

## THE REASONS FOR INCREASING EMPLOYMENT DEMAND IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN TURKEY

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### Abstract

The economic changes taking place in the world and in Turkey, have led to changes in people's employment demand. Before 2000 government jobs had been considerably less attractive in Turkey, after 2000, when the economic crisis occurred in Turkey public employment demands started to increase. One of the reasons for this that a growing number of people have started to face the unemployment situation that made the formerly less desired public employment more alluring. Beyond employment security there have been also reasons Turkish people choosing to work for government. The goal of this paper how employment demand of Turkish people is changing. Based on last few decade's employment data the paper, will try to shed some light on the reasons behind the related new labor market tendencies.

**Keywords:** Working Life, Career, Employment

### Introduction

The economical fluctuations in the world and especially in Turkey has dramatically changed the demand regarding work force. Once it was not so popular to work in the public sector, the reason for this was the lower incomes and the stabilized average salaries in terms of earning money in the public fields. Therefore employees were mostly willing to work in the private sector to earn more money.

Employees found themselves in a situation in which they intentionally retreated not to lose their current job because of the competition, the diminishing number of companies, stabilization of salaries, shrinking of the fields of demand and the economical crisis. There are several triggering reasons why people are willing to work in the public sector today. The Turkish legislation clearly shows in the 49th amendment of the constitution that the employees are supported by the government itself in order to prevent a high unemployment rate, to protect the workers and to improve the living standard of the people (D.49) According to the law, the government is under the obligation of providing a job to its citizens. Tokol (2001:13) "The Turkish law explicitly says that the government has responsibility to employ its citizens as much as it can in leading industrial and socio-political enterprises.

It is said that humans do their best when the attitude is defined in terms of capacity of people. This means that there are desires and opportunities. Desires always define the best thing for a person. On the other hand, opportunities are the methods and choices of people which are genuinely made by them. (Elster,2007:199). Nowadays, one can say that one of the best work option is a post in the public sector. The significance of this is already depicted in the applications for the KPSS civil servant exams. As we can see in the table number 1, the number of people willing to pass this exam has increased showing the growing interest.

There are a dozen of good reasons why people in Turkey really want to work in the public sector. Some of them are as follows; lower chance to get a job in the private sector due to the

augmentation of the competition, lower salary positions, the ambiguity of working terms in the private sector, growing unemployment rates caused by the crisis. We will profoundly articulate below what are the main reasons why people are indeed willing to work in the public sector.

### **The process of hiring employees**

The main reason of running a business lies in making profit by it. The highest is the profit if the production costs are low and the quality of the product is superior to the average. (Akat, 2009:28) Moreover, public organizations are launched in order to serve a larger community. Those institutions are unified by the government that aims at a principle of social pragmatism and serving to community. (Sabuncuoglu, 2010:215)

In the process of hiring workers in the private sector, personal details of applicants, his or her CV, field experiences are the most important as much as the successes once has done in order to accelerate the process. (Barutcugil, 2004:262) On the other hand, the main principle of hiring workers in a public business is to provide the equality for the applicants. (Bulutoglu, 2004:190)

The government of Turkey, during the first years of the republic, has installed a new work force hiring system based on the amendments of the 1924 law system. Yet it has been implemented in 1926. In the law system of 1926, according to the announcement of 93rd notification; the qualification, rights, duties, promotions and the salaries of the clerks are considered according to the regulations. In 1926, a new amendment has been announced which is considered to care about the clerk rights (Güler, 2005:213).

Clerks are selected by the public organizations according the the law n. 788. The law also details the qualities a future employee must possess. That means that a clerk is supposed to have completed his or her secondary education. If there is not a convenient person from among the ones holding a secondary school diploma, it is permitted to hire someone without a proper degree. This system was fully implemented solely in 1939. In 1939, a new law came out on "Civil servants and their monthly income" which has regulated the organization of exams. No examination is declared or required for those who are not qualified as a clerk. (Duran, 2006).

For many years, in Turkey, a system of institutional exams was used, but for the first time in history, in 1965, according to the law n. 657 a mixed system has been introduced. This law has been modified in 1984.

The new exam system was proposed by the newly formed State Personal Directorate. This new system was a forerunner of the coming centralized system which came into existence in 1999 only. (Güler, 2005:171-172).

To make it more simple to be a public servant in 1999 DMS or Devlet Memurluğu Sınavı (Government Public Servants' Exam) has been launched. This centralized exam was renamed later on, the appellation Central Exam of Public Organizations or Kurumlar İçi Merkezi Eleme Sınavı (KMS) was used in 2001 and the Public Personal Selection Exam or Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavı (KPSS) since 2002.

