

Value changes in transforming China

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Abstract: The People's Republic of China (PRC) is back on the global agenda. In the late 1970s, the process of modernization (reform and opening up under Deng Xiaoping) brought enormous changes to the economy, society and cultural landscape. China has rapidly emerged as a major world power, despite the current global economic crisis. This article explores the changes in Chinese values caused by the expanding economic and cultural exchange processes within the country. Of specific theoretical interest is the role played by the mass media and information and communication technologies (ICT), and their bearing on modern Chinese society. Empirically, we first examine China's placement on a global map of values (based on the World Value Survey), noting recent value shifts. We then offer a comprehensive view of attitudes of Chinese managers, drawing on a quantitative study from Beijing and Shanghai, to highlight the importance of cultural differences deeply rooted in Chinese society. Finally, implications for cultural relations between West and East are discussed.

Keywords: value change, modernization, cultural proximity, Beijing and Shanghai, identity and lifestyles

Introduction: Cultural proximity in times of globalization

In today's era of globalization cultures cannot be perceived as homogeneous units, because they are complex and diverse in themselves. Distances are getting smaller and the world seems to be growing together, as captured by the expression 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1990). The 'Other' no longer seems so far away. Welsch (1999) coined the term 'transculturality' to describe how cultures are becoming interconnected, with similar lifestyles merging and getting assimilated. As Welsch notes (1999: 197f), 'Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of

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national cultures, but go beyond these and are found in the same way in other cultures. The way of life for an economist, an academic or a journalist is no longer German or French, but rather European or global in tone.’

With globalization, processes of cultural exchange have expanded dramatically, based mainly on communication activities between and among members of society. All negotiation is communication, with the inherent cultural connotations. Communication is central in shaping relations between individuals as well as on the societal level. It serves as a vehicle for cultural negotiations in a world of economic cooperation, wider political debates and cultural exchanges. To optimize mutual understanding and minimize conflict, communication activities must be adapted to cross-cultural challenges. Interconnectedness is an unavoidable fact: it may prove an important stimulus facilitating constructive cooperation in facing new global challenges.

Other authors, however, hold that globalization does not lead to homogenization, and maintain that the binary logic of homogeneity/heterogeneity or unity/diversity must be discarded (see Featherstone 1990: 2). The local culture must be taken into consideration, and this leads to a cultural mix. The connectedness of the local and global and the ‘linking of localities’ (Robertson 1995: 35) are reflected in terms like ‘indigenisation’ (Appadurai 1996), ‘glocalisation’ (Robertson 1995), ‘hybridity’ and ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994), ‘third culture’ (Featherstone 1995), ‘creolisation’ (Hannerz 1987), vernacularization and métissage, among others.

A way out of this dispute between these two theoretical approaches is to differ precisely between cultural globalization on a macro-level (e.g. Beck, 2000), influencing certain institutions in society and cultural patterns at the micro-level (e.g. Schwartz, 1994). Cultural habits are deeply grounded in society, transmitted from generation to generation and clearly reflected in certain basic values of the citizens. In this article dealing with value changes in contemporary China we highlight the thesis of a *cultural surface synchronization* which means that cultural globalization should be seen hierarchical, influencing and changing culture more on a superficial level while the basic value structures of the Chinese are more or less unviolated.

Consensus or conflict: the role of mass media, ICTs and other forms of communication

Communication as symbolic interaction is carried out through intermediaries such as language, signs, gestures, symbols. As Blumer (1969: 14) puts it, the human being is an organism ‘that engages in social interaction with itself by making indications to itself and responding to such indications’. Meanings are negotiated between dialogue partners, so subjective experiences and cultural backgrounds play an important role in the communication process. Meaning is constructed within a context of cultural processes by (verbal and nonverbal) communication activities and influenced by media, ICTs and other forms of communication. Information and images are disseminated around the globe, with an undeniable impact on our worldview.

Appadurai (1996) sees the complexity of today’s world as involving certain disjunctures of economy, culture and politics. He operates with five different streams of global cultural flows, which he calls ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, finanscapas and ideoscapas. These five factors contribute to the global exchange of ideas and information and will lead to a deterritorialization of identities in a culturally hybridized world. With the shared suffix ‘scape’, Appadurai indicates that these flows are not objectively given relations but

perspective constructs. They are fluid, constantly shifting and irregularly shaped. These set of landscapes he calls ‘imagined worlds’ (1996: 296). Mediascapes suggests the global scale of information and refers to the rise in media production and distribution. Mediascapes involve both the ‘distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information’ as well ‘the images of the world created by these media’ (Appadurai 1996: 298f).

Interconnectedness has increased dramatically since the turn of the millennium. China’s infrastructure, once a white spot on the digital map, has developed with enormous speed. Traditional mass media, ICTs and various forms of communication (interpersonal, verbal, non-verbal, visual) have all facilitated greater cultural proximity in Eastern and Western encounters. The once insular Chinese culture – strange, unknown and unapproachable for people from the West – now seems much closer, perhaps even familiar. Media and ICTs speed up these intercultural exchanges via worldwide distributed images, virtual meeting places and interpersonal encounters, facilitating connectedness and resulting in a form of perceived intimacy.

China’s rising importance in the world economy has boosted its presence in new coverage around the world. However, this does not mean that what gets disseminated is a complex and finely nuanced picture. Information is often reduced to simplified images, producing stereotypes that may lead to misunderstanding and prejudice. In the German media, for instance, simplified, stereotyped pictures of China are presented (Wobst 2007; Richter and Gebauer 2011), and this necessarily has an impact on popular perceptions. The German public have been shown to hold negative view of China: some 69% of Germans evaluate China’s influence in the world as ‘mainly negative’; only 11% rated China’s influence 2009 as ‘mainly positive’ – even lower than in 2008 (28%) and 2005 (34%) (Bersick 2010: 247f). A recent research report (Richter and Gebauer 2011) confirms this. The study collected 8,766 reports from seven German media sourcesⁱ throughout 2008. Even in the most opinion-influential media, over half of the contributors were found to refer to China in stereotyped form, and these articles spread images and clichés already commonplace in society.

Whereas mass media distributes worldwide information and images, ICTs facilitate interpersonal contacts. The internet community communicates through bits and bytes: e-mail, VoIP, video conferencing, social media, etc., enabling people from all over the world to stay in frequent contacts, even with permanent real-time interconnectedness readily available on a cost-effective basis. In the course of merely the past five years, the number of internet users quadrupled. According to data from CINNIC (2011) the proportion of internet use rose from 103 mil (6.9% of the population) to 420 mil. (31.6%) in 2010. Even medium-sized and small enterprises rely on computers (94.8%), and 92.7% of them have Internet access. For 57.2% of these enterprises (again, according to CINNIC 2011) the Internet has become a main channel for communication and providing customer service. Despite the explosive growth of Internet use in China there are huge differences regarding the access. Amnesty International reported about violations of the freedom of expression and the suppression of dissent (Amnesty International UK 2006). It is important to have a close focus on the current shifts regarding these issues: “The tools and methods used by the authorities to control the content and flow of information, and the emerging dynamics between Chinese Internet users, or “netizens,” and censors shows that the expansion of the Internet and Web-based media is changing the rules of the game between state and society.” (Xiao 2011: 47)

Besides mass media and the ICTs, visual communication plays an important role in levelling out cultural differences. This can be noted in such varied forms of communication as

vestimentary communication (similar clothing styles), synchronization of body language (observable at international meetings), forms of visual synchronization (as when China's hutongsⁱⁱ is replaced by anonymous apartment blocks and modern skyscrapers; living styles), availability of globally distributed products (the 'McDonaldization of Society', Ritzer 1996), language (English as lingua franca), etc.

This globalized synchronization is accelerated by personal mobility, both long-term (expatriatism) and short-term (business trips, tourism). With these exchanges comes transculturalism, which 'sketches a different picture of the relation between cultures, not one of isolation and conflict, but one of entanglement, intermixing, and commonness' (Welsch 1999: 205).

On the other hand, several studies (e.g. Schwartz, 2006) have shown that cultural values still vary profoundly between countries. Signs and symbols as basis of communication are deeply culturally rooted. Culture plays a central role in social relations: it is 'the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted' (Clarke et al. 1976: 11). The more the one culture differs from the other, the greater are the chances of misunderstanding. More effort is needed to implement communication, precisely because norms and values, the models of 'correct' behaviour, differ so widely. Successful communication is achieved when the participants can correctly interpret the symbols in the interaction of the interlocutor.

Deciphering the map of meaning through cultural values and norms

Culture is 'the learned set of beliefs, values, norms, and material goods shared by group members' (Thompson and Hickey 1999: 68). Values and norms are culturally dependent, and representations of reality differ. Here Korzybski (1933: 58) has applied a geographical metaphor: 'a map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.' Objective reality is an illusion, just as a map represents the landscape by using symbolic meaning. 'The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in system of beliefs, in mores and customs, in the use of objects and material life... A culture includes the "maps of meaning" which makes things intelligible to its members' (Clarke et al. 1976: 10). Culture functions as codes of meanings which are constructed and can be conveyed and understood. This social-constructivist view of culture sees the human being as 'suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' (Geertz 1973: 5). Analysing those webs of significance cannot be done by experimental science in search of laws, but requires 'an interpretative one in search of meaning' (Geertz 1973: 5). This subjective dimension of these maps of meaning is determined by individuals who share the same values and norms: thus, a 'culture has to be studied in term of its own meaning and values' (Giddens 1997: 24).

Values provide an important gateway for deciphering the hidden dimension of culture, because values are 'key aspects of variations in human culture. What individuals value is strongly influenced by the specific culture in which they happen to live' (Giddens, 1997: 586). But culture is not a fixed entity. Especially in times of globalization – as highlighted by the concept of transculturality – culture is dynamic, not static. It is an ever-changing matrix, 'a constant invitation to change, not their "systemness"' (Bauman 1999: xxix).

Baumann's view on culture can be applied to the processes underway in China, where modernization interferes with traditions, which can lead to breaks in society: "Culture" is as

much about inventing as it is about preserving; about discontinuity as much as about pattern-braking; about norm-following as much as about the transcendence of norm; about the unique as much as about the regular; about change as much as about monotony of reproduction; about the unexpected as much as about the predictable.’ (Bauman 1999: xiv)

The present study follows this dichotomy, with empirical research based on this assumption. Modernization, globalization, cultural dynamics and changing patterns of social relations are affecting the values of China’s people today. The fast-paced development and increasing relevance in the world economy, with World Trade Organization membership from 2001 and the resulting opening of the country, the influx of foreign cultures through internationalization – all these necessarily have a bearing on China’s society, its culture and therefore its values. As pointed out by Inglehart and Baker (2000: 50), ‘Economic development is associated with major changes in prevailing values and beliefs’. A closer look at Chinese value systems and their shifts can help us to understand what appears to be a transformation spurred by current developments in this rapidly-changing country.

Aims of the empirical research

The focus of the study is on people who have been brought up in and are living the local lifestyle, but who are also exposed to Western lifestyle influences. The specific target group are managers who work on a daily basis with people from the West, who travel frequently, dealing with business partners in international ventures and are in ongoing contact with them.

First, the value characteristics of China are presented in relation to several countries, on the basis of the World Value Survey (fourth wave 2005–2008). Cultural characteristics are measured with the value concept of Schwartz (originally developed 1992), which seems currently to be the leading approach to measure values. The value theory of Schwartz was operationalized in the European Social Survey, the main cross-national survey in Europe and a short scale (10 items) was also included in the most recent World Value study. This database is used to illustrate Chinese values in relation to those of other countries. Based on the individual value concept of Schwartz (1992) major value transitions over the last decades within China are measured by comparing different value studies using the Schwartz concept in Shanghai.

After this secondary analysis, which seeks to provide insights into value characteristics and value transitions in China, we present the main results of our own empirical study. We begin with the procedures followed (sampling, fieldwork, operationalization). Next, due to the explorative character of the study, we formulate broad research questions instead of highly specific hypothesis. These research questions structure the presentation of our empirical analysis. Concerning basic values, grounded in personality we deal with the following research questions:

- What values have high priority in the managerial sphere in China?
- Are there differences between Beijing and Shanghai?
- What socio-demographic and occupational characteristics influence the importance of basic values?

Besides the basic value approach of Schwartz also central opinions of Chinese managers regarding identity and lifestyle, the working sphere and internationalization were measured. With a dimensional approach, several exploratory factor analysis (see Fabrigar et al., 1999) were conducted to elucidate the central constructs hidden behind the scales used in the study.

Two research questions guide the analysis of the second part of the survey:

- What central constructs of identity formation, attitudes towards work and internationalization can be observed within Chinese managerial culture?
- What differences emerge regarding the two major cities, Beijing and Shanghai?

In summary, then, our study examines whether the above-mentioned processes and recent experiences have led to shifts in the value system of the Chinese people, resulting in fundamental changes in society. Our preliminary hypothesis would expect this to be a matter of a kind of cultural proximity that develops through visible transcultural lifestyles, but that on the whole, people's values remain deeply rooted and little altered.

Basic values of China in a cross-national and time perspective

This study uses the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), an empirically sound concept of cultural values grounded in cross-cultural psychology, as its theoretical and empirical basis (Schwartz 1992). The SVS takes into account the complexity of culture and is well suited for comparative research. Its value approach refers to basic values which can be seen as encompassing fundamental beliefs referring to desirable goals and inextricably linked to affect. Important here is Schwartz's claim for universality. The theory 'concerns the basic values that people in all cultures recognize' (Schwartz, 2009, p.1). The major assumption of the Schwartz concept is that value types are arranged in a circular position. The closer two values are in either direction around the circle, the more similar are their underlying motivations, whereas values located opposite to each other represent conflicting and incompatible orientations. The first comprehensive measurement, the Schwartz Value Scale (SVS) itself, gathers 57 multiple values categorized into ten value types: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, security. These ten value types can be subsumed into four value dimensions: openness to change, self-enhancement, conservation/conservatism, self-transcendence (see figure 1).

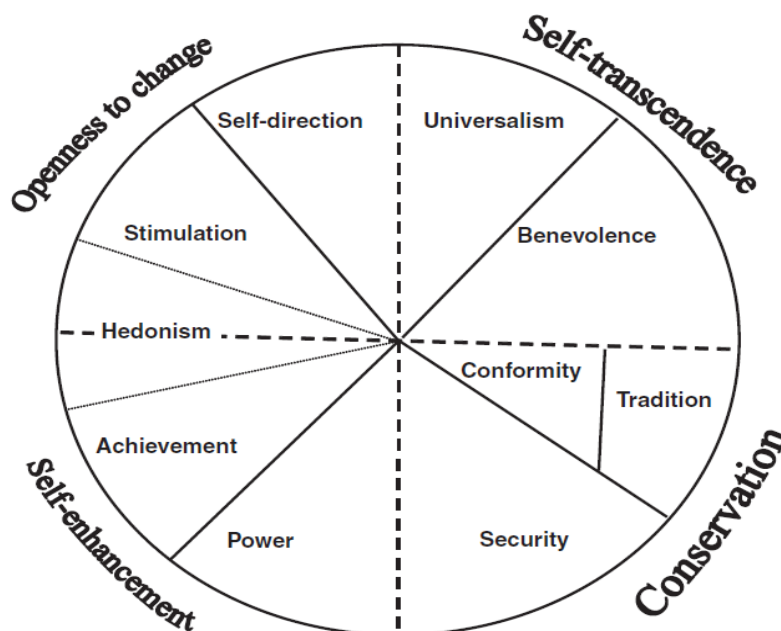


Fig.1: Circular structure of individual values according to Schwartz (1992)

These four value dimensions form two bipolar conceptual dimensions, yielding a spectrum with successive closely-related values: the dimension of openness to change (individualistic efforts and action) vs. conservation (preservation of the existing order) and the dimension self-enhancement (pursuit of one's own success and dominance) vs. self-transcendence (acceptance of others as equal individuals).

Schwartz et al. (2001) decided to develop the Portraits Value Questionnaire (PVQ) because the SVS was not considered appropriate for studies involving persons with low formal education. The new version of the PVQ (40 items) has high proven reliability and appears more suited for measuring basic values in representative samples within cultures. The designers of the European Social Survey opted for a shorter version of this scale, consisting of 21 portraits, in their survey, with the consequence that the ten value orientations are only poorly measured with at least two items, and with low reliability. The current leading role of the Schwartz concept due to extensive research based on ESS data has led to the decision to include a very short battery (every value is operationalized with only one item) of the PVQ in the fourth World Value Survey (2005–2008). Due to the short scale it is feasible to compare cross-nationally only the two bipolar value dimensions conservation vs. openness (6 items) and self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence (four items). The items used in the worldwide comparison based on WVS data are listed in table 1.

Indicator	Value orientation → Dimension
Adventure and risk-taking are important to this person: to have an exciting life	Stimulation → Openness to change
Being very successful is important to this person: to have people recognize one's achievement	Achievement → Self-enhancement
It is important to this person to be rich: to have a lot of money and expensive things.	Power → Self-enhancement
It is important for this person to have a good time: to indulge oneself	Hedonism → Openness to change
It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative: to do things one's own way.	Self-direction → Openness to change
Looking after the environment is important to this person: to care for nature.	Universalism → Self-transcendence
It is important for this person to help others: to care for their wellbeing.	Benevolence → Self-transcendence
Tradition is important to this person: to adhere to the customs handed down by one's religion or family.	Tradition → Conservation
Living in secure surroundings is important to this person: to avoid anything that might be dangerous.	Security → Conservation
It is important for this person always to behave properly: to avoid anything people would say is wrong.	Conformity → Conservation

Table 1: The 10 item version of the PVQ in the World Value Survey (fourth wave 2005-2008)

Source: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_136

Based on these ten items, the two value dimensions conservation vs. openness to change and self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence were constructed. To avoid scale-use differences across cultures, the values were centred around the mean rating of all value items (MRAT) (following the instructions of Schwartz, 2009). The four dimensions represent the average rating on those items belonging to the higher order constructs. Due to the expected high

negative correlation between the two bipolar dimensions ($r = -0,74$ between conservation and openness and $r = -0,52$ between self-enhancement and self-transcendence), it was justified to construct two major value orientations: openness vs. conservation and self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence. Figure 2 draws a worldwide map of value orientations based on the country-samples of the World Value survey. All data is based on the fourth wave of the survey (2005–2008).

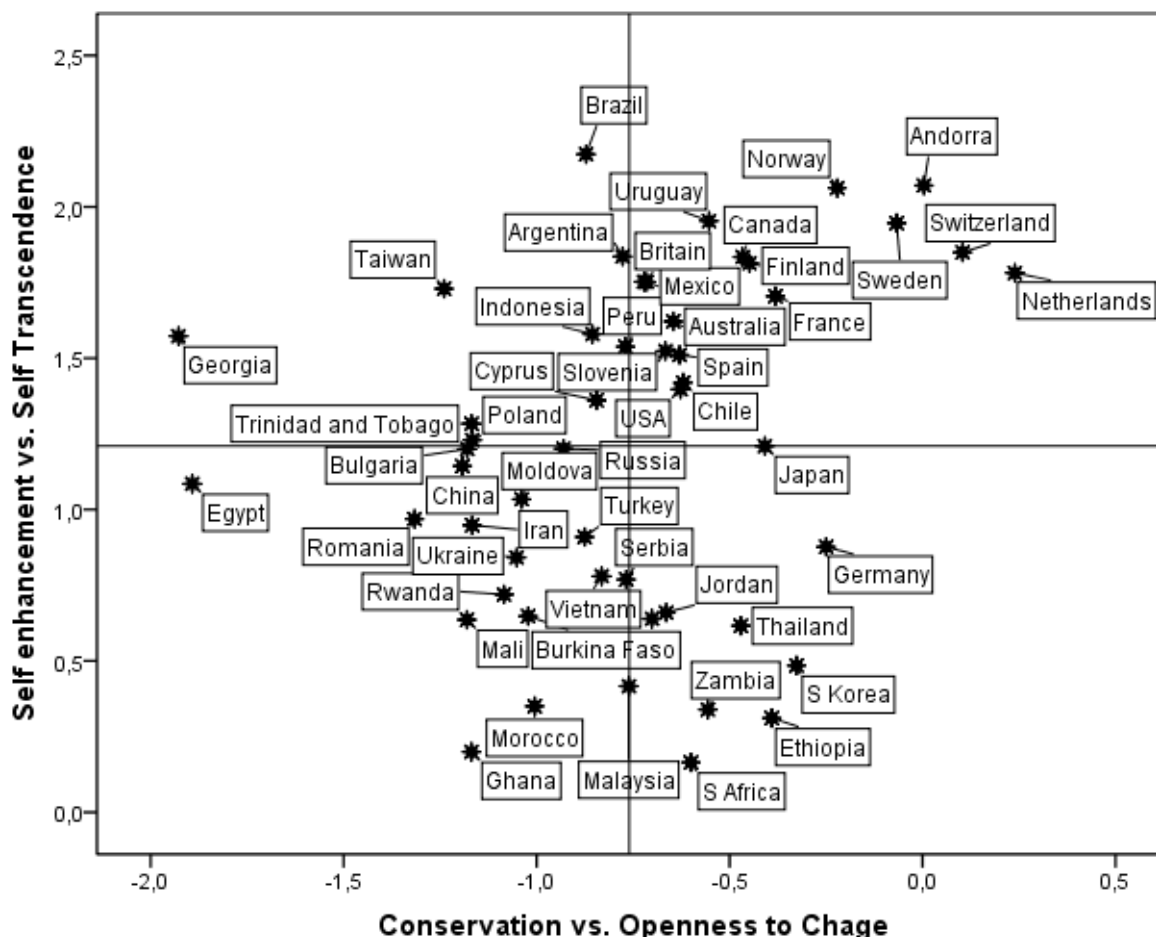


Fig.2: A global map of Schwartz values (based on 10 item PVQ measurement of the WVS)

Source: own computations based on the WVS data (<http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSDData.jsp>)

It is evident that China belongs to the lower left-hand quarter of the figure. Preserving the existing order ('conservation', in Schwartz's terminology) as well as self-enhancement values rank high compared to the worldwide average. The position of China is close to that of former communist countries of Eastern Europe like Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova. Also Arabic and African countries are located in the lower left of the figure, but in general with a higher relevance of conservatism/conservation (as with e.g. Egypt) or self-enhancement (e.g. Ghana, Morocco). Compared to the denizens of other power states like the United States or Japan, the Chinese people still seem to see the preservation of order and achievement as being more important than benevolence and universalism. Western European countries are variously located. Particularly the Scandinavian states, together with Switzerland, the Netherlands and France, can be seen as advocates of self-transcendence and progressive values. Germany is as

KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry Volume 1 Issue 2 p. 1-22.

an outlier, according higher relevance to achievement and power than other Western European countries. Some emerging nations in Latin America (like Brazil or Argentina) are characterized by a completely different value structure. Self-transcendence is far more important than self-enhancement, with Brazil occupying the very global position on this value dimension.

This worldwide comparison of value characteristics clearly shows that there is no universal, global unification of values. There are still cultural spheres with distinctions between African/Arabic, Asian and Eastern European, Latin American and Western European countries.

Analysing value transitions over time on the basis of survey data is difficult, because until recently comparable value data have hardly existed for China. In addition the quality of the samples (also in the WVS) is open to criticismⁱⁱⁱ. The Schwartz Value Survey Dataset included at least two student samples from Shanghai (1988, 1995). For this study, we decided to compare those samples with our sample of managers from Shanghai (2007)^{iv}. Again, we followed Swartz's instructions for computing the ten value orientations and four value dimensions (Schwartz 2009).

These three timepoints lead us to conclude that no clear value changes are evident in the metropolitan area of Shanghai: values have remained basically stable from 1988 to 2007. Only slight changes appear, in particular within the dimension of self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence. Values such as status, power and achievement seem to have gained in importance in Shanghai, but on the dimension of conservation vs. openness to change, no clear trend emerges. We can note a resurgence of conservative values between 1988 and 1995, but otherwise the managers demonstrated more progressive values in 2007 than did the student samples.

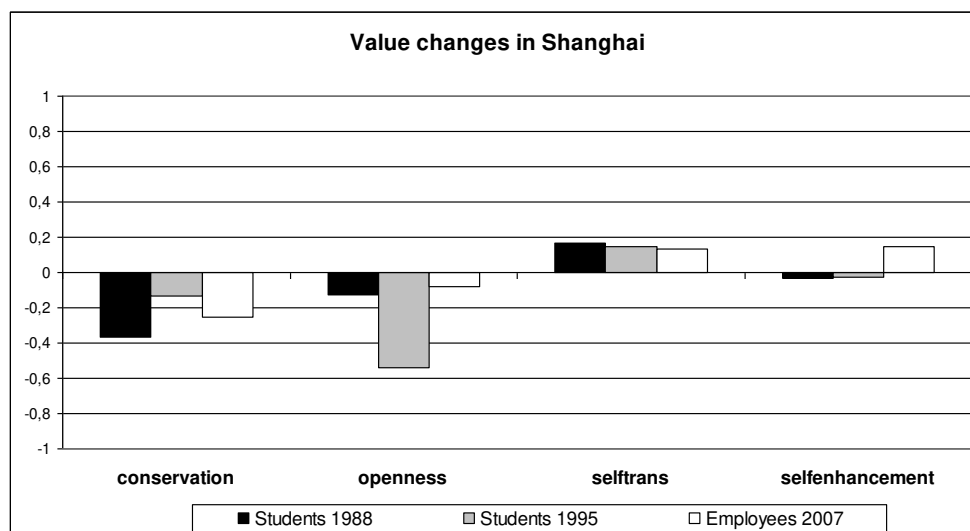


Fig.3: Value changes in Shanghai based on three different samples with SVS

Procedures and empirical findings of our survey

Sampling procedures and fieldwork

For our own empirical study, we decided to select a homogeneous sample of managerial personnel and to restrict our analysis to the metropolitan areas of Beijing and Shanghai, instead of attempting to achieve a representative sample all over China. The study was conducted in close cooperation with Chinese colleagues^v to avoid ethnocentric research bias and to ensure a cultural-linked approach.

Based on our theoretical approach, we saw Chinese business people as driving forces of modernity, and we wanted to distinguish between generations (those who have experienced the eras of Consolidation, Cultural Revolution and Social Reform; see Egri & Ralston, 2004), type of firm (foreign, joint venture, Chinese private, Chinese public) and managerial position (lower, middle, upper management). Therefore we decided to select our sample in China's two major cities on the basis of certain criteria as to age, gender, occupational position and type of firm, and a Chinese company was engaged to arrange the fieldwork accordingly. The study was conducted in May 2007.

Table 2 shows the main sample characteristics regarding socio-demographic and occupational variables. Due to the strict quota selection procedures, several characteristics (age, gender, type of firm and career position) are highly equivalent between the two cities, but there are several differences as regards educational background. Apprenticeships and professional schools are slightly overrepresented in the Shanghai sample. Considerable differences emerge with regard to university degrees. While in Shanghai nearly 60% of the sample has achieved a basic university or master's degree, the corresponding share in Beijing is below 30%. Interestingly, reported incomes are quite similar between the two cities, with only a slight overrepresentation of higher incomes (> 7500 RMB) in Shanghai.

