Analysis of Resignation Trend of Chinese Civil Servants

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Abstract. The thesis compares the resignation of civil servants in China and in the U.S.A. and the U.K., and the resignation of civil servants and employees in enterprises, and finds that the resignation rate of Chinese civil servants is quite small, but resignation will be normal. Then so much importance should be attached to problems such as civil servant distribution reasonableness, insufficient civil servant information disclosure, alienated civil servant resignation administration.

Introduction

Over 10,000 civil servants and public institution staffs in China delivered job hunting curriculum vitae during three weeks following February 25, 2015, according to “2015 Talent Flow Analysis Report” published by Zhaopin.com on March 28, 2015, and the growth ratio was 34% compared with that in 2014. There are 8,179 E-media reports, 289 newspaper reports, 1,442 posts in forums, 700 in blogs, 1,134 posts in microblog, and 2,389 articles in WeChat about “civil servant resignation” topics from March 28 to April 15, according to public opinion monitoring room data of people.com.cn.[1]

There are viewpoints below about turnover or resignation of Chinese civil servants. Firstly civil servant resignation peak is coming. Liu Xing, etc. think that data indicates cross-industry job hopper from governments, public services, non-profit organizations are 34% more than that in 2014, and the heated civil servant qualification exam gets somewhat cool down since 2014. This reminds us of mass civil servant resignation in 1992 and 2003.[2] Secondly there are actual causes for civil servant resignation. 29.3% Chinese civil servants have psychological issues, according to the article of Chen Xin. 10% of all psychological patients are civil servants, far more than other groups. In a career psychological health survey of a province, the life status of civil servants is ranked in the last one among all professions. [3] Under this actual background, civil servant resignation is a phenomenon bound to happen. Thirdly civil servants face “liquidity shortage”. Wei Jie holds the opinion that domestic civil servants who resign are not quite many; on the contrary, there is “liquidity shortage”. We don’t need to be shocked at a bigger resignation proportion of civil servants in future.[4] Fourthly it is the normal flow for civil servants to quit. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security denies the resignation trend of civil servants and thinks the resignation is normal.[5] Xiong Jianmei, public opinion analyst of public opinion monitoring room of People.com.cn also holds the same viewpoint that civil servant resignation is within the normal talent flow scope after analyzing over 10,000 articles on media.[6]

This paper focuses on what the actual circumstance of civil servant resignation is and what the trend is in China.

The Resignation Peak of Chinese Civil Servants Can Be not Coming

Data gathered by the author in the survey indicates that China has a small resignation rate of civil servants, and on the whole the civil servant team is pretty stable. The total number of nationwide civil servants is 7,170,000 in 2014. An anonymous insider introduces that about 9,000 civil servants quit their jobs in 2014, 1.25 per 10,000; the resignation rate of Yunnan province surveyed by the author is 1.16 per 10,000; the resignation rates of Menghai County and Cangyuan County
are 1.83 and 1.45 per 10,000. According to the survey data of the author in Yunnan province’s human resources department, 16, 184 and 301 civil servants resigned in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively after the 18th NPC, and the resignation number is on the rise. However, the resignation rates were only 0.06, 0.71 and 1.16 per 10,000. (See Figure 1) It can be concluded that despite of different resignation rates of civil servants across the country, the rates are less than 10 per 10,000.

Chinese civil servant resignation rate is pretty low compared with that of foreign counterparts. Statistical data of American federal human resources department shows the peak period for American federal civil servants to quit was in 1970 since 1970s, and the resignation rate was 12.6%. After that, it keeps a declining trend, from 5.34% to 3.64% from 2000 to 2013. [7](See Figure 2) The resignation rates of U.S. federal civil servants were all above 3%.

How about the resignation rates of civil servants in different states of U.S.? The average resignation rate of civil servants in 44 states of America in 1997 was 8.05%, according to 1998 Government Performance Project, of which the New Mexico State is 20.32%, the highest, and the resignation rates of 15 states are bigger than 10%; Florida State has the lowest resignation rate 1.86%.[8]

What about other countries besides the U.S.? The British civil servant resignation rate kept between 1.9% and 2.6% from 1992 to 1997, according to statistical data in 1997. (See figure 3). The total headcount of British civil servants in 2013 was 448,800, and 9,592 civil servants resigned, accounting for 2.14%. [9] It declines somewhat compared with that in 1997, but it remains above 2%.
Figure 3. Resignation Rate of British Civil Servants in 1992-1997.

