

ABSTRACT

Panel 1: Charities: The Invisible Hand in a Globalizing World

Lions Clubs in China: Case study at Guangdong Lions Clubs

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In the first of a dozen years at the 21st century, Lions Club International (LCI) had been in decline in the United State from which it was originated. At the same time, however, LCI entered China, in which its regime has vigilantly regarded a civil society organization with international background as an extremely sensitive political threat, and gained a rapid development, showing great potential for growth. Through in-depth case studies and survey, we will probe into LCI's development in Guangdong Province by using embeddedness theory with the following three dimensions, cognitive embeddedness, cultural embeddedness and structural embeddedness: a) The participatory philanthropic mode with simultaneous donation and volunteering was a great innovation way for urban elites and emerging middle class and it also organically combine Chinese traditional causal blessing idea, encouraging the actors to continue volunteering. b) The democratic governance mode of LCI has offered a platform for its members to participate in the organization's self-governance. The Chinese volunteers from the middle class have been united firmly by LCI. C) It has developed and kept substantial relationship with government apartments, especially governmental officials, including top leaders from the Central Government and important officials from local governments, which created political opportunity space for promoting volunteering actions as well as the development of the organizations.

However, it is not a unidirectional embedded pattern and different kinds of embeddedness are not completely independent from each other. Instead, embedding is a two-way interacting and interconnecting process. LCI is flourishing in Guangdong and gradually develops a mode with Cantonese characteristics; at the same time, LCI has made a profound influence in Guangdong local governance system. LCI successfully enters China, meanwhile, China with its representatives, the ordinary Chinese, are stepping onto LCI, the stage of international civil society, and moving towards the world.