	Shanghai (N=559; 50.5 %)	Beijing (N=549; 49.5 %)	Total Sample (N=1.108)
Age			
<i>M</i>	39,25	39,43	39,34
<i>SD</i>	10,56	10,17	10,36
<i>Range</i>	20–59	21–59	20–59
Gender (valid %)			
Males	277 (49.6 %)	275 (50.,1 %)	552 (49.,8 %)
Females	282 (50.4 %)	274 (49.9 %)	556 (50.2 %)
Education (valid %)			
Compulsory School	3 (0.5 %)	3 (0.5 %)	6 (0.5 %)
Apprenticeship	13 (2.3 %)	0 (0.0 %)	13 (1.2 %)
Professional institute	26 (4.7 %)	8 (1.5 %)	34 (3.1 %)
University entrance diploma	60 (10.7 %)	92 (16.8 %)	152 (13.7 %)
Professional institute requiring diploma	143 (25.6 %)	229 (41.7 %)	372 (33.6 %)
University degree	281 (50.3 %)	191 (24.8 %)	472 (42.6 %)
Master	33 (5.9 %)	26 (4.7 %)	59 (5.3 %)
Firm (valid %)			
Foreign firm	139 (24.9 %)	135 (24.6 %)	274 (24.7 %)
Joint venture	142 (25.4 %)	139 (25.3 %)	281 (25.4 %)
Chinese – private	138 (24.7 %)	137 (25.0 %)	275 (24.8 %)
Chinese – public	140 (25 %)	138 (25.1 %)	278 (25.1 %)
Career position (valid %)			
Lower management	188 (33.9 %)	183 (33.4 %)	371 (33.6 %)
Middle management	184 (33.1 %)	182 (33.2 %)	366 (33.2 %)
Upper management	183 (33.0 %)	183 (33.4 %)	366 (33.2 %)
Income (valid %)			
1,001 – 2,000 RMB	17 (3.0 %)	41 (7.5 %)	58 (5.2 %)
2,001 – 3,000 RMB	127 (22.7 %)	110 (20 %)	237 (21.4 %)
3,001 – 5,000 RMB	166 (29.7 %)	178 (32.4 %)	344 (31.0 %)
5,001 – 7,500 RMB	103 (18.4 %)	108 (19.7 %)	211 (19 %)
7,501 – 10,000 RMB	87 (15.6 %)	66 (12.0 %)	153 (13.8 %)
10,001 – 15,000 RMB	42 (7.5 %)	26 (6.6 %)	78 (7.0 %)
15,001 – 20,000 RMB	16 (2.9 %)	7 (1.3 %)	23 (2.1 %)
> 20,001 RMB	1 (0.2 %)	3 (0.5 %)	4 (0.4 %)

Table 2: Sociodemographic and occupational characteristics of our sample

Operationalization

Although the samples from the two metropolitan areas of Shanghai and Beijing can be seen as rather homogeneous, we expected different values and attitudes on three major criteria. Therefore we opted to select our sample based on theoretical assumptions.

The first independent variable refers to a generation cluster. Respondents were divided into three generation categories: ‘future’ (20–35 years; they did not experience the Cultural Revolution), ‘opening up’ (36–45 years; experienced the Cultural Revolution as adolescents, as well as the ‘Reform and Opening Up’) and ‘cultural revolution’ generation (over 45 years of age; have experienced two difficult times, the ‘Cultural Revolution’ as well as the ‘Three Years of Natural Disasters’) (similar to the concept of Egri & Ralston, 2004).

In addition the ‘working area’ represents another central variable of our survey: whether the respondent is working in international surroundings like foreign companies (e.g. joint ventures), in Chinese private companies or in state-owned institutions. A further factor is the individual’s career position within the firm. People in higher positions might experience more freedom and Western working values in foreign firms, while those working in Chinese firms might be still attached to Chinese values and hierarchical working styles.

The dependent variables were the basic values of Schwartz as well as some ‘secondary values’. Secondary values represent a broader value concept similar to the approach of Inglehard and Welzel (2005). We developed several item batteries to measure the lifestyle and identity of Chinese managers (e.g. determination in life through family or society, fears of the future, responsibility and commitment to family and society, expenditures for work and leisure time), the working environment (e.g. career objectives, attitudes towards leadership, importance of qualifications, working styles) and attitudes towards internationalization (consequences of foreign investment, view of Chinese managers and people, view of European managers and Europeans, connections with Europe and China). All scales were constructed as Likert scales (five categories with equal intervals). Explanatory factor analysis (PCA with varimax rotation) and reliability analysis were used to detect latent constructs behind the indicators, which were used for further analysis.

Before we turn to these secondary values, the analysis will refer to basic values of managers surveyed in Beijing and Shanghai based on the Schwartz Value Survey as well as on predictors explaining certain value orientations.

Empirical findings

Table 3 shows the operationalization of the first two research questions of our survey. We want to explore which of the ten value orientations enjoy high priority in Beijing and in Shanghai and which socio-demographic and occupational characteristics are linked with the importance of specific values. In a first step, the ten value orientations (based on the Schwartz concept, Schwartz 1992) were compared between Beijing and Shanghai using a t-test to bring out mean differences with regard to the importance of values. In a second step, four hierarchical OLS regressions (see Urban & Mayerl, 2011) were computed to compare the influence of socio-demographic and occupational characteristics on the Schwartz higher-order value dimensions.

Socio-demographic characteristics^{vi}	Occupational characteristics	Basic values and dimensions	measurement
City (Shanghai/Beijing)	Income (five categories) Education (non-academic/academic) Middle management level	Security Conformity Tradition	Index based on the instructions of Schwartz (1992), additionally scale use corrections because of individually different response styles
Gender (male/female)	Upper management level Company (foreign/Chinese) Experience with European colleagues (no/yes)	Self-direction Stimulation Hedonism Power	
Age (in years)	Experience with European bosses (no/yes)	Achievement Benevolence Universalism	Index based on Schwartz (1992) with scale-use corrected values
Marital status (not married/married)	Work experience in other countries (no/yes)	Value dimensions: Openness to change Preserving the existing order Self-enhancement Self-transcendence	
Children (no/yes)			

Table 3: Overview of predictors on basic values and value dimensions

As regards value differences between Beijing and Shanghai, we note significant results on nearly every value orientation. Conformity and security are of higher importance to respondents in Beijing, whereas tradition is seen as slightly more relevant in Shanghai. Respondents in Beijing can be characterized by a higher social value orientation as reflected in the values of universalism and benevolence. This result is also backed up by higher achievement orientation in Shanghai, a value which is negatively correlated with universalism and benevolence. Business people in Shanghai tend toward an individualistic orientation, expressed by higher relevance accorded to self-direction and stimulation. The only values where no differences can be seen are hedonism and power: both these are basically neutral in importance to respondents in both cities.

Regarding the importance of different value orientations, the Chinese managers of our sample in Beijing and Shanghai can be characterized by high achievement orientation combined with high relevance of security values as well as self-direction. Managers working in the prosperous and booming cities of Shanghai and Beijing clearly reject the more traditional view of life. While they are positive to benevolence, universalism values are only of neutral importance to them.

		N	Mean (centered)	SD	t-value	Significance
Conformity	Shanghai	555	-.02	0.63	-3.105	.002
	Beijing	548	0.09	0.61		
Security	Shanghai	555	0.17	0.67	-2.502	.012
	Beijing	548	0.27	0.67		
Tradition	Shanghai	555	-0.91	0.94	4.362	.000
	Beijing	548	-1.14	0.81		
Benevolence	Shanghai	555	0.31	0.67	-2.419	.016
	Beijing	548	0.39	0.50		
Universalism	Shanghai	555	-0.05	0.69	-6.677	.000
	Beijing	548	0.19	0.47		
Self-direction	Shanghai	555	0.29	0.66	1.675	.094
	Beijing	548	0.22	0.59		
Stimulation	Shanghai	555	-0.65	1.47	6.671	.000
	Beijing	548	-1.20	1.29		
Hedonism	Shanghai	555	0.13	1.16	-.402	.688
	Beijing	548	0.16	0.79		
Achievement	Shanghai	555	0.44	1.03	3.226	.001
	Beijing	548	0.28	0.57		
Power	Shanghai	555	-0.14	1.11	-.844	.399
	Beijing	548	-0.09	0.85		

Table 4: Mean differences between Beijing and Shanghai in 10 basic values

The influence of socio-demographic and occupational characteristics on values can explain only a surprisingly low amount of variance. While conservation and self enhancement seems to be completely independent with regard to socio-demographic and occupational characteristics, only 4% of the variance of openness values and 3,6% of the variance of self transcendence values could be explained by the predictors. In total, only the city differences remain strong enough to achieve significance. Additionally, only three predictors exert an influence on value orientations. The experience of working in a foreign country leads to a slightly lower importance of ‘openness to change’ values, and experiences with European bosses leads to a somewhat lower relevance of ‘self-enhancement’ values. Higher income tends to go together with lower interest in benevolence or universalism.

Several assumptions predicting value differences with regard to generations or different styles of firms or different career positions could not be confirmed. It seems that only regional differences (Beijing vs. Shanghai) account for different value orientations in our sample.

Model 1: Socio-demographic characteristics	Beta	Model 2: Sociodemographic and occupational characteristics	Beta	Adj. r²	Basic values
City Beijing	-.16			3.6%	<i>Openness to change</i>
		City Beijing	-0.15	4.0%	
		Working in foreign country	-.07		
No influence				-	<i>Conservation</i>
		No influence		-	
No influence					<i>Self-enhancement</i>
		Experience with Europeans	-.085	0.5%	
City Beijing	.19			3.3%	<i>Self-transcendence</i>
		City	0.18		
		Income	-.08	3.6%	

Note: Hierarchical OLS-Regression on four value dimensions
Only significant influences (p<0,05) were shown (standardized coefficients)

Table 5: Results of the four OLS-hierarchical regressions

The second part of the empirical analysis focuses on secondary values, the attitudes towards identity formation in China, lifestyle features, working styles and internationalization. Because the design of our empirical analysis is explorative we tried to detect empirically which latent constructs are hidden behind the scales we used. We decided to use Principal component analysis (Varimax Rotation) to judge the quality of the scales. The following table provides all necessary information of our scales and our latent constructs (percentages of explained variance).

Values concerning the identity of the respondents refer on the one hand to general attitudes towards individual life in examination with society. We measured the individual and family responsibility in contrast with the commitment to society (embeddedness), the determination of life through reference groups and anxieties with regard to future developments. Here we could clearly distinguish between fears of societal changes and fears of a loss of status. The item battery referring to expenditures was more lifestyle-oriented and measures the importance of rather personal expenditures in comparison to classical leisure time expenditures. To measure attitudes towards the working environment we used classical item batteries measuring career objectives (such as like income, security of position and social climate in relation to further education and working in foreign firms). Concerning leadership it was possible to differentiate between a preference for an authoritarian leadership styles vs. a cooperative, liberal leading role. Qualifications like foreign experience, education, important contacts, foreign languages and experience in different occupational fields were all seen as important and could be summarized as one latent variable.

Values concerning identity	Operationalization	Values concerning working environment	Operationalization	Values concerning internationalization	Operationalization
Embeddedness in society	PCA with Varimax: - Commitment to society (Var. = 38,0%) - Responsibility for oneself, family (Var. = 20,2%)	Carrier objectives	PCA with Varimax: - Classical carrier objectives (Var. = 29,6%) - Further education, working for foreign companies (Var. = 23,5%)	Consequences of foreign investment	PCA with Varimax: - Positive consequences of Western firms (Var. = 29,9%) - Negative consequences of Western firms (Var. = 26,4%)
Determination of life	PCA with Varimax: - determination of life through society (colleagues, work) (Var. = 39,3%) - determination of life through self and family (Var. = 21,2%)	Leadership	PCA with Varimax: - cooperative leadership (Var. = 32,2%) - authoritarian leadership (Var. = 31,2%)	Attitudes of Chinese	PCA with Varimax: - Attitudes towards Chinese Managers (Var. = 20,7%) - Attitudes towards Chinese people (Var. = 17,6%) - Modern view of Chinese (Var. = 9,1%)
Anxiety about the future	PCA with Varimax: - Fear of societal changes (Var. 31,0%) - Fear of loss of prestige (Var. 30,4%).	qualifications	PCA with Varimax: - Importance of qualifications (Var. = 47,9%)	Attitudes of Europeans	PCA with Varimax: - Viewing Europeans as lazy and impolite (Var. = 16,6%) - Viewing Europeans as importunate, arrogant (Var. = 13,7%) - Viewing Europeans immoral and distant (Var. = 13,6%)
Financial expenditures	PCA with Varimax: - Expenditures leisure time (Var. = 42,7%) - Expenditures family and work (Var. = 23,8%)	Dependency of income	PCA with Varimax: - Income based on activities, performance and output (Var. = 39,2%) - Income based on age and qualification (Var. = 27,6%)	Associations Europe	PCA with Varimax: - positive associations Europe (Var. = 37,6%) - negative associations Europe (Var. = 24,4%)
		Working style	PCA with Varimax: - western working style (alone, own time management and ideas (Var. = 50,9%)	Associations China	PCA with Varimax: - positive associations China (Var. = 35,3%) - negative associations China (Var. = 27,8%)

Table 6: The scales with regard to secondary values (explained variance of Principal Component Analyses with Varimax rotation)

Regarding income, a clear distinction could be noted when viewing salaries on the basis of age and qualification or on activities, performance and output. Finally, also the working style was operationalized as one construct, in terms of preferences for a Western style of working. Attitudes towards internationalization focused on a comparison between Europe and China.

The first item battery referred to positive consequences (important business partner, new technologies, responsibility for booming cities) or negative consequences of foreign investment (e.g. exploitation, societal changes in values).

In addition, the perception of personality traits of European and Chinese people were compared. Interestingly, explorative factor analysis indicated that attitudes towards other Chinese managers could be clearly distinguished from attitudes towards Chinese people, while European people and managers were viewed in equal ways (lazy and impolite; arrogant and importunate; immoral and distant).

The final item battery concerned associations with Europe and China. Both principal component analyses showed a clear distinction between positive associations (economic power region, high quality of life, beauty of nature) and negative associations (like criminality and terrorism, bad manners).

All those indicators which were extracted through exploratory factor analysis were used as index variables (computing the mean attitudes towards items). Again, hierarchical regressions were run where socio-demographic and occupational characteristics as well as basic values were used to measure the influence on all different indicators. The analyses yielded virtually similar results: in general, we found very weak predictors^{vii}. Because city differences accounted for most of the explained variance in nearly all analysis, we decided to compare the mean importance of the index variables with reference to the two metropolitan areas, again using t-tests for independent samples.

We start with the analysis of differences regarding attitudes towards individual life in relation to society. All indicators show that Beijing respondents esteem this value more highly than do the Shanghai respondents, attaching considerably higher importance to several attitudes independent of the constructs measured. The values of self and family determination of life are ranked higher than determination through society in Beijing as well as in Shanghai. The fear of loss of prestige is equally important as fear of societal changes in Shanghai, whereas respondents in Beijing saw societal changes as a greater threat. Expenditures on leisure-time activities were not considered as important as expenditures for the family or for further education.

		N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Self and family determination of life	Shanghai	559	4.20	0.63	-8.107	.000
	Beijing	548	4.49	0.57		
Determination of life through society	Shanghai	559	3.17	0.76	-9.030	.000
	Beijing	548	3.57	0.69		
Fear of loss of prestige	Shanghai	559	3.63	0.69	-4.421	.000
	Beijing	548	3.85	0.98		
Fear of societal changes	Shanghai	559	3.63	0.71	-	.000
	Beijing	548	4.07	0.73		
Having sole and family responsibility	Shanghai	559	4.24	0.62	-7.668	.000
	Beijing	548	4.49	0.47		
Commitment to society	Shanghai	559	3.38	0.66	-1.333	.183
	Beijing	548	3.43	0.69		
Expenditures for family and further education	Shanghai	559	4.26	0.70	-7.847	.000
	Beijing	548	4.55	0.48		
Expenditures for leisure-time activities	Shanghai	557	3.51	0.63	-9.896	.000
	Beijing	548	3.91	0.72		

Table 7: Mean differences between Beijing and Shanghai in identity and lifestyle scales

As to the working environment, the general conclusion of higher importance of values among the Beijing respondents remains the same. However, no significant differences could be observed concerning preferences as regards leadership or the relevance of income based on age and qualification.

		N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Classical career objectives (income, security, climate)	Shanghai	559	4.08	0.54	-7.914	.000
	Beijing	548	4.33	0.48		
Further education and working for companies	Shanghai	559	3.61	0.67	-6.235	.000
	Beijing	548	3.85	0.63		
Authoritarian leadership	Shanghai	559	3.42	0.77	-1.491	.136
	Beijing	548	3.49	0.84		
Liberal leadership	Shanghai	559	4.18	0.62	.015	.988
	Beijing	548	4.18	0.66		
Importance of qualifications	Shanghai	559	3.96	0.58	-15.508	.000
	Beijing	548	4.44	0.43		
Income based on age and qualification	Shanghai	559	3.49	0.80	-.683	.495
	Beijing	548	3.52	0.79		
Income based on activities. performance and output	Shanghai	559	4.21	0.66	-7.337	.000
	Beijing	548	4.45	0.45		
Western working style (own ideas and time management)	Shanghai	559	1.55	0.33	5.003	.000
	Beijing	548	1.44	0.37		

Table 8: Mean differences between Beijing and Shanghai regarding attitudes towards work

In general, classical career objectives seem to be more important than further education or working for foreign or Chinese companies. All respondents opt more for a liberal leadership than for an authoritarian leadership. The majority thinks that income should be based on activities, performance and output, and not too strictly on age and qualifications. Interestingly, preference for a more progressive working style (being able to manage one's own time and develop one's own ideas) was found to be more common among respondents in Shanghai than in Beijing.

The attitudes towards internationalization reveal finally a clear and coherent view of managers in Beijing in comparison to Shanghai. In Shanghai the view towards Chinese people as well as towards Europeans is expressed more critically than in Beijing. There are also less positive and more negative associations with Europe and less positive and more negative associations with China. Regarding the consequences of foreign investment, respondents in Beijing see more positive signs but considerable fear negative developments such as effects on Chinese values and identity or a potential exploitation of Chinese workers.

		N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Positive consequences of foreign investment	Shanghai	559	3.86	0.57	-8.825	.000
	Beijing	548	4.14	0.49		
Negative consequences of foreign investment	Shanghai	559	3.22	0.66	-	.000
	Beijing	548	3.76	0.64		
Negative view of Chinese managers	Shanghai	559	0.36	0.28	3.021	.003
	Beijing	548	0.31	0.31		
Negative view of Chinese people	Shanghai	559	0.29	0.29	10.763	.000
	Beijing	548	0.12	0.21		
Modern view of China	Shanghai	559	0.30	0.37	.345	.730
	Beijing	548	0.29	0.37		
Europeans lazy. impolite	Shanghai	557	0.18	0.23	10.529	.000
	Beijing	548	0.06	0.14		
Europeans arrogant. importunate	Shanghai	559	0.44	0.31	4.136	.000
	Beijing	548	0.36	0.35		
Europeans immoral. distant	Shanghai	559	0.36	0.33	4.912	.000
	Beijing	548	0.26	0.30		
Positive associations with Europe	Shanghai	559	3.95	0.56	-	.000
	Beijing	548	4.35	0.43		
Negative associations with Europe	Shanghai	559	3.18	0.83	2.297	.022
	Beijing	548	3.06	0.93		
Positive associations with China	Shanghai	559	3.71	0.74	-3.682	.000
	Beijing	548	3.87	0.70		
Negative associations with China	Shanghai	559	2.73	1.00	3.368	.001
	Beijing	548	2.52	1.03		

Table 9: Differences between Beijing and Shanghai (attitudes towards internationalization)

Discussion of the results - a cultural surface synchronization?

The first empirical part of the paper (secondary analysis of value characteristics of China in a cross-national and time perspective) demonstrated that basic values held in China remain stable over time, and quite distinct from values held in Europe or Latin America. Also at the managerial sphere, as our own survey clearly demonstrates, the homogeneity of values is striking. Neither socio-demographic characteristics nor occupation predictors could explain the evolution of different value orientations. Only between the two metropolitan areas, remarkable differences in basic values and central attitudes could be found. Respondents in Beijing tend to be more socially open and tolerant while respondents in Shanghai favour achievement and individualism. Concerning identity and lifestyle, business people in Beijing give a higher priority to several identity and lifestyle features, which may reflect their higher personal involvement with Chinese society. This can also be confirmed with regard to attitudes towards internationalization. Respondents in Shanghai clearly express a critical view towards Europe and China. It seems that respondents in Beijing see themselves in the heart of China while respondents in Shanghai demonstrate a tendency to develop a more independent and critical perspective towards domestic and foreign influences.

Do these empirical results represent a form of equalization of values between Europe and China through greater integration – or a shifting apart (particularization), or perhaps a higher form of hybridization? It seems that Western values have at most penetrated only the outer cultural surface in China. Otherness is no longer so strange or exotic: everything seems within personal reach, whether physical or virtual. The impression is that globalization leads to a global blend. The regional differences between the two metropolitan areas are a sign of a pluralisation of lifestyle values within China and between different social classes. This modernization process involves various components: the physiological-analogue dimension (work mobility as well as tourism generates a higher degree of interpersonal contacts), the virtual-digital component (frequent virtual encounters are accelerated by omnipresent and low-cost modern information and communication technologies) and visual synchronization in a globalized world and through international exchange (transcultural lifestyles, distribution of images through mass media and cultural artefacts). From these indicators, we might expect that, through globalization, a cultural synchronization is developing – but, as this study has shown, this is only superficial and manifests itself only at the level of secondary values. Our analysis of the basic values of Chinese business people has shown that these developments have not led to a merging or synchronization with Western values: traditional Chinese values remain deeply rooted. Rather than ‘hybridization’, the term ‘cultural surface synchronization’ seems a more apt description for the situation. There are still huge differences in value systems, East and West, that are not visible because they are nested deep in the hidden dimension of culture and grounded in personality.

Notes

ⁱ Quality dailies and Information formats from the public-service television broadcasting network

ⁱⁱ A hutong is an ancient city alleyway or lane lined with single-story dwellings in which generations of families have lived together. In recent decades these hutongs have been replaced by modern buildings, and this has had a massive influence on the collective way of life in China.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is highly questionable, if the Chinese sample of the World Value Survey can be seen as representative for the Chinese population. Representativity means in a strict sense that all inhabitants of China should have an equal chance to be part of the proposed sample of about 2000 per country individuals in the WVS.

^{iv} Again, the conclusions based on three different samples must be recognized as limited, but at least the same survey instrument (the 57 item SVS) was used in all samples.

^v from Fudan University/Shanghai, Tsinghua University/Beijing and Beijing Foreign Studies University/Beijing

^{vi} Socio-demographic and occupational characteristics were dichotomized to use the variables as predictors in multiple regression analysis. It was decided to use age in the original form to avoid a theoretical determination of regression models based on the three-generation approach.

^{vii} Due to space limits, the full analyses are not reproduced here, but can be obtained on request from the authors

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KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry Volume 1 Issue 2 p. 1-22.

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Fluid and Stable Structures in the Organisational Communication of the Modern Society

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Abstract: This study focuses on one of the basic questions of Luhmann's social theory relating to the description of modernity, namely, on the characteristics of organisations, even more specifically, it is aimed at gaining new recognitions concerning the relationships between the functional subsystems and the organisations. Organisations, one of the most important levels of today's society, is analysed in the context of Luhmann's general social theory. The approach taken in the study originates from Luhmann's analysis of subsystems during the late period of his work. The author argues that vertical relationships between subsystems make up a typical feature of modern society as well. In its analysis of the organisations of modern society this study works out an interpretation of the relationship between stable and fluid structures in the process of communication, highlighting the frequently or continuously changing 'rationality preference' of organisations and it argues for the necessity a more complex analysis of organisational communication. At the same time the study points out by analysing the organisation's system level that vertical segmentation is a characteristic of the entirety of sociality besides the horizontal structure.

Keywords: system theory, social theory, communication theory, autopoiesis, organisation, organisational and social communication

The macro-societal context of the organisation's system level

Niklas Luhmann is, beyond doubt, one of the theoreticians who have made the most profound impacts by analysing the complex systems of relationships of modernity. His system theory approach taking communication as a basic unit in the functioning of a society produced fundamental insights not only in the field of general social theory but also in relation to organisational communication. We are making an attempt to analyse the system level of the organisations that have been acquiring an increasingly high priority under the conditions and in the circumstances of modernity in the Luhmannian system theory, in the context of Luhmann's comprehensive social theory, because in our view the contents of organisational

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communication cannot be successfully outlined without the involvement of the entirety of social communication. This study gives an interpretation of his theory concerning organisational communication in the system of relationships of the system theory construction (Luhmann, 1987; conf. Karácsony 1990; 2000) that followed the autopoietic turn, focusing attention on the complex organisations emerging in modern society.

The issue of modern organisations is, in the context of this approach, therefore inseparable from the problem of the macro-level structure of modern society. The relationships between the functional subsystems of modernity is the cornerstone of the Luhmannian communication theory approach. For Luhmann's theory considered that functional subdivision of society to be the most important characteristic of modernity which, in contrast to the hierarchic organisation of the previous era, saw modern society definitely as a system comprising coordinated subsystems (Luhmann, 1987; 1998). The key proposition of this view of society is that none of the social subsystems are capable of influencing the functioning of the others because every subsystem decides autonomously on further connections of communication in line with its own self-reference distinction, as a consequence of which it is not even capable of contemplating the reference codes of other subsystems. Accordingly, modernity would differ from the earlier historical eras primarily in that the once (vertically) hierarchically organised communication of society would be replaced by a coordinating (horizontal) communication structure in which, for instance, the sphere of politics could not determine the economy's communication which is organised on the basis of economic viability and it would not be able to influence, for instance mass media's selection focusing on informativity. In this sense, therefore, it is not possible to talk about a preferred or focal subsystem that could influence the communication of the other subsystems.

On the other hand Luhmann's system theory was, for the most part, content with pointing out that the various subsystems had no means for interfering with the autonomous rationality of other subsystems, since impulses coming from one subsystem towards another can only be taken as mere irritation of the latter subsystem to which this subsystem responds on the basis of its own autopoiesis. The autopoiesis concept interpreted on the basis of the epistemological recognitions that originated obviously from the cell biological research dominating Luhmann's second creative period however, means not only separation but also the taking account of the environmental impacts. Nonetheless, Luhmann's interpretation seems as though it had focused only on one side of distinction, one of the characteristics of the communication scheme of impact (irritation) – response (adaptation) – reaction. It highlighted the relationship that expressed the subsystem's nature which uses its own internal elements as building blocks and that ensured its difference from the outside world and the self-referentiality of the subsystem. It paid less attention to how the environment that surrounds all subsystems and that is more complex than any subsystem can, if not determine, but influence, the contents of the system's autopoiesis.

Continuing Luhmann's train of thought however, may lead to revealing new dimensions of the particular organisation of modernity. Having accepted that there can be no central instance in modernity which could integrate the organisation of sociality, it inevitably follows from the connections of communication that the different functional subsystems need to have different weights. That is, the above special nature of social communication is bound to assume some kind of a hierarchic relationship even if it does not resolve the contents of the autopoiesis of the various subsystems. Applying the conclusions drawn from this train of thought to the conditions of European societal development that has created modernity, it is hardly possible to dispute for instance that the subsystem of the economy and that of politics can enforce its own rationality as irritation on the other subsystems to an extent that is different from the extent to which sports can assert its own. We are not only arguing here that the number of structural connections is larger in the case of the economy or politics than in

the case of sports (as it is even possible to point out in a number of cases), but that the degree of irritation of certain subsystems on other subsystems can be a lot greater. Accordingly, certain subsystems in a more dominant position can therefore much more strongly dominate or determine the environment of another subsystem.

I attribute a structuring role to the different degrees of irritation as described above in that environmental impacts always affect the subsystems' autopoiesis. Although the subsystems make their selections in the process of communication on the basis of their own earlier (self-) referentiality but their own autopoiesis contents become fixed to at least the same extent as a result of and in response to environmental impacts and in the course of their own separation. If therefore a given subsystem receives impulses from the various subsystems in the form of irritations not at random frequency but some subsystems serve up challenges either much more often than do others or not necessarily more frequently but with a much more significant weight, and thus they somehow force the internal functioning of the subsystem to adapt to the impacts, then the development of its internal rationality is also more heavily affected by the subsystems in more dominant positions. What follows from it all is that it is possible to talk about a hierarchy or vertical connection between the functional subsystems, since some subsystems can – in the form of environmental impacts - more profoundly affect the forming of connections in social communication than other subsystems.

