

Discipline Power: A Cathedral of Research on the Academic Sexual Harassment in Chinese College

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Abstract--This research discusses the reasons of academic sexual harassment in Chinese college. The focus of this research is on college students as victims of academic sexual harassment. Several hypotheses were made based on the theory of discipline power and micro-power by Michel Foucault. The result indicates that discipline power has an effect on the college students in the family, society and college. What is more, micro-power functions as a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally, and affects those college students. These powers penetrate into college students, making them easier to accept as standard principle in daily life, then leading students to receive academic sexual harassment unconsciously.

Index Terms—Academia, sexual harassment, Chinese college, discipline power

I. INTRODUCTION

The Me Too Movement is a movement against sexual harassment and assault, especially in the workplace. On October 15, 2017, actress Alyssa Milano first spread the hash tag #MeToo, to encourage victims of sexual harassment to tweet about it and in order to draw much more attention to sexual assault and harassment. After that, the phrase "Me too" was tweeted more than 500,000 times by October 16, and the Me Too Movement spreads round the world quickly. This hash tag has trended in at least 85 countries, including China. Dr. Luo Xixi, an academic, was encouraged by this trend and revealed being sexually harassed by her professor at Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics when she was in her 20 years old. Following, university students were encouraged to reveal being sexually assaulted or harassed by professors or leaders one after another in colleges, which attracted much attention around the Chinese society.

A study on academic sexual harassment is of great concern now. When measured by the quality of journal articles, sexual harassment has been talking in many fields, including tourism, hospitality, workplace [1],[2].Accordingly, voluminous studies focusing on academic sexual harassment in other countries give a good example for China to solve with this problem[3]-[5]. The study also tries to explore and document sexual harassment in educational setting in HongKong, but the study about it in mainland of China is still lack of. This research could not represent and cover the all fact of mainland, China[6]. What is more, previous study also demonstrated gender harassment in the context of christian

higher education[7]. Furthermore, although a board range of survey have been done for demonstrating sexual harassment, little attention has been paid to perceive the academic sexual harassment on college students, especially in mainland of China.

TABLE I: WHY DO THE VICTIMS CHOOSE TO KEEP SILENCE

Reaction of victims when being harassed	rate
not realize they suffer sexual harassment	62.8%
not know how to revolt and resist	48.7%
Could not find the evidence	22.4%
Have a bad effect in the relationship and communication	14.1%
Feel too ashamed and embarrassed	16%
Feel that it is not a big deal	21.1%
Others	8.3%

The Table I is made by the statistics of the Investigation of Sexual Harassment of Chinese Undergraduates and Graduates. This investigation was started by Tingting Wei, and finally received 6592 questionnaires[8]. This investigation have demonstrated that when they had been suffered sexual harassment in college, there are 62.8% of investigators that did not realize they suffer sexual harassment, 48.7% of investigators did not know how to revolt, resist and defend themselves, and 21.2% of investigators feel that it is not a big deal. Therefore, previous studies have shown that major Chinese undergraduates and graduates are at risk of becoming victims of academic sexual harassment, and even did not realize and not know how to defend against. The purpose of this study is an attempt to explain why did academic sexual harassment happens in Chinese college from the perspective of power discipline of Foucault Michel.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A lot of definitions about sexual harassment have existed, while the definition of academic sexual harassment was first proposed by Frank J.Till in 1980. In this article, as Frank defined in his report, the working definition given by the council is that "academic sexual harassment is the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of a student in a manner which prevents or impairs benefits,climate, or opportunities". What is more, it includes these common elements: "distortion of a formal, sex neutral relationship(e.g., teacher/student, counselor/client) by an unwelcome, nonreciprocal, emphasis on the sexuality or sexual identity"[9]. Accordingly, we refer academic sexual harassment as that victims in college have had direct sexual assault, received unwanted sexual invitation,or experienced verbal or physical advances.

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Before launching into the rationalization for specific hypotheses, it is of vital to ground our study in the discipline power method proposed by Michel Foucault.

Michel Foucault (1987)'s theory of discipline power mainly contends that the relationship between power and knowledge, and how the former usually functions as controlling and defining the latter. As Steve noted that discipline is a form of power which appeared in Western society in nineteenth century, which is used as social control[10]. Here, Discipline power means that people will be controlled by those disciplines that are contended into knowledge produced in family, society and school. The statue of knowledge affects the statue of truth. Those knowledge will produce power to control multiplicities of body and force. Furthermore, micro power also functions as a network of relations and affects them not only from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally. This paper aims to offer a new perspective to explore why did undergraduates experience the academic sexual harassment in Chinese college.

III. CORPOREAL DISCIPLINE

Discipline power expands and penetrates in Chinese society in many fields, including five social institutions of school, army, factory, hospital, school, and prison. The finding that it has an effect on college students from the family, college and society.

