

**Thinking on the development of college students' union -- based on the comparison of student organizations in Hong Kong, Macao and mainland China**

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**Abstract.** There is a fact that students union represent the students' self-management ability, each college or university in China has set up this kind of organization, and the organization of students in Hong Kong and Macao regions because of its different cultural background, present a different forms and functions with the mainland universities. However, by analyzing the reactions of student organizations face to social events in recent years, we also find some problems. In a word, youth is the most significant resource and the freshest blood of a country, studying their expressions and daily activities is contributes to the subsequent cultivation of youth and the subsequent development of youth organizations. Meanwhile, under the guidance of the new policy, to promote the exchange of young people and also the student organizations will be more conducive to the student organizations, furthermore, the cultivation of more outstanding leaders for the country and society.

## **1. Introduction**

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) has a strong potential for economic development. China's recent planning also reveals the significance of the development of the region. Meanwhile, the continuous follow-up of infrastructure (such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge) provides more platforms for people to promote cooperation. The mutual learning and exchange among young people is also a key move to promote China's future development. In recent years, the expansion of enrollment in Hong Kong and Macao for the mainland students, and the enrollment policies of mainland universities for Hong Kong and Macao students have provided better development opportunities for young scholars.

At the same time, because of regional culture background, and different cultivation systems, student organizations are also present in different areas of different forms, student organization expression as the most representative opinions of students and student leaders exercise more in this platform, with the aid of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development opportunity, mutual learning and exchanges between the student organizations, more conducive to the cultivation of the excellent young backbone in our country.

## **2. The current situation of student organization**

### **2.1 Mainland universities**

Student organizations in the mainland can be defined as self-governing organizations that mainly manage and organize daily activities for students in colleges. The mainland student organizations studied in this paper mainly include student union, student associations, classes, party organizations and clubs.

First of all, the student union is the largest organization covering student groups and student affairs. It is an autonomous student organization under the guidance of party leadership and the league. The existence of the student union plays an important role in safeguarding students' rights and interests, comprehensive development and other educational policies: during the period of the May 4th movement, the first student union appeared in the history of our country. At that time, the organization name was "student self-government". In 1919, Tsinghua students established the first student delegation, which was intended to defend the national dignity and awaken the national consciousness when the country was in danger. The establishment of the student government is inevitable under the special historical background, because the awakening of the youth is the hope of the country. Secondly, it is the student association, which is an informal group established by college students on the basis of common pursuit, with clear development goals and in line with the school's community management regulations. Compared with the student union, the student association focuses more on the functions of organization and management, including academic, sports, culture and other categories, and the biggest characteristic of the organization is its autonomy. Then the class and the party organization, these are the basic organizational units set up in mainland universities, and their functions and management mode are the most familiar to college students. Compared with the selection mechanism of the student union, the student cadres in the class and the party organization are mostly based on the democratic voting system, so the degree of recognition is also very high. At the same time, cooperative management between the counselor and the party branch secretary also makes the organization run more efficiently and excellently. The last is club, with the development of economy and demand for talent, many large enterprises have clubs in colleges and universities, training talents for enterprises in advance, such as Unilever, Johnson & Johnson, Tencent, compared with the student union, the club has the job function, most members involved in the club are interested in the enterprise, there are also some people are eager to for internship experience. Therefore, in addition to the support from schools and enterprises, the club can grow and meet the needs of college students for job-hunting after graduation. Such a "job incubator", so it is very attractive among college students, and in recent years, it has gradually attracted the attention and needs of young scholars in college student organizations.

To sum up, student organizations in mainland universities can be divided into two types according to their functions, namely administrative function and development function. The student union has more administrative functions. The school-level students' union and school-level students' union of each university all have job appraisal, which also makes the daily affairs of the students' union more purposeful. Therefore, among the mainland university student union spread such a sentence: the first-class student union leads the

students, the second-rate student union maintains the rights and interests, the third-rate student union does the activities. From the activity to the protection of rights and interests to the guidance of students, what is needed is the improvement of the students' executive ability, learning ability, critical thinking ability and expression ability, which also confirms the training goal of improving students' comprehensive quality and ability in mainland universities.

## **2.2 Hong Kong universities**

University student organizations in Hong Kong include territory-wide student organizations such as the Hong Kong federation of youth, as well as the student union, graduate student union and student societies. At present, HKFS is the earliest and the most influential student union in Hong Kong. Founded in 1985, it is a joint organization of university student unions in Hong Kong. The student union of each university is an association legal person, which is independent from the university and registered with the government, and enjoys complete autonomy in terms of administrative and financial rights. For example, the student union of the Hong Kong University was established in 1912 and registered as a corporation in 1949. It has accumulated assets of more than 20 million Hong Kong dollars through self-managed business<sup>i</sup>.