These conclusions however, do not override the Luhmannian recognition that the various subsystems have such autonomy which, in other aspects, expresses also the horizontal organisation of the various subsystems. On the other hand, there is good reason on the basis of the above to assume that subsystems are not only horizontally but also vertically organised. In my view this proposition is supported – in contrast to Luhmann's intents – by the interpretation he provides of modern society's self-description. In my view a number of its aspects also go to confirm that besides the definitely existing horizontal connections there are also vertical forms of organisation in the system of relationships among subsystems, because in discussing modernity's self-description Luhmann points out that there is a kind of a discrepancy between the structural connection of social communication and society's self-description (Luhmann, 1993a; 1993b). Although Luhmann often expresses that the existence of co-evolution is a pre-requisite for the connections between the different spheres of sociality, in this aspect he also perceives chronological differences as well. Accordingly, he clearly considers modern social communication to be possible to be characterised primarily by the horizontal relationships among functionally divided subsystems but he finds society's self-description to be dominated by the old European semantics which continues to express the semantics of the earlier era organised on the basis of stratification and which constitutes in this way a hierarchic perspective (Luhmann, 1991a; 1993c; 1996).

There is good reason to assume that this communication of homogeneous contents, which is coming from a variety of sources and which assumes a hierarchic relationship in the communication connections, imposes such an environmental impact on all spheres of sociality which cannot be ignored by the autopoiesis of the various systems either. In other words, if the communication impulses are not of a random nature in regard to the horizontal or vertical content of the structural connections but typically communicate that the communication organisations of sociality is determined by vertical organisation, then this factor plays role in the creation of vertical connections as well, *besides* the horizontal connections between the internal autopoieses of the various subsystems.ⁱ I am arguing that if the old European semantics of the description of the modern society emphasises the primacy of the economic and political subsystem that has been playing a central role in historical development, then this also affects the fact that communication expressing the rationality of these subsystems can more frequently and/or strongly appear as an irritation in the other subsystems that creates a pressure towards adaptation.ⁱⁱ Though this does not override the

autopoiesis of the other subsystems, yet by imposing a pressure it is also responsible for hierarchic momentums to also appear between the subsystems in communication affecting the entirety of sociality.

The functional subsystems and the character of organisational communication

The following is an analysis of the consequences of the perspective change that can be worked out from the late Luhmannian theory in relation to the specific features of the organisational communication of modern society. I analyze the system level of the organisation of sociality focused on the special dynamic of the relationship between the organisation and the subsystems as well, as a sphere that also indicates the horizontal and vertical dimensions of structural connections in the modern society and that refers back to the dynamic between the subsystems. The discussion of this aspect can also be regarded as linked to Luhmann's late work. This is the period when his general system theory is increasingly highlighting the fluid nature of the connections besides the fixed nature of organisations and their features indicating stable structures.ⁱⁱⁱ Luhmann's change of perspective at the level of general system theory (Luhmann 1987; 1998) – for the very reason of his strive towards a high degree of internal coherence and of his capability of organising things in systems – did not leave his social theory unaffected either. Partly in relation to the autopoietic turn therefore, in his later works he revises the relationship between subsystems and organisations as well, and consequently he gets increasingly distanced from classical system theory which was perhaps most strongly linked to the name of Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 1962; 1967; 1969; 1971; 1977; 1991).

This turn in the Luhmannian social theory had an impact on the approach discussing the structural relationship between the subsystems and the organisations as well. Although Luhmann had not unambiguously linked organisations to the various subsystems even in the earlier period (to the extent his social theory permitted various organisations to come into existence independently from subsystems or in ways that could not definitely be tied to one or another subsystems), yet he regarded the majority of organisations primarily as social organisation forms assisting the functioning of the various subsystems (Luhmann, 1978; [1981] 2009a). At that time he still regarded the key task of organisations to be to enable the operation of the various subsystems by making decisions reflecting the rationality of the subsystems concerned. Accordingly, organisations were considered to be in place in order to tackle the difficulties of communication entailed by the increase in complexity and to provide for the subsystem's autonomy. At the same time, this organisational communication entailed the possibility of additional increase in complexity in the mutual relationship that characterised the mutually inter-dependent communication of the subsystem and the organisation and in which the organisation was just as capable of contributing to the separation of the subsystem's own rationality as it enabled further structural change.^{iv}

This interpretation obviously assumed a strong structural connection between the various subsystems and their respective organisation(s) in which institutional communication even got institutionalised in the subsystem's communication reflecting its rationality. In the relationship between a subsystem and its institution or system of institutions therefore, the possible forms of resolution of dual contingency were determined by stable structures. Accordingly, its contingency was designated by the structure of the institutionalised organisational decision making mechanism, referring, of course, back to the rationality of the subsystem as well.^v This framework of interpretation could, in its own particular way, clearly describe the process of institutionalisation that had a growing weight in modernity and it did

not fail to describe the internal dynamic of the organisations and the subsystems either.^{vi} On the other hand, however, it could hardly give answers to the phenomena that could be observed at the system level of the organisations when social organisation had not necessarily been getting organised on the basis of organisational objectives.

The reason for the above is that organisational communication cannot only be organised on the basis of the organisation's explicit goal, in that decisions determining the system level can, in certain cases, be made on the basis of the rationality of other subsystems or of that of symbolically generalised communication media. We are talking here about the social phenomenon (still on the example of the economy) when the decision to be made by an industrial company or a bank is determined not by the drive towards economic viability but, say, by the rationality of the subsystem of politics or that of the communication medium of love. Based on the Luhmannian system theory there are at least two possibilities for interpreting this phenomenon that is so often experienced in our social world. Either we focus on the corruption of the organisational decision, saying that it applied not the rationality of the subsystem linked to the organisation but an external factor, a distinguishing structure that is alien to the subsystem's autopoiesis. Interpretation in this case leaves unaffected the concept of subsystems and organisations formulating a stable structure since in the interpretation of the social phenomenon we apply the assumption of another stable structure (that of politics or love) overriding the stable structure on hand (in this case the subsystem of the economy and the rationality of the organisation linked to it).

It is also possible, however, to give an interpretation to the phenomenon by reference to the fluidity of social communication. In this case we point out that the nature of social communication is determined by the temporary linkage of communication at any given point in time. Returning to the above example, if at the central bank the decision on hiring a new staff member is determined on the basis of political or personal (emotional) considerations then the organisational decision is interpreted on the basis of the preference code of the given communication situation. In other words, in the course of the sociological interpretation of the phenomenon organisational communication (similar to the system level of interaction) is assigned to one or another subsystem or communication medium depending on the area whose self-referentiality it applies in its communication. In pursuing this train of thought I cannot discuss here all of the social theory consequences of this change in perspective but it is clear from the late work of Luhmann (Luhmann, 1991b; 1998; 2005; 2006; 2009b) that – mainly from the nineties on – while he did not neglect the role of stable structures either, he moved in essence in the direction of assuming fluid structures. In other words, in the last period of his work Luhmann concludes that modernity's complex system of relationships cannot be described without assuming prior structures fixed in the resolution of dual contingency – which are in this sense stable structures – and on the other hand he also notes that concrete social communication must always be interpreted on the basis of its momentary realisation and in this sense on the basis of its change.

The highlighting of the fluidity of social communication entails Luhmann's reevaluation of what he explained about the relationship between subsystems and organisations earlier on. Although he continued to assert that the communication of subsystem can be linked to organisations (e.g. to the school, the hospital etc.) but it is always the concrete communication situation that determines the subsystem whose rationality dominates. (Luhmann's example for the fluidity of organisational communication in the case of the school is that its organisational communication is not necessarily linked to the subsystem of education, instead, the school's communication may be a covert form of religious or political communication as well (Luhmann, 1998a: 775). These later recognitions clearly relativise the earlier period's view concerning stable structure and the emphasis laid on the process of institutionalisation also changes.^{vii}

The most important aspect of this analysis is however, that it yields new aspects for the interpretation of the relationship between the subsystems themselves as well. It seems to me that as a consequence of the application of the concept of fluidity, social theory explanation can also describe the structural connections between the subsystems rather in its dynamic. The description of society is therefore interpreted not so much on the basis of the stability between a subsystem and its organisations, rather, it provides more leeway for the dynamic of momentary communications which permits even connections to rather different subsystems in the case of the various organisations. This conceptual change definitely offers certain advantages from the aspect that it can more strongly demonstrate the increased mutual dependence of modern social communication and its more complex structural connections in comparison to the earlier historical era (Luhmann, 2009c). On the other hand, it definitely makes it more difficult to understand and interpret the autopoiesis of the various subsystems since if momentary communication shows frequently or continuously changing ‘rationality preferences’ then the time dimension of the self-referentiality of the various systems can also only be grasped by a more complex analysis. In other words, the exploring of the contents of communication referring back to earlier connections and pointing forward to future connections also takes a more complex analysis.^{viii}

At the same time, problems arise in the case of the subsystems and their organisations, from the interpretation of corruption, or in other words, from the distinctions falling outside the rationality of the subsystem as well. If in the case of organisational communication we can rightly argue that its decision making mechanism can be linked in time to even multiple subsystem or to the symbolically generalised communication media, then it becomes more difficult to decide when we can talk about corruption and when we cannot. This is likely to be possible to decide on the basis of what the primary reference code in social communication is and in a simple case it may be decided on the basis of whether the structure of distinction is or is not aligned to the explicit goals of the institutionalised organisation. That is, returning to the earlier example, it can be determined on the basis of the realisation of corruption whether communication is determined by the distinction between economically viable from economically non-viable or some other reference code.

Even regardless of the problem of the fluidity of structures it is often difficult to find the borderline between the two. Returning to the example relating to the operation of the organisation it is difficult to decide whether the smile on the lady colleague’s face is meant to enable smoother decision making in relation to the organisation’s goals or whether it can be interpreted as the communication of intended seduction that can be linked to the symbolically generalised medium of love. Or whether a suggestion from the party headquarters concerning the choice of the new staff member should be interpreted as assistance given to facilitate the explicit goals of the organisation (the central bank) promoting economic viability as a preference code, or as interference on the part of politics overriding the rationality of the economic subsystem. Although subsequent connections of communication in time can provide an answer in the case of this problem to the occurrence or avoidance of corruption,^{ix} yet in the given communication situation this question cannot be decided. The reason for this is that communication can refer back to earlier structural connections, providing little help in the case of a momentary decision on whether communication is to be regarded as corruption or as communication of contents that fit in with the rationality of economic viability.^x

Returning to the issue of the fluidity of organisations it follows from Luhmann’s organisation sociology in his late work that even in the case of organisations that are strictly subordinated to the various subsystems, specifically assisting the rationality of the subsystem concerned, it must be taken into account that the connections of communication are not exclusively linked to the organisation’s explicit goal. Using the above example, the communication of a bank makes no sense if the subsystem’s explicit rationality and decision making as determined by

economic viability is demanded of it in every single instance of communication. At this point we are talking pointedly about that feature of communication in the case of which the various other subsystems or symbolically generalised communication mediums appear in institutional communication appear in institutionalised communication that this intervention can in no way be regarded – like in the above examples – as corruption or cases in which the suspicion of corruption arises. In the course of work the training of a new colleague (training subsystem), a discussion of the legality of the operation of the organisation (legal subsystem) or even friendship or affection between colleagues (symbolically generalised communication medium) can hardly or not necessarily be interpreted as corruption, even if it does not reflect the explicit goals of the organisation.

In regard to the connections between subsystems the fluidity of communication shows, at any rate, that even organisational communication definitely interpreted earlier on as the domain of a given subsystem is also intermingled with structural connections with subsystems that are also characterised by vertical organisations as well besides the horizontal ones. That is, the organisation's system level also reflects the historical contingency that offers greater opportunity for certain subsystems to appear in the communication of organisations that are determined predominantly by the rationality of another subsystem while other subsystems are provided with a much narrower manoeuvring room to structure the communication of 'alien' organisations. These appearances of different frequency and weight are shaping not only the specific features of the communication of the given organisation. Since organisational communication is an irritation even to a subsystem that is more dominantly linked to it, this presence constituting the logic of other subsystems results in an environmental impulse in organisational communication even at the system level of the organisation, which reflects the aspect of external rationality as well. In this way therefore, in addition to horizontal divisions vertical impacts can appear in a new relationship thereby also pointing out that the dynamic of subsystems can equally be characterised by both horizontal and vertical structures alike.

Finally, a brief reference needs to be made to the relationship emphasised in particular in Luhmann's late work, which refers to the profoundly different organisation of subsystems and organisations. While in his posthumous volume on organisational communication (Luhmann, 2001) characterised subsystems by horizontality and by lack of hierarchy, he considers it to be the main feature of organisations – besides focusing on decisions – that they retain their strongly hierarchic structure even in the circumstances of modernity.^{xi} While he describes the functional subsystems of modernity by inclusion which is considered to be the main characteristic, he regards the particular relationship; between inclusion and exclusion to be the central feature of organisations in which the threat of exclusion or its application is a key structure building element of the organisation.^{xii} In this late piece of work Luhmann emphasises the role of hierarchic conditions even more when he characterises three premises of the organisation's communication by decisions – communication through programmes, communication channels and persons – by strongly hierarchic features (Luhmann, 2001).

In accordance with the logic of the above discussion we can safely assume therefore that the hierarchic structure of modern organisations cannot leave the rationality of the subsystems unaffected either. As a matter of course, we are regarding the hierarchic organisation of organisational communication not as a feature fundamentally determining internal autopoiesis but as an environmental irritation, assuming the presence of a complex system of structural connections. Organisational communication is an environmental stimulus that cannot be disregarded by the self-referentiality of the subsystem, forcing the subsystems towards adaptation. Though this impact does not affect the distinguishing logic or the subsystems or the contents of their binary codes but – similarly to the characteristic old European semantics of the description of society – it strengthens the impacts of hierarchic

construction structuring social communication. All these recognitions may offer new aspects for a more finely differentiated sociological description of modern society.

NOTES

ⁱ It needs to be emphasised that my train of thought is not meant to argue – as does the critical discourse of the political left – that any and all social communication can only be interpreted in a hierarchic relationship and that it can envision only the validity of a conflict theory approach. [For a fully explicit explanation of this see the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1980; 1994), or Boltanski (Boltanski–Thévenot, 1999; Boltanski-Chiapello, 2001).] My argumentation is an attempt at correcting the consensus theory interpretation – *in this aspect* - of the Luhmannian approach. (Noting at this point again that the whole of Luhmann’s social theory work cannot – in contrast to that of Parsons – be integrated in a framework of interpretation based on consensus theory or a conservative one. For more on the latter see: Bognár, 2009.)

ⁱⁱ Owing to constraints of volume it is not possible for me to discuss the debate between Luhmann and Willke in more detail. Therefore I only refer to the fact that Willke held that in modernity the state has powers overriding the coordinating structure among subsystems that restricts the autonomy of the subsystems (Willke, 1983). Although the approach attempting to carry on Luhmann’s arguments along this line (Willke, 2001; 2003) emphasises the role of horizontal connections – similarly to my position – however, it perceives that not in the relationship among the various subsystems but identifies the hierarchic structure in the institutions determining the subsystems.

ⁱⁱⁱ For more detail on this perspective, see: Bognár, 2009.

^{iv} Luhmann set out his theory on organisational communication in three main publications (Luhmann, 1978; 2001; [1981] 2009a). Orientation is complicated however, by the fact that both his work reflecting the standpoint he took in the seventies and his piece of work elaborated in the nineties but published only after his death came out under the same title (*Organisation und Entscheidung*) although there are marked differences between the approaches taken in those two pieces of work. (For more on this see Ortmann, 2009)

^v For example, the rationality of the economy focusing on economic viability was determined at the level of organisational system in the institutions (industrial company, bank, etc.) that obtained their information input on the basis of the subsystem’s preference code.

^{vi} It is not surprising that Béla Pokol considered the very description of the process of institutionalisation to be one of the greatest merits of the Luhmannian social theory and he tried to continue elaborating that system theory focusing on the process of institutionalisation (Pokol, 1990).

^{vii} It is also related to this conceptual change that Béla Pokol’s interpretation assigning a greater role to institutionalisation fails to effectively find connections to Luhmann’s late period though the integration of fluidity in the social theory does not necessarily undermine the assumption of stable structures and it does not rule out the integration of the society either. For more detail on this latter see Bognár, 2009.

^{viii} In empirical social research it will not be sufficient for instance to interpret an economic decision making mechanism in a series of communications following one another, instead, there is a need for keeping tracks of the acts of communication that are broken off occasionally and then continued, that are determined by the preference code of economic viability, while the same principle is to be applied in observing the other preference codes that are likewise intermittently discontinued in both time and space.

^{ix} Further connections of organisational communication can then more clearly show whether the smile on the face of the lady colleague or the activities of the colleague hired as recommended by the party headquarters are or are not in line with the explicit goals of the institutionalised organisation.

^x This cannot be decided even if all of the earlier smiles of the lady colleague(s) were signs of intended seduction or the colleague recommended by the party headquarters always promoted political rationality instead of economic viability, because such prior structuring factors can only make the mode of resolving the dual contingency probable but not certain in the given communication situation.

^{xi} Luhmann even goes as far as to explain that more complex organisations are inconceivable without hierarchy in the era of modernity. It is only by hierarchy that the various associations, federations, public administration organisations and undertakings can act as predictable collective actors since it is hierarchy that ensures that the instructions acceptable to the leaders of the organisation appear as the organisation's goals in the organisation's internal and external communication.

^{xii} Since at the system level of the organisation the borderline can be drawn by distinguishing between membership and non-membership, exclusion can be achieved mostly by threatening expulsion from the organisation or by actually doing so, rather than by exclusion from organisational communication because this would mostly be concomitant to exclusion from the given subsystem as well which however, is not considered by Luhmann to be a characteristic of modern society, as he even explained in the above. (At least in the case of occidental development.)

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Myth and the construction of meaning in mediated culture

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Abstract: Traditionally mythical thought has been banished and considered less important than logical thinking. However, in the last decades several authors have claimed the need to revalorize this notion. From our perspective, myth is a key concept to explore the construction of meaning in media narratives. For instance, if we try to solve fundamental questions as what communication is or how media make meaning, we should take into consideration the epistemological scope of myth. This article's main objective is to prove that the co-implication between *logos* and *mythos* is essential to understand social communication and mediated culture. Thus, to avoid any kind of reductionism, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between the two forms of thinking and expression: the concept and the imagination.

Keywords: Myth, communication, mediated culture, ritual, narration

Introduction

This paper deals with the conceptualization of myth and its importance in the mediated culture. We propose a theoretical and analytical approach to myth, as a fundamental issue to understand the basis of social communication. First of all, we will try to make a conceptualization of the complex notion of myth and we will explore its particularities. This is supported, fundamentally, by the contributions of Mircea Eliade (1973), Joseph Campbell (1993), Kurt Hübner (1996), Lluís Duch (2002) and Hans Blumenberg (2003). Secondly, we will express the connection between myth, ritual and narrative, different questions that are crucial to understand mediated communication. Thirdly, we will underline the role of myths in everyday life and in the construction of identities. Fourthly, we will give special emphasis to the *logo-mythical* approach, a theoretical perspective that co-implicates *mythos* and *logos*, as two parts of the same process. And finally, we will highlight the theoretical importance of the mythological and the imagination in the study of mediated culture and communication.

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Towards a conceptualization of the polysemic notion of myth

Our main premise is that myth is not a simple reality because, as Mircea Eliade (1973, p. 18) has pointed out, it appears in very complex cultural contexts and never allows univocal and linear readings about it. This means that this notion can be interpreted from multiple and complementary perspectives. Indeed, from a psychological approach (Jung, 2011) myths are considered elementary ideas, while from a historical-ethnographic point of view they are called ‘ethnic ideas’ or ‘popular ideas’, as Joseph Campbell (1993) has suggested.

First of all we will refer to the particularities of myth and will follow the proposal of Lluís Duch, the Hispanic anthropologist who has best explored mythic structures to understand the human being. In one of his major works, *Mito, interpretación y cultura* (2002, p. 27), the author argues that myth comes to be present at all times and in all spaces, it must be constantly reinterpreted in terms of new variables that arise in the life paths of individuals and communities. Therefore, it has a particular importance in communication. The existence of a series of constants that prevail and transcend any whim makes us say that myth is a structural condition in human life. Or what is the same that all human beings are *mythical* by nature; and they use different myths –historical articulations– in different contexts or cultures.

As we consider a bit dogmatic to propose an ultimate and unique definition of the term, we will limit ourselves to a much more concrete work: we will try to describe the most important functions of myth that shed light to the understanding of media culture and communication.

It may be necessary to clarify that we presume that myths are theoretically ‘multifunctional’, as they are formed by different motivations (Duch, 2002, pp. 86-87). None of the particularities of the myths prevails and, if we observed them as a whole, they will allow us to understand the grammar and scope of myths in the mediated culture.

One of the first features of the concept under consideration is called by Duch, the communicative function. This aspect is crucial for us, because we understand myth as a search for meaning or as an attitude that demonstrates the polyphonic and imaginative capacity of the human being. Indeed, subjects and groups need different forms of expression that allow them to communicate their humanity which is, according to Duch, a *complexio oppositorum*¹. In this sense, myth, as Manfred Frank (1989) would say, tends to a mutual understanding of members of society and the harmony of their moral convictions.

The so-called by Duch (2002) *teodiceica* function is another key to understand the fundamental structure of myths. In fact, myths, with many different shapes, are related to the most important aspects of human life, but especially are related to the *praxis* of domination of the contingency (Lübbe, 1986). That is to say, these structures allow human beings face the problems and adapt themselves to changing situations always marked by temporality and human frailty. In other words, these practices help overcome the contingency to the extent that enable humans, individually, and groups, collectively, to move “from chaos to cosmos” (Duch, 2002, p. 37). In a sense, a therapeutic function could also be released, since myth, as religion, allows subjects (individual and collective) to take a place in the world. A social place configured by the media many times. A thinker who stressed this last therapeutic function is Hans Blumenberg (2003), who believes that mythical narratives are the mechanisms that enable man to overcome anxiety and the traps of an uncertain destiny.

Now, it is obvious that myth meets a set of cultural, religious and communicative functions, that offers comprehensive criteria to the different members of a culture; establishes hierarchies among individuals and groups, and draws and blurs the boundaries between the present and the absent, as Duch (2002) has pointed out. However, myths also perform historical and social functions: they speak about the origins and evolution of all types of

societies. And these narrations also propose political functions that “serve the self-presentation of consciousness of the identity of human communities” (Duch, 2002, p. 88). And this is essential to understand the configuration and circulation of the media collective imaginaries.

How to interpret myths?

When interpreting myths, there are several approaches for their better understanding. It would be worthwhile to devote some attention to two issues that are related to them: the narrative and the rituality.

In the light of the narrative perspective, myth is a communicative and experiential way that is submerged within the scope of the narration and not only in the mere description (Stolz, 1988). One of the authors that has adopted this approach is Blumenberg (2003, p.41), who has argued that myths are stories that have a high degree of constancy in their narrative core and also some margins of variation. In addition, myths express the complexity inherent in the reality of the world and the human. In fact, “what has become identified by their names is released from its bleak and strange character through metaphor, revealing, through storytelling, the meaning that encloses” (Blumenberg, 2003, p.41). At the same time, mythic narrative reveals the early crystallization of the experiences of communities. In other words, it does not only give meaning to the actions of individuals always and everywhere, but also, and mainly, to groups. In fact, mythical stories, in the same way that media stories, provide community members ‘guidance’ and information that allows them to be placed through an identification process (in the psychological sense).

From the perspective of the cult, myth and ritual are understood as processes that operate simultaneously. Actually, there are many anthropologists, among whom James Frazer can be highlighted, who imposed the view that myth and ritual were like two sides of the same coin: “The first would come to define the narrative sense (story) and the second, the representative and spectacular appearance (theater)” (Duch, 2002a, p. 183). In the same vein, Joseph Campbell (1993, p. 59) equates the link between the classic mind-body dichotomy and asserts: “Myths are the mental supports of rites; rituals are the physical representations of myths”.

Although this concept has evolved and myth and ritual are now considered separate entities or processes (but complementary) we cannot forget that both have a very similar nature. So besides having a symbolic common basis, myth and ritual have also an essential psychological and emotional condition, which finds its rationale in the limits. As it is well known, the concept of limit has been studied in depth by Victor Turner (1988). For the British anthropologist, the fluidity of mythical narratives can be explained because of its liminal character. In fact, for him all liminal situations are happening in symbolic borders, and they include a series of concrete attitudes (individual and collective) that must be dramatized in front of the group members. From Turner’s (1980) point of view, a ritual is a very stereotyped behavior and powerful in terms of cultural conventions, that communicates the more valuable social values, allowing participants to perform a role.

It is remarkable that the functioning of the ritual is similar to several media processes. In addition, myths tell how a situation led to another, how the world became populated, how chaos was transformed into cosmos, how the immortal turned into mortal, how seasons appeared in a climate where they did not previously exist (Turner, 1979, pp. 150-154). That is, myths explain the transformation processes, the transition from one situation to another, the intermediate steps that elapse between the one and the other or, what is the same, the vanishing points separating the unspeakable from the understandable. In “Myth and Symbol”

(1979), Turner describes liminality as pure potentiality from which extra logical behaviors may arise, for even limits may be overridden or transcended.

All this leads us to believe that myth is a process or phenomenon that is substantially liminal. And it has the initiation of individuals as preliminary foundation; hence sometimes it works as a rite of passage. These processes are highly effective in an ontological level because the participants transform their situation or transcend their previous status to accept their new acquired position. Although, according to Turner, myths are not directly connected to specific rites, from our perspective they are related, in one way or in another, to a cultic practice, whether conscious or unconscious. And these theories are of particular interest for the study of mediated rituals and communication.

Myths and quotidianity

But besides having a direct link with cultic practices, myths are also an important part in cultural competences and represent a significant development in daily life. In this regard, Bronislaw Malinowski (1974) has placed particular emphasis on the scope of the mythical universes in everyday practice. In light of his ideas, myths are stories that deeply affect all society, and whose function is to justify or reinforce the beliefs and coding practices that articulate the life of a particular community. These processes are analogous to some of the functions of the media, like configuring beliefs, modifying practices and values or prioritizing ideas. All these phenomena are part of the mythical discourses and media discourses at the same time. And as Malinowski (1974, p. 124) stated: “Myth is not an idle fantasy, nor a meaningless outpouring of evanescent dreams, but a very laborious and extremely important cultural force”.

This explains why myth is not used to amuse or entertain, but it has to be employed when a rite, ceremony or social or moral rule needs a justification, a guarantee of antiquity, reality or holiness (Malinowski, 1974, p. 131). The use of myth in these occasions, as guarantor of meaning of the groups, is closely related to the concept of tradition. In fact, myth strengthens tradition and gives value to the communication between generations. Therefore individuals can return to the origins or remember the past to resolve issues of present reality, using symbolic and mythical forms. Thus, it is clear that myths have an essential symbolic nature or, what is the same, that they use symbols to express their mission. Nor can we deny that media culture has a mythical and symbolic character if we consider the previous proposal.

Another of the key issues when addressing the scope of myth is its link to imagination. In this sense, the contributions of Gilbert Durand (1981) are highly relevant. Unlike Levi-Strauss (1979), for whom myth is a particular form of communication that can be assimilated into language, Durand believes that myth, instead of a notation that is translated or decrypted, is semantics presence and, being composed of symbols, it compressively contains its own sense (Durand, 1981, p. 340). In fact, as he has pointed out, myth does not translate, even in logic because any attempt to translate myth –as any attempt to move from the semantic to the semiotic– is an attempt to impoverishment (Durand, 1981, p. 341). From his view, what really matters about myth is not the thread of the story, but the symbolic meaning of the terms that appear on it, so that the translation itself is invalid. So, we should understand that the universe of myth is not founded on diachronic or synchronic relationships, but on comprehensive meanings. That is because it is a universe loaded by an immediate semantics and it can only be disturbed by the mediation of discourse. Thus, Durand is right when he claims an integrative view of the archetypal symbolic and mythical thinking modes, where imagination and reason are complementary.

