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Resilience in Media Ecologies: Mapping the Converging Histories of Magic Lanterns, Omocha-e (Toy Prints) and Kamishibai (Paper Theater)

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Abstract

Histories of kamishibai (paper theater) typically trace its roots to early magic lantern shows, but Iwamoto Kenji questions this development: "At a time when many different audiovisual technologies were tied in some way to modern scientific instruments, kamishibai was made of just pictures and narrative and seemed to be a throwback to Edo-period spectacles" (2002). Iwamoto's dismissal of kamishibai as a "throwback" exposes the limitations of examining any medium in isolation rather than viewing it within an interconnected media ecology. Lyons and Plunkett argue, "In contemporary media practice, 'convergence' stands for the dominance of fusion and transferability between different forms...we are in an era in which media are always used in relation to each other" (2007). While acknowledging that the scale and interconnectedness of new media may be unprecedented, this paper asks whether theories of convergence in media ecologies may also provide new opportunities to reassess older media formats. Through a historical mapping of the transnationally shifting ecologies of magic lanterns and kamishibai through a series of omocha-e (toy-prints) from the Cotsen Children's Library collection (Princeton University Library), this paper demonstrates that kamishibai not only converged with magic-lantern technology through the mediation of omocha-e, but also that the two audio-visual media—kamishibai and magic lanterns—continued to develop in relation to each other, as they moved in tandem over time. The imaginative leap that transferred cinematic animation techniques to paper offers insights into kamishibai's resilience as a medium and its growing popularity around the world today.

Keywords: Kamishibai, Media Ecology, Media Convergence, Magic Lanterns, Film Studies

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Introduction

Kamishibai in the format commonly seen today began as a form of street entertainment, which was wildly popular in the 1930s and leading up to and following World War II. The kamishibai performer would ride from one neighborhood to the next, usually on a bicycle, selling candies and other treats and telling riveting cliff-hangers that ensured children would be back the next day for more. Kamishibai is said to have been so popular that when television was first imported to Japan in 1953, it was referred to as “*denki* (electric) kamishibai” (Kamichi 90). Ironically, television is often blamed for kamishibai’s later demise as a street-performance art, but the medium of kamishibai never did die out and, in fact, is experiencing a resurgence around the globe.



Figure 1. “Paper TV: Kamishibai Storytelling,”
Posted on Kamishibai Connections Facebook Group.

In October 2021, Filipino-Australian kamishibai storyteller Anna Manuel joined kamishibai storytellers from India, Archana Chandel and Ramya Srinidhi, to present an online kamishibai story program called “Paper TV” for the Federation of Asian Storytellers (FEAST) annual conference (Fig. 1). In a similar twist, on February 6, 2022, the Japanese kamishibai Facebook group Zenkoku kamishibai kōryū kai (全国紙芝居交流会) posted about a series of flashcard kamishibai stories on YouTube called “Paper Television invented in Yamagata” (山形発 紙テレビ). This raises the question: Do these anecdotes, separated by time and space, represent a series of quaint analogies between similar-looking media, or are they an example of what media theorist Henry Jenkins (2001) has identified as an organic and ongoing process of “convergence” in the minds of consumers and creators within a multilayered global media ecosystem? He writes:

Genres and delivery technologies come and go, but media persist as layers within an ever more complicated information and entertainment system. A medium’s content may shift, its audience may change and its social status may rise or fall, but once a medium establishes itself it continues to be part of the media ecosystem.

Theories of “media ecology” (McLuhan 1964; Postman 1970) have been attracting increasing attention in Japanese media studies to account for the new interwoven and global scope of *animé* and video-game franchises, television and internet (LaMarre 2018). While

acknowledging that the scale and nature of 21st century media convergence made possible by digitization may be unprecedented, this paper examines the intersecting histories of magic lanterns, *omocha-e* (toy prints), and kamishibai in Japan to ask how the historical convergence and recent resurgence of these early technologies may explain a resilience in media ecologies that has been identified by Jenkins and others when describing our current media environment.