## **2.3 Macao universities**

Similar to student organizations in Hong Kong, student organizations in Macao place more emphasis on the voice of students' opinions and the function of autonomy. Taking the Macau University as an example, the student union of the Macau University is an independently registered legal entity, a non-profit student self-governing organization with independent funding sources. The President of the student union is elected once a year and can participate in school management as a member of the school board. At the same time, the office of student affairs maintains contact with the student union and cooperates with it in its work. More than 60 associations are affiliated to the student union, including academic, cultural, sports, religious and student groups. In order to provide more comprehensive services to the student union and student associations, the students' affairs office also serve as consultants to student organizations. Students' union has the right to participate in school management, put forward opinions and Suggestions on school management, and students' union has the right to participate in matters related to student life. Various activities of the student union make full preparations for the development of students and their future entry into the society<sup>ii</sup>.

## **3. Questions**

No matter in Hong Kong, Macao or the mainland, the establishment of university student organizations is to protect the rights and interests of students, but the development of everything is about "degree", the weak function of student organizations and improper ways of expressing opinions will lead to adverse consequences. The mainland students along with the development of our country's economy, the changes of The Times, new era group of students is different from the May Fourth movement period the unsteady state of the environment, they have a more complete education resources, the platform of improving the comprehensive quality of

university students is more and more diversified, a large number of college students hope to speak freely and express themselves. There is a phenomenon that the students' recognition for the students' union, the teachers' recognition for the students' union and the society's recognition for the students' union gradually decreases. Although the youth league committees of colleges and universities attach great importance to the endogenous motivation of students' independent management, it must be admitted that the student union is the largest and the most representative student organization. But the function has changed from the representing the students' interests and safeguarding the students' rights to "management", and has caused the internal "inequality" that in some students' opinions, which is not conducive to the healthy and free development of college students.

Compared with the mainland students' union, Hong Kong students' union is more autonomous. Its management system is very strict, and it has a rigorous selection system and operation system. Independence is a distinctive feature of student organizations in Hong Kong universities and colleges, as well as a common characteristic of the backbone students in Hong Kong universities. The student backbone in Hong Kong regards the development of student organizations as their own career. In fact, professionalism, elitism and specialization have become the labels of the student backbone in Hong Kong colleges and universities, which also means that they have to switch back and forth between the roles of students and corporate elites. Hong Kong student organizations not only need self-management, self-education and self-service, but also need self-sufficiency and self-financing, which puts forward higher requirements for the quality of student leaders.

#### **4. Problem analysis**

##### **4.1 Mainland universities**

###### **4.1.1 Students have low social adaptability**

At present, the news that student union cadres are "bureaucratized" and "dark" has been repeatedly exposed in mainland colleges and universities, which has a great impact on the image of student union. The reason is that the social adaptability of college students is low, which is manifested in the conflict between student groups and the society. The biggest difference between college and high school life is that most college students are all adults, they have their own independent choice and judgment ability so the students' union is to practice students of the school organization, planning, management, and other comprehensive ability, what makes such a good platform and student groups have "Inadaptability"? In this paper, this is the manifestation of role conflict in the socialization process of college students, and the contradiction is the phenomenon of "disconnection" in the socialization process. All these prove the saying that "university is a small society". Whether they are college students who pay too much attention to their rights in the student cadre group, or those who are separated from the sense of belonging in the organization, they are all members of the "society" of the university. Some of them are lost in the complicated college life, while some are more determined to pursue their goals. However, society has no clear boundaries and not a bad word, only in the school has been protected groups, college students are not adapted to span from juvenile to adult, also may say, the time for each student step into "social" are different, some fast, some slow, this time difference is the starting point of all contradictions and

conflicts. The current situation of student union organization should cause us to think more deeply -- how the thought of pursuing freedom should be guided correctly.