In society, China has always had the fine tradition of honoring the teachers and their teachings. It is also called "Zun Shi Zhong Dao" in Chinese. This spirit has been carried on and further promote in Chinese society for thousands of years. "Zun Shi" in Chinese means showing great respect to the teachers, which first cited from Bai Hu Tong, an important work in Chinese philosophy history[11]. In China, "dao" means road or way first, and then has further meaning, that is "spirit, principle and way". In tradition, learning is mostly determined by teacher. An excellent and great teacher could cultivate a smart and great student. As the famous philosopher in Tang density --Han Yu saying in *Shi Shuo*, where there is truth, there is a teacher. If you want to get the truth, become smart and have great thinking. You should learn from the great teacher. Teachers have great and higher statue in Chinese society all the time. In the Chinese Warring States period, it is said that 'one-day teacher, life-long father' in *Lv Shi Chun Qiu*. It means that "He who is a teacher for a day is the father for a lifetime". Therefore, many students treat their teacher as respectful as their parents. Furthermore, traditional patriarchal thinking and Confucianism affect many Chinese, which force them to used to following traditional ethics ideology and feudal spirit. Three cardinal guides ("Three Gang") and six of Confucian discipline (Six Ji) represented by the Chinese culture has interpreted into concrete social system. Here, "Three Gang" in Chinese means rulers and subjects should be loyal to each other, parents and children should love each other, and husbands and wives should live in harmony. As Foucault argued that "in every society, the body was in the grip of every strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations"[12]. Although Chinese do not have to apply to these principles anymore, these principles have penetrated in

them day by day, year by year. Chinese accept these principles as a virtue, as a standard, but disobey it. Therefore, there are many poems and essays that appreciate these traditional virtues. Here, it is not to appeal Chinese to criticize and abandon these virtue totally. However, These behavior and culture also return to penetrate into body, eventually, the body becomes into a "docile body". It will lead to student's loss of subjective consciousness and mental ossification, if they have not received dialectical thinking for a long term. When college students faced academic sexual harassment, their bodies do not know how to reject and defend against, even not connect it with sexual harassment. This is the power of docile body joined with the discipline. The concept of "docile" becomes a virtue, and people become docile.

In family, Chinese families have paid great attention to education, especially to teachers. In ancient times, teacher would be treated as another father and as respectful as parents. Listening to and following to what teacher ask ones to do is a great virtue. Nowadays, "well-behaved" still be taken as a great stander and appreciation for children in China. If people would like to appreciate someone, they would describe he/she, especially a child, as "well-behaved", or "guai" in Chinese, people often mean that they behave in a way that adults usually like and think is correct. Here, "well-behaved", or "guai" in Chinese means obedience, compliance and docility. Throughout the history, many Chinese families have family precept or family instruction, in order to define their children's behavior. In tradition, Chinese families had many kinds of famous family instructions, such as family instruction of Yan Clan, family instruction of Zhu Xi, and Advice to my Son and so on. These family instructions presents principles made and could not be broke. And their bodies gradually accept this rule and apply to it. As Foucault noted in the Discipline and Punish, body could be manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces. A docile body easily follows those principles [12]. Family is the first and the most importance place for education. "Knowledge priority" is to praise highly in many Chinese families. Therefore, children are forced to follow principles of college and what teachers ask them to do. These family precepts gradually penetrated into children's thought would change and manipulate their behaviors. Their bodies are docile and try to be well-behaved, and not reject anything. Because when they were very little kids, they have been always taught by their parents to obey and follow the teacher's instruction. They were expected to be well-behaved children at home and well-behaved students in school, but those who dare to challenge the authority. Furthermore, some parents even don't like children always ask why, which is looked as challenging the authority in ancient times, and still as not a good behavior or trouble-making until today. These docile students makes efficiency in government and monitor for family and college, conversely, they are turned into subjected body and practised body. When they encountered academic sexual harassment, they did not know how to resist and protect themselves. Because teachers and school represent the authority, and they could not dare to challenge them. Challenge means that children do not show respect to them. As a result, when they face dilemma, they always have

negative attitude towards.

