The Improvement of Two-level Power Disposition Policy of Universities and Colleges in China*

Jingbo Feng
Northeastern University
Shenyang, China 110169

Wanbing Shi
Northeastern University
Shenyang, China 110169

Abstract—Two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is the core problem of the management system reform inside the universities. At present, the theoretical direction and practice approach of the management system reform inside the universities mainly concentrate on the static allocation of political power, executive power, academic power, democratic power at the horizontal and macro level of two levels of universities and colleges; however, it ignores the dynamic allocation of personnel power, finance power and affair power, decision-making power, executive power and supervision power at longitudinal and micro level. The four power dispositions at macro abstract level are mainly embodied and achieved by the power disposition at micro specific level. Furthermore, the management system reform inside the universities shall adhere to the view of practice of historical materialism, take two-level power disposition of universities and colleges as focal point, put the personnel power, finance power and affair power as the logical starting point, regard the execution of decision-making power, executive power and supervision power as the practice basis, innovate the way of thinking and practice pattern of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges, and dynamically and specifically achieve the structure optimization of four powers. Therefore, the first is to perfect the existing policy system and increase the relevant regulations of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges in the aspect of matters and processes; the second is to improve the existing policy content and provide the two-level power disposition with the specific, accurate and workable system guarantee.

Keywords—two-level power disposition of universities and colleges; education policy; policy system; policy content

I. INTRODUCTION

Two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is the core problem of the management system reform inside the universities. The management and standardization of the country for two-level power disposition of universities and colleges are achieved by formulating the relevant regulations. The policies and regulations of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges have the guiding and regulatory function, therefore, formulating and improving the policies and regulations of two-level power disposition can provide the important system guarantee for the two-level power disposition of universities and colleges.

II. CONCEPTUAL TOOL OF TWO-LEVEL POWER DISPOSITION POLICY ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

A. Two-level Power of Universities and Colleges

The power of universities refers to the ability and power of each power subject of universities to affect, govern or control the relevant objects by the effective educational resources controlled to achieve the interest and value of the subjects. On the basis of organizational characteristics and interest differentiation reality of universities, four powers, namely, political power, executive power, academic power and democratic power, mainly exist inside the universities. Moreover, the different distribution and collocation of the four powers in the university system are the power structure inside the universities. In general, the power in the organization is mainly about the authority. It is the right to allocate resources for a certain managerial position in the organization design to make decisions, issue orders and get the executed orders. In terms of distribution of power, the power structure of universities mainly includes horizontal power and longitude power. Horizontal power is corresponding to the subject attribute of university organization, that is, the four kinds of power are arranged in power subject of different types at the same level. Longitudinal power is corresponding to the hierarchy of university organization, namely, the four kinds of power are allocated at the different management levels of colleges, colleges and departments. In terms of power level, the power structure of universities can be divided into macro power structure and micro power structure. The macro power structure mainly includes centralized type, decentralized type and coexisting type. Among which, the centralized and decentralized coexisting type is the normal of power structure of most organizations and the power need shall be dynamically allocated according to the development and operation of organizations. However, micro power structure is only the operational medium and operational process of single power, from the operational medium perspective, the power of universities mainly has personnel power, finance power and affair power; from the point of operational process, the power of universities mainly includes decision-making power, executive power and supervision power. A complete power structure of universities is the organic whole, with both mutual independence and mutual restriction, composed by horizontal
power and longitudinal power, macro power and micro power, and all powers are separated from each other and simultaneously maintain a relative balance in the process of operation.

Horizontal and longitudinal power structure of universities reveal the general orientation or general venation of power distribution of universities, however, it seems too abstract for the university governance and still can not specifically and clearly show the actual prospect of internal operation of powers of universities subtly, therefore, the system design of reform is hard to operate and implement specifically. Only theoretical direction and practice approach of power structure at longitudinal micro level can clearly express the interest demand of power subject. Under this circumstance, the management system reform inside the universities shall put emphasis on the two-level power disposition of universities and colleges and take the power devolution and power restriction as the difficult and key point of the reform. The two-level power of universities and colleges is the ability and restriction as the difficult and key point of the reform. The two-level power of universities and colleges is the ability and strength of university and college to mutually affect, allocate or control the relevant personnel, finance and affair by the bilateral interaction process of decision-making, executive and supervision to achieve the interest and value of subject. The two-level power operation of universities and colleges is the direct presentation of two-level management of universities and colleges, and is the irresistible trend and inexorable outcome of management and operation of modern universities.