But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the study of myth is its epistemological and ontological scope. Actually, for us, there are issues that positive science and the hypothetical-deductive method will never be able to solve. Indeed, the denial of imaginative and mythical forms has largely limited mere ontological description of the subject and the identifications that subjects and groups do in relation to media. It is important to remark that, for us, “myth can make an experiential basis to the above questions and could be ‘effective’ (symbolically) to give the somersault from the *exoteric* to the *esoteric*” (Duch, 2002, p. 89).

Because of this, we demand a renovative conception of myth, which allows overcome the dogmatic structure that privileges conceptualization, as the exclusive and absolute way to apprehend reality and configure human life (Duch, 2002, p. 430). And that after all, it does nothing but merely impoverish it. In this sense, it is necessary to revalorize the meanings and the imaginative and mythical way of understanding the reality and the communication. As Blumenberg (2003) has highlighted, myths have favored the reduction of a unique History, promoting several enriching and complementary meanings. Therefore myth can be proposed as a *critical* and alternative model, which would allow the opening to different and creative horizons. In that way, it will be possible to continue the *hermeneutic path* that is typical and necessary for human communication.

The logo-mythic: a co-implication between *mythos* and *logos*

The Western thought has been dominated throughout History, and even today in many areas, by separating metaphysical dichotomies. These irreducible antagonisms (among which may be cited as examples: essence-existence, reason-emotion, mind-body, image-concept, interior-exterior or *mythos-logos*) assume that among the above concepts or processes does not exist any kind of link or continuity. By contrast, Ernst Cassirer (1976, pp. 446-450) considers that only symbolic forms are capable of mediating between the dualisms of traditional thinking and experience of human beings. For us, as for Cassirer, the true concept of the symbolic cannot adapt to the traditional classifications or metaphysical dualism, but must overcome and break its frames. But obviously, this kind of categorical dichotomies forgets certain nuances, as the vast range of grays that is found between white and black. Moreover, these metaphysical divisions do not only separate the mentioned elements due to their differences, but give different value to them.

Thus, depending on the historical and cultural moment, one of the areas or concepts identified will be evaluated positively and the other relegated or even banished. To some extent, we could summarize the trend fluctuating between *mythos* and *logos*: when one held sway, the other ceased to exist. In fact, as Duch has proposed (2002, p.158), what has been attempted in Western culture has been that the *logos* replaces the *mythos*, as well as “the *nous* takes the place of the *eros*, the being (*on*) of the becoming (*genesis*), the *eidos* of the *aisthesis*, the essence of the existence, the act of the power, the definition of the intuition”. And this supremacy of *logos* –as well as the supremacy of *mythos*–, as we will see, can have painful consequences.

But which are the reasons why myths, as the image or the existence, have been relegated from the positivist and traditional way of thinking? Some authors, such as Giambattista Vico (1995), who attributes a high degree of historical truth to the mythical tales, focused his criticism in cartesianism, whose prejudices against mythical thought we review briefly below. While we can say that Descartes was one of the most influential intellectuals in the creation of modern Western thought, we cannot forget that some of his paradigms have been installed coercively in some areas of reflection. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries his statements, along with other thinkers like Bacon and Newton, were erected against the

mythical and mystical thought (Lévi-Strauss, 2002, p.124). And any type of speculation about myths was banished. The illustrated Science sought to eliminate all those ‘subjective’ elements like tastes, feelings, desires, moods, images or ethical provisions that are not susceptible of being verified. (Duch, 2002, p. 489).

At the same time, the value given by Descartes to *logos* (logocentrism) and the supremacy granted to the scientific technical method, led to the triumph of iconoclasm. In fact, according to Albert Chillón (2000, p. 141), the influence of the Cartesian paradigm is one of the reasons responsible for: “The longstanding iconoclasm professed by the Enlightenment, characteristic of modernity”. Moreover, as suggested by Durand (1971), Cartesianism raised the triumph of the sign over the symbol, the concept over the imagination, because all Cartesians reject imagination, as well as feeling as phenomena that induce errors. It is interesting to recall that in the first part of the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes points to consider a fake everything that is not more than likely (Chillón, 2000, p. 141):

“After all, the Cartesian logocentrism extols the concept and postpones the image. In doing so he refuses to see, not only that the concept is born as an image and it needs images to function, but also that concept and image are the two aspects of the symbol. Also, that the distinguishing characteristic of human intellect is certainly the function of symbolization”.

But it was not only Descartes who rejected the symbolic and mythical thought by attributing preponderance to reason; numerous authors, such as Sigmund Freud or James Frazer, also judged negatively the worlds of myth as wrong. And they argued that these worlds should be refuted, exceeded and finally replaced by Science (Campbell, 1993, p. 23). For these intellectuals, the relationship between *mythos* and *logos* was never dialectical. That is, there was never interaction or co-implication between them, but denial of one part for the benefit of the other. However, other researchers, as Blumenberg (2003, p. 20), emphasized that “the boundary line between *myth* and *logos* is imaginary”. So we cannot accept a separation between these two ways of understanding reality, since both forms of expression cannot be canceled as they are complementary:

“Saying that the course of things has gone from *myth* to *logos* implies a dangerous ignorance, because one believes to be able to ensure that, at some point in the distant past, there was an irreversible leap forward that would have definitely left something [myth] behind” (Blumenberg, 2003, p. 35).

When, actually these two forms of expression must coexist. Precisely their coexistence is the basis of the mutual enrichment. This idea owes Cassirer’s or Hübner’s thought for whom there is no difference between the conceptual and the mythical, an opposition that the rationalist tradition had wanted to see, partly to maintain its hegemony and control.ⁱⁱ

However, we found various proposals that make us necessarily deconstruct logocentric logic from its own base. The epistemological paradigm of Thomas Kuhn (1962), for example, shows some of the limitations of Science and conceptual thinking. Besides, it allows us to manifest the inherent polysemy of each scientific discourse and the need to translate and interpret it within a particular tradition. From this perspective, any argumentation must be raised as a questioning of the reference system as Paul K. Feyerabend (1993) has suggested. From his point of view Science is sometimes closer to myths than it is prepared to admit. It is important to note that the author believes that reason and Science have displaced other beliefs, among which we could certainly include mythical thinking. This would indicate that logical thinking instead of been questioned or interiorized, is taken for granted very often.

It should be remembered, therefore, that subjects appear in a host environment where there are already a number of unquestionable latent implications. *Logics* that function as cognitive frameworks, from which individuals and groups understand, define or delimit the surrounding world. Ortega y Gasset (1997) has given a metaphysical sense to these shared beliefs, since for him they form part of human life from the beginning. Here it is important to point out that the belief system cannot be individual or extracultural: hence it is conditioned by the media culture and cultural tradition in which an individual or group is inserted.

So another paradox that we find to address the dichotomy *logos/ mythos* (concept/ image) is the very difficulty of separating these two forms of expression and thought. In fact, in the mythical thought we can sometimes find a conceptual background and vice versa. In the same manner as in anthropology “emic” is also “etic”, for instance.

Yet, paradoxically sometimes the creation of myths is perfectly rational –in the sense of economic rationality–. Such is the case of the McDonalization of the society proposed by George Ritzer (1993). This myth, a truly expression of capitalism, includes a series of symbols and characteristics that are similar to “pure” science like efficiency, calculation and falsation, uniformity and predictability or automation.

On the whole, from our perspective, it is necessary to establish a dialogue between the two forms of expression and communication. It is therefore necessary to build “bridges, mediations that bring us closer to things that remain in the ambit of distance or ignorance; and then get familiar with these things” (Duch, 2002, p. 153). Because if we meditate only in the domain of one of the spheres –the logic or the mythical– we would be accepting the rule of a dangerous single speech: the mono-discourse. All totalitarian discourse is based on the preponderance of one of these areas: the rational or the mythical. And as History has shown to us many times, the empire of one these spheres can have very adverse consequences. A mythical speech without critical consciousness –as the Holocaust, for example– or a logical discourse devoid of affection –as the worship to technology or market– becomes an aberration that destroy true humanity. In short, for us, *mythos* and *logos* are not two exclusive ways of *existing* or *being* in the world, but two different forms of expression that should be co-implicated and enhanced by each other.

Myths, imagination and communication

Actually, the complementarity or the co-implication between the two discourses is a comprehensive key to understand communication and one of the evidences of human *multifacetism* (Duch, 1984, pp. 247-332). A *multifacetism* that needs the word as an indispensable means of salvation, which drives human communication, and all forms of expression. Communication is the fundamental mission of the human being and his way of gaining knowledge about himself and others. A fact that highlights the need to implicate both the mythical and logical discourse, image and concept, imagination and abstraction.

Here it would be interesting to make an approach to the etymological origin of the word communication, which derives from the Latin *comunicare* (sharing or pooling) and the Greek *κοινωνία* (communion). Two words that hint at the need to complicate and unite different approaches, among which we can mention, without any doubt, the logical and the mythical character of the human being.

Precisely the difference between communication and information, from our view, is based on this assumption. While communication provides a tension between the logical expression and the mythical, the mere information reduces the mythical to the logical. Thus, that is one of the reasons why we must understand the *logo-mythic* thinking as an essential anthropological and

communicative praxis. Or, what is the same, as a necessity in our time, consisting in the renunciation of any kind of totalitarian discourse (Duch, 2002a, p. 501).

It is worth mentioning that the alleged commitment to rationality has caused many forms of “epistemological violence” (Teo, 2010). Precisely within social research, we can find logocentric interpretations that give a lower position to the subject observed. We are thinking, for example, of the contributions of Edward Said, who criticizes in *Orientalism* (2003), the ownership and definition –always reductive– of the Oriental by historians, writers and European travelers. All of them helped to create over time an indisputable scientific value based on impressions, prejudices and stereotypes.

But this kind of epistemological violence can also be seen in the discourse of the media that legitimates racism and social exclusion, for example, based on an alleged rhetoric of “objectivity”. We are thinking of the countless news reports or television programs that associate migration or blackness with crime, for instance, or more recently Islam with terrorism. All this constructed “bad” news uses *logic* to create a *myth* about the *other* (in that case the foreigner, the immigrant). These TV reports or newspaper articles, as it is well known, are based fundamentally on police statistics or tests. And this is a fact that prevents or hinders a critical discourse or the answer of the receptors. The logic of tests constructs an irremediable “truth” that very few receivers can reject. Here it is very easy to see how a particular presentation of data in the media can become a common belief around people. And how this belief can transform into an irrational fear to the immigrants or Muslims, for example.

Like Science, Media (as an institution and a socialization agent) have a higher status than the theoretical criticism expressed by a marginalized *other*. In that way, the hegemonic discourse, stereotyped and exclusionary, can't be rejected or denied. And finally this mono-discourse ends up becoming an accepted reality, in a shared belief. Therefore by means of myth, conveyed by the media, it is possible to construct an admitted and shared logic.

However, not all communication is logical or responds to logical thinking. And here we are referring to the highly subjective and performative nature of all communicative exchange. From the enunciative communicative act to the mediated reception or virtual participation it is necessary to draw a path or “hermeneutic horizon” (Gadamer, 2007), that allows to create senses. And this subjective appropriation of reality and the message itself is based not only on the *logic* of logical meaning but also and mainly on the experience, namely in the sense arising from the intersubjective experience.

Here, it is important to consider imagination as a crucial category to understand both mythical forms of expression and the functioning of the media. As Chillón has noted (2000, p. 140) imagination is the psychic faculty par excellence, which, by means of configuration and synthesis, is ultimately responsible for all imaginable forms of insight and communication. It will be worthwhile to clarify this complex concept. We understand imagination, not as a special attitude or characteristic of some facets of existence (such as fantasies or dreams), but as the crucial psychical dynamic of all existence.

Furthermore, imagination is central to understand media culture (Duch and Chillón, 2012, pp. 235-292). That is because the construction of reality and the world in which the subjects and groups take place finds its way and its sense through imagination. Indeed, the human being configures the enigmatic world by “building things in themselves as phenomena, that is, as figures intelligible and communicable”. (Chillón, 2000, p. 140). So we cannot forget the power of imaginaries and myths in the mediated culture. From our perspective, the narratives that appear in the media are configured thanks to some archetypal or stereotypical images. These are fundamental figures that appear in every story or media narrative –from the news to science fiction–. Recurrent images that give expression to common desires, unconscious fears or tensions that are above human conscious conduct (Campbell, 1959, p. 233). All these

archetypal contents symbolize original and primary models and have a redundant character because they appear in all cultures always influenced by each social context or historical moment.

Finally it should be noted that particular traditions, through specific myths created and narrated by the media, provide consistency, fixation or rigor that create, at least, the sense of a community, the feeling of belonging or exclusion and the identity itself.

As it is well known, the images depicted in the media propose models about how to dress, move or respond to established standards of beauty. But under the yoke of these mirages, myths or ideal models largely unattainable, we can find serious psychological effects such as depression or eating disorders. Here, the interpretation of these images by receivers is very limited because there is nothing beyond the representation. These self-referential images are so explicit direct, that people apprehend them immediately. And don't give room to any question. However, we cannot forget that the pursuit of desire, pleasure and beauty are not new demands and, deep down, reveal the human struggle against the contingency.

Thus, to avoid communicative reductionism or imperialism –supremacy of one of the two areas studied–, our proposal, the *logo-mythic*, aims to reach the proper administration of human expressiveness and enhance the intersubjectivity as a specific version of human speech in its dual version of *mythos* and *logos*.

Conclusions

In short, we cannot forget that the mythical, expressed through specific myths and their interpretations, is a versatile and multifunctional presence in the lives of individuals and groups. That is because the *logo-mythical* expressions are complementary and help us achieve a more complete vision (although never final) of reality. In this regard, it is worth remembering that the symbol allows the union of these two spheres of thought and experience. In fact, the symbolic function is a combination of the two constituent dimensions of thought: *logos* and *mythos*, reason and representation, concept and image, number and figure, analysis and synthesis, speech and narration (Chillón, 2000, p. 142).

On the whole, knowledge, the collective culture, the shared reality and moreover the individuals and groups behave in a symbolical way: they express and communicate figuratively or, what is the same, they use figurations to become intelligible. And this reality and its mediated forms of expression are fundamentally imaginative, as they are configured and created through symbolic forms and mythical narratives that constitute them.

Finally, mediated culture is one of these realities that are expressed in a mythopoetic way. This means that the media construct their stories in a mythical way: by using fables, stories, figurations and the imagination. But, what is the scope of the mythopoetic? As Ernst Cassirer (1976) has pointed out, this natural quality of language whose essence is mythical and metaphorical requires indirect ways of description. And the primary subjects of this language would be confusing or ambiguous terms that necessarily have to be interpreted symbolically. This ambiguity inherent in language, which we also see in the construction of identity or in communication, owes its origin to myth. Although myth is natural, it does not have to be related to the nature of external objects. In short, we cannot forget the value of the symbolic in creating identifications or transmitting beliefs, because symbols are created within human communities. And what is more important they function as cohesive elements that create ideology and images from each community. In conclusion, human being knows and builds everyday reality through symbols, myths, metaphors, and finally, mediations that are crucial to understand the communication and the influence of the media on individuals and groups.

Notes

ⁱ The notion of *complexio oppositorum*, also called *coincidentia oppositorum* or *concordance of opposites* was introduced by Nicholas of Cusa in the XV century and refers to the paradoxical state in which opposites coexist and where multiple aspects include a mysterious unity.

ⁱⁱ It is not difficult to notice that this supremacy allows delimiting several differences and grant contrary positions to the observer and the observed, for example.

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Discovering Miss Puff: a new method of communication in China

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Abstract: In recent years animation has been considered of one of the pillars of the creative industry by the Chinese government. For this reason both the central and local government has been investing and supporting this sector, effectively becoming the first manufacturer. In parallel with the industrial production there is another kind of production, totally independent, that tries to find its audience on the Internet, creating many interesting animations absolutely different from the traditional ones. This study will attempt to explain one of these famous animations using the case study approach and it will focus on one of the most representative products of these years, that is *Miss Puff*. The Director of this animation is Pi San who is considered, in China, both the master of animation created with Flash and a revolutionary, because of his innovative ideas. This article is based on an interview to the Director Pi San. The interview was conducted in the study Hutoon of Beijing in July 2012

Keywords: Chinese animation, Miss Puff, Soft power, Flash, Youku, Baidu

Introduction

The animation has always been considered a minor art and it has been neglected by the media experts though it has got a very ancient history and it is so successful on the world market. From 2006 to present the Chinese government has considered the animation a key sector for the birth of a new national identity and for the cultural development in China. To reach this goal the Chinese government has promoted and supported the birth of about 6000 animation studios, 1300 universities which provide animation studies and so in China there are more than 500 animation departments. Zhao Shi, deputy director of the State Administration of Radio, Film and (SARFT) said “About 64,000 students majoring in animation have graduated from universities and 466,000 were studying in colleges” (Xinhua NA 2006). Since 2006 the Chinese government has been boosting and supporting the production of this genre, thanks to a targeted policy and special allowances. In 2004 China used to produce less than 30 titles with about 20,000 minutes of animation products for TV and cinema, but, thanks to the Chinese government’s support, in few years China has become the first world

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producer of animation with 385 titles produced and 220,529 minutes, breaking the record held by Japan (Social Sciences Academic Press 2011).

But all the animation products are under control by SARFT from the production to the distribution. So this can be considered a kind of prior censorship of the animation products which obviously affects the creativity of the young artists. So there was the birth of new kinds of animation and of a new way to look at the animation, in fact it is considered not only a business for a young audience but also a new method of communication now (Mirabito 2012).

In China lots of independent artists have created some animations which deal with the social life and problems of the country and they use the web to get them about. Pi San (whose real name is Wei Bo) is one of these artists who has “recreated” the way to look at the animation in China. He’s well known in the world thanks to his production *Kuang Kuang*, an animation dealing with the Chinese problems. Pi San, together with other artists, is trying to create a new method for communication which goes beyond the traditional one (Benecchi 2011).

The theoretical structure of this article is based on the researches and the theoretical ideas conceived by Thomas Lamarre in his book *The anime machine*. The book takes into consideration the animation theories from the technical point of view because it doesn’t consider just “a list or catalog of formal features of animation or anime”. Furthermore this study focuses on the socio-economic aspect, in order to understand if the production and the distribution have worked well and added some more values to the animation (Lamarre 2009).

In *Miss Puff* (泡芙小姐, *Paofu Xiaojie*) I have taken into consideration Lamarre’s theories, the same he used in *The Anime Machine*, about the technical and economic features of this animated series. In his study, Lamarre particularly focuses on the animation and especially on the Japanese anime. In this article I have used the same theories and adapted them for the web-animation and animation in China.

It was also interesting analyzing the animated series *Miss Puff* from the aesthetic and narrative point of view in order to better understand how the author and the animation studio were successful and what topics and techniques they used to draw the interest of the Netizen. In this section I have followed the theoretic guidelines, related to the analysis of a film, created by Bordwell David and Thompson Kristin and well described in the book *Film Art: An Introduction*.

But I have adapted them such as a new criterion in order to analyze not only this product of animation but also all those media products which show the images in movement (Bordwell 2010).

An overview on Chinese animation

Miss Puff is an original work and it is just one of the several other works produced in China which has become the first world producer of animation this year, as far as the minutes of production, outdoing Japan for the first time (Variety 2011). With its 1.34 billion people, where the 51,27% live in the cities (National Bureau of Statistics of China, January 2012) and more than 367 million of whom are teenagers, China enjoys a huge potential demand for animation content. Rough estimates say that, by the end of 2006, the demand for animation content accounted for 270,000 minutes of cartoon programs each year yet the domestic animation industry was only able to provide around 25,000 minutes (Pan, 2006). However, some market figures show that the situation has changed slightly. The trend of animation TV program production in China has registered a steady growth in the last ten years: in 1997, 5

animation TV programs were produced, in 2004 this number reached 29, and in 2007 it produced 186 series, for 991 minutes, 21,819 minutes and 101,614 minutes respectively (Blue Book 2008). Domestic animation was the fastest growing sector in China's TV industry in 2007, with output growing to 82,300 minutes of new content.

Furthermore, since 2006 the Chinese government has promoted the development of cinema and TV series with the aim of reaching 1% of GDP in the next five years against an investment of around RMB250-350 million (€29-41 million).

Thanks to these government policies there have been substantial changes in animation production in China: in fact, while only 5 animation TV series for a total of 991 minutes were produced in 1997, in 2007 the number of animation TV series increased to 186 for a total of 101,614 minutes (Blue Book of China's Radio, Film and Television, 2008).

In 2004 the annual production of cartoons could not meet the internal market demand because there were only 29,000 minutes while the market demand was 268,000 minutes. Today, there are 34 TV channels devoted to young people and 4 devoted specifically to cartoons in China. According to the China Animation Industry Report (2005-2006), the production of animation series accounts for 800 minutes of cartoons per day: a remarkable achievement that shows us how China has successfully invested in the animation sector.

In 2010, 220,000 minutes of animations were produced, making China the world's biggest producer of cartoons on TV.

Being aware of the influence of foreign animation products produced for the young audience and, with the task to boost its own animation industry to make it strong enough to compete with foreign players, the Chinese government has been attaching great importance to improving its cartoon industry. In 2000 Chinese broadcast regulator the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) required local TV stations to obtain approval from the Administration and set quotas for imported cartoons. The 2004 regulation by SARFT required prime time slots (5 - 8 pm) to be strictly reserved for locally produced content on all domestic channels and not more than 40% of the air time could be allocated to foreign animation content. A further regulation issued in 2006 established businesses co-produced cartoons needed the approval by SARFT if shown in first time. SARFT also adjusted the schedule for TV stations under supervision ITS: in a 10 - hour time frame, screened for domestic cartoons would be of seven hours every while three hours of foreign cartoons were allowed. The previous ratio was six to four (Han 2009). In May 2008 SARFT extended by one hour for the first time nationally produced animation content. According to the current regulation, domestic broadcast television stations can broadcast only cartoons approved by SARFT or Provincial Authorities during children's broadcasting first time. Broadcasters need to obtain approval from SARFT before airing. TV stations must not buy or re-broadcast unauthorized programs and are expressly forbidden from broadcasting or pirated prohibited foreign animation (De Masi 2011). All these regulations are widely seen as protection for the domestic industry in a bid to promote struggling homemade cartoons. Another policy adopted by the government was the creation in 2004 of 15 animation production bases.

Preferential policies, favorable tax regimes, awards and venture capital investments were introduced to foster the growth of the industry. By the end there were 20 of 2009 authorized animation industrial bases which produced a total 221 series of animation amounting to 132.235 minutes, 77% of the total output and an increase of 30% from 2008. 34 children / youth - dedicated channels and 4 animation channels broadcasting about 8.000 minutes every day. The CCTV channel dedicated to youth, Shaoer CCTV (CCTV Youth), on ITS own broadcasts to an audience yearly 65.000 minutes of 600 million people (Blue Book , 2008).

As a result of regulatory and industrial policies, many animation production companies have flourished: today, their estimated number is 1500 - 2000 companies (state, owned and private). In 2007, in the framework of a number of measures adopted for the promotion of national creative industries, SARFT and the Ministry of Commerce jointly issued "A guiding to the catalog of cultural export products and services"(Wenhua chanpin he fuwu chukou zhidao mulü). This catalog includes two important documents: one is the "Catalogue of companies for the export of important national cultural products 2007 - 2008" (2007 - 2008 niandu guoji wenhua chukou zhongdian qiye mulu), the other is the "Catalogue of important items for the export of national cultural products 2007 - 2008" (2007 - 2008 niandu guoji wenhua chukou zhongdian xiangmu mulu). The former animation production companies Indicates 14 national companies as "crucial" to export cultural products, while the latter includes animation Such TV series as "3000 Blue Cat's whys " (Lan Mao guqi sanqian wen) and "Journey to the West "(xiyouji) as products to be exported national animation worldwide.

Original Net Animation Series (ONAS)

Miss Puff is considered as an Original Web Animation (OWA), anyway there is much confusion about the definition of OWA and ONA (Original Net Animation), so I would like to clear up this misunderstanding. When I speak about ONA I refer to "a product of original animation which was created to be broadcasted straight on internet (Web TV and streaming video), it was consequently intended for a production for the online market".

The origin of the word ONA appeared for the first time in 2001 in Japan for a pilot episode, but never published for the series *Lingerie Senshi Papillon Rose*. This series was created by Japanese amateur authors in search for a market and for fame on Internet, but this episode, due to various reasons, has never been broadcast, anyway their idea had a quite good success since the beginning (Lamarre 2009).

Some of these anime have aroused the interest of the big Japanese animation production houses and from now on some Japanese studios begun to take into consideration the idea of creating original animated series only for the web, so it would be more exact to say that these episodes are ONAS, that is an Original Net Animation series.

The first ONAS created by a real animated studio was in 2002 with the launch, for the first time online, of *Maho Yugi*, a series composed by 23 episodes, produced by AIC (Anime International Company Studio, Japan). After this first experiment, also the big distribution houses have started creating some products intended for the web, such as *Mobile Suit Gundam SEED C.E. 73: Stargazer* whose the first three episodes were distributed first online and then in the complete version in DVD. In China this phenomenon is quite new, even if the experiment of the ONAS happened actually in the same period of that in Japan with the same features (Tomino 2012).

As far as *Miss Puff*, the Director Pi San became very famous not only in China but also abroad for his independent productions broadcast on the social networks, Youtube and other video sharing websites. These productions had different points of view from the Chinese government, Steve Aranguren, Vice President of Global Original Programming at Disney Channel Worldwide said "The Chinese government is no different in a lot of respects to the Hollywood studio system (People's Daily 2012). They want commercial movies that entertain, that show people in a positive light, that aren't too violent or sexual" (Cineuropa 2011), in fact Pi San's animations are sometimes provocative creating clashes with the Chinese control system.

To promote his videos, the author decided to choose not only some actual and even provocative themes against the Chinese government (Larmer 2011) but also to analyze some social issue that will be discussed ahead. His productions were intended for internet consumers viewers (People's Daily 2012).

Before *Miss Puff*, Pi San became popular for his animated character called *Kuang Kuang*, created by his small independent animation studio on the outskirts of Beijing. *Kuang Kuang* like *Miss Puff* is an ONAS but it is very different from *Miss Puff* especially because it tells about a little primary student called Kuang Kuang and his adventures during his primary school life and Chinese society in general. *Kuang Kuang* show is indeed much more oriented to analyze Chinese social issues than *Miss Puff*, moreover the episodes of this series are sometimes very violent (Larmer 2011).

Beyond the new surviving model *Miss Puff* established for other animation production of how to engage into the video sharing market, the success of *Miss Puff* can also be tracked back to the relevance between its storyline and the social background. Setting as an animation for Internet consumers, especially online video viewers at the beginning of the production, the plot of *Miss Puff* was “ordered” to keep closest concern with the ongoing social topics and fashion information according to the Director Pi San. Thus, studying with how *Miss Puff* is involved in the huge social/cultural background, and why it can arouse such a big feedback from its viewers may also provide us another process to understand its success.

About “City Background” and the dimension of *no-place*.

From the technical and artistic point of view the analysis of this series, as stated by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson’s theories related to the criteria of lighting, narrative, color, shots, takes and editing described in the book *Film Art: An Introduction*, we can see that *Miss Puff* has been made in flash animation, one of the most used programs for the animation intended for the web. The author has thought to produce a hybridization of animation and reality (live- action) using real videos as background and moving his animated characters in real places: this is not a very new technique in fact it was used since the beginnings of the animation cinema, but it is new for the effects. Using real backgrounds has a lot of positive aspects, in fact it makes the production saving time in the creation of the format and it also gives a “touch” of realism to the series. Jill Nelmes in *An Introduction to Film Studies* argues that the use of the live-action as background in the animation is a “representation of what is ‘real’ in recording the concrete and tangible world.” This realism has been exploited for advertising purposes above all, in fact we can see real places, and objects only for the publicity. The realism becomes much more real thanks to the use in the live-action of sequences created with a hand camera, so the image is less steady but more real.

In *Miss Puff* back-ground images and those of the characters created in animation never clash, and this is due to a fine photographic research of the director of photography in the live-action which integrates with the colors and the light used in the series and in the characters in a perfect way. In some sequences the background and the animation mingle creating a new form and it’s difficult to understand if there’s the animation in the scenes.