In college, there is time-table, enclosure, all kinds of school discipline and regulations that provide good condition for forming well-disciplined body. First, a comparatively fixed time-table provided by college is the good condition of becoming docile body for students. School life would begin in childhood, when young children would be taught to keep their pace with the timetable in 'school manors', and each must be adjusted to the time of the others in such way that it would end up a form of mechanical docile body. When they enter in college, students still have an arrangement in universities, including that when they read in the morning, have classes all the day, take school activities in the evening, go to sleep at night and so on. As Foucault noted "time measured and paid must also be a time without impurities or defects; a time of good quality, throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise. Precision and application are, with regularity, the fundamental virtues of disciplinary time"[12]. This could establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition, which helps form a docile body. Second, enclosure is the prerequisite of training the body. College works space in a much more flexible and detailed way. Although college students are more free than high school students in China, they are still under monitor and manage. The reason of it is two-fold: one is Chinese students are more dependent on their parents than those western college students. They cannot solve the problems independently sometimes, because they are used to following the guides from parents and teachers year by year. The other is that Chinese parents and students are not willing to take the responsibility, but the university have to shoulder complete responsibility, when college students have any accidents unexpectedly. That is why universities in China have to monitor and control those students' behavior. Therefore, many places in campus like panopticon raised by Foucault install monitors, such as classroom, dormitory, gates of school, and the inside of the campus. This enclosed, segmented campus is observed and monitored at every point. Then they would know where students are clearly when each individual has his own place. In addition, when students left campus, they have to report to their counselors and ask for leave. Counselors and assistants would record their behavior and everything happened in college from day to day, month to month, year to year. Then staff of university could really take students in control. Third, discipline offers up a form of micro-power, which easily makes the bodies become docile. School regulations, rules of dormitory, behavior of students are knowledge be taught by teachers in the college, which is beneficial to make students accept the principles and be submissive. However, these disciplinary methods have long been in existence in university so that their bodies become shaped and docile. Therefore, time-table, enclosure, all kinds of school discipline and regulations helps easily produce subjected and docile bodies.

In college, family, and society, students are being manoeuvred repeatedly for a long time, forming their bodies with the same stander. All these constitute a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. As Steve argues that "Discipline aims to mold and shape individuals to increase both their productive powers and their willingness to submit to authority in order to ensure the smooth functioning of

society as a whole"[10]. Discipline is little things. However, as Foucault argues that "the meticulousness of the smallest fragment of life and of the body will soon provide, in the context of the school, the barracks, the hospital or the workshop, a laicized content, an economic or technical rationality for this mystical calculus of the infinitesimal and the infinite"[12]. The aim of discipline is to transform, use, subject the body, making their bodies become submissive and docile. It is easier to let the docile body accept any sexual harassment. Academia should be pure and full of passion. It is recognized and lamented that academic sexual harassment is a stain of some academic life in camp. Because of docile body, facing of sexual harassment by their teachers or leaders of university, Chinese college students dare not challenge the authority of teacher and resist, while usually choose to bear.

IV. MICRO-POWER

Micro-power proposed by Foucault means not the traditional centralized power, while is an automatic, multiple, omnipresent and anonymous power spreading around the campus life of everyone. Its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally.

First, the harasser have power in college, so that their requests represent a kind of power, form micro-power around the students. Usually, the harasser in the context of academic sexual harassment is the professors or the leaders of the college. They have the right of deciding the distribution of benefits for students, which forms micro-power for students. In China, the professors have a closed relationship with college students, especially graduates. For undergraduates, professors maybe just decide the performance and the score of one course, while for graduates, professors maybe control all their study life and career. They have right to train, conduct, evaluate, and recommend students. Most graduates are the assistants for helping professors teaching and doing research. And the professors pay for them in return. In this case, professors are also the boss of students. And the leaders have the specialized administrative adjudication right. All these rights constitute a compact model of power, which is productive and beneficial for others known by everyone. Second, knowledge could change into a kind of micro-power. As Brad Elliott Stone noted in his article Power that knowledge is itself the result of power relations. Terms that Foucault often use are like "power/ knowledge" and "truth-power", which are not neutral arbitrator between two conflicting powers. That is to say, knowledge is not neutral, so is power[13]. Knowledge is a form of power, delivering the thought of passer-on. Some professors or leaders offer up a new form of knowledge as a tool to pass on some message like this, "if students do not follow what teachers ask, they are not well-behaved students." The knowledge's power forces students to adjust to the authority, gradually their bodies are trained and manipulated by authority. What is more, Chinese regard respecting and submit to superiors as virtue. Who resist this virtue would therefore be essentially corrective. Those students would be isolated or revenged by professors or leaders. Third, Chinese students hardly say no in the context that teachers are always supposed right. In Chinese society, teachers are supposed right, so that parents

taught their children to submit to their teachers when they were kids. That is to say, most people in society believe in teachers and regard them as authority. In such case, students do not follow what teacher demand, they would be regarded as challenge the authority, even the whole society. Therefore, students are in the grip of micro-power every moment, which imposed on them constrains and prohibitions. Because micro-power is around them, gradually they lose the thoughts of their own and dare not resist.

V. CONCLUSION

The current study has empirically analyzed the relationship between discipline power and micro-power by Foucault of academic sexual harassment in Chinese college, and finds out that discipline power and micro-power have effect on Chinese college students. These powers penetrate into college students, making them easier to accept as standard principle in daily life, then leading students to receive academic sexual harassment more easily or unconsciously. Though this study is a perspective of academic sexual harassment, it is hoped that this study will provide a foundation to enable future research in academia to be more deeply engaged with psychology of college students and intention of the harassers. It is sincerely hoped that this study would be conducted to prevent and manage the academic sexual harassment in Chinese college.

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