B. Two-level Power Disposition of Universities and Colleges

Allocation is usually understood as distribution and arrangement, and generally has its four features: firstly, only the organizations, groups or individuals who have high authority or policy-making power in the superior or same level organization has the ability or strength of allocation; secondly, allocation has the purposiveness and is not blind, temporary and random; thirdly, conduct comparative analysis for the property, strength, task and characteristic, and situation and other factors of allocation objects, and provide basis for allocation; fourthly, allocation means adjustment, refund for any overpayment or a supplemental payment for any deficiency. Therefore, the so-called two-level power disposition of universities and colleges refers to the senior decision-making power subjects, to achieve certain educational aim and task, apply certain educational administration methods to adjust the two-level power structure of universities and schools based on the contrastive analysis and judgment for the state of universities and colleges and influence factors, so as to maintain the power of universities operate scientifically and effectively. To clearly understand the concept of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges, it needs to grasp the following basic ideas:

First, the essence of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is resource allocation. In form, the power disposition also needs to be allocated even redistributed, but the power disposition is not equal to power distribution. Firstly, power distribution is a kind of way or method and power disposition is a process. Power distribution is similar to “cut cakes”, but power disposition is to “make cakes”. Power disposition includes interest adjustment and even interest game, and the power structure may be reasonable and stable through regular adjustments. Secondly, power distribution reflects a level or perspective, but power disposition aims to establish a scientific and reasonable power system. Power disposition is not satisfied with power transfer only through authorization or decentralization. Rather, it comprehensively and thoroughly considers what powers shall be allocated and how to allocate all kinds of power to achieve the best effect and efficiency. Thirdly, the object of power distribution is the power itself, but the essence of power disposition is resource allocation. Resources are always limited. It needs to consider the various conditions and elements such as culture, institutions, organizations and people, and allocate and utilize the limited resources scientifically and effectively, so as to achieve the sunshine power and fine organization.

Second, the way of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges mainly is to decentralize rights moderately. With the expansion of university organizations, there is an essential difference between decentralization and authorization. Authorization transfers the power which is necessary in a certain job to the subordinate officers; only the power is granted, and the necessary responsibility for the job can not be entrusted; authorization is like a skill in management, usually short-term behavior, and the power will disappear once the task is completed. Decentralization also transfers the power to other institutions or others, but it must bear the corresponding responsibility, so that the rights and liabilities can depend on each other and can be on an equal footing. Decentralization is a formal organizational behavior, showing a redistribution of certain powers, which is generally relatively stable and long. The so-called moderate decentralization means that the two-level power disposition of universities and colleges shall deal with the unification of freedom and controllability. The university is a typical academic organization, and technicality is the fundamental attribute of the university. The fundamental objective of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is to stick to the fundamental objective of universities and protect academic freedom. However, universities not only have academic attribute, but also have political attribute and social attribute; academic freedom is a kind of system, method or way compared with academy and academy is the purpose and goal compared with academic freedom, therefore, academic freedom is relative and requires conventions.

Third, the goal of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is to optimize power structure and operating mechanism. From the external manifestation of the university power, it can be identified that the university power consists of three components: the subject of power, the object of power and the media of power. The subject of power is relative to the object, and the subject of power is in the active and dominant position, and the object of power is in the passive or governed position. The subject and object of the university power can be the organization, the group or the individual. The subject of university power generally includes government, society, university organization, teachers, administrators and students, and they respectively represent and embody political power, academic power, executive power and democratic power. Organizations, groups or individuals
who are forced and subject to the subject of power and execute the will of the subject of power are the objects of power. The subject of power reflects the power of decision-making, execution and supervision by casting the decision-making, execution and supervision effect on the objects of power. The subject of power plays a role in the object of power through a certain medium of power. The university’s power medium refers to the resource managed by the university, mainly including personnel, finance and affair, which forms the personnel power, finance power and affair power. To avoid the abstraction, conceptualization and tagging of political power, academic power, executive power and democratic power, the management system reform inside the universities shall adhere to the view of practice of historical materialism, take two-level power disposition of universities and colleges as focal point, put the personnel power, finance power and affair power as the logical starting point, regard the execution of decision-making put the personnel power, finance power and affair power as the practice basis, innovate the way of thinking and practice pattern of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges, and dynamically and specifically achieve the structure optimization of four powers.