This series usually uses a language that, especially for the first five episodes, can be presented also in Western cultures without any kind of misunderstandings. The first five episodes of the first series were set in the modern city, a “no-place”, with just some references to the Chinese culture, and there are some clear references to Beijing , however they can be codified only by a Chinese public or by someone who has a deep knowledge of

the Chinese culture, this strategy was initially picked by Pi San's team in order to create a hybrid products. But what is a hybrid product?

A hybrid product is the one that doesn't have an explicit cultural reference in the language, in the context and in the background. The writer Marc Augue is the inventor of the word "no-place" (non-place) which appears for the first time in his book entitled *Non-lieux*, published in 1995. Marc Augue gives us a careful explanation of this phenomenon by explaining that *non-places*, that is, all modern public spaces, are sometimes anonymous and stereotyped, lacking a historical dimension and the warmth of the living, only frequented by individuals or groups of people in transit, who don't relate to each other (Moscon 2010).

This book accurately portrays the place of the first episodes of *Miss Puff*, that is, a city that can recall in your mind the place where that movies are exhibited: the multiplex.

The multiplex are often called "no-places" or spaces which lacks specific national characteristics, as stated before. Similarly to airports and the major hotel chains, once you are inside of them it is difficult to see in which country you are. Likewise, the blockbuster products are products culturally hybrid and culturally not well defined, designed as such to reach a wide international audience. Both *no-places* and blockbusters thus represent spaces (physical in the first case, symbolic in the second) that belong to everyone and yet no one (Cucco 2009).

Analyzing the whole series of *Miss Puff*, it's interesting noticing that from the first episode to the fifth one there's a little of references about Chinese culture, in fact *Miss Puff* lives in a house that looks like a house designed by IKEA, the location is in modern metropolitan places (*non-place*), she goes into places which are similar to the European ones rather than Chinese, she rides expensive autos in the city, she uses a Macbook and iPhone, she watches European football matches on TV and most of the video references and contributions, the photos refer to a Western culture and not the Chinese one, it is thus possible to argue that the series seems to be located in a global village (Augue 1995). But I'd like to clear up, once again, that in the early episodes of the first series there are various Chinese cultural references, which seem to be clear and explicit from the point of view of a Western audience, but actually the series was intended for a Chinese audience, who, while watching the movie, perceives a city totally different from the Chinese typical and modern ones and so doesn't have the perception of being set in China. Referring to the interview that I conducted to the Director Pisan, he told me that he wanted to highlight what stated before and in fact he said "at the beginning I didn't want to set the series in a Chinese city, because I wanted to create a new and fashionable city. When the audience started to love the series, I have included many more elements of the real city, even though, actually, the city of Beijing, that we see in *Miss Puff*, is much closer to a Western city than to the real Beijing".

Another important example about not Chinese references is the use of sequences of the Japanese *Super Mario* and *Street fighter* videogames and furthermore the sequences alternating of the closes up of the characters makes us think of the Japanese series live-action *Densha Otoko* (電車男, Train Man), and last but not least most of the soundtrack of this series comes from the Western tradition or even refers to soundtracks of well famous films (Cohn 2012).

From the fifth episode on we can notice a change above all in the locations, in fact here there are more references to the Chinese way of life, in fact there are different places and people and there are even the outskirts of Miss Puff's city, a map of Beijing and the very famous building of the CCTV in China; anyway it is in the eighth episode that the viewers realize the Miss Puff experiences her adventures in Beijing. This period is quite relevant and matches with a wider strategy, it is possible to argue that in the first five episodes the task was

oriented to create the main character and allow audience to take confidence with the show, it is the same strategy that was used in the product placement case, once the show obtained a first and fixed base of viewers, plot, product placement strategies and background as well are all defined and very well decoded by Chinese viewers.

The strategy followed by Pi San and his team can be included in the City-based screen story (including films, TV series, animation) style that has less than 30 years of development in China (Xue Jinwen, 2009), which can be seen as the result of the social change after economical-politic reform begun in 1978, and the overwhelming urbanization following this reform. In the last five years, there has been a huge increase of the amount of city-based screen story (Bing 2009), and these stories provided a spiritual resource from “entertainment amusement” to “understanding life philosophy” for young audiences who are born after 1980s or 1990s (China news agency 2011). *Miss Puff*, in this way, is not an exceptional case among other city-based screen stories which get success among Chinese audiences.

Concerning the main character characteristics it is possible to confirm that Miss Puff is a young lady living in a modern city, or if more precisely, in Beijing. The role of the city is quite relevant also because as the same Pi San confirmed in an interview “the new series will be shoot in Beijing but it is also true that Youku is evaluating some sponsor proposals that ask other *Miss Puff* episodes to be set in other cities” (People's Daily Online 2011).

Concerning the character, Miss Puff works for a magazine, live independently as a typical “white-collar”. This identity setting gives Miss Puff an easy reorganization from young people living in cities, since most of them hold the same life standard as Miss Puff. Different stories expanded on Miss Puff’s life with the background of the city, for example, the subject of episode 11 of the first series is around “renting home”. This is one of the most common issue “Bei Piao” people (those one who are “floating” in Beijing) are facing for living in a big city, since they are coming from other places, having no root in Beijing, and the real-estate price raised too high for young graduates or a common “white collar” to afford to buy a home, they can only rent to stay. “Everyone who rent a home used to be an angel with a broken wing in their previous life, when fall into current life, they became ants.” The conclusion of this episode of *Miss Puff* can be traced back to a hot social topic in China in recent years—“Ant Group” (Shi Taoyang 2010).

Yuan Si, who gave out the name of “Ant Group” defined it as the one who are graduated from colleague within low income and Inhabited by groups. Another prominent blogger and scholar, Han Han, defined “Ant Group” with a more detailed idea based on his research of “Investigation on Ant Group in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong”: Ant Group are people who are graduated from college in the recent 10 years, aged between 22-29, coming from poor family from small cities or villages, and are working in the first-level city where the lowest salary standard is more than 800 RMB (99 Euros). Their income is generally less than 3 times of the lowest salary standard of the city, and 70% of the income need to be used to pay for the renting and the basic living expense. The Engel’s Coefficient (Liu Chen Xiang 2008) of this group is much more than the average standard of other people, and they are mostly living in big cities or places with advanced economy like Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dalian, and similar. The total amount of “Ant Group” people is around 3 million around China based on the official data (Shi Taoyang 2010).

Most of the “Ant Group” people are born after 1980s, it came into the lens of the media in 2010 because one of the place – Tang Jia Ling, where a lot of “Ant Group” people are living, is facing to be demolished, which means more than 50000 “Ant Group” renters from that little village of Haidian district of Beijing needed to relocate themselves. Afterwards “low-income College graduates” started to be concerned as the fourth vulnerable group living in

cities after farmers, immigrant workers, and laid-off workers (Baidu). Because of those structural change of the society in recent years such as the urbanization, the transformation of the population structure and the labor market, and especially because of the industrialization of education system since 1999, young graduates are facing a severe situation to survive in the city after their graduation.

The “video game” part of this episode describes the “Ant Group’s “ living situation in a simple but obvious way, they live in a tiny cell, but need to move out time and time again because of the rise-up of the rental, they are shaped like an ant, and there are a lot of them. Miss Puff talked about the “curse of home” with her “Ant Group” neighbor that one need to relocate 11 times till he find his own home, but her neighbor had already moved 11 times, while still without a place to stay. Not only discovering “Ant Group” who are poorly renting home in the city, this episode of Miss Puff also refers a little to the “house-slaves” group of people who had already bought a “home”, but couldn’t afford the loan and expense of living inside, thus they rent their own home to others, and they rent small cell to live as “Ant Group” again.

Topics about “home” and real-estate market is one of the most typical topics relates to “city” in China. *Miss Puff* chose this kind of theme as the storyline and so it touched the resonance of its audiences in the most direct way. Reviewing those comments of this episode online, most of the viewers had the same experience of moving and renting, thus, they love to see the shadow of themselves into the story of *Miss Puff*. Although Miss Puff herself is a kind of “ideal” model with a visible “perfect” life style, the stories around her are realistic and they always arouse or discover a kind of “pain” of the city life, and it is because of this realistic relation between the real life and the story: *Miss Puff* won the heart of the audience.

Conclusions

Miss Puff success represents one of the first most successful ONAS product created by a Chinese video sharing company gaining both a relevant commercial success, provided by very accurate product placement strategies, and a cultural consensus especially among the most young and urban viewers who saw some of their problems that have to face everyday reflected in the show.

Considering the lack of dedicated literature on the Chinese ONAS production, the authors decided to prove one Chinese animation industry and Chinese video sharing overviews in order to understand in which context the 2009 “Plan for Boosting the Culture Industry” and Chinese international image building will take place.

This article tried to describe the ways *Miss Puff* was ideated, created and presented to the public analyzing when and how new form of profitability were involved in the show. More detailed studied could be confirm or negate Zhang and Neelankavil empirical results according whom US consumers will be more accepting a product placement than Chinese consumers (McKechnie 2003).

On the artistic and socio cultural side the authors decided to first clarify the difference between OWA (Original Web Animation) and ONA (Online Net Animation) for moving then to the match between the city based background and the hybrid stile used in the first series. The video sharing service is the *Miss Puff* context represented an important platform both for describing artistically and commenting some Chinese social issues and phenomenon such as “ant group and housing price”, “leftover lady Identity”, “latest social relation”, “life philosophy”. Very interesting especially under the SARFT “anti-vulgarity” campaign issued to crack down on populist programming.

From a production point of view it will be interesting to see if in the future ONAS productions follow the path drawn by *Miss Puff's* success and consequently if product placement strategies revenues is competitive or even replaces revenues forms provided by traditional media. According to the author's point of view, the huge presence of Western values present in the show through product placement, but also through quite explicit references, soundtracks and quotes as well as the first five episode hybrid strategy, could represent an attempt of the Chinese ONA production to gain success also in other Asian markets in a more general purposed oriented to a stronger more Chinese soft power image. With this article I hope that Chinese ONA could be studied both from an economical and a cultural approach and it will be a very interesting step to check if the Chinese "Plan for Boosting the Culture Industry" is able to gain the expected results as well as if the Chinese soft power international image building is also be positively confirmed (Gates 2006).

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Using Burke's Dramatistic Pentad to Interpret Chinese "Gao-Kao" High Stakes Testing and Stressing – Paralleled Testing in the U.S. as Cross-Cultural Context

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Abstract: The Chinese College Entrance Examination (“*Gao-Kao*”) is the most high stakes assessment in China and parallels the most competitive examinations globally. Although it can provide Chinese educators and policy makers with an enormous pool of information about student achievement growth, school efficiency, etc., the current use of the test is mainly limited to ranking students by their raw scores. In this study, we tried two modifications to the traditional test to connect the assessment outcomes with school accountability. First, we linked the Gao-Kao English tests from 2010 and 2011 and aligned them on a Rasch scale. Secondly, we collected background information of the examinees via a background survey.

The result showed that students from Hainan province improved a little in 2011 overall. In addition, school level reports were generated to show the school's growth as well as the county and province averages. By implementing test equating and background survey measures, this study demonstrated that Gao-Kao data can be used to construct a longitudinal data source as an initial step to build a value-added school accountability system.

The aforementioned findings and how they are communicated help to frame global use of such high stakes testing. Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad is used as foundation for communicative interpretation of these findings. The international context provides backdrop within which the findings are nested. Contrast with testing in the U.S. serves to highlight unique features of the Gao-Kao examination approach.

Keywords: Gao-Kao, test equating, school accountability, Dramatistic Pentad

Introduction

The College Entrance Examination in China, called “*Gao-Kao*” in Chinese, is the most high stakes assessment in China and parallels the most competitive examinations globally. Two days each year, millions of high school graduates and people with equivalent educational qualifications take the test. Students with higher Gao-Kao scores get into better universities. They can get better jobs after graduation, and eventually, become winners in the thriving economy. Hence, the test is considered to be the most critical turning point in every student’s life, and studying for it can never be over emphasized.

This type of high stakes examination has parallels with other national college entrance examinations, such as the ACT and SAT in the U.S., but the U.S. examinations do not carry the weight that Gao-Kao does. The U.S. system considers other factors within the college placement process.

Under such high pressure, over use of the Gao-Kao test score seems inevitable. In many places, high schools are ranked by their average Gao-Kao scores and teachers are rewarded by their class averages. As a result, many people blame Gao-Kao for causing bad educational practices such as teaching to the test and social problems such as creating students who are test-taking “machines” with limited creativity. Thus, the Gao-Kao examination manifests symbolic meanings that correlate with stress and intense competition.

Ironically, the Gao-Kao data has seldom been used for important educational policy making decisions. China’s NEEA (National Education Examinations Authority) is directly under the MOE (Ministry of Education). The NEEA exerts great effort to ensure the quality of the test questions and the reliability of the tests. There is not examination continuity from year to year. That is, unlike the SAT or ACT exams in the U.S., Gao-Kao scores from different years cannot be compared directly. It is not possible to tell whether the difference in Gao-Kao scores from one year to another is the result of changes in student proficiency or a shift in item difficulty. Findings from investigations on trends regarding education quality in individual schools, regionally, or on national levels remain untapped.

Modern score equating techniques (Kolen & Brennan, 2004) provide the NEEA with a tool to make better use of the Gao-Kao data. The goal of equating is to produce a linkage between different test forms so that the scores from each test have the same meaning and can be compared directly. Analysis of student growth becomes possible when Gao-Kao tests over successive years can be equated.

Moreover, it has been widely acknowledged that one-time assessment scores are not a fair way to compare teachers or schools since students come to school with different backgrounds (Doran, 2003). This is significantly different, in contrast with the U.S., where multiple factors are considered for college entrance decisions. Such factors include aptitude testing, high school GPA (grade point average), extra-curricular activities and unique life experiences.

Over the last decade, value-added analysis in China has become the most promising tool to evaluate school effectiveness. The idea behind the value-added approach is simple. School quality is determined by the increase in student knowledge and skills, extracting the impact of non-school factors such as the student’s family SES (socio-economic status), etc. (Ballou & Sanders, 2004). It is strongly desired that the Gao-Kao data be used in this way since value-added accountability models can greatly motivate teachers and schools (Doran & Fleischman, 2005).

In this study, we took data from Hainan province as an example and implemented two technical modifications to the Gao-Kao English test. First, we linked the tests from 2010 and 2011, and aligned them onto a Rasch scale (Kolen & Brennan, 2004). Secondly, we collected background information from the examinees via a background survey. The results were used

to examine student growth and were further applied to construct a value-added school accountability model.

All of the aforementioned, taken together, offer relevant themes for interpretation using Kenneth Burkes Dramatistic Pentad (Golden, Berquist, Coleman & Sproule, 2011) as a foundation for framing the varied communicative elements. The Dramatistic Pentad stresses the act, agents, scene, agency and purpose (which will be explained later in this report).

Methods

Test Equating

Test equating seeks to produce comparable scores for examinees who take different editions of the same test. Researchers have developed many data collection designs, such as the single group design, the equivalent groups design, and the anchor test design (Holland & Dorans, 2006). An anchor test design allows for a new test to be administered to a sample of examinees from each test-taking population. It is most appropriate in high-stakes situations when item reuse leads to test security problems. So we chose to use the Nonequivalent Groups with External Anchor Test (*NEAT*) design (von Davier, Holland, & Thayer, 2004) in this study. Specifically, a 28-item anchor test was administered to two groups of examinees one month before Gao-Kao in 2010 and 2011. The details are shown in table 1.

	2010 English test	2011 English test	28-item anchor test
2010 Gao-Kao participants	X		
Sample of 2010 participants	X		X
2011 Gao-Kao participants		X	
Sample of 2010 participants		X	X

Table 1: The data collection design for equating 2010 and 2011 Gao-Kao English test

The NEAT design poses strict requirements on the quality of the anchor test as it greatly impacts the accuracy of equating. It needs to measure the same construct of the full tests. Even though it is usually shorter and less reliable than the full tests, it is desirable because of the high quality variables. In this study a team of professional item developers, working for NEEA, were hired to construct representative common-item sets. The anchor test was built to the same test specifications as Gao-Kao, except that it did not contain Listening and Writing sections. More than 50 items were developed and administered originally. Items that displayed undesirable psychometric properties were excluded from the analysis and only 28 items were used in the final equating procedure. The number of anchor items exceeded 20% of the total length of Gao-Kao, meeting the rule of thumb proposed by Kolen and Brennan (2004). One thousand-four hundred-seventeen examinees in 2010 and 580 in 2011 were sampled using the anchor test.

The next step of test equating is to produce comparable scores for the 2010 and 2011 tests. Different procedures to convert scores are available (Kolen & Brennan, 2004). In this study, we chose to align the two tests onto a Rasch scale mainly for two reasons. First, the Rasch scale is considered to be an objective scale because the difficulty of an item is independent of student abilities and the ability estimates are independent of the items (Wilson, 2005). Secondly, data from both years can be analyzed simultaneously via a concurrent estimation

procedure (Kolen & Brennan, 2004). Scale scores produced by the software are directly comparable. Computer software *ConQuest* (Wu, Adams, & Wilson, 1998) was used to scale the data in this investigation. Finally, the Rasch scores were converted to follow the NEEA process of multiplying by ten then adding 50 ($Y_{\text{final score}} = 10 * X_{\text{Rasch score}} + 50$).

Background Survey

To extract non-school impacts on Gao-Kao outcomes it is necessary to collect student background information, including students' family socio-economic status, parents' education level, occupation, and students' after school learning activities (Strand, 2011).

So we conducted a 25-question online survey in both years. After filling out the Gao-Kao online registration, examinees were prompted to decide whether they would participate in the survey. The response rate reached a high of 80% because we informed the students beforehand and asked teachers to encourage their students to take it.

Correlations between the non-school factors with student achievement scores were examined. The background information also enabled further discussion regarding trends linked to school quality and education equity.

Results

Altogether, our focus on Hainan revealed that 54,100 students participated with the Gao-Kao English test in 2010 and 53,755 students did so in 2011. The overall reliability in the concurrent estimation is as high as 0.94. The average final score increased slightly from 54.2 in 2010 to 55.1 in 2011. The change is not statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Figure 1 shows the Wright Map (Wilson, 2005) for the two successive years aligned on the logit scale. The right hand side is the distribution of the examinee abilities estimations, while the left hand side is the distribution of item difficulties.

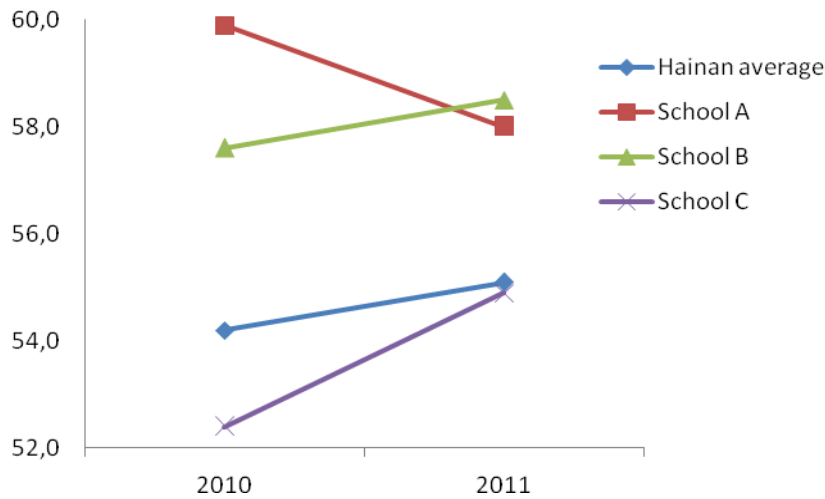


Figure 2: Measuring school performance longitudinally

Finally, student background information was analyzed. The family SES indicator was found to be the most important factor associated with student English achievement. Specifically, aggregated at school level, lower performing schools tended to have lower average SES. Figure 3 showed how school average scores increased with the SES index. (In the graph, each bubble represents one school. The size of the bubble is proportional to the number of examinees in the school.) This indicates that lower performing schools are not necessarily less effective since non-school factors play a significant role in influencing student learning outcomes.

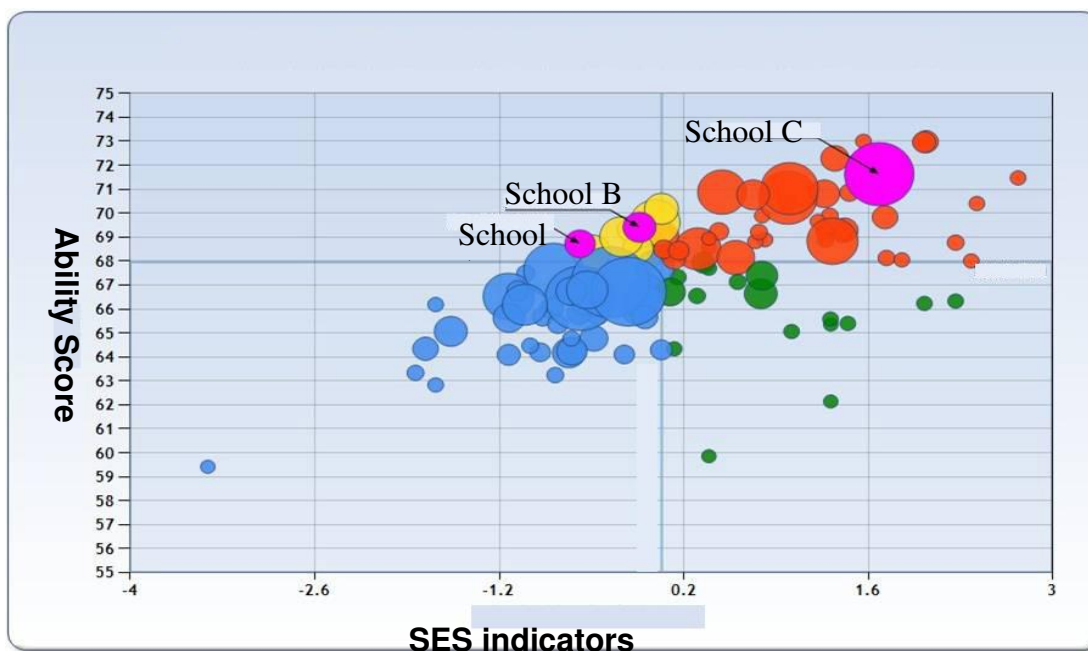


Figure 3: The relationship between SES and the scaled English score at school level

Discussion

Ranking schools or teachers by a single year’s Gao-Kao scores often leads to negative or damaging impacts on school culture and the instructional programs. As first steps to promote

better usage of the Gao-Kao data, we equated tests from 2010 and 2011 and showed how longitudinal analysis might be carried out to inform educators and policy makers.

In addition, we collected and analyzed student background data. In many well-known large-scale assessments, such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), background information is always collected, and statistical analyses are routinely carried out to examine factors that significantly impact students' learning outcomes. However, this part has been largely neglected in China in the past.

In this study, we found that SES was the most prominent non-school factor that correlated with students' English achievement. This finding is in accordance with previous research (Perry & McConney, 2010). This provides Chinese researchers and policy makers with more information on education equity and quality.

The test equating practice and survey are our initial attempts to build a value-added school accountability system. However, it is important to note that it would be necessary to build a vertical scale (Briggs & Weeks, 2009) that aligns student ability from their entrance point to Gao-Kao in order to construct such a model. We started to collect data from cohorts that entered high school in 2010 and 2011. But it has not been long enough for us to follow them until their Gao-Kao examination time. The vertical scale is still under construction. As a result, this report is limited with regard to discussions about equating results between the two Gao-Kao English tests, which is a very important initial step in the big picture.

In addition, student growth in one subject is a very narrow angle to investigate school quality. Equating tests on other subjects is our next mission. It is more complicated to equate math and science tests and correspondingly build vertical scales as these subjects consist of several sub-areas. More efforts to develop high-quality anchor tests are called for. And multidimensional equating procedures may be applied to tackle the problem (Oshima, Davey, & Lee, 2000).

Moreover, because the accuracy of equating is critical in providing valid information for high-stakes policy decisions (Peterson, 2007), it will be worthwhile to equate with different models and evaluate whether differences in equating functions have practical significance. To construct statistically and theoretically sound value-added models, additional information on teacher, school and district characteristics is needed. Teacher and school principal surveys are being developed.

This high stakes testing scenario, as exemplified via the Gao-Kao examination phenomena in China, is ripe for interpretation using Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad (Golden, Berquist, Coleman & Sproule, 2011) that is commonly used for framing communicative elements. The Dramatistic Pentad is composed of five parts: 1) the act, 2) agents, 3) scene, 4) agency and 5) purpose.

The act is the focal center within which the other parts function. The agents are the individuals involved. These agents operate in a scene or situation. They employ an agency, or means, so they can accomplish a specific purpose.

The act, in this high stakes testing scenario, can be understood as the high drama associated with the completion of a single exam that will have crucial significance on the direction the examinees lives will take (regarding opportunities for advancement in life). The agents are the students primarily and their families secondarily. The scene, or situation, involves the interactive dynamics that result in an environment that is exceedingly high stress and very relevant for students and their corresponding relationships with their families and the larger social order.

The agency, or means, through which the agents will progress centers upon student performance on this single Gao-Kao examination. The ultimate purpose being to score well

on the Gao-Kao examination and use this positioning as foundation for advancing toward a higher quality of life than would be available if a lower score is achieved.

Summary

With careful test equating and background surveys, we set out to build a longitudinal data source with China's most important test, the Gao-Kao. This marks the starting point where China's testing practitioners and researchers can seek to utilize high-stakes assessment data to ensure school accountability.

The aforementioned, placed within a global context, reveals how such high stakes testing can come to be symbolically represented via various communication channels. The factual clarifications and delineations in this report serve to demystify such high stakes testing so as to make it understandable and, thus, minimize confusion, resentment and despair by the general public.

In contrast with paralleled testing in the U.S., such as the SAT and ACT examinations, we find similar kinds of testing but less emphasis being given to the examination itself due to consideration for other (non-examination) factors. Thus, there is considerably less anxiety associated with such examinations in the U.S. and less anxiety conveyed in that regard via relevant communication channels.

Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad is offered as a framework for understanding this high stakes testing scenario. Such emphasis on understanding of act, agents, scene, agency and purpose serve to frame this scenario so it can best be understood via the communicative variables that give it meaning.

We do not believe one approach, either Chinese or U.S., is to be preferred over another. Ironically, at the present time, we observe that the U.S. is seeking means to give such high stakes testing more emphasis as a college entrance consideration and the Chinese are considering measures for redefining the role of high stakes testing such as Gao-Kao.

We do believe communicative representations of high stakes testing are key in molding public perceptions of such testing over time. How the public interprets such representations impacts their responses to the examination process. Cross-cultural understanding of such impacts will serve to augment the fund of information that can be considered regarding improvements. This report is intended to be a contribution to that fund.

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Medical rituals and media rituals

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Abstract: In the present article the author examines the ritual elements of the professionalization during medical studies, and its interference with media content of medical significance, comparing the role of medical and media rituals on the way of becoming a doctor. It is to be explored how these medical soap operas, medical dramas, medical thrillers or crime stories do exert influence on medical identity and role expectations. Do medical students and their relatives (with medical expertise frequently) identify themselves with these roles? Is their way of reception critical or naïve? How media rituals are organizing, modulating the students' medical perception and expectations. Is there a mediated "shadow initiation" via media or it is excluded and denied? Does it peruse the common social experience of becoming a doctor via peer communication and peer shaping of model behavior? We search the answers in the context of a theory of media rituals.