**Table 1. Applicants trying the KPSS according to their degrees 2004-2014**

Years	High School	Associate Degree	Undergraduate	Total
2004	1.092.479	246.434	392.846	1.731.759
2006	1.379.211	283.554	456.804	2.119.569
2008	1.483.767	373.922	550.690	2.408.379
2010	1.812.103	606.663	835.320	3.254.086
2012	1.877.684	695.175	931.307	3.504.166
2014	1.683.696	779.314	1.028.032	3.491.042

References: [www.dpb.gov.tr](http://www.dpb.gov.tr), [www.osym.gov.tr](http://www.osym.gov.tr), 05.04.2015

### **Guaranteed work place - Continuous earnings**

Guaranteed work place means that the employee can be sure of being employed on a long run. (Gök, 2006:84).

A civil servant has to be punished or commit a serious crime in order to lose his or her post. If this does not happen, he or she has a guaranteed place until the day of his or her retirement from work. There is not a way to fire someone because of him or her being judged incapable. (Aygün, 2010:67).

This cannot be said about a private company. In the private sector, it is a must for an employee to progress and the person concerned can lose his or her job for various reasons.

The legal basis regarding the civil servants, the law n. 657 drafted in 1965 empowers the employees in five ways. These are the protection against the changing nature of the government, the status, of the employee, the permanence of the job and work place and the fact that the civil servant is protected by the law in case of a legal procedure by a third party. (Güler, 2005:176-181).

Nowadays, the number of employees loosing their job is increasing. This means that the fearing of loosing his or her job is increasing, too. In many sectors, there is a clear uncertainty concerning the continuous nature of the work places. (Seçer, 2009:307).

A civil servant can lose his or her job only cases defined by the law. (Kayar, 2011:386). In reality, those working in the public sector lose their job if they commit a serious crime. This also means that their position is maintained even times of economical crises in the country. We can find this motive in the answers given by those opting for the public sphere: "I am afraid of loosing my job" or "I fear that I might be fired." (Seçer, 2009:313).

The examples showed above clearly demonstrate that the public sector is not only attractive for the unemployed, but also for those working somewhere else.

The big economical changes might make the work force restless, this is why everywhere in the world people fear to lose their job, especially in times of crises whereas a permanent income is necessary for a decent life.

## **Unemployment**

Unemployment is the difference between the number of unemployed and those willing to work. In our industrialized time, the unemployment is not derived from a personal deficiency or incapability but from the economical system itself. That means that there a lot of people with the intention and ability to work but without the chance to get a job. Having said that unemployed is the one who unsuccessfully tries to find a job. (Ayvaz, 1990:15-16).

Ertürk presents the effects of unemployment on the unemployed as follows: (2004:331) "What is more difficult to realize? The fact that the value of your money is decreasing or the fact that you do not have money at all? The first situation is that of inflation, the second unemployment. Inflation means that you partially lose your capability of buying different items, unemployment means that you cannot buy anything. This shows that in the developing countries the fight against unemployment is much more important." In developed countries, unemployment is created by the dynamism and industrialization of the economy, whereas in the underdeveloped world, it is a particular question raised by the lack of capital. The very reason for the unemployment in those countries is a mismatch between the labor supply and the capital. This form of unemployment is structural and persistent. (Ayvaz, 1990:17-18).

In Turkey, the main reason for the existence of unemployment is the high number of economical crises. The situation is more volatile in Turkey since it has a special demographic structure: the unemployment rate is incredibly high among the youth. The number of the young unemployed is growing by each and every crisis. (Yaprak, 2009).

The unemployment is a pressing issue also because many of the ones without a permanent job have to look after relatives (children, wife, parents) and have certain responsibilities within the frame of a traditional family, to might lead them to a deep unease. (Ertürk, 2004:336-337).

During the last few years, Turkey's economic growth was spectacular contributing to a small decrease in the field of unemployment. In 2011, with 8,5%, Turkey was placed second after China in the list ranking the growth of the GDP. That means that in that particular year the economical growth of the country bypassed that of the EU or OECD countries. ([www.milliyet.com.tr](http://www.milliyet.com.tr), 02.03.2015). This is the main cause behind the decrease of unemployment as shown in the table n. 2.

In every country, unemployment is one of the most important problems of economy. It is foreseeable that it would also remain to be one of them. Even though it would stay with, the workers develop different strategies to fight it back in their personal lives.

The new Turkish exam system introduced in 1999 has at least the virtue of championing the equality of chances, meaning that the "gates of the public sector are open" for the ones who are ready for working for it.