C. Two-level Power Disposition Policy of Universities and Colleges.

From development track of management system reform inside the universities, each change of management system inside Chinese universities is closely related to the policies and regulations promulgated and implemented by the Party and the state. Relevant policies and regulations provide an important basis and guidance for the establishment and improvement of the management system inside the universities. Education policy is the political measures and political behavior expressed and integrated by social subjects for educational benefits, and cultivates comprehensively free people with harmonious development by guaranteeing and improving the existence and development of education, so as to promote the rules and behavior of strategy and principle of sustainable development of social politics, economy and culture. This is a view of the subjective education policy. Fundamentally speaking, the view of subjective education policy is an educational policy view that cultivates the educated people to be the subject of education activities and social life. This view of subjective education policy emphasizes that education policies shall give full play to the motive power effect of human in social and political and economic development, and pay attention to the organic unity of the political nature, social nature and relative independence of education. Two-level power disposition of universities and colleges reveals the specific political relations within the university. The essence of political relations is the interest relationship, and different interest demand is the fundamental purpose of the political relationship between the behavior subjects, and the so-called power is only the means to realize or obtain the interests. Taking “interest analysis” as the basic theoretical paradigm, the two-level power disposition policy research of universities and colleges pays special attention to the increment cultivation, transformation reform and their relations with environment in the university organization, which helps to analyze how a university organization as a power and political system solves the interest differentiation and contradiction to effectively pursue common interests or integrated solutions.

University is a typical stakeholder organization. The political power, academic power, executive power and democratic power inside the universities represent the interest differentiation and interest demand of different subjects. The two-level power disposition policy of universities and colleges is just the political measures and political behavior expressed and integrated by two-level power subject of universities and colleges for educational benefits. Political power is a form of power that the Party committee and Party organizations at all levels of a university own and control for implementing the national political requirements and ensuring the orientation in running school. The subject of the political power of the university refers to the Party committee, the Party general branch and the Party branch. The political power of colleges and universities is the extension of the political power of the state, which embodies the will of the state and determines the development direction of the universities. Educational causes involve with the development and density of the state and society and also concern the vital interests of the broad masses of the people, and any political power can turn a blind eye to it. Especially the higher education, “the more it is involved in social affairs, the more it is necessary to look upon it with a political view. Just as the significance of the war is too important to be completely given to the generals, the higher education is also very important and can not be completely left to the professors.”2 Executive power is a power form that the administration and administrative staff of the universities apply the controlled educational resources to effectively affect and govern the insiders and institutions according to the authorization of national laws, government policies and school rules. Its subjects mainly include schoolmaster, director, dean and chief in the executive branch, whose power is often reflected as authority because the power relies on appointment of organization; of course, the obedience degree of object also has direct relation with the individual personality and prestige. Executive power reveals the organization and management features of bureaucratization and has the coerciveness, which advocates standard and pursue efficiency. Academic power refers to the power expression form that the academic staffs and academic organizations in the universities own and control the academic affairs and academic activities through their controlled education resources. The academic staffs are professors, associate professors, lecturers and other full-time teachers who have advanced knowledge; academic organizations refer to the academic board and professor committee and so on. Academic power is inherent and is the externalization of intrinsic properties of universities and objective requirement of internal logic. The power is built on discipline and specialty and relies on the knowledge and prestige of experts and scholars, so it advocates democracy and pursues freedom. Democratic power is the power of democratic management and democratic supervision of the democratic institutions of the university. The democratic management organizations refer to teacher's representative committee, student’s representative committee and so on. This power embodies the right of teachers and students to participate in the management and service of the school. However, what needs to be emphasized is that responsibility or
obligation is relative to interests or rights. Two-level power disposition policy of universities and colleges not only means the interest expression and integration of two-level power subject of universities and colleges, but also shows that the two-level power subject of universities and colleges shall jointly bear the corresponding responsibility or obligation. The unification of interest and responsibility, rights and obligation is an important presentation that the universities develop to the common governance of stakeholders. Article XVII of Manifesto of World Conference on Higher Education indicates that “cooperative partnership based on common interests, mutual respect and mutual trust shall be the main way to reform higher education.” Many different interest forms exist inside the universities, such as personal interests, group interests, special interests (political interests), public interests, but these interests are not equal to the common interests which are the general interests gradually formed and developed on the basis of these benefits. With the progress of science and technology and the improvement of the level of civilization, people gradually have a more sober understanding for the educational benefits. The educational benefits represent both the individual interests and special interests, and also represent the group interests and the interests of whole society, thus it is a common interests. In such a grand context, other interests will be outshone in the educational policies. Perhaps only by recognizing the common interests of education can they find and highlight their significance of existence and development. Therefore, China shall take the common interests of education interests as the value basis to formulate and perfect the two-level power disposition policy of universities and colleges.