Keywords: medical initiation, professionalization, medical drama, media ritual, abject gaze, narrative analysis, bioethics teaching

The professionalization of medical students implies mixed sequences of students' rituals and overt and hidden elements of professional initiation. Teaching anatomy may also gain ritual importance transforming the relationship with the death, generating a shift in view of the human body by distancing, de-personalization of a former living person. Other rituals glorify the 'high tech' omnipotence of medical diagnostics and therapeutic intervention lending an empowering feeling of a new cyborg-like sensation of professional expertise. The medical rituals of the students on their initiation way have the same function as in other communities where rituals celebrate, maintain and renews the world in which one lives through their important social, psychological and symbolic dimensions. These rituals imply an 'aggregation of symbols', where symbols are 'storage units' into which the maximum amount of information is condensed (Turner 1969), this is because ritual symbols are 'multi-vocal', representing many things at the same time. Early results of O'Connors (1998) suggest the role model offered by medical drama like ER may influence medical students' perceptions

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and beliefs in a similar way to the real doctors they encounter. This concept is in line with Gerber's cultivation theory, which states that those spending more time with watching the world presented by television programs tend more to believe social reality portrayed on television causing a misperception of what is true in our world. (Cohen, Weimann 2000) As almost all medical students watch television medical dramas based on data of a systematic research (Czarny et al. 2008) and medical dramas can affect behavior change in the general public (Valente et al. 2007), we have to investigate their role in the "informal curriculum" of health care professionals regarding ethical and professional behavior issues in practice and in research as part of medical professionalization. Some of the researchers even propose, that

„students must be taught in a way that engages them and that does not ignore the potentially significant impact that cultural artifacts can have on their professional development and identity, while ensuring that their negotiation of popular culture gives them an authentic perception of the real medical world they are entering.” (Weaver, Wilson 2011).

On the methods

In our research we carried out qualitative anthropological research with focus groups and deep interviews to explore the stages, types and elements of the process of medical initiation among former students and groups of medical students attending upper years and those at their preclinical years. Focus group work, deep interviews was completed by written reports regarding media consumption of medical dramas and soap operas in circle of students (as part of anthropological field work tasks in medical anthropological working group) at their preclinical period. The reflections on the influences of the medical dramas regarding medical professions were collected from recorded and written materials, and a narrative analysis in categorical-content perspective was made regarding the collected of these reports and anecdotes. The analysis of narratives and responses, focus group contents supported out working hypothesis that medical students go through many stages of initiations until they reach the formalized act of being conferred the degree of a doctor. Before medical school the object of their initiation may be an important event in childhood. That is, a serious illness in the family (maybe their own), hospital experience or the example of a physician relative, model of secondary school teacher etc. During university they list the experiences of the freshmen's camp, Hippocratic oath, some more serious illness. Passing or failing an exam may appear as an initiation stage but they all count the summer nursing practice after the freshman year (Becker 1961) as one. In the later years working on an ambulance, assisting in the operating theatre etc. function as initiations. One remarkable category we would like to draw attention to is personal example or model giving. 'Objects' (analytic psychological term) serving as models is an outstanding category regardless of situation, age, certain act etc. These initiators may condense almost all ingredients of a 'standard type initiation'. Initiators as model giving 'objects' may be significant members of the students' family, an outstanding secondary school teacher, seminar or practice lesson leader or the leader of a students' scientific circle. They all may serve for students as a lifelong 'compass', authentic pattern, during their personal and professional lives. In this paper we investigated whether media figures like Dr. House and other characters of medical dramas, soap operas and other medical media genres do offer such model giving an object or do not.

While we could trace out the contours of hidden ritual dramatic framework of student professionalization, there is another ritual space, which is also filled with medical content of ritual significance. This ritual space of medical content is part of the spectrum of media rituals. Biomedical soap operas, classic movies with medical themes, thrillers and horrors

have a common function to look behind the curtain of the medical world. The medical dramas have some distinctive feature in the hidden curriculum () : *having a form of entertainment, 2) allows time for thought and reflection, 3) can be conducted on personal time, and 4) is non-threatening as it relieves the viewer of being on the spot and needing to make actual decisions in the clinical environment.* ()

Less research is driven among medical students regarding the ritual function of these media content. Our hypothesis was that biomedical media contents are important “ritual” supplementary in transition towards becoming a doctor.

In our qualitative study implying focus group meetings and written material, we found that although our informants agreed that these medical series are fascinating, and may exert significant impact to turn lay people towards the clinical world, but these series lose their importance during the medical phase of professional initiation. Some the informant were receptive, while others proved to be critical regarding this series, nevertheless they could outline some functions and features of these genres.

Biomedical soap operas, classic movies with medical themes, thrillers and horrors have a common function to look behind the curtain of the medical world. Less research is driven among medical students regarding these media content. Our hypothesis was that biomedical media contents are important “ritual” supplementary in transition towards becoming a doctor. It is not surprising that both medical students and lay audience is led to the world of medicine and medical knowledge through the passage leading into spaces of anatomy and necropsy. In the case of the medical students it is the first years of anatomy with a hidden function of making distance towards corporeality, while in the case lay audience re-presentation of the dissected body celebrate the power of science and technology implying knowledge of forensic medicine.

In our qualitative study implying focus group meetings and written material, we had to realize that our informants were highly critical towards these series, nevertheless they could outline some functions and features of these genres.

Medical drama as media ritual

The medical dramas represent and mediate messages of a central ideological institution, the biomedicine in the ritual space of the media. As biomedicine implies key values of late modernity, its media representation offers surface for mirroring, performance , transformation and transfiguration with ritual functions of expression and renovation of the key values of modernity. This hidden function of the corpus of medical legends is associated with identity- and community building function as well

If medical dramas and soap operas take part in symbolic construction and a dramatization of otherwise more or less hidden reality of clinical world, and its social experience with critical importance, then we may extend this ritual function beyond the circle of medical students towards lay public. (Lázár 2012) These stories and narratives working as legends of medical lifeworld, absorbing lay audience into this different reality, as a symbolic separation from their own lay world, immerse them into medical narratives of suffering, challenge, bodily catastrophes , fighting for the solution and healing or catharsis of the heroic failure. The hypnotic experience of watching this clinical world lets audience to leave the common role of being patient for empathic identification with the healer Dr Kildare, Dr House or the other clinical heroes. This may be seen as a sort of antistructure experience, which is followed by a deeper understanding of the healers, and a more reflexive relationship with the role and set of behavior of patients. This Turnerian view of medical media rituals as anti-structure

presenting an alternative to the dominant hierarchical experience of clinical transactions in the society, helps to understand the resistance on the dominant medical side as well.

It is also true for medical dramas when they interrupt the former relationship between patient and healer, they empower the lay public, and de-mystify the close community of clinical world. This liminality drives audience as participant to see the clinical side in a different manner until returning to their own position after the story's end with a new experience reintegrated within the dominant frame of medical ideology. This ritual media experience may be even a harsh conflict with dominant medical ideology like in case of spiritualist medical soap operas like the *Riget*.

Both the media and the biomedicine are modern or late –modern cultural institutions sharing and/or competing for the *mythical center in modernity*. Both institutions enjoy a considerable approval and respect beyond the widespread critical voices, untrust and denial. There is also considerable symbiosis between the two as medical media dramas may strengthen medical insights and identification with clinical cosmology and medical narratives may create addict media consumption.

May be soap operas classified as media rituals? According to Carey even in media “*news is not information, but drama. It does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and it invites our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it*” (Császi cit. Carey 1989). That is also a strong argument to include medical drama and soap operas into the circle of media rituals like tabloids, talk shows, ceremonies or media scandals. As the ritualized function of news is mixed with entertainment, medical soap operas and medical dramas entertain with a hidden ritual participation by separation, transition (or liminality) and re-incorporation during the watcher's (“mystic”) participation via their semantic network. The medical dramas are more conventional in contrast with tabloids, talk shows and alike, and they tend to impose one dominant medical moral perspective. Victor Turner's understanding of rituals offers a key for us also, that these medical dramas as rituals embody and betoken transcendent values of late modern clinical cosmology.

Professional identity and media

Social theorists argue and emphasize the importance and function of media consumption in identity (Kellner 1995; Willis, 1990), where the basis of the construction of ‘a narrative of self-identity’ consists of mediated symbolic materials. According to Kellner in contemporary industrial society a ‘media culture’ has emerged which helps ‘produce the fabric of everyday life shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities’. In this view of media determinism „*media stories and images provide the symbols, myths, and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today. Media culture provides the materials to create identities whereby individuals insert themselves into contemporary techno-capitalist societies and which is producing a new form of global culture.*” (Kellner 1995) Medical contents in the media are thought to be useful in teaching biomedicine by improving communication skills (Wong et al 2009) and offering themes for Bioethics (Spike 2008) as well. According to Arawi (2010) teaching bioethics offer a framework to insert narratives of medical dramas into medical socialization, as a „*narrative genre that enhances emotional engagement, cognitive development, and moral imagination allowing for a more ethical sensitive student in training*”. According to her concept use of medical dramas can extend the present day practice based on case vignettes which do not allow discussants to see how the various stakeholders perceive and understand different events. The main difference

is that the case studies in bioethics objectify patients and render them soulless while medical drama narratives objectify them to bring them to life.

However this enthusiasm may be controversial if we accept criticism of medical dramas blaming them for depicting the practice of medicine and bioethical issues in a strikingly realistic but sometimes inaccurate fashion. On this theoretical track we can understand, how values of bioreductionist techno-medicine is mediated by medical dramas like ER or House M.D.. On the one hand this frame of representation is part the homogenized and mediatized global culture, on the other hand these contents are re-shaped by ‘subtle interplay of mediations’ (Tomlinson 1991)

Virtual corporeality of the Dead :

If we try to apply the initiation pathway from anatomy, through analytic science via the clinical practice of diagnosis making and therapy and its drama even up to the spiritualization of the healing activity we can follow this sequence of topics and genres in the media rituals as well.

According to the neo-durkheimian framework of Cultural Studies the media embody the audience into his “virtual ritual community” of its disenchanting secularist values like monetarist orientation, high technology, materialist cosmology and political correctness, the cultural system of basic assumptions, values, rules and roles and imaginations. The legends of the “every night” criminal stories at 8 P.M. is about the fanatic and criminal behavior driven by fantasies of the wealth, and the heroic efforts of forensic experts helped by the high tech to uncover the truth through the analysis of alienated, reified informative corpse of the victim. This spectacle unifies two clinical insights- a medical student must acquire during his/her studies: one as part of alienation, and another one need for functional reification: - as the abject gaze with a focus on the physiological effects of death on the human body, where the abject nature of the corpse is mediated by the investigators’ forensic gaze, which seeks to control crime, death, and abjection. This forensic gaze has ideological content being in pronounced association with displays of biological identification technologies.

In this sense popular media may take also part of the ritual process of becoming a doctor, as mass media is a mode of ritually enacting the shared understandings of a group.

James Carey (1998) helped us to reveal the ritual content of mass communication, where communication may be seen as ritual, with the aim of maintaining a culture or community over time. From the ritual perspective mass media with the above mentioned forensic medical content immersed into criminal context can serve re-enacting shared cultural understandings and cosmology of bioreductionist medical assumptions about the essence of human being and its materialist limitations, too.

As Simonson (2002) writes

“from stock dramas (science versus religion, technology run amok), to named practices (“professional wrongdoing,” “breach of human rights”), to common roles (the reformer, the researcher, the innocent victim), - journalist” and our script writers of these NCIS, Bones, Dexter stories “ draw upon and amplify existing conventions, and in so doing re-establish cultural and social norms.”

Crime stories, -on one hand- remind us of the contemporary world's dangers, reinforce social standards by calling attention to deviations from them , but on the other hand- send message

about the power of the technology and the institutions of criminal investigation and the forensic medicine within.

It is also interesting to put the representations of the human body into ritual and cosmological context. This function is obvious in the case of medical students, who gain their first impressions about the human body through bones and dissected parts of the dead. But nowadays anatomy by its popular displays conquered museum, exhibition halls, with mixed aim of entertainment and health education with hidden function to express the hegemon view of human being as pure material, biologic –somatic entity encapsulated in new ideas about bodies are both formulated and contested as Stephens (2011) write. This renewed visual representation empowered by new visual technologies for public display and medical purposes is filled with culturally-determined metaphors where entertainment is mixed strongly with apologetics of late modern biotech. Doherty (2003) defines this genre as „forensic noir” mixing forensic science and “autopsy-driven entertainment, expressing a pronounced belief in the powers of forensic science to solve crimes and a morbid interest in human dissection. This is not far from the gaze of medical student where the lay, abject gaze of a medical student toward human cadaver is mitigated by the anatomical examiner’s procedural entrance to the anatomical microcosm of a human being. This may have an initiation impulse parallel to the anatomical descensus of medical student towards the reified reality of lifeless human being. Abjection as an omnipresent threat to self-identity and subjectivity is expressed by Kristeva (1982), and it is a primordial element of medical initiation as well. For Kristeva, the corpse is the ultimate in abjection. The abject is ambiguous and does not respect borders and rules, and therefore, “disturbs identity, system, order”

According to Pierson (2010) *C.S.I.* constructs a multiplicity of gazes for viewers with a particular focus on the forensic and abject gazes along with the complex relationship that exists between them. This forensic gaze can be associated with the prevalence and proliferation of biological identification technologies in contemporary society.

The body centered framework is not the only way, as spiritualist framework represents the human body through symbolic anatomy of the chakra system, or Prana Nadi channels even new behavioral medicine generates different informational network representations which may embody social dynamics of the self through network of neuroimmunomodulation (Lázár 1994, 2005). On the other hand these criminal stories have wide socio-cultural and political connotative aura, where the abject and forensic gaze via the explorative work of *C.S.I.* investigators stares also the spaces and scapes of the whole society encaptured by criminal narratives filled with its hidden secrets and crimes.

As Pierson says: „*the forensic gaze also delves into the dark, inner cavities of the body in its quest for the legal truth.*” It is an analog way, how the healer is helped by autopsy, and medical student to get the proper knowledge.

This body-centered cultural focus may be seen also as hidden basic assumption of our culture. According to Foucault post-Enlightenment medicine is in its obsession with the improvement of the body, another objectifying the body, another inscription of power, another benevolent—or faux-benevolent—manifestation of the need to control, the same attitude is expressed by the way, how we deal with dying in the antiseptic anonymity of hospital rooms rather than in our own homes, which is considered to be “a technological blasphemy, a denial of the reality and dignity of death itself”.

The representations of the dead body are quite different in the *CSI*: "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" series and its „spin off” *CSI* (Miami, NY etc), the dramatic framework of which is anchored to scenes which take place in the autopsy suite. In *CSI* Miami we enjoy the computer graphics based animation of the explorative casual logic while gold, green, yellow

colors of the sacralized iconography of the rich upper middle class, and its Americal lifestyle in the tropical leisure zone generate visual metacommunication and contrast to the ascetic scientific pursuit the Truth.

The success among media audiences led to organize even a wandering international CSI exhibition Series with an interactive website, (<http://budapest.csiexhibit.com/index.html>) and very pervasive visual promotion.



This web- „iconostase” of CSI cult, offer a rich web of meaning, which is not far from our informants mentality. The new – almost religious identity is based on the facts, evidence based knowledge and the visually performed and celebrated scientific technology. As Tait (2006) writes „*These sequences elaborate a modernist imaginary: the anatomized body as a vehicle for discourses of science and pleasure extends regimes of representation and looking inaugurated in the Renaissance dissection theatre.*” It offers a special analogy with anatomical theaters as Sawday shows us ‘*The anatomy theatre was a register of civic importance, an index of the intellectual advancement of the community, and advertisement*

for a city's flourishing cultural and artistic life' (1995), the CSI series celebrate the high tech scientiflicated body with its victimized past narrative immersed in criminal context. The Forensic milieu became a central scene for this *media-ritual show* of the body in a mixed scientific and criminal context presenting the honor and dignity of science, technology, criminal investigation and law. Series like SCI spin offs, 'Dr. Bone', 'Waking the Dead', 'Cold Squad', 'Cold Case' put in focus this temporary asylum between life and dissolution, criminal enigmas and the final Truth. Pathology is a niche for events of secularized, materialized Bardo, and this way it is strictly religious surface between covered narratives of human ontologies immersed into suffering and success motivated by money, carrier and self-realization. The personal and inflated calvaries are encoded in a histological, biochemical, biophysical sign system explorable by high-tech. This carnographical shift of ontological representation of the Human being at the edge of non-existence has more than philosophical and hermeneutical content, it points clearly to the present crisis of the bio - reductionist notion of the Human being. The Human being as a victim only occasion for technology to fulfil its supreme power, the facts are only substrates of complex system of data analysis and re-presentation. As this carnographic semiosis unfolds not only human, but Transhuman dimensions too, knowledge society dates forensic pathology in the prime time zone to celebrate design, high tech computer graphics, multimedia iconic intertextuality. The camera generates another multidimensionality using different registers for the narrative presence with the high-color depth of CSI Miami for example, the documentative past via "home video-like" documentarist recording and the computer-based hyperreal representation of the scientific truth. Low, middle and higher realities, the unfolded past, the reflecting present and the special time of analysis which is anchored to the signs of past, happening in the presence and determines, or controls the future. These are the dimensions where the leader of cult guides the audience.

The good old shamanic trance returns, spirits of high tech machinery whisper the truth via CSI masters to the hypnotized listening audience of the media ritual. The scientific control and the technological narcissism are the message.

„Digital identifiers appear on the screen to make the correspondence between the cumulated images. In effect this sequence depicts a simple assemblage of clues, but in the hands of the CSI this evidence is translated and displayed via high-tech signifiers. The problematics of photographic truth are elided and instead this augmentation with technology and the expertise through which it is deployed extends a panoptic gaze which enables science to succeed where policing and the manipulations of lawyers fail” (Tait 2006)

We used the term „carnography” referring to an obsession with the human body that "suggests a connection between horror and pornography, nevertheless we debate Tait's thesis regarding the necrophilic gaze, where *“science offers a refuge for the pornography of death.”* As she argues, the audience is „positioned to take pleasure from imagery of death, imagery which often penetrates the flesh” (Tait 2006) continuing Pinedo's statement about both pornography and horror that 'expose what is normally concealed or encased to reveal the hidden recesses of the body, porn through carnal knowledge and horror through carnage' (Pinedo, 1997), where digitally produced shots simulating these hidden recesses of the underskin bodily world and the effects of violence upon them generating *„examples of this 'carnographic' revelation”*.. The fact is that these carnographic scenes - making science exciting, and spectacle -are media rituals celebrating science and high tech, where human actors are just necessary substrates of the industry, an industry which produce homogeneous series like CSI spin offs and its auxiliaries: web site, wandering exhibitions etc. The colors,

the characters, the schemas of dramatic framework, the narrative trajectory: all of these components are standardized, like in the McDonalds. These media rituals are regular mass media masses of high tech, professionalism, globalized standards with one word – the control. And the control is the most important category of stress theory, management of catastrophes and corporations, enterprises, states and local communities of all sizes.

This layer reflects the core, inner layer of the (medical) culture with the undercurrent of implicit basic cultural assumptions and worldviews about the suffering Human with its limited bodily, materialist essence and corporeality without its spiritual content and perspectives. These interpretations embodied in rules, narratives and discourse just like anatomical lessons are about the scientific and technological culture's norms and values with their visible elements.

Multiple scopes of clinical world

There is also another layer with importance regarding the medical professionalization, which is about the medical reality woven from transactions, displayed by characters, role, dramas and narratives.

The medical dramas conquered media space step by step. The first “swallows” like medical series like Dr Kildare preceded this “clinical boom” with decades and one must mention an American sample also: the City Hospital serial which was broadcast from 1951- to 1953 and another one from England in the late fifties and sixties, the Emergency Ward, which had been broadcasting for ten years . (This long “show time” was repeated by later the medical drama “House M.D.” with its 8 eight year story and two Golden Globe prizes.)

This early sample differed much, as they were more realistic, the medical script was worked out with moral messages, while the clinical enigmas, decision “turmoils” were not exaggerated at all. According to Karpf the medical profession was reluctant for a long while to see either the media or the public meddle in what it took to be its province. “*Broadcasting to an 'undifferentiated audience' would only distress the frail and neurotic; hypochondria might result*” (Karpf 1988) In the early period media functioned as mediator of scientific facts and knowledge like in the case of the BBC program *Your Life In Their Hands*, which started in 1958, provided opportunities for the scientific and technological perspective to gain ascendancy in health-related coverage. The next decades brought with the rise of consumerism and the patient's view a more skeptical audience attitude towards the medical contents where the dominant position of the doctor seemed to have waned. In this more pluralistic environment new ways of portraying medicine and health care emerged, and instead of the classical heroic 'good doctor' image a more realistic, or sometimes very controversial spectrum of medical figures emerged in clinical dramas and medical soap operas. On the other hand beyond a sort of inflation of traditional moral superheroes of clinical world, a new scape of collaborative team competence emerged, and we can accept Gabe's statement (1974), that in this big picture “*The representation of health and medicine as essentially technical issues effectively reinforced the individualistic approach to health, offering a 'dominant ideology' suggesting that health and medicine were essentially about pharmaceutical and technical progress.*” This accurate mediation of real medical facts became blurred in the contemporary medical media scene for sake of entertainment. As Carlyle writes about the recent Renaissance of medical drama, these cognitive dramatic framework is perfumed with a sort of mystery, when things are transformed into their enigmatic frame not fully explained. “*Programs like ER and Casualty are at times deliberately obscure, drawing the audience into a blur of activity where instructions are half*

heard, decisions are fudged and things don't always work out for the best.” Although this way of representation is usually denied by the medical expert audience, the naïve watcher and medical students may be involved in this atmosphere without distancing, also. Collee’s criticism is about this fascinating mystification: *”The fact that we don't understand the medical process makes us more appreciative of its complexity. The chaos and the jargon engage us intellectually in trying to work out what's happening. The moral ambiguity adds richness and depth while enabling us to put our own interpretation on events.”* Although close cooperation helps writers, producers, and medical advisers ensuring higher level of accuracy with a sort of medical censorship, nevertheless the audience immersed into these media space so deeply and totally that there is a danger that television being watched gains public health concern related with health behaviour covered or miscovered in these fantastic and usually dramatically distorted stories and the same distortions may emerge in the medical roles and model behaviors, cognitive schemas, like in the problematic issue of Dr. House or the strange and sexually overheated milieu of Gray’s Anatomy.

There is another genre, those thrillers and horrors, where narrative is immersed in the world of medical students like Rusowitzky’s thriller Anatomy I and II, where the medical students in the University of Heidelberg form a secret “anti-Hypocrates’ society for forbidden anatomic research on living peers in an atmosphere of post-Nazi secret societies, with fanaticism of scientific suprahumanism, which included polymeric preparation in living bodies for a better technical achievement. Our student informants did not find it interesting at all, rather dull, while others were seriously embarrassed by the stupid story. The similar denial was expressed in the case of Flatliners made by Joel Schumacher.

The students of the focus group session were more accepted in the case ER and the other medical soap operas like House M.D.:

„I was a real fan of ER. I am a little bit older than my schoolmates, my generation liked ER much. Although my foster-father told me, that the ER’s screenplay was ridicule. There is no such thing, that the medical staff run up and down shouting and jumping through cables and wires in Autoservice-like hall. Nobody operates beyond curtains in a passage, but we liked it very much.” Now my young colleagues are watching House M.D., and this traffic jam like dramatic framework has been disposed to the routes of medical decisions.”

But those parents who worked as medical doctors were generally very critical.:

“ I was also an ER fan, and watching the series my mom, being also medical doctor was very disappointed telling: No, no, not that way. Why do they give epinephrine, this is not so,, that must be done in a different way.” From that interest moment I started to see it through a more critical lens, sometimes saying that it is really rubbish. But ER was an almost documentary compared to House M.D. and the Grays Anatomy, these series are really unreal.”

This case represents sample of a multidimensional space of professional socialization, with conflict of informal authority and mediatized patterns of medical knowledge. But other soap operas have bad reception on the side of the students, like Gray’s Anatomy *“filled with strange sexual atmosphere, and stupid dialogues.”*

Other opinions point to the fascinating function of the medical milieu in these series, it is not about medicine, the world of doctors and nurses are only mean to recruit watchers, curious regarding the secret medical world. But they also deny the rigid “professional dignity,” the “I am proud to be a good doctor” feeling. They find it very embarrassing, that there is an

exaggerated sexual climate in Gray's Anatomy, because - looking at these series – “ a belief may emerge that the things are going this way in our hospitals to”.

Let's see some samples from the focus group statements regarding these soap operas.

“There is a sort of inflation of medical soap operas, all of which has a title beginning with Dr. this or that, Bone, Donor etc.” This transplantation story impressed me, I mean not the story, but its end... The story was about an old man with a progressive neurological disease. After his injury, there was a conflict between him and his daughter, as he wanted to give his organs to other patients, being in a fatal, final stage. I felt compassion, so these stories may bring strong bioethical messages, which may be useful in teaching medical communication and bioethics.” “One can find other normative messages with wider relevance. like the medical expertise, when the script writer uses the medical role and prestige to draw a model behavior of a committed, devoted, hyper-effective expert, who behaves like a self-sacrificing intellectual slave working without a break except few moments of holiday events to pronounce the exceptionality of these days. This picture of working night and day, the icons of the heroes of ER, sleeping in their clothes, with books on the bed.” “The other sample, the special Sherlock Holmes like icon of Dr House is also about the legitimation of expertise which overvalue the anomalies of his character.”

The students classified the medical serials, as medical dramas (House M.D., ER), medical comedies (Scrubs), medical soap operas (Gray's Anatomy) and medical crime stories, thrillers and horrors (like SCI clones, Bones, Riget - Kingdom Hospital, Coma, Anatomy I - II). The medical dramas exerted the most significant influence in the premedical, pre graduate period- although no one told that these movies played a decisive part in choosing medical profession. Other informants mentioned that among their friends – one learning economy at the Corvinus University- reported that ‘House M.D.’ was fascinating and getting him to think about change towards medical studies. These informants depicted the medical world as a fascinating and heroic one. Other opinion emphasizes that the medical world is like a microcosm offers a model for a wide scale of human behaviors, attitudes and transactions. Medical anthropologists like Cecil Helman also describe hospitals as a common frame of diverse institutional metaphor like church, city, factory, market and alike. It is not surprising that clinical worlds offer wide space for the human social microcosm of soap operas.

The medical soap operas like ‘Gray's Anatomy’, ‘Die Schwartzwaldklinik’, or the Czechoslovakian ‘Nemocnice na kraji města’ (‘Hospital at the End of the City’) were rather about human relationship, interactions and melodramatic events of the local medical community and its collisions and relationship with the outer world.

A different genre is the category of medical comedy like ‘The Scrubs’ or the Hungarian cartoon ‘Please, The Next’, - ‘Kérem a következőt’ with their sarcastic and ironic, caricature –like figures and dramatic framework.

The other important idea - emerging from these students' reflections-, was a sort of Sherlock Holmes idiom, the similarity or analogy between detective work and medical diagnosis and decision making.

Another classification implied three different levels: focus on the profession (ER), focus on the professional (‘House M.D.’), and focus on the non-professional interactions in the professional milieu (‘Gray's Anatomy’). One student said that this sequence of stages reflects her phases towards medical profession also.

The reports contained a sort of schism in the perception of the world of medical dramas, as they kept their reliability only until the students gained clinical experiences. The insight of the real clinical world cause dissatisfaction and tension, the same attitude, what their parents with medical background expressed.

These genres were exploring the causes in a sharp dramatic manner or decision making plays created the thematic focus like in the case of ‘House M.D.’, or the CSI forensic serials. Collecting the students’ reports about the influence of soap operas and medical dramas, we could circumscribe a minority group who attributed importance looking at the ER serial in their childhood to choose the medical profession. Two of the informants mentioned a Hungarian cartoon about Dr Bubo and the nurse Ursula, and their adventures, a medical-Aesopus-like collection of fables from of the mid seventies repeated several times later in the late nineties. A student told, that it had gotten her to cut and operate her toy animals one by one and these doctor role playing was her favorite childhood game. It is hard to deny this influence in choosing the road to become a doctor.

Some students mentioned - as a desirable model – ‘House M.D.’ as an elective seminar in the Marburg Medical School. They cited the cardiologist Jürgen Schafer, who used ‘House M.D.’ episodes regularly as part of teaching.

