil Service Examinations

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Received 12 June 2012; accepted 2 October 2012

### Abstract

In essence, modern public servant system is different from the bureaucracy in the past. As a career, public servant does is the same as other social careers and professions. However, the hot phenomenon of Chinese civil service examinations reflects in some degree the great temptation of this career on the public which is inconsistent with the development of citizen society in China. This temptation on one hand may be convenient for the government to enroll talents and help enhance development of civil servant team; on the other hand, it can also cause unhealthy views on careers, inappropriate talents allocation mechanism, waste of talent resources, and therefore influences the benign development of society.

**Key words:** Public servant; Career; Hot phenomenon of Civil Service Examinations

MA Tao (2012). Pros and Cons of Chinese Public Servant Career Temptation -- Consideration on the Hot Phenomenon of Civil Service Examinations. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(5), 117-120. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720120805.1377> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720120805.1377>.

One of the greatest achievements of modern democratic revolution is breaking up the social grading in identity and profession. In modern democratic political society, there are only differences between social divisions of labor but no lower or higher levels in professions. Nevertheless, denying the grading in professions does not mean there is no difference between careers. Even the 2012 Chinese national civil service examination is still working on, related training and preparation works about

the 2013 examination has started already. Nowadays, according to the internal affiliated interests of different careers (for example, nature, social status, income, and social insurance), there are obvious social distinctions. Because different attributions or different types of careers' internal affiliated interests varied, based on the interests-seeking nature of people, when choosing a job, most people definitely prefer to careers that have more internal affiliated interests. Plus great pressure given by many external factors, the trend is bound to be a social phenomenon. The appearance of the hot phenomenon of civil service examinations is just a reflection of unbalanced internal affiliated interests in careers. Career differences caused by unreasonable social distribution system have been more obvious. Recently, the number of people who take the Civil Service Examinations has been increasing in a drastic speed. In 2003, there were less than 100,000 people attending the examinations while in 2010 the number has been increased to 14,430,000 which is 17 times of that in 2003. Although the number of people taking Civil Service Examinations in 2011 and 2012 has decreased in certain degree than 2010, compared with the limited positions offered by the government, we can still feel the fierce competition of the examinations. The hot phenomenon of Civil Service Examinations has shown in certain degree the great temptation of the career. Then, why do Chinese civil servant positions have such great temptation? Is this phenomenon normal? How can we handle it? To resolve these problems, we need to get a deep understanding about the pros and cons of the career's temptation.

## 1. TEMPTATION OF CHINESE CIVIL SERVANT PROFESSIONS

### 1.1 Honor of the Career

Civil servants or the so called "government officials"

in ancient time who have the public power of the government are always respected by Chinese people. As the continuators of the “government officials” of the past, civil servants are still enjoying the respected social position. However, the typical “subject” thoughts of citizens in traditional political culture also widely exist in Chinese people’s hearts; therefore, civil servant careers have a much higher social reputation and social status.

Civil servants are public servants of the people. As basic parts of governmental organizations, they directly offer their service to the nation, the society and the public. They work to help realize people’s interests, rights and benefits, and achieve national goals and aims for the country. They own the sublime and holy that other people do not have. At the same time, the civil servant profession also provides great development potential for people. It can be a wide platform for people to achieve their dreams and ambitions. As young generation, people especially those graduated from the universities have strong impulse for self-identification and self-improvement. The special features of civil servant profession and high-level endorsement from the public can help prove themselves in a much faster way. Of course, this kind of jobs which can help get affirmation from family members, friends, and other surrounded acquaintances have great temptation for most people. Meanwhile, the current civil servant group also has many organizational, economical, and cultural resources that other professions do not have. All of these have made civil servant group own the advantageous position in current society.