Then what about the result of comparison with the resignation rate in Chinese enterprises? At the beginning of 2015, PXC data department conducted a comprehensive survey on resignation rates in 2014, and the analysis results reveal that the overall resignation rate of enterprises in 2014 was 28.8%, and the voluntary turnover rate, i.e. resignation rate, was 19.6% (The overall turnover rate in 2013 was 25.6%, and the resignation rate was 17.4%).[10]

Therefore, based on comparison with counterparts in the U.S.A. or the U.K., and with that in Chinese enterprises, the resignation rates of Chinese civil servants are extremely low. As a result, Chinese civil servant team is very stable, and the civil servant resignation peak is groundless.

Resignation of Civil Servants Will Be Normal Information

Since the 18th NPC, CPC and the government have adopted combined measures to strengthen administration over party and government leaders, cadres, and civil servants. Civil servants take on a completely new look, they are more honest and upright, and the political ecology is better purified.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security follows the administration trend, the pension insurance of civil servants combined with enterprise employees under discussion for years is implemented, meaning that over 7 million civil servants pay their social security fees out of their monthly salary, and receive their pension in social security bureaus.

Civil servants change their career expectations when the measures above are implemented, and the distorted viewpoint that civil servants could make fortune and enjoy good income from moonlighting is corrected. Hence the profession of civil servants, just like other jobs, is a public career choice, and it is the foremost standard to see if it is suitable. A few people find out that the career is not satisfactory, and then they make timely adjustment and quit the jobs. Resignation means quite normal talent flow, and reflects diversified choices of talents under market economy and gradually standard civil servant administration. Meanwhile, the growing resignation of civil servants frequents in most places is the normal reaction to the management measures implemented by the CPC and the state. The author learned from several county level cities that several civil servants resign in every county every year in recent three years. It is predicted that it will be normal to see civil servants resign. However, the civil servant career is still quite appealing compared with jobs in enterprises, which are of strong competitions and large pressure.

Enhance Study on Severe Problems in Resignation of Civil Servants

Severe Brain Drain in a Few Systems and Grassroots Units

Firstly many civil servants in court system and grassroots drain. The statistics of a county level court shows one resigned and another is applying for resignation during recent three years. However, among 51 civil servants recruited from 2003, 23 left the county court via organizational transferring, exam transferring, resignation, etc., making the resignation rate 45% by May 12, 2015.
Only 7 out of 30 recruited from 2003 to 2010 still work in the court, and 77% backbone have left. Secondly it is difficult for remote counties and cities to recruit and keep talents.

No Information Disclosure

Seen from international practice, human resources department websites of European and American countries publish important information and data on a yearly basis, such as headcounts, new recruitments, retirements, dismissal, discharge and resignation. On one hand, the right to be informed and to supervise of the public is guaranteed; on the other hand, it is favorable for conducting academic analysis and study, and improving governments’ human resources development and management. However, relevant data about Chinese civil servants is not published on relevant human resources department website, scholars apply for information disclosure, but the data obtained is incomplete, and management sectors refuse to provide relevant data at the excuse of confidentiality. Under this background, the academic study of experts and scholars are lack of practical information, the research fruits are hard to bring interaction and responsive chord with civil servant administration work, and there are no effective ways to help government sectors to improve their human resources development and administration.

Alienation Phenomenon of Civil Servants Resignation and Administration

Firstly some civil servants holding weak concepts about organizations and legal systems leave their work without notice, or leave without being approved by their units after submitting applications, all of which violate organizational administrative procedures. Secondly the alienation phenomenon of resignation administration of civil servants. In practical administration, due to wrong understanding, some leaders consider civil servants applying for resignation as opposing the units and themselves, so normal resignation of civil servants turn into dismissal, thus legal rights and interests of civil servants being infringed.

Summary

The trend of civil servant resignation, information disclosure, talent distribution, management alienation etc are discussed in this paper. Under the background that it is normal for civil servants to resign gradually, it will be major topics for discussion concerning civil servant administration in China to strengthen research on severe issues above, refer to beneficial experience from foreign civil servant resignation administration, gradually and legally accelerate civil servant information disclosure, take pertinent measures to resolve brain drain in some areas, lawfully administrate civil servant resignation, etc.

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