III. POLICY ANALYSIS OF TWO-LEVEL POWER DISPOSITION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN CHINA

When the interest relationship in the university changes, it also changes the basic structure of power, however, the power is also a crucial impetus to change the interest relationship. As the basic academic unit in the university, colleges have many stakeholders, and objectively political power, executive power, academic power, democratic power exist. A period of time after the founding of the people's Republic of China, the political power and executive power dominated in the power structure of universities, therefore, the academic power and democratic power existed in college level were ignored. After the reform and opening up, with the continuous understanding of the higher education law and the leadership system in the university, China paid more attention to the key position of leadership system in the governance structure of colleges. How to maintain and exert the academic power and democratic power based on the majority of teachers and students gradually became the focus of the management system reform inside the universities. One of the most significant policies and measures was to conduct two-level management of universities and colleges to effectively solve the deficiency, disjunction and low efficiency in the centralized management of universities, and give full play to and motivate the enthusiasm, initiative and effectiveness of colleges.

In 1978, Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China issued the regulations of Provisional Work Regulations on National Key Universities (Trail Draft), and then the universities carried out “schoolmaster division of labor responsibility system under the leadership of Party committee”, and departments conducted “department head division of labor responsibility system under the leadership of department general Party branch committee (branch Party committee)”. In 1983, Ministry of Education issued Suggestion on Adjusting Reform and Accelerating Development Higher Education and Some Questions and put forward that “departments conduct responsibility system of department head, who shall be responsible for schoolmaster (dean)” in the universities. At that time, policy orientation was decentralization and mainly involved with the allocation problem of political power and executive power.

In 1985, Decision of CPC Central Committee on Reform of Educational System proposed that the reform of the educational management system should be adapted to the economic and social development, and the academic and democratic power of the teachers also received attention. China Educational Reform and Development Plans in 1993 put forward that “preliminary establish the new educational system adopted to the reform of economic system, political system and scientific and technological system of socialist market”. As a result, the governance structure of Chinese universities has been constantly improved. In 1989, CPC Central Committee Political Bureau discussed and adopted Notification of CPC Central Committee on Strengthening the Party Building, and put forward “universities shall conduct schoolmaster responsibility system under the leadership of Party committee”. From 1990 to 2010, China have successively issued Notification of CPC Central Committee on Strengthening the Party Building of Universities (1990), Work Regulations of Colleges and Universities Grassroots Organizations of CPC (1996), Basic Standards for the Work of Party Building of Colleges and Universities (1998), Suggestions of Party groups of CPC Ministry of Education on Strengthening Grassroots Party Organization Construction of Colleges and Universities (2007), and colleges (departments) gradually established and perfected the “party-government meeting system”. In 2012, Ministry of Education issued Some Suggestions of Ministry of Education on Comprehensively Enhancing Quality of Higher Education, and put forward “colleges and departments shall adhere to party-government meeting system”. Since then, “party-government meeting” has been determined as a system. The Party and government should communicate with each other fully, exchange opinions, understand and support each other and share out the work and cooperate with one another. Collective decisions can ensure a scientific decision-making and can be responsible for the promotion of democratic management. The policy documents from 1990 to 2009 all made explicit stipulations for the professors' academic management and teacher’s democratic management at university level, which played a positive role in enhancing the optimal allocation and efficient utilization of educational resources, forming the characteristics and advantages of university education, and enhancing the ability and level of university services, leading and docking, however, these documents did make specific policies and regulations on the academic governance and democratic management of colleges, besides, the colleges also did not give full play to and
release the property of academic organizations and basic function of universities.