### **1.2 Occupational Stability**

As long as we can see, currently young people’s occupational directions are governmental organizations, institutions, state-owned businesses, private companies, and entrepreneurship. Comparatively speaking, most of them prefer stable jobs in government organizations and institutions more than others, especially when the employment situation is grim. From the 1998 state-owned enterprises reform, many workers in state-owned enterprises lost their jobs. Besides, due to the college expansion plan in enrollment, there are more and more university graduates. According to authoritative survey, the overall unemployment rate of Chinese young people is 9% which is higher than the average unemployment rate of the society which is about 6.1%. The serious employment situation has also made young people choose more stable jobs in job seeking. Since the modernization of Chinese civil servant management system has not been completed yet, unless doing actions concerning major violations of laws and discipline, civil servants will not be unemployed after they get the jobs. According to statistics, between 1996 and 2003, the number of dismissed civil servants in China is less than 20,000. Among more than 5 million civil servants, we can get that the dismiss rate in China is about 0.05%. Through a Rough estimation, it

can be found out that the turnover rate of civil servants is around 1.25% which is far below the numbers of other industries. Therefore, civil servant profession is a preferred secure job for people who are eager for stability in their lives.

### **1.3 Occupational Indemnity**

Since the civil servant group is relative stable and has great financial support, it is definitely the first object covered by social insurance. At present, Chinese social insurance mainly includes “five one insurance fund” which are the endowment insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, employment injury insurance, maternity insurance and Housing Provident Fund. Although Chinese laws ask employers pay the “five one insurance fund” for their employees, due to ineffective governmental supervision, little consciousness of employers and employees on paying insurance, intentional avoidance of the employers, or other factors such as decrease of production cost, plus unbalance between the labor’s and the capital’s powers in labor market, quite a part of labors in private companies cannot have social insurance. China is still in the social transformation period and its social insurance system is not completed, in addition, with the lack of related legislation and implementation of laws, staffs in non-public institutions cannot have complete social insurance which has made employees worry about their own future before them taking the job. Comparatively, the advantages of the civil servant profession in social insurance are very obvious. Owing to powerful and stable financial support, civil servant professions have complete social insurance “safety net” which has make sure they have no crisis awareness compared with other social members in other industries.

### **1.4 Power Attribute of Civil Servant Profession**

“Power” is also a very important reason of the hot phenomenon of Civil Service Examinations. “Although China has the fastest economic increase speed and private investments have created lots of employment opportunities, the temptation of power and social status are always attractive to many people including first-rate university graduates.” Owing to the influence of bureaucracy culture, many young people are very easy to worship power. In many people’s eyes, it is nearly the same to be a civil servant and an official. Because to be a civil servant means that they have the opportunities of potential promotion and also the expansion of power. Just because of this worship, many talented intellectuals have been enthusiastic in taking civil service examinations instead of using their own talents to do jobs that suit them. In addition, various interests and privileges contained by power are also very attractive for job seekers. At present, Chinese government has controlled giant social and economic resources. As part of the governmental organizations, civil servants can obtain improper benefits

legally when operating powers. For example, welfare benefits, Children education welfare, and housing benefits which exceed far from the normal income of civil servants. The nature linkage between civil servant occupation and power has also promoted the pursuit of job seekers.

## 2. ADVANTAGES OF THE CIVIL SERVANT PROFESSION TEMPTATION

### 2.1 Optimize Civil Servant Team as Well as Improve Government Efficiency

Based on the above mentioned civil servant profession temptations, no wonder that civil service examinations are so hot. Large amount of people getting into the civil servant team has injected new energies for government work. What is affirmative is that more and more people taking the civil service examinations is helpful for the government to elect excellent talents by a public and fair way. The civil servant profession temptation is useful for the government's recruitment and the perfection of civil servant structure. The open, fair, transparent, preferential civil servant recruitment system has been approved by the people and examinees after so many years' revolution and perfection. It can provide new human resource and young energies for governmental organization reform and innovation in certain degree as well as bring vitality and new life for civil servant team. All of these great new features brought by the civil servant profession temptation are of great help for improving government work efficiency, update and development of government work ideas, strengthening government self regulation and management ability and keeping smooth operation of various government jobs in a fast and best way so that to build the foundation for realizing completed governmental functions.

