

# 0042 How to prevent sycophancy in China's civil service

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## 1. How to prevent sycophancy in China's civil service

In a study to be published this month, 主 researchers led by Alain de Janvry of the University of California, Berkeley, 谓 divided 3,785 **entry-level** (公司中) **最初级的 civil servants** into two groups. In one, they were told which of the two leaders would be evaluating 评价; 评估 them. In the other, the identity 身份 of the evaluator **was kept secret. As one might expect** 正如人们所预料的,你们可以想象得到, 主 those in group one 谓 tried to please (v.)使满意; 使愉快 the evaluator, choosing tasks that were more important and observable 能看得到的; 能察觉到的 to them. As a result, they **got higher scores** from them than from the other leader.

**What if** 假使.....将会怎么样 it is not clear who to flatter (v.)奉承; 讨好; 向...谄媚? In the second group 主 the disparity (尤指因不公正对待引起的) 不同, 不等, 差异, 悬殊 in scores 谓 disappeared. These bureaucrats 官僚主义者; 官僚 were assessed 评估, 评定 (性质、质量) to be more productive. Their colleagues **thought more of** 更重视; 更看重 them, too. The authors **observed a significant “performance gap”** between group one and group two.

Ordinary 普通的，平常的 Chinese **have rising expectations** 预期；期望 of officialdom 官僚；当官的人. If China wants **to control (v.) sycophancy** 谄媚；奉承 and **improve (v.) the performance of** bureaucrats, this study suggests **leaving them in the dark about** who is evaluating them. **At the highest level of** government, though, that's not possible. The seven members of the Standing 永久性的；常设的 Committee 委员会 **know (v.) exactly** whom to flatter 奉承；讨好；向...谄媚.

### Example 1. 标题

#### *officialdom*

→ 来自official,官方的，-dom,领域，词源同kingdom.引申词义当官的人，官僚。

#### *sycophancy*

/ˈsɪkəfənsi/

→ 英语单词sycophant（谄媚者）来自希腊语sykophantes，由sykon（fig，无花果）+phainein（to show，显示）组成而成，字面意思就是fig-shower（显示无花果的人）。在这里，fig（无花果）隐喻女性外阴，指的是用手比划成女性外阴的形状来侮辱对方。在古希腊，政治家们表面上很正派，背地里却唆使自己手下用这种下流手势来侮辱自己的对手。而那些听从大人物的吩咐，用下流手势侮辱对手的手下则被称为sycophant（fig-shower）。

现在，英语sycophant用来比喻那种卑鄙无耻、奴颜婢膝的谄媚者、马屁精。

sycophant：[ˈsɪkəfənt] n.谄媚者，奉承者，马屁精adj.谄媚的，奉承的

在本月即将发表的一项研究中，由加州大学伯克利分校的Alain de Janvry领导的研究人员将3785名初级公务员分为两组。在其中一个实验中，他们被告知两位领导人中哪一位将对他们进行评估。在另一个试验中，评估者的身份是保密的。正如人们所预料的那样，第一组的人试图取悦评估者，选择对评估者来说更重要、更容易观察到的任务。结果，他们从是评估者的领导那里得到的分数，比从另一个领导者那里得到的分数高。

如果不清楚该讨好谁呢？在第二组中，分数的差异消失了。这些官僚被认为效率更高。他们的同事也更看重他们。作者观察到第一组和第二组之间存在显著的“表现差距”。

普通中国人对官场的期望越来越高。如果中国想要控制阿谀奉承，提高官僚的表现，这项研究建议让他们不知道是谁在评估他们。然而，在政府的最高层，这是不可能的。七名常委很清楚该讨好谁。

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## 2. How to prevent sycophancy in China's civil service

In a study to be published this month, researchers led by Alain de Janvry of the University of California, Berkeley, divided 3,785 entry-level civil servants into two groups. In one, they were told which of the two leaders would be evaluating them. In the other, the identity of the evaluator was kept secret. As one might expect, those in group one tried to please the evaluator, choosing tasks that were more important and observable to them. As a result, they got higher scores from them than from the other leader.

What if it is not clear who to flatter? In the second group the disparity in scores disappeared. These bureaucrats were assessed to be more productive. Their colleagues thought more of them, too. The authors observed a significant “performance gap” between group one and group two.

Ordinary Chinese have rising expectations of officialdom. If China wants to control sycophancy and improve the performance of bureaucrats, this study suggests leaving them in the dark about who is evaluating them. At the highest level of government, though, that's not possible. The seven members of the Standing Committee know exactly whom to flatter.

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