

On the Three Characteristics of the Ideological Work of College Counselors

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Abstract

College is the forefront of ideological work, and the ideological work of the college counselor is an important part of college ideological work. As a system, the ideological work of college counselors is characterized by complexity, integrality and openness. This paper analyzed these three characteristics from the perspective of system science.

Key words: Ideological work; College counselor; Complexity; Dynamics; Openness

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INTRODUCTION

Ideological work is a work regarding thought in the complex social situation. As the major positions to produce and disseminate ideology as well as the places gathering young students, colleges would be a place converging a variety of ideologies. On the one hand, foreign capitalist ideologies have accelerated the penetration to colleges, on the other hand, college students have been inevitably affected by the non-Marxist thoughts in the period of social system transformation. College counselors are the backbones of college ideological

and political education, who get the closest to college students, communicate with them more easily, and hence are able to spread the socialist ideology into their hearts more easily. The ideological work of college counselors is not only related to the growth of college students, but also related to the construction of college ideological position and the leadership of socialist ideology. A scientific way of thinking to study the ideological work of college counselors can make them think collaboratively, nonlinearly and complexly instead of separately, linearly and simply. This conversion can greatly improve the counselors' abilities to implement ideological work and the scientific level of their ideological work.

1. ANALYSIS ON THE COMPLEXITY OF THE IDEOLOGICAL WORK OF COLLEGE COUNSELORS

Ideological work is the core of college counselors' work. Every college trains talents for the ruling class, and our socialist country trains personnel for the proletariats, trains the qualified socialist builders and reliable successors. Ideological work is an extremely important work for Chinese Communist Party, which plays an irreplaceable important role in the proletarian revolutionary struggle, the socialist revolution and construction, and the great cause of reform and opening up. Ideological work is a complex work. Based on the carriers of construction of the Party and the Youth League, construction of classes, academic and career guidance, mental health counseling and education, management of daily affairs, campus cultural activities and social practical activities, by the ways of construction, development, advocacy, education and criticism, college counselors implement organized and planned socialist ideological education to college students, implement socialist ideological researches, implement integration and criticism of non-socialist ideologies,

maintain and promote the leadership of socialist ideology to college students. The ideological work of college counselors presents the nonlinear characteristics, so we cannot study in a restored linear thinking way. The complexity of the ideological work of college counselors is reflected in the following two aspects.

1.1 The Complex International Environment

Western ideologies of westernization and differentiation have remained unchanged. Multi-level politics, economic globalization and cultural globalization have great impacts on Chinese people's lives, ways of thinking, ways of behavior and values. The dominant position of Marxist ideology in China is under attack. Ideology is the thinking foundation and spiritual support based on which a country, a nation or a society is able to exist, and is an important means to achieve national interests. Looking over the world, the struggles for national interests are no longer purely military struggles, but are also the battles for ideological dominance. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the socialist countries have been established consecutively. Socialist ideology began to appear on the stage of history at the national level, and the ideological struggle between the socialist camp and capitalist camp has reached a fever pitch during the Cold War. In 1951 CIA has developed the *Ten Commandments* and the new *Ten Commandments* to deal with China. After the Cold War the western countries applied themselves to fight a "smokeless World War" with China. The ideological struggle did not come to an end as the Cold War ended, but became more subtle and confusing with the economic globalization and informatization, such as the "Drastic Change of the Soviet Union", "Disintegration of Eastern Europe", as well as the "Jasmine Revolution" in North Africa, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, etc. in the Middle East. Western countries have dominated the world political and economic order for a long time, formed a global hegemony mechanism, and managed to dominate the values with globalization. On the contrary, socialist ideology has not yet achieved world dominance. Hou Huiqin pointed out that the new problems faced by China's socialist ideology are shown mainly in the following aspects: (a) the great achievements of China's reform and opening up have not been fully transformed into people's recognition on socialism; (b) the ideological and theoretical circles and academia have not reached a consensus on many important political theoretical issues; (c) the mainstream ideology has not a strong propaganda and guiding force, and lacks an effective way to criticize and resist the various thoughts denying the "four cardinal principles". These problems faced by China's socialist ideology have shaken the legitimacy of the socialist system (Hou, 2010). Therefore, in the changeable international environment, college counselors' ideological work is facing a complex situation which increases its complexity.

1.2 Marxist Ideology Tends to Be More Complicated in Spreading

In the past, Marxist ideology has been mostly imparted to college students by the top-down approach, which can ensure the dominance of a unified ideology through books, newspapers, class meetings, etc., and ensure the unity of college students and the Party. In the information age, the Internet has become an important platform to influence people's thinking. With the higher speed and wider width than the traditional media, new media have brought huge challenges to Marxist ideology with its openness, hiddenness, virtuality and convenience. In a virtual network environment, lack of supervision and management of information led to distortions of Marxism, and even slanders of the Chinese Communist Party, its revolutionary history and New China's history. Some developed countries make use of their economic strength to permeate their cultures and values by means of computers, televisions, mobile phones and other media products. Hedonism, individualism, egoism, money worship, consumerism and liberalism penetrate into our campuses in different ways, spread all kinds of distorted facts and bad information by e-mails, videos and blogs, destroy the harmonious relationship between the people and the Party. Because college students are more curious and easy to accept new things, they do not have a strong judgment and resistance in the face of novel things, and are easy to have doubts to Marxism. Marxism lacked effective, innovative and in-depth promotion and dissemination, and gradually lost the initiative and discourse power.