In 2010, the State Council of CPC Central Committee issued National Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020). National Education Plan advocated that “it should perfect modern university system with Chinese characteristics”. To further improve the governance structure of universities, China have successively issued a series of relevant policies and regulations, such as Notifications of General Office of the State Council on Carrying out the Pilot of the National Education System Reform (2010), Suggestions of Ministry of Education on Further Advancing Subordinate Universities to Implement “Three Significance and One Large” Decision-making System (2011), Regulations of Faculty Delegates' Congress of the University (2011), Some Suggestions of Ministry of Education on Comprehensively Enhancing Quality of Higher Education and University Statute Formulating Interim Measures (2012), Suggestions of Ministry of Education on Deepening Comprehensive Reform in Educational Field in 2013 (2013), Instruction of Ministry of Education on Advancing Pilot Colleges Reform (2013), Some Suggestions of Party groups of CPC Ministry of Education on Further Strengthening Leading Group Construction of Subordinate Universities (2013), Implementing Opinion on Sticking to and Improving Schoolmaster Responsibility System under the Leadership of School Party Committee of University (2014), Academic Committee Regulation of the Universities (2014), Colleges and Universities Court Regulation (Trail) (2014), Overall Plan of Overall Planning and Advancing World-class Universities and First-class Subjects Construction (2015), “the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan” of National Educational Business Development (2017), Interim Procedures for Leader Management of the Universities (2017), Suggestions on Enhancing and Improving the Universities' Ideological and Political Work under the New Situation (2017), Some Suggestions on Deepening the Reform of Streamline Administration and Institute Decentralization and Optimization of Service in the Field of Higher Education (2017) and so on, all these documents provides the sufficient legal basis and sophisticated system basis for college governance. There are two highlights in the policy innovations of this period, the first is to standardize the university statutes. The university statutes are the standard documents to establish legal basis and sophisticated system basis for college organizations to form organizational force that affects the allocation of power, therefore, it is difficult to issue power claims for pursuing the status, and to some extent, it affects the empowerment of universities for colleges.

IV. POLICY PERFECTION OF TWO-LEVEL POWER DISPOSITION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN CHINA

The policies and regulations of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges have guiding function and regulatory function. Improving and perfecting the policies and regulations can provide significant system guarantee for the two-level power disposition of universities and colleges.