### 2.2 Release Employment Pressure and Strengthen Confidence for Fair Competition in Job Seeking

Civil servant profession temptation can attract large amount of young people which has released the insufficient supply of employment market in some degree and also provides an important platform for excellent people to show their talents. Therefore, civil servant recruitment is a very significant employment method. It has helped a part of people get employed successfully, resolve family worries and personal panic, and made employment situation better. Besides, the recruitment system of civil servant insists fairness and justice as its principle which has brought benign employment competition environment, given young job seekers confidence, strengthened their confidence and determination in competitions, and shows as a great example for employment market's recruitment system.

## 3. DISADVANTAGES OF THE CIVIL SERVANT PROFESSION TEMPTATION

### 3.1 Twisted Occupational Ideas

The "official-centered" is an informal saying but not an accurate scientific definition. It is a new word that shows folk intelligence which was created by Chinese people in 1980s. When the word was created at that time, there was at least a meaning contained by it: recognize being an official or not as a core social value measurement to evaluate people's social status and value. The "official-centered" concept has influenced modern young people's values in a large extent. By the influence of the "official-centered" concept, everything people do is for being an official. To be an official is the highest pursuit of people's life. People judge the value of others by their official ranks and evaluate other people's social status and functions. Official positions have become the only one measurement of the society; the honor from these positions is much higher than others'; official positions are the best way to obtain wealth. Under the political psychological effects, "study to become officials – be officials and be rich – be rich and feed families" has become the recognized criterion of the society. Therefore, many a young people who want to be officials do not have the "serve the people" aim. They think that "serve the people" is the start point of their "official lives" and "one's political development space is unlimited" if they can pass the civil service examinations. Meanwhile, from the statistics of every year's civil service examinations sign up, some positions are registered by more than four to five thousand people while some have no applicants which have shown that examinees think positions are the most important thing in the civil service examinations. A "good" position can make people draw on advantages and avoid disadvantages; of course, it is more welcome than others. Although a major-fitted job and interesting job is always the first choice for people, when there is convenient working conditions, favorable salaries and benefits, majors and interest seem of less important.

### 3.2 Unreasonable Talent Distribution Mechanism

The great temptation of civil servant professions has made a large amount of different talents come to work at government departments and other national organizations. On one hand, it has reserved many talents for civil servant team; on the other hand, it also leads to insufficient supply of employment market. Because some young people cannot resist the temptation of civil servant professions, the only aim and goal they have after graduation is to be a civil servant even if they fail several times in civil service examinations. This phenomenon has reflected the unbalance of internal affiliated interests of different careers that has made civil servant professions outshine others. Civil servant professions are just one type of

many social occupations. They provide certain kind of management service to the society. Excellent civil servant team can improve their social management level and promote social development, however, if too many excellent people are in the government, even the best social management service cannot help realize social development and progress.

### 3.3 Waste of Human Resource

The requirement of civil servant professions is to absorb excellent talents to perform government management service through selection of civil servants. When young people choose their careers, they should pay great attention on jobs' correlation degree with their majors so that to serve the society by expressing their own speciality. When decide whether to choose civil servant professions, they still need to think about the position and their majors studied in universities and thus to keep the unity of realizing individual value and social value. Only by doing so, our society can realize the harmonious situation of human resource and occupational needs and makes full use of human resource to avoid great loss.

Since the enrollment conditions for civil service examinations are very tough, most examinees can only register for positions that do not have limitations on majors which has decreased the serviceability of graduates' majors, goes against the expression of their talents, and after all causes social human resource waste. In addition, due to the time limitation on civil service examinations, many students have spent too much time on waiting for examinations and thereby missed the best time for seeking other jobs which is definitely restrict future development of them.

## CONCLUSION

If one day, the supreme status of civil servant occupations has been changed, government creates more space for professions apart from civil servants, and keep balance between other professions' internal affiliated interests and the professions, the civil service examinations which are thought as "The No.1 Examinations" of China are just normal professional examinations. Through completing social insurance system and a set of buffering mechanism to provide the "vulnerable groups" in employment competition a "safety valve" or "life belt". We look forward to the day's coming because it is the correct and normal development direction of citizen society and also the necessary requirements of social fairness and openness.

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