2. ANALYSIS ON THE INTEGRALITY OF THE IDEOLOGICAL WORK OF COLLEGE COUNSELORS

Every system would exhibit integrality, which is a core feature of the system theory. Bertalanffy emphasizes that every system is an organic whole, rather than a mechanical combination or simple accumulation. The integral function is a nature that various elements do not have in isolation, and analysis and research on the elements cannot replace an integral study. This is a simple linear thinking, and each element has its own demands, but when they are unified in college counselors' ideological work, they must seek the same target to complete common tasks.

2.1 The Objectives of the Ideological Work of College Counselors Present Integrality

General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed in the national propaganda and ideological work conference in August 2013 that, economic development is the central work of the Party, and ideological work is an extremely important work of the Party. Xi Jinping pointed out that propaganda and ideological work is to consolidate the

guiding position of Marxism in the ideological field, learn to use the Marxist stands, viewpoints and methods to observe and solve problems, strengthen the ideals and faith, consolidate the common ideological basis for the unity and struggle of the Party and all people. College counselors should strive to become the mentors and close friends of college students, do a good job in research, propaganda and education, constantly improve the affinity, attraction and penetration of socialist ideology, put ideological education into different tasks to form an integrated force. The first is to have a sense of responsibility and dedication. College counselors have a duty to implement ideological work, and should be responsible for defending their territories. In reality, however, because the counselors need to deal with too many complex transactional work, they usually have no more time for in-depth thinking, so some of them struggle to cope with daily routines, and hold that everything is all right as long as there is no security incident. The second is to continuously enhance the level of Marxist theory. Only when college counselors have a real understanding in this regard, they can use it really well. Some counselors lack a systematic cognition of Marxist theory, cannot keep up with the times, cannot use Marx theory to explain the hot and difficult issues in modern society, and cannot sort out the confusions and doubts of college students, resulting in some students' political belief faintness, moral decline and lack of integrity. The next is to pay attention to work methods. College counselors need to go deep into the students' living and learning, spread socialist ideology in a way acceptable to students, care about their practical concerns such as academic performance, emotion and employment, etc., focus on the temperature and depth of the spread of Marxist theory, solve ideological problems while solving practical problems, and enhance the cohesion and leadership of socialist ideology in college students.

2.2 College Counselors' Ideological Work Presents to Be Integral

CPC Central Committee General Office and State Council General Office have issued the *Opinion on Further Strengthening and Improving the Propaganda and Ideological Work in Colleges in the New Situation*. The *Opinion* stresses that ideological work is an extremely important job of the Party and the state. Colleges, as the frontlines of ideological work, shoulder the important task to learn, study and publicize Marxism, nurture and promote the socialist core values, and provide personnel and intellectual support for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Ideological work of college counselors can be divided into the following four subsystems according to the tasks: research, propaganda, education, and guidance. These work is a unified whole.

The first is to properly implement theoretical research work. The metal itself must be hard to be turned into

iron. The counselors should conscientiously study Marxist theory, socialist theoretical system with Chinese characteristics and socialist core value system so as to have a true learning, understanding and belief in this regard. The counselors must have firm ideals and beliefs, take the initiative to assume the historical responsibility, and establish a Marxist belief. They must effectively arm their minds with the Marxist theories, have a firm confidence in the road to socialism with Chinese characteristics, the theory and the system so as to enhance their persuasiveness in ideological education. The second is to do a good job in propaganda. College counselors should promote and spread socialist ideology. They merge with college students for a long time and their words and deeds have a profound exemplary effect and radiation force to the students. In order to make the students recognize socialist ideology, it is necessary to thoroughly publicize socialist ideology, innovate the methods of propaganda, combine dominant propaganda with recessive propaganda to solve ideological problems as well as practical problems; the counselors should expand the content, combine Marxist ideology with college students' living and learning realities, speak good Chinese stories, inherit Chinese spirits and spread good Chinese voices, further instill socialist ideology into their brains and hearts. The third is education. College counselors are the organizers and implementers of ideological and political education and student management, have the dual identities of teacher and cadre, should take the initiative to assume the responsibility for education, and put socialist core values throughout the concrete work. The counselors should set up "morality education" as the fundamental task, promote college students' understanding and recognition on the socialist core values, promote perceptual knowledge to be rational knowledge, use rational knowledge to guide college students' learning and practices, put "patriotism, dedication, honesty and friendliness" into the entire process of education, guide students to establish a correct outlook on world, values and life, and guide college students to grasp the main switch of life. The fourth is the guiding work. With the impetuses of our media, new media, all media and other information technologies, a variety of social thoughts come out after another, which has a huge negative impact on the thoughts and behaviors of college students. In the face of the strong penetration of non-mainstream ideologies, college counselors cannot sit still, but work hard to study the trends of social thoughts and ideological laws, lead social thoughts with the socialist core value system, produce attractions to the students with charisma and prestige. Charisma is a non-power influence, meaning that

