

# How the Government Influence the Change of Personnel System in Chinese Universities

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## Abstract

Chinese government is the leading force which influence the change of personnel system in Chinese colleges and universities. The change of personnel system in Chinese universities is led mainly by the government. The leading position of the government causes an obvious mandatory change in personnel system in Chinese universities, which also makes the personnel system in a short and excess supply at the same time.

**Keywords:** The Government, Chinese Universities, The Personnel System, The Institutional Change

## 1. Introduction

The Chinese government has played an important role in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. The Chinese government has been in a comprehensive control over the country since Qin Dynasty. Because of the centralized system which has been in practice in China since Qin dynasty. Until the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, the Chinese government cannot implement a powerful centralization, which give a chance to cultural elites and other action groups to play a role in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities, although, the Chinese government control the development of the personnel system in Chinese colleges and universities through the laws and regulations. The People's Republic of China established a powerful regime, the Chinese government had a more comprehensive control also. Because of the historical tradition and the political system, the government plays a very important role in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities.

## 2. The Government Lead the Change of the Personnel System in Chinese Universities

The Chinese government nearly has an action in every change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. It originated from the top-down

hierarchical despotism in China. The government has a decisive influence on the the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. The government leads the change through laws and policies. For example, There are three "DaXueTang Charters" In the late Qing Dynasty (GuPing Zhou & Yan Zhang, 2003). In the republic of China there are more laws, the famous ones of which are University Law in 1912 and the University Organization Law in 1929. In the Republic of China, there is almost a policy before every personnel system reform. The Chinese government regulate the basic framework and change the trend of the personnel system in Chinese universities through laws and policies. The government can rely on the policy and legal order to make the personnel system in Chinese universities similar. The government can do this because there is no tradition of university autonomy in China, which makes a distinction between the western universities and their Chinese correspondence. Chinese universities have been held by the government since the date of birth, and the government is the major investors and the main service targets. China's higher education has always been regarded as part of the national business, and managed by the government as an administrative department or a quasi administrative department, so, Chinese universities don't resist the governmental management over university affairs so strongly as their western correspondences. The principals in Chinese universities has been ranked officials in the

government, actually is appointed by the government to manage the universities. The teachers in Chinese universities are the officials or cadres in the government during the late Qing Dynasty and the People's Republic of China, who are included in the administrative system of the government. This makes it possible and feasible that the government leads the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. And this kind of change of the personnel system from top to bottom is centralized and planned typically. For example, higher education marketization in contemporary China is the tool of the government to increase the efficiency and relieve the financial pressure. The Chinese government doesn't change their value of public administration, which is different from the western governments (Motohisa KANEKO. LIU Wen-jun. & ZHONG Zhou. 2003). In other words, any reform on the personnel system in the universities in the People's Republic of China are implemented from top to down.

### **3. The Government's Leading Position in the Change of the Personnel System in Chinese universities Makes the Change an Obvious Mandatory one**

The government has a leading position in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities, which influence the change through laws and policies. This makes the change a characteristic supply-dominant and mandatory institutional one. It's easy for the government to have a self-aggrandizement in their behavior and interests (Yifu Lin, 2003). The government of China has been in great discretion and the color ruled by man is thick. The government doesn't administer according to law, which makes the policies change at will. With the regime changed, there is no order in the change of the personnel system in the Chinese universities, there is no reason to explain some change, and there is a obvious institutional breakage. For example, the teachers in the universities are officials in the late Qing Dynasty, and self-employed professionals in the republic of China, and the cadres similar to the civil servants in the People's Republic of China. Why the Identity of the teachers in the universities changed like this? no one can explain. It is generally believed that the personnel system in the early Republic of China basically Copied the model in Germany (HongJie. Chen. 2006), but the professors in Germany were civil servants who had a stable income and status, and there was no security for the position of the professors in the early Republic of China. The disordered change of the

identity of the teachers in universities shows that it was the government that change the identity of the teachers by force.

### **4. The Government's Leading Role Makes the Personnel System in Chinese Universities in a Short and Excess Supply at the Same Time**

The change of the personnel system in Chinese universities led by the government is one led by the institutional supply. This kind of change hypothesizes that the government understands all the implication of the change of the personnel system in universities, understand the needs of the personnel system, and the government provides the institution in accordance with the need of personnel system in universities. But in realities, there is no such a situation. This is why the personnel system in Chinese universities is in a short and excess supply at the same time, namely the personnel system implemented by the government becomes invalid and the one needed by the universities is being absent. For example, the reform of the faculty recruitment system In the contemporary Chinese universities can make the teacher resources in rational allocation and improve the efficiency of the teachers, it is accord with the trend of The Times, also accord with the interests of the government, universities, and the teachers. However, the necessary supporting system for the reform such as the unemployment system, pension system are being absent, which makes the faculty recruitment reform cannot achieve the aim (LIU Xian-jun. 2008). At the same time, in order to improve the efficiency and change the attitude of the staff who acts like civil servants, the education staff system reform is put into practice, but in realities, the staff reform only changed in the form, there is no change in essence (Li AiMin. 2006). This is a typical supply surplus. University personnel agency system is meant to break the university teachers' identity, however, in the actual operation, personnel agency became a new identity for the relatively worse education background and lower status (Chen li. Zhang LiNa. Zhao HuiFang& Kong ZhiHong. 2003). The "up-or-out" system reform in Beijing university, according to the interview by the author in Beijing university, the reform is basically "much cry and little wool" and in no real practice (Xu Jie. 2003). This is an example of the failure of system reform which is caused by the excess supply. in this case, the reform becomes a mere formality.