In the secular, disenchanting and bureaucratic social space the biomedicine may take some parts of the former religious control of everyday life. Where somatic health is in the place of salvation and beatitude and lapses of health behavior may replace the sin, and doctor is the moral authority instead of the clerk, media és medicine both generate a ritual space, a secular quasi-church. Medical soap operas like modern “legends of saints” are teaching narratives about the somatically good or bad and the their social, technological and psychological secularist context.

The biomedicine plays a great part in determining what is good or bad, normal and abnormal, how can we control insecurity and misfortune. The body weight, eating habits, body figure and its standards, all they are elements of this normative picture of reality guarded by medical expertise, evidence based knowledge machinery, and health industrial developments, *high technological* extensions.

We realize that biomedical soap operas offer a permanent media liturgy or masses of medicinal biopower and control. Two ritual space in one package- media rituals and medical rituals. Media church represents the church of medicine, church of health with a hidden legitimating and advertising rethorics on side , and a critical controlling role which may cause loss of trust in biomedicine. The audience may experience a double “participation mystique”.

Some other thoughts from the focus group session:

“Although we don’t like these series, there are some medical students who seem to be addict of these series, looking at different genres, like a whole spectrum of medical courses. ‘Bones’ from Forensic Medicine and Pathology, Dr. House is a course of medical decision science. Otherwise Dr House is really close relative of Sherlock Holmes, drug addict, eccentric and deviant hero., who is genial, creative problem solver with very conflicting social background. A course of work-life balance, or work-family conflict – as sort of medical sociology and sexology: ‘The Gray’s Anatomy’ just like the medical history of socialist Central- East European medical lifeworld, ‘Hospital at the End of the City’, or its Bavarian counterpart, ‘Die Schwartzwaldklinik’.

“ We can mention a different genre , where the medical narrative is covered and mixed with other files of the story, like the Neighbours with doctor Magenheim. This is even a more intimate insight to the doctors’ world from the home perspective.”

” Really it may help to build up a fantasy of a medical life career, as the behavior, the emotions and experiences represented by Dr. Magenheim would easily be internalized. There is no horror, there is no closed expert world of medical doctors, therefore the model and the figure of the doctor gets closer and closer, and more sympathetic. It can be also part of a hidden emotional initiation mediated by media.”

“Die Schwartzwaldklinik’ offers similar “gemütlich” milieu, but in an aristocratic and idyllic context with high medical prestige and elegant doctors. It is totally different compared to the sterile, abstract technocratic American medical professionals. The narrative of the Schwartzwald Clinic is sentimental, like a Hungarian movie from the thirties, the chief doctor and the nurse,”

“These stories have feminist connotation, like in this case, where the nurse starts medical studies for the sake of their romantic relationships.”

“There are important Hungarian “art Kino” with relevant message regarding the humanist or non-humanist sides of biomedicine, like Gaál’s ‘Sodrásban’, or the ‘Oldás és kötés’ of Jancsó Miklós, or ‘The Lost Paradise’, a Sarkadi novel adaptation by Makk Károly. These movies may help professional socialization as much as other influences.”

“The Institute of Behavioral Sciences used to organize ‘Filmklub’ but these movies are about psychiatric, thanatological, sociological or bioethical problems and themes. Now they organized a whole series of Marco Ferreri in a monthly scheduling.”

The last theme of the focus group was challenging, because the students brought up media as source of counter- ritual of classic bioreductionist assumptions and the cosmology of biomedicine. These assumptions exclusive materialism, organ-centered, analytic orientation, upward causation and alike are subverted by some movie narratives, like in case of Wenders’ ‘Der Himmel über Berlin’ (‘Wings of Desire’) or its American remake, the ‘City of Angels’, or the extreme ‘Riget’ by Lars von Thiers and its remake, Kingdom Hospital by Stephen King. These movies are part of the western cultural trend, which can be called Occulture or Re-enchantment (Partridge 2002).

“A good sample is the heroine of the movie “City of Angels , who is seduced by an angel played by Cage, and we can compassionately follow how she developed from a skeptical surgeon or cardiologist, or whatever into a spiritual novice, partner of an angel with open spiritual eyes, a mystic who dies suddenly after this transformation. The German version was much deeper, but rather for few...”

“In these lines of genre one can mention the Prophecy Trilogy or Pentalogy, where the prosecutor is the key figure at the frontier of the facts and evidences and the transcendental reality facing the morphology of the Suprahuman”.

This way the room for autopsies, the place where the somatic evidences are dominant becomes a passage from here to there over the transcendental septum. And a whole Hospital may be transformed to be the home and the battlefield of the spirits, like in the case of the right.

But these transits are also legitimate in the world of multiple medical realities (Johannessen, Lázár 2006), as these spiritualist explanatory models are not absurd in the cosmologies of alternative medicine.

The results of narrative analysis in categorical-content perspective

Principal sentences	Category	Comments
ER realistic, authentic with general medical role model, while Dr House irreal, fantastic, the controversial figure is charismatic, popular for lay people, finally Gray's Anatomy as a real soap opera represents an interpersonal relationship of surgeon community in front. They are complementary	Medical genres	The informants tipologize the medical dramas and medical soap operas along genre features, narratives and characters.
Media narratives show doctors as heroes, The mediated clinical world is fascinating, and exerts recruiting effects	Lay cluster. Influence of medical dramas on friends and other lay people	Esoterism of clinical life world is fascinating,
"... more than half of my schoolmates watched medical dramas in elementary school, and the situation did not change much in the secondary grammar school.		popular
My lawyer friend followed every part of the Gray's Anatomy for years, without missing an episode, she was interested much in the hidden world of clinical community, and – although her mother worked in a hospital. She was happy to be supported not become a doctor .		even for those who otherwise have health worker's relatives or wanted to be
A young solicitor lady told, that she watches medical dramas because of nostalgia (she wanted to be medical doctor in an earlier period), but now she is glad to avoid medical route, as .based on these medical dramas- (they don't have leisure time, work to much, etc)		or denied to be medical doctor
The lay informant emphasized that this foreign clinical world is different from ours, and he reported mistakes, and obvious paradoxons.		The western clinical world is usually compared and differed from the own clinical reality
Another lay informant told, that Dr House was unsympathic, and because of this she ceased to watch the serial the foreign medical dramas shows a contrast.		Characters may be basis for denial of the serial..
"As I suffered a lot because of diseases in my childhood and medical world was familiar to me, I liked much medical drama on TV like ER, influencing my doctoral games and my intent to be a doctor"	Childhood memories cluster	Medical dramas exert influence on early decisions on to be a doctor,
"I was attracted by Dr House as an assertive superman with clinical omnipotence, although suffering from character problems		Medical expertise is fascinating.
"I liked House M.D. very much, based on my primitive biological knowledge the story seemed to be without any mistakes, and I thought it had given insight to the medical world, I think it helped me to choose medical		Medical dramas exerts fascination influence in teenager period also.

profession” as a teenager I loved to see House M.D., I found it very interesting.		
My mother who is a medical doctor, told: “No, this not, why do the give epinephrine, this is not that way, that thing mustn’t be done “and I accepted her viewpoint and started to see it with more criticism as a teenager I like the soap opera, Grays’s Anatomy.	Expert relatives cluster	Medical expertise creates critical or denying attitude towards medical dramas.
They let Hungarian doctors get insight in the clinical world of richer western countries but many mistakes from translation disturb expert watchers My friend’s mother as a health worker told that the illnesses in House M.D. are really existing, but they are rare		Lay elements like translation may hurt medical credibility. The medical content is not reliable.
House M.D. annoyes me now . Gray’s Anatomy is ridiculous, I just laugh at it now	Medical students with expert identification	A medical student at the late phase of professionalization becomes critical, and distancing.
Medical soap operas may confuse the patients if they represent non-realistic elements.		They show responsibility for lay public’s disinformation and distorted expectancies through the media.
“As the time passed by, I was filled with doubt regarding House M.D.’s figure, as I learned to involve patients into the clinical, where healing must include body and soul at the same time.		Based on bio-psycho-social basis they criticize bioreductionist and technomedical ideology of medical media serials.
“...a medical student was very critical with these medical drama because of their non-realistic issues, there are diseases, nonsense representations, and absurd dynamics of illness courses		Strong clinical reality testing
I have used to see ER since age 5, and it exerted influence on my becoming medical student, it was a dynamic landscape of my future, an aim to fight for, the serial helped me to tolerate to see blood, wounds and clinical scapes.	Socialization cluster	Medical dramas exerts positive influence on medical socialization in the early, pregradual period.
These medical dramas helped me to choose the medical profession, as they show an idealized clinical world and roles in it		
The biology teacher advised to watch E.R.which helps choosing medical profession		

Summary

Although medical dramas, soap operas are not classic media rituals in their Neo-Durkheimian sense compared to talk shows, one can find several elements of a secular “mystic participation” sharing the key assumptions, basic moral values, behavioral rules, roles and models of our late modernist (post-postmodern), high tech and hyperrational age. Even the criminal series like CSI serials - called a special genre, „forensic noir” mixing forensic science and “autopsy-driven entertainment”- may be treated as analogy of early anatomy experiences

of medical initiation. The medical context offers a fascinating archetype-like frame for adoration of professionalism. The psychopathic personal limitations in the case of House M.D., or anomic sexual behavioral chaos in Gray's Anatomy are only a background – where the Gestalt of medical professionalism and the power of high tech medical industry comes to the front.

That is why it is tempting to insert the medical media rituals into the ritual spectrum of medical initiation. Our informants agreed regarding the fascinating nature of medical themes and genres, and showed slight ambivalence regarding their determinative role in choosing medical profession accepting the pregradual influence in inducing interest towards the profession. Some of the informants reported a sort of alienation from these media contents after their real clinical experiences. Other students started to search for medical mistakes, being more critical, usually without success. They developed the same professional superiority regarding these media representations as their parents with medical background. These opinions draw a slight but strict border between the institutional socialization and media effects, whatever fascinating and influencing they are. This shift can be explored during the process of medical professionalization, when students report the multimodal media influence of medical dramas, and the denial of their strict role in professionalization at the same time, supporting the view that the media as the dominant representational aspect of modern culture is overwritten by the embodied and 'lived experience' of (professional) culture in medical socialization. Warde (1996) argues the need to consider other sources of cultural experience beyond media influences like identification with occupational groups not dependent upon shared patterns of commercial consumption. The production view of the professional self underestimates the social context of identity formation, and *overemphasizes the role of* media outputs at the expense of the variety of practices which create and sustain social relations of the professional clinical life world.

Some reports (Spike 2008, White 2008, Arawi 2010, Weaver R., Wilson I. 2011,) signified the importance of bioethics education practice incorporating medical dramas like House M.D. episodes, nevertheless students did not mention these media contents as a source of valid medical knowledge in bioethical, medical communication or sociological context. On the other hand there is equivocal and sounded opinion that these medical soap operas, medical dramas, or medical thrillers or crime stories do exert influence of medical identity and role expectations in premedical years and among lay public. It is the task of the future to get a more detailed picture how media rituals are organizing, modulating lay public's medical perception and expectations. Although it is generally denied, we can't exclude these "medical media rituals" as shadow part of medical initiation .

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**Culturally, Historically
Communicating the Yoruba's
Traditional Concept of Military
Heroism: Ààre Ònà Kakanfò**

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Abstract: This article uses Fischer's narrative paradigm to analyze the traditional war leaders of the Yoruba in the south-west of Nigeria. The paradigm resonates with Kenneth Burke's dramatic pentad, which stress symbolic actions. The article defines the title, highlights its origin, presents the characteristics of an Ààre Ònà Kakanfò and tells a brief history of each holder of the title. The purpose of presenting all these is to argue that through the history and tradition of Ààre Ònà Kakanfò of the Yoruba land, Yoruba concept of military heroism is constructed and communicated. Also, this article shows how the public react to the character of the Ààre Ònà Kakanfò. In addition, it examines the relevance of the title in the contemporary Nigerian politics.

Keywords: war, bellicose, brave, courageous, tactics, trouble, culture, tradition, fear, politics, paraphernalia, title, holder(s), history

Introduction

*Ààre!
Ààre!
Orí mi, má je n s'Ààre Ònà Kakanfò.
Ààre!
Òlórún, má je n s'Ààre Ònà Kakanfò.
Ààre!
Ààre!
Ààre!*

Translation:

*Ààre!
Ààre!*

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My head (being), don't let me offend Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò.,
Ààrẹ̀!
God, don't let me offend Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò.
Ààrẹ̀!
Ààrẹ̀!
Ààrẹ̀!

The lines above constitute the poetic song (panegyric) which creates a sense of awesomeness, fear, and overwhelming feeling about a formidable traditional title and the holders of it among the Yoruba of the south-west Nigeria. The song is used to launch this article which explores history to arrive at the Yoruba view or concept of heroism. Before the exploration of the history, a theoretical approach becomes imperative since the communication of the concept is what prompted the writing of this article. One theory which connects with human stories and leads to the derivation of ideas from such stories is from Walter Fischer, a communication theorist. According to Sagan (2009), Fischer's narrative paradigm means that human beings are story tellers. In fact, Sagan relays Fischer's exact expression as follows: "a theory of symbolic actions –words and/or deeds –that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, and interpret them" (in Sagan, 2009). Sagan states that Fischer's idea resonates with Kenneth Burke's dramatisic pentad. Dickinson (2009:126) explains Burke's pentad as "a tool of analysis made up of five elements act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose," stating the sole idea as a way to analyze human symbolic action so as to detect the motivation behind the action. Since Fischer and Burke are concerned about symbolic action, only Fischer's theory has been chosen for this article to avoid duplication. His theory is reformed in this article to include human beings as story or history makers, not just tellers. While some people tell the stories or relay the history of others in writing or in speech communication, their experiences also build stories or history that can be conveyed to others. Without any doubt, to tell stories or relay history, human beings need to communicate. As Sagan says, the stories, history, culture, biography, character and so on which they communicate have impact on how people in general think or act. Fischer's communication theory, therefore, is used as the gazing lenses for presenting this article because the Yoruba concept of traditional military heroism and their way of evaluating heroes are based on the history and/or panegyric of their cultural or traditional, war-venturing leaders.

This article argues that the history of the Yoruba Aare Ona-Kakanfo title holders communicates the Yoruba concepts of heroism by highlighting the cultural, symbolic marks which characterize their title and form the Yoruba perception of traditional military heroes. To achieve its goal, the paper offers the meaning of the title, traces its history, examines why the title is controversial and full of fearful or frightening adjectives, presents vital information about the title holders, brings to the fore common characteristics of Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò, looks at what people say about the title, explores the rituals that go with the position for idea formulation, places the Aare within the context of Èsò, pays special attention to the last two Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò whose role in Nigeria politics has erected a foundation for a new feature or trend. In a nutshell, the paper presents an overview of Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò to project it as an aggressive, dangerous, ritualistic, controversial, heroic, and relevant institution –all derived from its history, a unique name, traditional military structure, rituals, war effrontery, paraphernalia or insignia, belief, people's perception of Kakanfò, praise poetry, the tendency to conquer and dominate the scene, and contemporary Nigeria politics.

Omolola (1987) notes that the institution of *Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò* among the Yorùbá people connotes bravery, mystery, bizarre, war appetite, defense, tactics, chieftaincy, command or authority, traditional militarism, callousness, blood-thirstiness, restlessness, culture, controversy, capture tendency and power retention, territorial expansion, magical power exhibition, installation rituals, military dress, weapons, military operation's deadline, brutality, trouble, prowess exhibition, conflict, and attempts to dominate and conquer others. The Yoruba view the title holder as an awesome, dangerous, calculative, unpredictably predictable, domineering, magical, ritualistic, obstinate, stubborn, obdurate, bellicose, and the most brave and gallant traditional military man whose appointment, according to tradition, should be made by the Aláàfin, the king of Òyó, whose remaining geographical center can be traced to the present *Òyó* City in the *Òyó* State of Nigeria.

The traditional concept of military heroism which the Yoruba form from the history, tradition, and behavior of their *Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò* is not peculiar to the Yoruba; it is an idea which represents traditional military heroism generally in Africa. The Yoruba or African idea of traditional military heroism may not fully resonate with westerners because of cultural differences, values, and gazing lenses. Two scholars present what appears to be a western concept of heroism:

„After polling a number of people, we discovered that heroes tend to have eight traits, which we call *The Great Eight*. These traits are *smart, strong, resilient, selfless, caring, charismatic, reliable, and inspiring*. It's unusual for a hero to possess all eight of these characteristics, but most heroes have a majority of them” (Allison & Goethals 2013).

From the perspective of Allison and Goethals, all attributes of a hero are positive. Without any link to any profession, the definition sounds generic in a way. Becker and Eagley (2004:163-178), who approach heroism from a psychologist's perspective, see a hero as a person serving others and at the same time trying to hold a status, and psychologists Jayawickreme and Stefano (2012:14) frame heroism as “an individual's commitment to a noble purpose, usually aimed at furthering the welfare of others, and involving the willingness to accept the consequences of achieving that purpose.” Even though this definition comes from westerners, the description it presents tallies with the Yoruba idea of heroism revolving around *Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò* who, by tradition, must defend his people at all costs -fight fiercely to win or die while defending and expanding the territory of his people. The interpretation of the word “noble” as implied in the definition above may differ from one culture to another. Hence, the features of a hero and definitions of heroism may have their local peculiarities, meanings, and interpretations. Nonetheless, heroes, irrespective of locations or cultures, are people who do what others do not do or cannot do; they display courage and stand up to difficult tasks. Lieven (1998:419) asserts that “the courageous man becomes a hero.”

Meaning or Semantic Breakdown of the Title:

The word “*Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò*” came into use during the reign of Aláàfin Àjàgbó who ruled in the 17th century (Ogunniran 1986:12; Omolola 1987). According to Akintunde Sowunmi of Omolaso House, Ibadan, “*Ààrẹ̀*” means “the topmost rank” or “presiding authority; “*Ònà*” means “the path” or “the way;” and “*Kakanfò*” is derived from “*Kaka ni ifò*” which means “strong, unstoppable jump.” Sowunmi's semantic breakdown constructs the noun phrase which is the highest military title among the Yoruba. *Ààrẹ̀ Ònà kakanfò* can be interpreted as

“The war authoritarian or commander who strongly and forcefully jumps about from one place to another, not skipping any place, or the one who is usually restless, moving with ease and in turn from one point to another” (Sowunmi). That is the simple or ordinary meaning of the title. To the Yorùbá, Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò is the over-all boss of all soldiers and all military unit commanders and their soldiers. No wonder, Johnson (1969:73) called him “Generalissimo” or “Field Marshall.” Generally, as upheld by Àdérinkòmí (1986:10) and Omololá (op cit. 35), the name Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò is reserved for the topmost, toughest military leader among the Yoruba. This makes the title holder a heroic person among the èsò and the general public. The title is strictly for a bold, powerful, and blood-thirsty military leader. Today, because of modernity and change in the institution of Aláàfin, the title has been conferred on highly influential politicians of the modern time. Only tested soldiers could occupy the position in the past, and in the modern time when there was no longer standing Yoruba traditional army, Aláàfin conferred the title on Akintola and Abiola who had taken a leading role in Nigerian politics. Participation in national politics might be a new selection criterion which Aláàfin has adopted. Whether in the past or in the present time, Aare Ona-Kakanfò is a person with exceptional abilities, whose influence often creates a charged atmosphere and two visible conflicting sides – one for him and the other against him. As the commander of one side, Aare Ona-Kakanfò is a hero because all public actions revolve around his personality and ideology, and his voice and actions dictate the tune for those on his side while those against him are not at peace as long he lives or as long as they oppose him.

Pre-Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò Era:

Odùdùwà, the founder of the Yoruba country, made Olúkòyí a defense minister and war commander, and Olúkòyí passed on the role assigned to him to his children and the generations that followed; thus, Olukoyi’s traits- fearlessness, magical power, traditional weapon mastery, determination, seriousness, and interest in going to and in pursuing wars to an end extended to all members of Olúkòyí’s family members. Today every generation of Olúkòyí takes pride in its inherited brave acts and power-connected qualities by proudly or boastfully saying, “Emi omò Eso Ìkòyí!” which means “I, the child of Ìkòyí Warrior!” Usually, the descendants of Olúkòyí make the expression to signal that they can accomplish difficult tasks, that they can not be taken for a ride, and that they can not be intimidated or subdued easily. The military image of Olúkòyí echoes in an extract from a popular panegyric, which the Yorùbá oral artistes crafted for the first generation of Olúkòyí:

Olúkòyí ó!
 Èsò rógun jó jìngín.
 Àròní, omò Kún’rí-dogun.
 Èsò Ìkòyí kì í gbòfà léyìn;
 Iwájú ní fí gbòrun!
Omò A-kú-yán-àn-yàn-an-bòtẹ̀-lẹ̀rù.
 Olúkòyí,
 Èsò rógunjó jìngín,
 Àròní, ‘mò Olórí-ogun.

Meaning:

Olúkòyí!

Èsò who joyfully dances at the sight of wars.
 Àròni (Medicine man), the offspring of Kún' rídogun
 (He who leaves his hair unshaved in anticipation of war)
 Èsò, the Warrior of Ìkòyí never gets the blow of an arrow on the back;
 It is his front view that he uses to receive the attack of a bow!
 The offspring of He-who dies-in- conspiracy-and-leaves-fear-behind.
 Olúkòyí,
 The warrior that joyfully dances at the sight of wars.
 Magical man, the child of the one who leads others at wars.

However, during the reign of His Royal Highness, Àkèè Olúodò of Òyó, the king realized that Arùkú Oládogán who was the Olúkòyí, his war commander, was too old to lead a war. Consequently, Aláàfin requested Oládogán to nominate any of his brave and competent sons to lead the Òyó army, and as a traditional routine, Olúkòyí consulted his Ifa priest (babaláwo), and the Ifá oracle identified Sèèrèkí Àpalà of Ìgbànnà as the most suitable Olúkòyí's son to be the new commander for the army (Ògúnníran 1986:12). Sèèrèkí was brave, perfect at using weapons, strong physically and magically, and forceful like his formidable father, so he assumed the responsibility of leading the Yorùbá army. According to Ògúnníran, immediately after the installation of Sèèrèkí Àpalà as the new commander, Aláàfin sent him to wage a war. Sèèrèkí won the war and moved to other unassigned places for wars, and he won, too. When he returned late and told Aláàfin how he left one war for another, fighting and conquering places, Aláàfin commended his performance, and said that Sèèrèkí should be named "Olúkòyí kékeré tabi Àrèmo tí í jà tí í fo àfòlú," which means "Young Olúkòyí or the first child that fights and continues to fight from one boundary to another." In addition, Omololá (op cit.:50), seems to agree that Sèèrèkí started as the first Kakanfò because Sèèrèkí had a special recognition which resulted or metamorphosed into the title.

Selection and Installation Rituals

Aláàfin, with the support of his Òyó-Mèsi (chiefs-in-council), reserves the right to select a warrior to become Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò. Traditionally, in the military hierarchy, the Òtún Kakanfò, by ranking of the Èsò, is the next in command to the Kakanfò, and upon the death of one Kakanfò, he, under normal circumstances, automatically fits in as the new Kakanfò.

The installation of the Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò involves a physical and ritualistic process which is intended to empower the new Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò and make him tower above other eso. Traditionally, the installation process requires the new Kakanfò to accept incisions and medicinal concoctions on his head. Specifically, within the premises of the Aláàfin in Òyó City, any Èsò selected for the title would have the hair on his head shaved, have 201 sharp and deep incisions made on his head, and 201 medicinal concoctions rubbed into the incisions – one medicine for one cut! This process is considered as rituals or a rite of passage for the new Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò to be fearless (Johson 1969:74).

Did all the Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò pass through the rituals? Up to the time of Látòsísà's installation as Ààrè, no one would doubt that every Ààrè appointed by Aláàfin underwent the rituals. However, the gap between Látòsísà's and Akintólá's installation marked a new trend in the Yorùbá land, as foreign ideologies had taken over in the land, and Christianity and Islam had gained ground to the extent that they had a tremendous impact in the way people perceived traditional rites. Adherent to the two religions view the ritual ceremony associated

with the Ààré Ònà Kakanfo's appointment and installation as being against the doctrines and tenets of their religions; hence, they detest the idea of any Christians or Muslims passing through the traditional process. The last two recent Kakanfo, Samuel Akíntólá, a prominent Christian and Moshood Abíólá, a devout Muslim operated within the context of their religions and Kakanfo institution. While there was little or no Christian protest at the time Akíntólá was appointed, Muslims and Christians received the news of Abíólá's appointment with mixed feelings. While some people felt that he should accept the title from Aláàfin who was also a Muslim, other people, especially Muslims, felt Abíólá should not accept the title because it had rituals that were purely unacceptable in Islam.

To make the institution fit into the reality on the ground, a new, modern dimension set in. According to Abíólá (2007:par. 3), the Aláàfin introduced a change to the conferment of the Ààré Ònà Kakanfò title, and the king gave an explanation for the new trend: "The institution of the *aare ona kakanfo*, the generalissimo of the Yoruba, has also had to change since the treaty of 1893 signed by my grandfather, King of Yoruba country, which put an end to intertribal and internecine wars." Abíólá states further that Aláàfin told the crowd that witnessed the Kakanfò Abíólá's installation that "men are still conferred the title to help advance the progress of the kingdom, even in times of peace (op cit.: par. 13). To show that the installation rituals changed when Moshood Abíólá was installed, Hafsat Abiola (op cit.:10), the daughter of the late Kakanfò, also states:

„The videos of the fourteenth ceremony do not show the physical preparation of the candidate, Moshood Abíólá. Indeed, it is doubtful that the recipient who is also a businessman allowed 201 incisions to be made onto his "occiput" or his head to be shaved everywhere but "the inoculated part." He is seen wearing a Yoruba *fila*, not an *ojijiko*. He does not carry a staff invincible nor does he wear a leopard skin apron. A possible concession to the traditional regalia is the geometric patterns of his garment, especially his *fila* (cap) which shows bold geometric shapes that might be a leopard motif."

Dressing and Paraphernalia of Office:

Traditionally, Ààré Ònà Kakanfò's appearance is distinct among the *èsó* because of his paraphernalia of office and dress codes. His unique dressing and other insignia of office place him on the highest level of command. After the installation, Ààré Ònà Kakanfò keeps the routine of shaving the hair on his head, leaving "ààsó" (hair tuft) on the head, wearing "sòkòtò" (what Americans know as pant) made of a leopard skin, sitting on a leopard skin, wearing a long cap ("Ojijiko") made of the parrot's red feathers, and carrying with him "òpá iségún" (òdùro) which means "the weapon of victory." It is only this weapon that he carries to any war, not gun. Also, he ties charms round his body and wraps his body up with magical clothes when he is in the house (Aderinkomi 1986:11). The leopard skin is a common dress feature of Ààré Ònà Kakanfò. Samuel John writes that Kakanfò wears coronet ("Akòro"). Keeping strictly to this tradition extended to Aare Ona kakanfò Látòsísà, the last of the old-era Ààré Ònà Kakanfò. In spite of modernity at the time Akíntólá became Kakanfò, the dress elements of the ancient was still a part of his installation. Akinlolú Ajé (1987:9) states that when Samuel Ládòkè Akíntólá was installed as Kakanfò, the cap he wore was made of a leopard skin. In addition, Akíntólá was given "awa," a shield to protect himself from cutlasses, spears, arrows, and other dangerous weapons of war. Even though there was no standing Yoruba army like it was in the past, Akintola received war weapons! Moshood

Abíólá's way of dressing was different. He wore "filà òribí," not "ojijiko." Abíólá neither carried any staff invincible nor wore a leopard skin apron. The only thing similar to the regalia was the geometric patterns of his garment, especially, his fila (cap) which shows bold geometric shapes that might be a leopard motif (Abiola 2007:par. 10).

Composition of Office Holders:

All occupiers of the Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò office have shown bravery in troublous times, so they are heroes among the Yorùbá. Even Kúrunmí and Àfònjá who turned against Aláàfin proved their mettle as Kakanfò by being fearless and being war mongering. Both died gallantly while fighting for their course. In all, they are sixteen in number.