First, perfect the policy system of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges. At present, the theoretical direction and practice approach of the management system reform inside the universities mainly concentrate on the static allocation of political power, executive power, academic power, democratic power at the horizontal and macro level, however, it ignores the dynamic allocation of personnel power, finance power and affair power, decision-making power, executive power and supervision power at longitudinal and micro level. The power dispositions at macro abstract level are mainly embodied and achieved by the power disposition at micro specific level, therefore, the management system reform inside the universities shall regard two-level power disposition of universities and colleges as the core and put power decentralization and restriction as the difficult and key point of the management system reform inside the universities shall regard two-level power disposition of universities and colleges as the core and put power decentralization and restriction as the difficult and key point of reform. Horizontally, the existing policies have more restrictions on the leadership system, governance structure and operating mechanism of universities and colleges, however, longitudinally, the policies have less restrictions on system and mechanism jointly governed by two levels of universities and colleges, such as the major personnel, finance and affairs, how to conduct interest expression and integration by universities and colleges through decision-making, execution and supervision. At present, the bureaucratization and line and staff organization features in Chinese university organizations are still not obvious, however, under this circumstance that colleges still lack corresponding power and interest game ability, if there are no explicit and concrete compulsory systems, the mutualistic symbiosis of four kinds of power of universities will lose and fail. The second is that the policy content is missing or not detailed enough. It is mainly manifested in the following aspects: firstly, although the established university statutes make comparatively overall regulations for all the things of the universities, most of the content is too abstract and general, and the university statutes are not workable in the actual management of the university; secondly, the academic power of the professors has strong administration affiliated features, and the exercise of power is more arbitrary and needs further to be systematized; thirdly, teacher's representative committee and student's representative committee exist in name only, and the system and mechanism of societal forces participative management are unclear and the democratic power generally stays in fatigued and weak condition. All the problems need to be solved. The absence or abstract of relative content of policy makes it impossible for colleges and their grassroots academic organizations to form organizational force that affects the allocation of power, therefore, it is difficult to issue power claims for pursuing the status, and to some extent, it affects the empowerment of universities for colleges.
colleges. Therefore, the state shall integrate and improve the existing policies and regulations, formulate single and high-level administrative laws and regulations, standardize the content and process of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges concretely.

Second, perfect the policy content of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges. Colleges are primarily established on the basis of discipline fields or first-level disciplines, and the function of talent cultivation, scientific research and serving society impels colleges to become real unit, and colleges and their grassroots academic organization must require the matched manage resources. Although Chinese universities have established party-government meeting system, academic committee system, teacher's representative committee, student's representative committee and so on in accordance with national policies in recent years, however, because the universities have not established, perfected and implemented the dynamic, concrete and operational form system and function system of these systems, which makes these systems lose rigid compelling force and constraining force, on the one hand, some phenomena, such as privilege inundation, abuse of power, power rent-seeking, decision-making nearsightedness or arbitrary, at universities level can not be effectively contained; on the other hand, other phenomena, such as passive or negative coping, counterweight strategy, escaping or shirking responsibility, at colleges level gradually become normal. Therefore, two-level power disposition of universities and colleges shall have high-level system design inside the universities. The university statutes are known as the "Small Constitution" and are the extension of the authority of law at the university. The statutes can compulsorily standardize and define the relationship of two-level power subject of universities and colleges, which helps to concretely form the mutual restriction mechanism of political power, executive power, academic power and democratic power. At present, some university statutes in China stipulate the responsibility and authority from school Party committee to colleges and their grassroots academic organization, emphasize that the openness and transparency of power operation procedure and system shall be guaranteed by "opening the school affairs", and also put forward the supervising and supervised rights and liabilities of some important institutions, such as school Party committee, teacher's representative committee, students' union, graduate students' union, teaching and research unit (including each special committee), asset finance union.3 However, these regulations still are static, abstract and frame-style, and lack dynamic, concrete and operational characteristic on two-level power disposition of universities and colleges. One of the basic principles in modern politics is that power can only be displayed in the operation of power, and where the power belongs to depends on who actually makes decisions or affects decisions in the actual decision-making process.4 The university statutes shall make regulations on the two-level power disposition of universities and colleges and specifically standardize the major personnel, finance and affair about universities and staff composition, component proportion ratio, standing orders, rules of procedure and accountability system in the process of decision-making, execution and supervision.

V. CONCLUSION

Two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is the main focus of the management system reform inside the universities. The essence of two-level power disposition of universities and colleges is resource allocation and the target is to optimize power structure and operating mechanism. Only from the concrete, micro and dynamic aspect can we diagnose and inquire two-level power disposition of universities and colleges and can we expand the theoretical knowledge and innovate the practice pattern. Education policies are the regulations and behaviors of strategy and principle of sustainable development of universities and have the significant guiding and regulatory function for two-level power disposition of universities and colleges. At present, China shall formulate and perfect the education policies, resolve some problems, such as simplicity and abstract, insufficient practicalness, missing standardization, weak rigidity and low efficiency, existing in two-level power disposition policy and provide significant system guarantee for two-level power disposition of universities and colleges.

REFERENCES