



## EVENT REPORT:

# *“From Open to Global: Preparing a New Generation of Policymakers for China.”*

*With Prof. Lan Xue*

*29 October, 2009*

**Attendees:** Approximately 80

**Webcast Participants:** 14

The speaker at this event was the Dean of the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University, **Prof. Lan Xue**. He spoke about preparing a new generation of policy makers for China.

Prof. Lan Xue started the discussion by addressing some of the key factors related to public policy making in China: growth in GDP, the change of industrial structure, the change of society from rural to urban, increased international linkages and the new governance structure. Dr. Xue stressed that China’s transformation is quite unique because all of these changes took place simultaneously.

Dr. Xue discussed the challenges of public policy making in China. Among the greatest challenges, he enumerated the following: 1) Implementation of reforms (how to bring about equity while sustaining growth) 2) The demand for transparency 3) Addressing the needs of a new heterogeneous society 4) Dealing with legal problems related to China’s transition 5) Dealing with unintended consequences in policy implementation 6) How to balance policy making at the national and at the global level.

In terms of education, the responses to such challenges have included creation of think-tanks as part of the government, an increasing role of think-tanks outside the government and creation of a learning system within the government. Dr. Xue mentioned a number of ways to train public servants (of which there are 60 million) in China: training at a low level (three months training), training through MPA degrees (currently there are over 100 MPA programs in China), full time training, overseas training and programs offered by the Leadership Academy in Shanghai.



Dr. Xue further stated that the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University was founded based on the need to educate civil servants. It currently has 45 full-time professors half of which were trained overseas and offers the following degrees: Master of Arts, Master of International Development, Executive Master of Public Administration, International Master of Public Administration and Master of Public Administration.

Some of the global challenges highlighted by Prof. Xue that need to be addressed by the future public policy makers include: working toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, tackling climate change, and resolving domestic and international conflicts. All of these challenges will require global coordination. Prof. Xue highlighted the importance of China sending its professionals overseas in the past and stressed that now is the time for China to invite people from all over the world and to make meaningful contributions to the world.

### **Overview of Q&A Session**

*1) Could you please comment on China's stance on climate change and subsidies in the context of Obama's administration policy toward China?*

Climate change is a major focus for Chinese leaders, there are many possibilities for China in cooperation on energy efficiency and technology; subsidies in car industry is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

*2) Does public service in China fall under Western tradition or Eastern tradition?*

Public administration in China has a long history; its roots can be found in both Western and Eastern cultures. The long history of public service in China has a great impact on today's practice. The challenge for the Chinese system of governance is how to become an integrated part of the global system and remain efficient.

*3) What are the tools for the government to utilize while playing a role in the country's transition? What are the unexpected consequences of the country's transition?*

The unique challenge for the Chinese government is to maintain the stability found in China's long history. In China's contemporary history, there have been 6 or 7 public administration reforms. In



1998, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji turned all industry ministries into industrial associations. At present, the Chinese government is learning how to adopt cooperation between the public and private sectors and to increase the role of NGOs.

As China has moved from an agricultural to an industrial society, the cost of transition has been very high. China's huge population can be a big problem for the transition process; this is the reason why China has instituted the One Child Policy.

4) *How has the economic crisis impacted education?*

After the financial crisis, some people say, there is more of a need for the government to be involved. However, the role of government in providing assistance should only increase in the short run, in the long-term the market should work on its own. Overall, there is an increased need for the government to provide a better regulation of the financial system, the environment and provision of public goods.

5) *How has the internet affected public service in China?*

The internet has played an important role in public regulation. Online education has grown in China.

6) *Is it possible for foreign nationals to complete internships while at Tsinghua University?*

In terms of internships, in China, there is no regulated system of internship similar to that of the U.S.; however, opportunities are in place. Tsinghua University invites foreign students to complete internships with the Chinese government, but students must first pass a Chinese language test.

7) *What is the government's stance on NGOs in China?*

In general, the government supports the role of NGOs; locals welcome NGOs involvement when dealing with social problems.

8) *What is the difference between party-based training and university-based training?*

In general, Party School training deals mainly with government policies and initiatives. Universities focus more on knowledge skills; but party schools have recently become more open in terms of social policy issues. Party schools provide a healthy environment for learning; public administration schools are both private and non-profit, and are involved in public training of officials.



9) *Is internationalized education synonymous to Americanized education? What is the americanised? How [is] Chinese curriculum unique and not unique?*

In the past, China followed the Russian model of education, which meant rigorous technical basics. Since the late 70s, China became influenced by the European and US tradition. Nevertheless, the Chinese tradition has not been lost; the Cultural Revolution has caused more damage than outside influences. The National Entrance Examination has had a negative effect on students' critical abilities.

10) *How to nurture the public service through public policy schools? How do you make sure students serve the public, not themselves?*

The selection process is a part of it. If you apply to our school, you want to be a part of the public service. It is not easy to get into the public service; you have to take the examination. The new generation of students value individualism; the main challenge for society is to foster a better environment for learning while preserving the old Chinese traditions. You have to emphasize the value of public service.

11) *How critical is the Standardized University Entrance Examination?*

SAT in the United States is not the only criteria of college admission; National Entrance Examination in China is a requirement for those wanting to receive a graduate education in public service; but the local governments have their own exams. Such exams, unfortunately, are not testing problem solving skills.

12) *What is the best way to maintain contacts with local people?*

As one way to deal with this challenge, most people who enter public service in China, have to go to rural areas for a one year experience. Also, there is a new program called the Village Official Program which sends university graduates to administer government programs in rural areas.

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