## 5. The Personnel System in Chinese Universities is Formed on the Basis of Imperfect Competition of the Stakeholders

The subject that can influence the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities includes the Chinese government, the elites and the other stakeholders. But review the Chinese university history, we will find it is the Chinese government that leads the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. The Elites mainly provide intellectual support for the reform and the establishment of the personnel system in Chinese universities. They provide their professional advice for the officials in the educational department as a staff, help establish the personnel system in Chinese universities, and write the books to introduce the personnel system in foreign universities. They also participate in formulating laws and regulations to influence the university personnel system in the whole country. This kind of elite usually acts as a competent educational officials, and make the regulations in their tenure to have certain effect on the national university personnel system. They also implemented the personnel system reform in Chinese universities personally. Typical cases include Zhang BaiXi's adjustment of the personnel arrangement in DaXueTang (Jie Yu. 2001.) and Zhang ZhiDong's foundment of the Sanjiang Normal School in the late Qing Dynasty, Cai YuanPei and Jiang MengLin's reform of Peking University (PingShu Gao. 1998. Menglin Jiang. 2004.), Mei YiQi's maintenance of the democratic administration system in Tsinghua University (Yunfeng Su. 2001.), Guo BingWen's implementation of the board of directors in Southeast University in the Republic of China (Yan Zhang. 2009.). In addition, the game between interest groups can also affect the personnel system, for example, the game for the governance of the university between the professors, the students and the principals in Tsinghua University make the system of

professors' managing university to be formed and strengthen down in the Republic of China.

Under the government's strong intervention, Chinese universities are generally passive and the change of personnel system rarely happens actively and bottom-up. The system of professors' managing university in Tsinghua University in the Republic of China is one of the few. This system is characteristic of spontaneous formation, natural evolution and bottom-up, and is the result of the game between the professors in Tsinghua University and the headmasters of Tsinghua University (under the power of the government, such as the northern warlords, the Kuomintang), the board of directors (under the power of the American government and the American Foundation). The game between the interior interest groups in the universities makes the university personnel system to change in the direction of democratic management, because the game between all the interest groups is itself a challenge to the centralized leadership and is also a process to form the democratic management. The above tells us in some time in some universities, Chinese elites and the other interest groups act in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities, even so, during the change of the personnel system in the Chinese universities, it's still the Chinese government that leads the mandatory institutional change.

## 6. Conclusions

Actors is the important factor that influence the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities. Among them, the government is the most powerful in the process of change, elites can play a role in a certain historical period. The personnel system formed by the game between the internal interest groups is the one that can promote the development of the universities, a special kind of organization.

Because the government has been the main organizer of Chinese higher education, the Chinese colleges and universities nearly can't develop without the financial support from the government. Therefore, the government is basically the decisive role of actors in each historical period of the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities.

The elites influence the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities together with the government at various stages of the historical development, such as providing intellectual support for the reform of the personnel system, or acting personally to make the university personnel system to change in the direction the elites wish. But if the elites want to

play a role in the change of the personnel system in Chinese universities, the premise is generally that the Chinese government's control of the university is not very strict, only in that case, the elites can have an chance to work.

Generally speaking, there is little space for the various internal interest groups to play a free game to form the personnel system. The general or normal situation of the Chinese university personnel system is that the government promulgates the law or regulations and the university acts accordingly, then, the government firmly control the basic framework of the university personnel system. But in some specific historical periods, there is a situation of power vacuum can appear such as Tsinghua University during the period of the Republic of China. In that situation, the government's control is not strict, the principal of the university is absent or the principal implements a rule of "non-interference", only in this kind of special historical period the various internal interest groups can have the opportunity to struggle for the power, and a system of professors' managing university can finally form which is conducive to the development of the colleges and universities, reveal the characteristics of the academic organization and admire the academic power. The abnormal example provides a very good case to develop the Chinese university personnel system and an good reference and revelation to the reform of contemporary Chinese university personnel system. It tells us that the personnel system really suitable for Chinese universities is the one that the government nearly doesn't intervene in the university management, the principal respects the power of the teachers, the teacher group participate in the management of the university, and this system is not necessarily consistent with the laws and regulations the government promulgated. Because the laws does not comply with the situation of various colleges and universities, if it requires all universities unified to implement, it actually can cause thousands of universities in a same condition. The government should give more opportunity to the elites and the various interest groups of the colleges and universities to participate in the reform of personnel system of the universities, the government shouldn't completely leads the change of the personnel system of the Chinese universities. The system formed from Bottom-up has more chance to stimulate the vitality, to achieve the goal of the efficiency that the government and the society need on the basis of promoting the academic prosperity.

The ideal picture of the personnel system in Chinese universities is one that respects the essence of universities as academic organization on the basis of university autonomy, academic

freedom, professors' management.

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