**Table 2. Unemployment Rate**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Australia	5,93	5,40	5,03	4,79	4,38	4,23	5,56	5,21	5,08	5,22	5,66	6,07
Belgium	4,29	5,49	5,63	5,25	4,86	4,13	5,30	4,82	4,57	4,86	5,34	5,62
Canada	7,58	7,19	6,76	6,33	6,05	6,14	8,35	8,06	7,53	7,29	7,08	6,91
France	8,46	8,85	8,88	8,83	8,01	7,39	9,12	9,28	9,17	9,83	9,86	9,86
Germany	9,64	9,79	11,17	10,25	8,66	7,53	7,74	7,07	5,83	5,38	5,23	4,98
Greece	9,79	10,59	9,99	9,01	8,40	7,76	9,62	12,72	17,87	24,44	27,47	26,49
Israel	10,71	10,37	8,99	8,40	7,32	6,10	7,54	6,64	5,60	6,85	6,21	5,91
Russia	8,63	8,16	7,56	7,17	6,13	6,36	8,38	7,48	6,50	5,46	5,49	5,16
Japan	5,26	4,72	4,42	4,14	3,84	3,99	5,07	5,05	4,58	4,35	4,03	3,59
Korea	3,57	3,68	3,73	3,47	3,25	3,17	3,65	3,73	3,41	3,23	3,13	3,54
New Zealand	4,78	4,05	3,83	3,85	3,67	4,17	6,13	6,53	6,53	6,90	6,20	5,65
Spain	11,49	10,67	9,15	8,45	8,23	11,24	17,86	19,86	21,39	24,79	26,06	24,44
Switzerland	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,55	4,04	4,18	4,39	4,54
Turkey	...	...	...	8,75	8,89	9,73	12,58	10,68	8,81	8,17	8,74	9,88
England	4,97	4,70	4,76	5,37	5,28	5,63	7,54	7,79	8,04	7,89	7,53	6,11
United States	5,99	5,53	5,07	4,62	4,62	5,78	9,27	9,62	8,95	8,07	7,38	6,17
EU(28)	...	...	8,90	8,17	7,16	7,00	8,91	9,58	9,62	10,45	10,79	10,13

Reference: <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm#indicator-chart>

## Salary

The salary recognizes the physical or mental efforts one has done while working. The salaries in the private sector are defined according to the possibilities on the market. The management of a private company is free to fix the salaries after contemplating the market and the labor force market as well. Enterprises are aimed at increasing the work efficiency without raising too much the income of the workers. (Tokol, 2001:163).

This situation might fit the taste of the management, but it is hardly good for the workers. In Turkey today, the lowest salary in the public sector is much higher than the lowest salary in the private sector. To prove this, we have to have a look at the sum of the official minimum wage paid by the latter one. The tendencies show that in recent times with diminution of the size of the enterprises the salary decreases as well. Even though the average salary in the public sector is not high, as it is guaranteed, many would opt for a post in the public.

If we try to define the difference between the lowest incomes in the two sectors, we find that the lowest wage in 2003 in the private sector was 306 Turkish lira ([www.csgb.gov.tr](http://www.csgb.gov.tr), 02.04.2015), at the same time the least paid civil servant got 422,54 Turkish lira. ([www.kamusen.org.tr](http://www.kamusen.org.tr), 02.04.2015) In 2015, the lowest salary of a civil servant is 2.114 Turkish lira ([www.sabah.com.tr](http://www.sabah.com.tr), 29.03.2015) whereas the official minimum wage in the private sector is as low as 949,07 Turkish lira. ([www.csgb.gov.tr](http://www.csgb.gov.tr), 05.04.2015)

## **Working conditions**

The working conditions are said to be better in the public sphere since the main interest of a private company is profit. This is why at many occasions, companies do not care about the health of their workers. A good example of that is the events that had happened in the Tuzla Shipyard in 2008 that lead to a loss in human lives. It is interesting to examine how the irresponsible behavior of the management can be blamed for the accident (Arslan, Durukanoglu, 2009) “Metin Kalkavan, the head of the Naval Trade Camber (Deniz Ticaret Odası, DTO) said “we are not produced iron, we are not producing textile, we produce ships. The workers have to bear in mind that they can die while working.” as if death was a natural thing.

On the 11th March 2012, in a fire occurring in Esenyurt 11 workers have been killed. The colleagues of those deceased in the incident explained the working condition in the following manner: (Zaman,2012) “All the victims were guest workers. Their families live in other parts of the country. The contractors did not do anything to make the working conditions better. Next time would we stay under tents?”