a person makes a comprehensive use of personal internal qualities and external qualities, including his charisma, character, style, prestige, psychological quality and practicing rituals, etc., under certain conditions, to produce a directed influence and call

toward particular individuals or groups; or an ability to lead and inspire others with the strength of personality and belief rather than material incentives or coercion. (Liu, 2002)

3. ANALYSIS ON THE OPENNESS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL WORK OF COLLEGE COUNSELORS

If a system is in a closed state without any exchange with the outside world, it will spontaneously go towards chaos and eventually “death” sooner or later, this is the even but disordered thermal equilibrium chaos in the second law of thermodynamics. (Guo, 2003)

When a system does not exchange materials, information and energies with the outside world, it will certainly go to heat death. Only when it exchanges with the outside world, and introduces a negative entropy flow to offset the increasing entropy, it can develop orderly rather than disorderly. The environments can be divided into external and internal environments. Internal environment includes the internal elements, and external environment is the outside environment affecting the operation of system. Every system should be open. A system’s openness to the outside enables a cooperative and competitive relation with the environment, and its openness to the inside allows its components to be orderly by integration, and form a better overall functionality.

3.1 College Counselors’ Ideological Work Is Open to the Inside

The ideological work of college counselors can be classified into different subsystems in accordance with different criteria. According to work spaces and times, they can be classified into work subject, work object, work mediator and work environment. As this article focuses on the goals of college ideological work, it classifies the work into research system, propaganda system, education system and guiding system. These subsystems have their own constituent elements and functions, and the system functions need to be examined from the perspective of the internal environment. For subsystems, the whole system is their environment, and they are environments to each other. The introduction of internal environment leads to the relationship between whole and parts, or the functional relationship between different subsystems (Yang et al., 2011). Research is the logical premise of the whole system. 2014 professional ability standards of college counselors clarifies that college counselors should have a scientific thinking, correct research methods, and the capability to study college students and the law of ideology, which enable them to have a good grasp of international and domestic situations, grasp the ideological trend of college students, improve the discourse power in ideological work, and enhance the pertinence of ideological education. Propaganda mainly

aims to promote the Party and State’s guidelines, policies and directions, spread the socialist theoretical system with Chinese characteristics, arm college students’ minds with the right ideas, and further strengthen the students’ recognition on socialist ideology in politics, theory and emotion. Education is the most important work for college counselors as well as the focus of the system. College counselors must strengthen the cultivation of socialist core values by a variety of ways and in a variety of practical affairs, which help solve the root problem of socialist core values, help establish college students’ good moral characters, and help build the common ideological and moral foundation. Guiding work is the core of the system, and the essence of research, propaganda and education is to use the socialist core value system to lead social thoughts, lead the students’ discrimination and fighting capacity to social thoughts, lead them to combine their “success dream” with the “Chinese dream” of great rejuvenation, and safeguard the leadership of socialist ideology in college students.

3.2 College Counselors’ Ideological Work Is Open to the Outside

College counselors must exchange information, materials and energies with other sectors in college to ensure a sustainable development of the ideological work. The first is the communication in main positions and main channels. College teachers of philosophy, social sciences, ideology and politics should have smooth exchanges with the counselors. The counselors should communicate with the teachers of philosophy, social sciences, ideology and politics on the students’ ideological confusions, and the teachers should also exchange with the counselors on the current forefront theories, social hot and difficult issues, and feedback the students’ performances in classroom. The next is that college counselors should maintain exchanges with college propaganda departments and Youth Leagues. College counselors should have a good understanding of the Party’s principles and policies, remain consistent with the direction of the Party Central Committee; always report to and exchange with college Youth Leagues, effectively implement the requirement of college Youth Leagues into class work, and reply the construction of classes to college Youth Leagues in a timely manner. In campus culture construction, Party lectures, Youth League lectures and social practices, the counselors should always communicate and exchange with other departments. In addition, college counselors must exchange with specialized course teachers, know the difficulties in students’ learning and jointly guide their development. Furthermore, college counselors must also exchange with the society and parents, know the students’ family situations, have a control of public opinions, make a judgment on public opinions in the network, and improve the effectiveness and pertinence of network ideological work.

CONCLUSION

College counselors' ideological work system is a complex system with all the complex features of a system. The first is complexness, shown as the complex changes in the international environment as well as the complexity of the domestic ideological content distribution. The second is integrality, shown as the integrality in the completion of objectives and tasks. The third is openness. Everything is evolving, dynamic and open, and should be described from the internal orderliness and external orderliness.

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