#### **4.1.2 Organizational identity**

For the current problem of "low recognition" faced by the students' union, we need to think about the functions of the students' union and the future development orientation before we can solve it. As status quo analysis mentioned above, the student union organization set up by the "represents the interests of the students" organizational goals, but it is difficult to achieve through daily activities, so lead to the student union lose functions, recognition and trust. Ascension "identity" factors are complex, organizational identification should not be limited the student cadre group identity, and it should be a wider range of "identity" environment analysis, for example: the society, teachers in colleges, the students of campus, and also the members who work in organizations but not a leader. All these elements will put into consideration. Social identity can effectively solve the transformation of organizations from "school functions" to "social functions". If the performance of student cadres in school cannot play a reference role when they enter the society for work, then the incentive mechanism of student cadres will be ineffective. However, this is also related to another important research factor -- the identification of the members who work in the organizations but not a leader. Some scholars said that the selection mechanism of university student union cadres has the problem of excessive administrative intervention. Since the student union is set up from top to the bottom and is born out of the matrix of school administration. The power is not granted by the majority of students but granted by the school administration, so the selection mechanism will inevitably lead to the phenomenon of "student union group" and "student group" are inconsonant<sup>iii</sup>. According to a 2014 survey about Sichuan normal university student union organization identity, according to a study of the undergraduate students' internal groups, from primary school students part-time student cadre group chairman, director of a total of 132, according to the functional departments, a rough estimate the number of college student cadres, the school all student population of about 1000 people, student cadre of about 400 people. And we know that this proportion in the tens of thousands of college students, student union cadres accounted for a very small proportion. As at present, Sichuan university bachelor degree and above in school full-time students up to 60000 people, including more than 40000 full-time undergraduate, masters and doctoral students of more than 21000 people, in addition to foreign students and the preparatory program in Hong Kong and Macao students 1042 people, this paper discusses the subject for undergraduate college students, so the base of 40000(Sichuan university.[EB/OL] <http://www.scu.edu.cn/>), thus the student groups accounted for 2.5%, accounted for 1% of the total number of student cadre group. According to the above data, if the selection mechanism cannot be recognized by most students, it will lead to the problem of reduced organizational identity, which will further affect the identification of organization-related activities, thus leading to the phenomenon of low participation in activities, insufficient influence and the lack of objects for activities. Over time, the organization of the student union will lose its credibility among college students, which will lead to the internal organization of the student union only to complete the tasks required by the guidance unit, which goes against the original intention of serving students with students as the center, and

ultimately leads to the reduction of the organization identity of the student union cadre group. This has also been confirmed in the studies of scholars -- the research conclusion of professor Chen li of Sichuan normal university indicates that student union cadres have higher self-evaluation and lower organizational evaluation<sup>iv</sup>.

#### **4.2 The student union of Hong Kong and Macao universities**

Compared with student organizations in mainland China, student organizations in Macao endow students with more decision-making power. However, compared with student organizations in Hong Kong, student organizations in Macao cover a smaller scope and mainly participate in decision-making within universities. Combined with the youth training methods in Hong Kong and Macao, it can be concluded that: Hong Kong and Macao pay more attention to the cultivation of comprehensive ability so students have a strong sense of citizenship and independence, and the development of students is more personalized, so students are more critical and innovative. However, it is also necessary to realize that the youth group is still in the growth stage and has the characteristics of active thinking and quick acceptance of new things. Therefore, student organizations should be rational in guiding students to express their views and opinions, or it will cause social unrest. Take the 2014 "occupy central" event in Hong Kong as an example. Therefore, some scholars in the study of student organizations in Hong Kong have mentioned the difficulties encountered in the cultivation of students backbone in Hong Kong, that is, the emphasis on civic education over national education. (2015 Sun shaosen and Luo shengqi)

The formation of Hong Kong students organizations have funds or support of the enterprise, so Hong Kong students backbone have student status as well as a manager, and also runs a self-financing student organizations, so compared with the mainland universities, student participants of organizations in Hong Kong more realized the importance of "competition", whatever the campaigns or operating, both are huge challenges for a student cadre, so these require a lot of time and efforts, but they enjoy competitions and learn from the competitions. Because of the input of student leaders, the backbone of students in Hong Kong is highly recognized among students.

### **5. Solutions and Suggestions**

#### **5.1 To promote exchanges between youth and student organizations in Hong Kong, Macao and the mainland**

The communist party of China (CPC) and the state council, issued a plan on February 18, 2019, which calls for strengthening youth exchanges between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The plan expressed its support for the implementation of key projects such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao cultural tour, the Hong Kong mainland youth exchange funding scheme and the Macao thousand talents plan to promote youth exchanges and cooperation in the greater bay area. Based on the establishment of transportation infrastructure, the youth exchanges across the straits and in the three places should be more frequent, respond to the call of the party and

the state, learn from each other, and promote the healthy development of college student organizations and the cultivation of student backbone.

## **5.2 Strengthen the patriotic education of young people**

Hong Kong and Macao are integral parts of China. The concept of Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong and Macao people governing Macao also represents the concept of inclusiveness and unity of the country. Learning the history of the country and understanding the national heroes can help enhance the sense of national identity of the youth. Under the leadership of the party, the people of the whole country have worked together to create today's beautiful China. As the power of the new era, the youth should be more aware of their responsibilities and make efforts for the development of the country and the happiness of the people.

## **5.3 Cultivate the comprehensive ability of backbone students in mainland colleges and universities**

The student union in mainland universities has weakened the function of protecting the rights and interests of students, and the selection process is not open and transparent enough, which leads to the problem of low recognition at present. The youth league committee of universities should also refer to the model of student affairs management methods in universities in Macau, so as to improve the autonomy of student organizations and enable the backbone of students to get exercise and growth in universities. Too much administrative intervention will only lead to the lack of trust among students and the absence of a platform for organizational development.

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