The annual report of the International Labor Organization (ILO) puts Turkey on the list of countries notorious for providing poor working conditions. They state that there are major problems as far as the taking into consideration of the security norms and regulations are concerned. (MMO,2012:147). According to the statistics of the ILO, in every 15 seconds there is an accident at work causing the death or the injury of a worker. In Turkey, on a yearly basis, 1200 workers die, 1400 more get disabled. With these sad statistics Turkey is the first in Europe and third in the World! (İlki,2012).

One might say that for sure there are many countries where much more people die at work, but they do not prepare that accurate statistics or hide the reality. We can also say that in the past few years the number of work place accidents is slowly decreasing in Turkey.

Civil servants have prescribed working hours. Those working in the private sector work under difficult conditions and are exposed to the wills and desires of the management. In the 3rd table, one can see that Turkey is one among the OECD member states where the working hours are the longest in the 2006-2013 period. There is not a law governing this at the private enterprises. In fact, workers are forced to accept all the conditions imposed by their bosses in order to keep their job.

**Table 3. Average usual weekly hours worked on the main job**

<b>Country</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Australia	36,738979	36,856101	36,836048	36,421326	36,321317	36,348215	36,401095	36,257463
Austria	39,170757	38,933303	38,492043	38,059584	37,780272	37,760769	37,605075	37,184155
Belgium	36,794734	37,079152	36,761447	36,771727	36,915255	36,83673	36,943155	37,242192
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
Chile	43,92874	43,696636	43,805447	43,369044	42,725561	42,673517	42,675863	42,457252
Czech Republic	41,702076	41,677377	41,662859	41,386864	41,168292	41,046791	40,838247	40,47339
Denmark	35,348419	34,365398	34,10386	33,729679	33,631796	33,658034	33,579977	33,612797
Estonia	39,644491	39,557876	39,446915	38,721502	38,733865	38,667595	38,808186	38,832472
Finland	38,099754	37,484488	37,539698	37,296269	37,294128	37,244229	37,10817	36,906825
France	38,097286	38,097981	38,129652	38,047257	38,038025	38,033482	37,921268	37,51147
Germany	35,605923	35,500808	35,578328	35,679218	35,682817	35,539577	35,549178	35,31468
Greece	42,735403	42,470764	42,444169	42,490929	42,295987	42,123748	42,024106	42,116731
Hungary	40,303222	40,227273	40,087722	39,84612	39,752103	39,45942	39,433914	39,544383
Iceland	41,653217	41,642424	41,227307	39,442283	39,088657	39,701873	39,437571	39,585155
Ireland	36,582679	36,391089	36,092091	35,214705	34,974134	34,883809	35,042434	35,373867
Israel	41,040055	41,401824	41,031859	40,609894	40,793035	40,855589	41,065638	40,704958
Italy	38,531734	38,44855	38,242456	37,998801	37,789313	37,508515	37,058582	36,93851
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
Korea	48,530558	47,675665	46,648479	46,551921	45,85522	44,632304	45,327864	43,778249
Luxembourg	37,270826	36,696102	36,726221	37,151501	37,153274	37,01358	37,195304	37,132894
Mexico	40,56777	40,415227	40,455902	40,303825	43,131004	43,25957	42,806668	43,00552
Netherlands	30,86487	30,77393	30,751236	30,595624	30,62216	30,518187	30,332777	29,993395
New Zealand	37,973608	37,744117	37,643195	37,355855	37,424036	37,418172	37,267926	37,545453
Norway	34,223512	34,255483	34,268715	34,191374	34,097065	34,144037	34,261314	34,240939
Poland	40,916841	41,009228	40,970458	40,744306	40,587975	40,545215	40,671146	40,713386
Portugal	39,084586	38,975126	39,038747	38,943503	38,952616	39,153775	39,158034	39,440116
Slovak Republic	40,988897	41,008359	40,943583	40,761555	40,567887	40,55462	40,739158	40,689809
Slovenia	40,341105	40,33359	40,448451	39,785167	39,365302	39,470058	39,773538	39,591035
Spain	39,407997	39,309632	39,144344	38,845649	38,667771	38,452049	38,165513	37,994254
Sweden	36,735116	36,453563	36,37532	36,2923	36,336025	36,326793	36,366855	36,326868
Switzerland	35,416985	35,550259	35,342733	35,125543	35,174421	35,237874	35,142207	35,046037
Turkey	52,335878	51,048875	50,512668	49,375147	49,266117	48,855397	48,381272	47,860752
United Kingdom	36,922432	36,990414	36,913383	36,552742	36,419022	36,407818	36,364452	36,507723
United States	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Brazil	39,715029	39,751804	39,733118	39,667502	..	39,747054	39,504283	..
Russian Federation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
Sout Africa	..	..	45,414125	44,702206	44,501645	44,528005	44,244164	43,974411

Reference: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org), 02.04.2015

### Social status

Social status is understood as the rights and responsibilities of a group of people as well as they position or rank according to other groups. (Yozgat, 1997:107).