Sèèrèkí Àpàlà of Ìgbànnà:

Sèèrèkí was the son of Olúkòyí Arùkú Oládògán. The old age of Seereki's father prompted Seereki's appointment as the over-all military commander of the Yoruba army. His appointment by Aáàfin Àké Olú-odò gave birth to a new military title that co existed with the Olúkòyí title (Òguúnníran 1986; Omololá 1987) While his father retained his title, Seereki proved his mettle as an emerging military authority per excellence. Because he successfully led the Yorùbá army, fought gallantly, used his initiatives, attacked, and conquered unassigned places, Aláàfin said Sèèrèkí should be renamed as "Aremo ti i ja ti fo afolu," which literally means "the premier child who fights endlessly and jumps comfortably and aggressively from one boundary to another. This might have prompted the idea that he should be regarded as the first Kakanfò.

Kòkòrò-gangan of Ìwòyè (Àkekèé Òde Ìwòyè):

The son of an Ègbá woman, Kokoro-gangan (Scorpion) was the first person officially addressed as Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò. He had the title after the death of Sèèrèkí Àpàlà. He was a nephew to Aláàfin Àjàgbó who appointed him as Kakanfò. The most popular war he led was called "Ogun Ìwéré" which occurred in 1650 (Ogunniran 1986:13). He was a tough man. He destroyed Ìkèrèkú (his mother's birth place), Ile Olópa, and Ònkò.

Qyatópé of Ìwòyè:

Qyatópé was a son of Kòkòrò-gangan. He was as powerful as his father, so he succeeded his father as Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò, and Ìwòyè was destroyed while he was Kakanfò.

Qyálàbi of Àjàsè-Ìpo (Qyá'abi):

Oyálàbi was born in Àjàsè-Ìpo, a town in the present day Kwara State of Nigeria. According to Gbádébo, a descendant of Kakanfo, Oya'abi left Ajase-Ipo for the present Ajase near Ògbómòsò because of a chieftaincy tussle at the former. He helped Alaafin Abiodun Adegoolu to overcome the too-powerful Basòrun Gáà of Oyo. Because Kakanfò was ill, he died on his way to Qyó when he was going there for an honor Aláàfin wanted to bestow upon him.

Adéta Lángbin of Jàbàtá:

He was the first native of Jàbàtá to hold the title of Ààre Ònà Kakanfò and the first ruler of the town. According to Baále Òkésolá Àkanó, the ruler of Jàbàtá near Ògbómòsò, Adéta was officially installed as Kakanfò in Òyó-Ilé. He was always war tasty; consequently, Jàbàtá became a destroyed place because of the wars he fought. When the town scattered, Adéta moved to another Jàbàtá which is now in the present-day Òyó City . Two of his children were Sàlakó and Yetúndé Àtándá. His “oríki” was “Yawú olóogun; siini Ògún bá won dá bùru èjè,” which literally means “Yawú, the warrior; the well-dressed Ògún who makes them (enemies) spill blood profusely.”

Ìbítòlá Òkú of Jàbàtá (Ò-kú-láárò-jí-lálé):

He was the son of Adéta Lángbin. He succeeded his father as Ààre Ònà Kakanfò. He continued the war his father fought and died in Jàbàtá.

Àfònjà of Ìlorin:

Àfònjà was maternally a prince of Òyó. He was very powerful; he requested for the position of Ààre Ònà Kakanfò, and he was installed in 1817 during the reign of Aólè (Elphinstone 1921:15). Alaafin Aole disliked him because of his growing power, so Alaafin planned to have him killed by sending him to fight at Iwere that had very powerful soldiers. Àfònjà, with the connivance of Oníkòyí and Òyó chiefs, rebelled against the center and disgraced Aole, and this led Aole to curse Afonja and his supporters before Aólè committed suicide. Among the people who helped Afonja to fight against the towns under the control of Alaafin was Alufa Alimi, a Fulani religious leader who had strong Muslim warriors and made the service of his soldiers available to Àfònjà (op cit.). Unfortunately, his former helpers (Muslim militants) became too powerful in Ìlorin, so Àfònjà lost though gallantly his life in the attempt to regain his authority over Ìlorin (Omolola 1987:65).

Tóyèje Àkànní Alébiósù of Ògbómòsò:

He was the king of Ògbómòsò from 1797 to 1825. As Òtún Kakanfò, he became Ààre Ònà Kakanfò after the death of Àfònjà. His first mission was to free Ìlorin which the Fùlání had seized from the Yorùbá, but unfortunately the Yorùbá were not united, so they could not succeed in getting back what belonged to them (Oyerinde 1934:29). He led the following wars: Ogele and Rùnyererùnyere or Mùgbámùgbá. Fulani won both wars. He also led “Pamo War”, which occurred because of a disagreement he had with Oníkòyí. He also invaded and subdued Ede where people refused to pay tributaries. H died peacefully.

Edun of Gbógùn-ún:

Contrary to tradition, during the kingship of Aláàfin Amodo, Edun of Gbógùn-ún was appointed as Kakanfò by Oníkòyí Adégún while Tóyèje that Aláàfin installed was still parading himself as Ààre Ònà Kakanfò, so there were two Kakanfò at a time – one for Aláàfin and one for Oníkòyí! Edun led Gbógùn-ún war, scattered Esièlè, he but died at Gbódó while he was attempting to go and invade Ìlorin that succeeded in bringing Ikoyi under it.

Òjọ Amépowuyi of Abemò:

He was one of the top-ranking military officers under Kakanfò Àfònjá. He captured Èpo from Aláàfin and established his authority (Kakanfò's). He also captured Iware, Okiti, Ajerun, Koto, and Ajabe that were close to Ijaye. (Johnson 1969:234). He adds that Edun liked wearing his red clothes made of charms.

Kurunmí of Ijáyè:

Aláàfin Àtibà who promised Kúrunmí the title of Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò during the Eléduwè war conferred the title on Kúrunmí around 1840 (op cit.:283; Obateru 1982:21). Kúrunmí combined political, religious, and military powers. He was merciless to anybody who committed even the least sin. In addition, he was blood thirsty, for his common punishment was to kill sinners. As merciless as he was to many sinners and to many highly placed people, he was lenient to the poor or ordinary people. He was very skillful, magically forceful, and physically powerful at wars. He had the habit of suppressing any power that would rival his. Upon the request of Olúyòlé of Ìbàdàn, Kúrunmí supported the Ìbàdàn army against the Ìjèbú and the Ègbá soldiers who attacked Ìbàdàn, and Ìbàdàn was able to defeat Màyè at Gbánámú. He also fought "Àrákangá war" against Ondese that he envied because the latter had a unique, dangerous spear that was gaining popularity. (Johnson 1969:251-53). He also led the Bátèdó war against the Ìbàdàn army because he refused to pay tributaries to Olúyòlé of Ìbàdàn (op cit 297). Kúrunmí and his soldiers defeated the Ìbàdàn army. However, Kúrunmí faced a looming danger and eventually, despite his prowess, died at a war in Ìjáyè because he refused to recognize Adélù, the first son of Aláàfin Àtibà, as a new king in Òyó. Culturally, Aláàfin's first son should die with his father, but the arrangement Àtibà made changed the culture, for Adélù succeeded his father as Aláàfin. Because of this incident, Kakanfò rebelled against Aláàfin, and the people of Ìjáyè came up with a song that expresses the mind of the community.

Àtibà, mǎà tí í kú o o o;
 Dúró d'Adélù;
Omo-oba ní í boba kú!
 Dúró d'Adélù;
 Àtibà, mǎà tí ì kú o o o;
 Dúró d'Adélù;
Omo-oba ni i bóa kú!

Meaning:

Atiba, don't die now;
 Wait for Adelu;
 A king's son must die with the king!
 Wait for Adelu;
 Atiba, don't die now;
 Wait for Adelu;
 A king's son must die with the king!

Olúyedún of Ìbàdàn:

Oluyedun was a son of Kakanfo Afonja. He was the first Kakanfo in Ibadan. His tenure as Kakanfo was short, so he could not cause any trouble like his father (Akinyele 1951:31). According to Johnson, Oluyedun made a request that he wanted to occupy the position which his father had held (1969:244).

Òjò Aburúmákú Olánnípá Àdió of Ògbómòsò:

Òjò was too tough and regarded as a wicked person, so people labeled him “Aburumaku,” which literally means “The wicked one who does not die.” He was bale Ògbómòsò, the ruler of Ogbomoso (Oyerinde 1934:104). He was magically powerful and rich. According to Oyerinde, Ojo spent his money to compete for the Aare Ona Kakanfo position, and Alaafin Adelu allowed him to occupy it (109). Although he did not engage in wars outside Ogbomoso, he sent Ajayi Olubao to Ijebu War in 1866 and the later died there. Aburumaku also sent the Ogbomoso army to invade Ilesa in 1867 (?). His reign witnessed the Roti riot in Ogbomoso because he promised to kill Roti. Aburumaku was struck by a thunderbolt when he was at a conflict with Fami, his powerful friend in Igbeti. Although Aburumaku did not die immediately, his sickness after the thunderbolt attack led to his eventual death (op cit.:110).

Látòsísà (Látòósà) of Ibadan:

Látòósà was the second Ìbàdàn man who became Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò. Before getting the position, he was Òtun Kakanfò, the second in command (Akinyele 1951:88). He was a native of Ilora (Falola and Oguntomisin 1984:54). According to Johnson, “Latosisa usurped the title of Kakanfo by might over right, by displacing Ojo Aburumaku ... He sent to Ojo for all insignia of the office, which Ojo was obliged to resign to him, and on 3rd 1871, he was publicly installed (op cit.:387). His reign as Aare Ona Kakanfo witnessed a significant number of wars. Akinyele states that Latosisa fought the following wars: Ado War, Emure War, and Ogedengbe War 1 in 1874; Eletu War in 1876; Igbe Igbin War and Atadi War in 1877; Igbe Esinle (Osiele)War in 1878; Jalumi War in 1878-1879; Ekiti Parapo or Kiriji War in 1880-1893 (1951:90). He died at Kiriji war on August 11, 1885.

Samuel Ládòkè Akíntólá of Ògbómòsò:

Akíntólá became Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò in August 1964. Aláàfin Gbádégesin Second installed Akíntólá as Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò when a political conflict between Akíntólá and Obáfẹ́mi Awólówò had degenerated into a serious, cloudy atmosphere in the Yorùbá land. Unlike previous Kakanfò, Ládòkè Akíntólá was a product of western education, modern ideas, Christianity, and politics; he was never a military man or a traditional “eso.” He marked the beginning of modern Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò because he became the first Kakanfò after the political power and the authority to command the tradition army had given its way to a new system introduced by the British authority that imposed its rule on Nigeria in which Aláàfin’s territory fell. Although Akíntólá did not engage in the kind of wars his predecessors led, he was involved in a strong political confrontation that destabilized the political atmosphere of the Yorùbá and the entire Nigeria. Specifically, in the Western part of Nigeria, his disagreement Awólówò split the people of the region into two – pro-Awolowo and pro-Akintola. Consequently, an event tagged “Wild, Wild West” erupted and led to house burning and the chasing and killing of people. The aftermath of the incident was a glaring division

which continued years even after both were dead. Akintola was a very brave, eloquent, magical, and powerful man. His politics transcended the Yoruba land. According to Akintola (1982:114), one day when Ládòkè Akintola's car was moving on a road in Ìbàdàn, people who opposed Ládòkè started stoning him with different objects. As a brave person, he alighted from the car and walked toward the crowd of people throwing stone and other objects at him. Confusion reigned, and the people ran and dispersed. He also showed his bravery when his party and the opposition party met in Òyó City for their campaigns. Òyo was a stronghold of the opposition party. Akintola went to where the opposition members were doing their campaign, and upon sighting him, the opposition members started making a ridiculous shouting against him. Akintola told his driver to stop. As the driver stopped, he stepped out of the car and made his way toward the members of the opposition. Within a twinkling of an eye, everybody had disappeared. Galantly, he died in a military coup d'état in Nigeria on January 15, 1966 and was buried in his home town, Ògbómòsò (op cit.:115).

Moshood Kásimáawò Abíólá of Abéòkúta:

Moshood Kásimáawò Abíólá of Abéòkúta became Kakanfo on January 14, 1988. His installation was performed by Aláàfin Lámídi Adéyemí, Abíólá was the first Ègbá to hold the title. The news of his selection for the position generated divergent views nationwide. While many people felt that Abíólá's religion (Islam) was not in line with a traditional title that would involve rituals and the worship of the god of iron –Ògún- and other deities, others felt western ideas and foreign religions in the Yorùbá land had greatly interfered with and changed Yoruba culture and traditional institutions, that Aláàfin could go ahead to install Abíólá as Kakanfò; thus, the controversy which preceded Abíólá's installation might have prompted the statement which Aláàfin Lámídi Adéyemí made during the official ceremony announcing Abíólá as the new Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò. Aláàfin Adéyemí declared to the crowd that the institution of Aláàfin had to change from what it used to be because of unavoidable changes. According to Abíólá (2007:par. 3), Alaafin defends the new trend:

„Presenting the title, the Alaafin of Oyo prefaced his remarks with a statement on the changes in Yoruba traditional institution. According to him, change is the only permanent thing in life of men, institutions and the world at large, and no institution in Nigeria has been more affected by change than the institution of the Alaafin, probably more than any traditional institution in Nigeria. But the Alaafin is prepared to change with the times rather than be a victim of change. The institution of aare ona kakanfo, the generalissimo of the Yoruba, has also had to change.”

The changes that touched the institution of Ààrè Ònà Kakanfò is succinctly presented in the excerpt below:

„The ceremony was very different from the traditional ones recorded by Johnson in several aspects. The videos of the fourteenth (?) ceremony do not show the physical preparation of the candidate, Moshood Abiola, Indeed, it is doubtful that the recipient who is also a businessman allowed either 201 incisions to be made onto his “occiput” or his head to be shaved everywhere but “inoculated part.” He is seen wearing Yoruba fila, not an ojijiko. He does not carry a staff invincible nor does he wear a leopard skin apron. A possible concession to the traditional regalia is the geometric patterns of his garment, especially his fila (cap) which shows bold geometric shapes that might be a leopard motif.” (op cit.: pars 9-10).

Hafsat Abíólá added that the traditional poetry rendition that was a part of Abíólá's installation lacked a statement of the ancient rules about battles, that Lanrewaju Adepoju who rendered Yorùbá poetry performance during the officially installation ceremony incorporated only the achievements of the new Kakanfò (par 11).

Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò among the Eso:

Èsò is the Yoruba word for a warrior or warriors. Johnson (1969:73) states that the Yoruba warriors within the territory of Oyo rank next to the Oyo-Mesi who are the second in command to Alaafin. Eso, otherwise known as "Iba," is a soldier who is brave and can fight gallantly. In a nutshell, Eso are people of the noble class, whose leader, Aare Ona Kakanfo, ranks hierarchically third to Alaafin. Only a brave person can become "Eso." The total number of Eso, as historians have disclosed, is 70, and that each Eso commands a unit made up of 10 soldiers (Johnson 1969:73; Falola and Oguntomisin 25). Johnson indicates two classes of Eso: The upper class that consists 16 Eso (Gbonka, Esiele, Owota, Sadoe, Eso Oranyan, kogbona, Sakin, Eruku, Sagbedo, Ole, Odigbon, Gboingboin, Obago, Orunto, Sagbua, and Adaha) and the lower class that consists 54 eso. Both classes, when totaled up, produce 70 Eso who must yield to the command of the Kakanfò.

Duties of Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò:

The Kakanfo's duty is scary, not many people would want to do it. That the individual Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò stands up to the task relating to his office, in spite of difficulty, makes him a hero. His major duty is presented as follows:

„Eto Arẹ̀ ni lati ri si idaabobo gbogbo ilẹ̀ Yoruba; eto rẹ̀ ni lati bi ogun t'ò ba wa lati ita wo; eto rẹ̀ naa si ni lati gbogun lo ilẹ̀ miiran fun ikogun ati fun fifẹ̀ ilẹ̀ Yoruba sehin si i. Oun ni o maa n pin ikogun fun oba ati awon ijoye ati awon Balogun abe rẹ̀” (Aderinkomi 1986:11).

Meaning:

It is Arẹ̀'s responsibility to defend the entire Yoruba land; it is his duty to defeat external attacks; also, it is his duty to attack other places, to conquer them, and to expand the Yoruba territory. He is the person to distribute war booties to the king, to the chiefs, and to all commanders under him (Aderinkomi 11).

Traditionally, Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò should obey the command of Alááfin and engage in a war in every three years, in the dry season. He is expected to either win a war or die while fighting. Kakanfò's duty is to be in control of wars. Kakanfò uses the commanders under him to execute war plans, and he goes to the war front only when a war is too tense and difficult to fight. His duties make his office and personality heroic, for not many people can face death and discharge the kind of duties that go with the office of Aare Ona Kakanfo.

Binding on the Institution and the Title Holders:

A number of restrictions are in place traditionally to regulate the Kakanfò institution and the holders of the title. First, Ààrẹ̀ Ònà-Kakanfò is constrained customarily to be installed by the king of Oyo, and, second, in a normal situation only one Kakanfò reigns at a time. Third, only Eso can be elevated to the position. In addition, the Yoruba tradition disallows Aare Ona-

Kakanfo to reside in Oyo City where Alaafin lives (Johnson 1969:74). According to the tradition, Are Ona-Kakanfo should be a resident of other places outside Oyo City. The purpose of this restriction is to avoid power tussle between him and Alaafin. Moreover, Aare Ona-Kakanfo, by law, must go to wage at least a war every two dry seasons or once in every three years, to any place Alaafin directs him, and must win the war or die and have his corpse taken to Alaafin within three months after starting the war. Furthermore, Aare Ona-Kakanfo should always be the overseer of the military forces and should issue commands (Aderinkomi 1986:11).

Contradiction to Binding: Views about Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò:

People hold different, fearful views the Kakanfò. Many of them see Ààrẹ̀ as a person who combines two extreme behaviors – destructive and protective. To those that Ààrẹ̀ supports, he is a savior, but to those that Ààrẹ̀ opposes, he is recalcitrant, dangerous, harmful, bellicose, reckless, and inconsiderate. Adérinkòmí (1986:10) describes Ààrẹ̀ as a person whose presence makes his enemies piss in their pants, and Omololá (1987:42) states that Ààrẹ̀ becomes a protective person when he defends his people. While Aláàfin Abíódún Adégoólù got his protection through Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò Oyalábi, Aláàfin Aólẹ̀, who committed suicide, saw Kakanfò as a traitor because Kakanfò Àfònjá formed a gang that rebelled against his authority. Another example of contrasting view of Kakanfò reflects in Kakanfò Kúrunmí of Ìjáyẹ̀ who opposed the installation of Adélù as the new Aláàfin and became an enemy of the authority at the center (Òyó City). While Aláàfin was not satisfied because of Kúrunmí's opposing posture, the people of Ìjáyẹ̀ liked the Kakanfò and the position the latter kept.

A common belief among the Yoruba is that Kakanfo is supernaturally powerful, that the rituals that accompany his installation constitute the source of his power, so Kakanfo is always held in awe; people hardly want to cross his path. A common Yorùbá song that signals that people fear Kakanfò goes as follows:

Ààrẹ̀!
 Ààrẹ̀!
 Ààrẹ̀!
 Orí mi, má jé n se Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò.
 Ààrẹ̀! (3ce)

Meaning:

Ààrẹ̀!
 Ààrẹ̀!
 Ààrẹ̀!
 My being (inner head), don't let me offend Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò.
 Ààrẹ̀! (3ce)

The Yorùbá believe that Kakanfò is unpredictable, that he could kick against anything- even the choice determined through Ifá divination, so they always await his command. That is why the Yorùbá like saying, “Ààrẹ̀ n pè o. Ò n dífá! Bífá bá fòrẹ̀, bí Ààrẹ̀ kò bá fòrẹ̀ n kó?” (Ààrẹ̀ sends for you, you are consulting Ifa oracle! What will happen when Ifa says a pleasant message but Ààrẹ̀' s response is unpleasant?).

The Relationship between Kakanfò and Aláàfin:

Traditionally, Aláàfin is the sole authority to confer the title of Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò on any suitable èsó. This responsibility of Aláàfin makes Kakanfò subordinate to the king who orders him to go to war in every three years and to win or die there. Because both are traditionally powerful, as a sign of respect and a way to avoid conflict, they live far away from each other; Aláàfin lives in Oyo while Aare Ona Kakanfo resides in another place. In spite of the distance, there were instances when Ààrẹ̀ revolted against Aláàfin and fomented trouble for the king. Àfònjá and Kúrnmí are examples of Kakanfò who went against Aláàfin. Both Aláàfin and Kakanfò are supposed to play a complimentary role and respect each other and realize the limitation of their power if their mutual agreement would yield any good results. Aláàfin Abíódún Adegoolu had a cordial relationship with Oyálábi , and Aláàfin Gbádégesin enjoyed a good relationship with Kakanfò Samuel Ládokè Akíntólá, and Aláàfin Lámídi and Kakanfò Moshood Abíólá were in good terms.

Oriki as the Source of Spur and Image Making for Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà kakanfò:

Traditionally, the Yorùbá cherish the use of “oriki,” a form of oral entertaining praise poetry which serves as a repository of history, events, praises, warnings, sound achievements, sweet failure, and special peculiarities of lineages and individual persons who become artistic objects in the hands of the Yoruba verbal artistes. The Aare Ona Kakanfo is no exception. The “oriki” of all Kakanfò impresses on all people the concept of military heroism among the Yoruba and helps the performance of the Kakanfò. The common ideas the *oriki* of the Kakanfò packages are bravery, tact, mastery, command, and tendency to plan and execute military actions. “Oriki” spurs the Kakanfò to endlessly engage in battles or live up to the expectation of his office. The overall image of Kakanfò “oriki” presents is the military and political authority that involves force, control, and heroic, military deeds.

Danger Associated with the Title:

The Kakanfò’s military duty, like the western military commanders, exposes him to personal and group defense, death, blood letting, devilish plan, aggression, invasion, powerful movements, and the control of the military regiments, and war escalation. His ability to function in this type of scenario and to face difficult situations makes him a hero among the Yorùbá.

Death of Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò:

In the western world, a soldier that is worth his salt would not entertain fear because of war. The same is applicable in the Yoruba land. Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò does not fear death arising from wars. By commission, he is to fight a war to the point of death, to return alive or dead. Most of them died violently or in difficult situations, so society expects Kakanfò to face a troublous or turbulent end. For example, Mashood Kasimaawo Abíólá believed so much in his influence and in the public support for him, so as an attempt to realize his annulled mandate, he refused to listen to the discouraging voice of the Nigeria-led military junta; he aroused the interest of the world in his course, and preferred to fight his course to its end, but in the process of getting freedom from the military imposed “imprisonment”, he died suddenly. As a typical Aare Ona-Kakanfo, he stood for what he believed. Tactically, he did as if he was to mellow down because of the military’s

tough stance on the election. However, suddenly, he showed his bravery when he declared himself the president of Nigeria. His earlier comment that he could not die could be interpreted as the Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò's tactical approach to attack enemies at the least expected moment. The majority of the Kakanfò died in violent, heroic circumstances. Did he fight back physically like Afonja who fought gallantly and died in the process? This is a question which only the modern situation can interpret and which is open to further research since he passed away while he was captured by coup d'état plotters who ruled in Nigeria then.

Is the Title Relevant Today?

The institution of the Aláàfin, the sole authority over the appointment of Kakanfò, is no longer very powerful as it used to be before 1889 when the Alaafin signed a peace treaty with other tribes and succumbed to the British system of government which took over the control of the Yoruba land. Because of the reduction in the power and land territory of the Alaafin today, the traditional Yoruba army is no longer really visible though some traditional military titles are still alive and the king does ceremoniously give them to those who deserve them. This situation might make people say there is no longer a need to appoint Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò. Also, the cloudy dust -violence or disturbance- that preceded the death of the last two occupiers of the position – Samuel Ladoke Akintola and Moshood Kasimaawo Olawale Abiola- and the nature of their death might also serve as justification for debunking this traditional title. Ladoke was killed by the military junta during a coup d'état while Abiola died in captivity as the United Nations representatives to Nigeria were negotiating his release from the brutal military dictator, General Sanni Abacha.

However, since the institution of the Aláàfin has drastically changed and adjusted to modernity, the institution of the Kakanfò should be kept alive because of its significance in the history of the Yoruba, the challenge modern politics poses in Nigeria, and the impact the title holder can make. The Kakanfò could be a unifying factor in making a political decision that goes beyond the Yoruba land in the context of other ethnic groups if a right person bears the title. M. K. O. Abiola is a good example. He was able to pull the majority of the Nigerian ethnic groups along when he contested the 1993 presidential election which he successfully won though he was prevented from ruling Nigeria because General Ibrahim Babangida, a military dictator and self-styled president, annulled the election which was globally recognized as the most successful election in Nigeria. The heroic aspect of the title is part of the Yoruba concept of military and political heroism; therefore, the continuation of the institution is imperative because of the modern challenges that require a competent hand to handle on behalf of the entire Yoruba engaging in the competitive, slippery “political path” of Nigeria.

Demarcation between History and Tradition of Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò:

Past Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò title holders manned the office at different times, so the events of their times vary and reflect in their history. Their situations and how they handled them form their history and present their personalities. The only common ground to them was their ceremonious installation by a king. The special installation process is the traditional aspect of Ààrẹ̀ Ọ̀nà Kakanfò.

Conclusion

The history of and the tradition revolving around the Yoruba Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò serve as the communication which builds the Yoruba idea of traditional military heroism, suggesting that a hero is a military person who is constantly fomenting trouble, defending his people, expanding territories, unyielding, bloodthirsty, commandeering, dominating, and pulling one crowd against another. In the modern time, the new political situation which makes different people to exist under the same system, which is modern and multi-cultural, has brought about a new expectation of the public about Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò. The old title holders, as history passes on, were people of exceptional, traditional military ability and commitment to physical wars, and the most recent -the modern Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò title holders, as their history relays, are regarded as national, modern political leaders, power brokers, and influential individuals whose recognition and role have extended beyond the Yoruba land. Generally, whether old or modern, the Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò would not mind on stepping on other people's toes, to achieve his goals even if doing so would cost him his life. The Yoruba regard the duties of office and the rituals accompanying Kakanfò's installation as a propeller or an injector of boldness which makes every Kakanfò fearless to face obstacles and take bloody and death-connected risks.

The selection of the most gallant *eso* to man the position is the prerogative right of the Alààfin who is traditionally forbidden to allow the Kakanfò to live with him in the Òyó City because of Kakanfò's tendency to foment trouble. The duties, rituals, people's belief, and insignia that go with the office of Kakanfò make the title holders to be fearless and war-ready heroes in the eyes of the public they serve. The institution has been bent to accommodate modern changes. The demand posed by the modern politics in Nigeria, the need to preserve culture, and the intermittent power tussles among ethnic groups in Nigeria make the institution of the Kakanfò a subject of relevance today though the modern Kakanfò can not hold military weapons as the modern-day soldiers and the *èsó* of the past would do because Nigeria Army is now responsible for the security of Nigeria in which the Yoruba land is located. In spite of changes in and people's fear about the institution, Kakanfò is an institutional heroic symbol of the past and present power struggles, and, as such, those who value the tradition and history would want the tradition to be preserved for the present and future generations. However, the Yoruba should realize that they now co-exist with other peoples, so they should encourage their Kakanfò who may be the successor to the last office holder, Ààrẹ̀ Ònà Kakanfò Abilola, to use dialogues or diplomacy to solve conflicts instead of engaging in war. Can diplomacy serve as the substitute weapon for Ààrẹ̀ Ònà-Kakanfò of the modern day? History and tradition, as constructors of situations, events, and role players, will tell.

NOTES

The "n" in "Kakanfò" should have the same diacritic which appears on the last letter of the word. Also, "o" in "Abiola" and "eso" should have a diacritic under it. The computer used for typing this work lacked the diacritic.

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