Everyone has a certain social status. Everyone has a certain situation within the society he lives in as societies are not composed in random manner. Societies are organized on the basis of the elements constituting it. (Fischter, 2009:35).

Everyone has different statuses within the same society. For example one can be a father, a husband and employee at work place at the same time, he or she can -at a given level- lead other employees, as far as the national level is concerned, he is a citizen of that country. All these are different social statuses. (Gün, 2009).

Social status explains the prestige and the value of the individual for the rest of his or her society. If his or her role to be played within the frame of the given society is important, he or she holds there a high social status. (Yozgat, 1997:107).

In general, the position of a civil servant is considered as a high social status. Societies show respect towards the ones working in the public sector as they think that such a job is pleasant and fits the desires of a worker.

### **Leave**

There is a certain difference between the number of the days of leave and vacations in the public and the private sectors. According to the law n. 657 the government guarantees the following amount of days to the civil servants: during the first ten years of work 20 days, after that 30 days. A maximum of 2 days can be added to this for those commuting between their work places and homes. According to the law n. 4857 those working in the private sector have the right to 14 days during the first five years, five and fifteen years of experience let you to spend 20 days away of your office, at least 15 years spent working entitles you to get 26 days of leave. Considering this information, the civil servants have more vacations.

The civil servants can use their leaves easier than the ones working in the private sector. In the private sector, many companies force their employees to take unpaid leaves. This would be impossible in the public sector.

### **Career**

Carrier means “the personal advancement of a worker from his or her first year until the end of his professional life.” (Turgut Özal Üniversitesi KARMER,2011:10).

The person concerned advances in the hierarchy and with every step he or she gets closer and closer to high ranking positions. (Baycan,2005:54).

Someones career cannot be influenced by laws in the private sector. Every private enterprise has its own career scheme. The career of the civil servants is regulated by laws. In Turkey the Law on Civil Servants or Devlet Memurları Kanunu (DMK) which describes precisely what kind of degrees and deeds are necessary to advance in one's career, this gives always the chance to the civil servant to improve and climb the hierarchy. (657 DMK,m.3).

In the present Turkish civil servant career system advancement is made step by step, meaning that the person has to serve a given time period (one year), to get the necessary stamps, this advancement can be called a gradual advancement. A civil servant can progress as well in a vertical way in the system, this also spells more responsibilities and work to do. According to the law n. 657 and its paragraph n. 68. A civil servant has to serve at least three years and to have all the necessary qualifications to be able to reach a high position (third level). (Saylan, 2000:37).

This progression is not open to everybody working in the public sector, only the civil servants and some similar subgroups have access to it. So, ordinary workers and those working on the basis of a contract cannot progress in the above-described manner. (Güler, 2005:225).

## **Conclusion**

Human beings in Turkey as well as in other parts of the World out of their inherent nature want to live the best possible way. Working in the public sector in Turkey slowly became attractive not only for the ones having low degrees of education but also for the well versed. Today, it is the goal of many university students.

Finding a stable job became a preference since unemployment is high and economical crises are frequent. As the private sector becomes more and more fragile, parents advise their children to opt for the public sector causing a heavy growth in the number of civil servants.

It is nearly a fact that this growth would continue in the future. Since 1999 the exam then called DMS, later renamed KPSS let a larger number of applicants to get to the civil service.

After all the most important reason behind choosing the public sector is a security it guarantees for its employees. Because of inner problems, sometimes, private companies offer lower and lower wages. In Turkey, the salary one can obtain in the civil service is fixed, it is also known how much it can increase year by year. The salaries proposed in the public sector is linked to the economical situation of the country, it is always sufficient to live a decent life.

When civil servants go shopping they might say to the shopkeeper: "I am a civil servant, please, give me a discount", the shopkeeper would answer: "I would like to be one, too". It means that being a civil servants is convenient not only in periods of crisis, but also at times when economic growth is there.

If we consider the situation in Turkey and in the World, it seems that number of people opting for the public sector would not decrease but increase. For civil servants, the Turkish state acts as an employer. On one hand, certain Turkish governments privatize a part of the public sector, this way they distance themselves from the position of an employer, but on the other hand the growing number of people willing to work in the public sector would make this sector even stronger.

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