The Role of Paper

Histories of kamishibai typically trace its roots back to an early form of Japanese magic-lantern show called *utsushi-e* (literally, “projected pictures”), but, in his *Century of Magic Lanterns in Japan* (幻燈の世紀), Iwamoto Kenji questions whether the development of kamishibai represented progress: “At a time when many different audiovisual technologies were tied in some way to modern scientific instruments, kamishibai was made of just pictures and narrative and seemed to be a throwback to Edo-period spectacles” (2002, translated). Iwamoto’s dismissal of kamishibai as a “throwback” exposes the limitations of examining a medium in isolation in a linear historical trajectory rather than viewing it within a complex and interconnected media ecology. The inventors of kamishibai took the magic of light and shadow—the foundation of all cinematic technologies—and transferred it to a mundane and ubiquitous material: paper. This leads to the question of the role of paper in this process of convergence. Is paper itself a medium, a delivery technology, a platform? Can it be all three?

Henry Jenkins has identified at least five categories of convergence¹ and argues that collectively they will lead to a “digital renaissance” much like the invention of the printing press did for Europe. When defining “technological convergence,” he writes: “When words, images and sounds are transformed into digital information, we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow across platforms. (Jenkins 2001).” In what follows, I shift the focus from digitized text or even moveable type to ask whether the material of paper itself might serve as a vehicle for “technological convergence,” expanding the potential relationships between technologies and allowing information to flow across them. To begin to address this question, I trace the repeated technological convergence of magic lanterns and kamishibai as they developed in tandem over time by examining several paper *omocha-e* (play-prints) held in the Cotsen Children’s Library collection at Princeton University.

Omocha-e is a term broadly used for Edo-period *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints designed for children’s amusement. Genres ranged widely from paper dolls (*kisekae-e*) to matching-picture games (*e-awase*), to board games (*sugoroku*) to elaborate theatrical or historical dioramas to be cut out and assembled (*tatebanko* or *kumitate-e*). What all these different genres of *omocha-e* had in common was the format of fitting onto a two-dimensional sheet (or, in some cases, multiple sheets) of *washi* paper. Typically, these prints include the name of the artist and publisher, date of publication, and a title to identify the theme or genre. At the heading of the title, the characters *shinpan* 新板 (or 新版), meaning “the latest” or newest information about the given topic, are often prominent. Beginning in the Edo period (1603-

¹ **Technological Convergence:** What Nicholas Negroponte labeled the transformation of “atoms to bits,” the digitization of all media content...**Economic Convergence:** The horizontal integration of the entertainment industry... **Social or Organic Convergence:** Consumers’ multitasking strategies for navigating the new information environment...**Cultural Convergence:** The explosion of new forms of creativity at the intersections of various media technologies, industries and consumers. **Global Convergence:** The cultural hybridity that results from the international circulation of media content.

1868), *omocha-e* prints offered a cheap and transportable medium to spread information quickly through the population. As such, they were also the perfect vehicles for media convergence. *Ezōshiya* print shops, where they were sold, could be found on almost every urban street, where people could easily purchase *omocha-e* about metropolitan fads—from the latest fashions in hairstyle and dress to the latest media technologies for education and amusement—as souvenir gifts (*omiyage*) to take home to their families in the provinces (Suzuki 2010, 7-19).

To begin this mapping, we will examine an *omocha-e* print (Fig. 2) titled “The latest magic-lantern pictures” (*Shinpan utsushi-e* 志ん板うつしゑ), which was published in 1884. The image at the bottom of the print (Fig. 3) is designed to look like the entryway into a *yose* theater with the stock character of Fukusuke—who typically served as a narrator between acts—bowing and inviting the audience into the venue. *Fukusuke* dolls are frequently found in Japanese shops to promote business, and the characters *ōire* (大入) above Fukusuke’s head means “a full house.” Among the cherry blossoms above the stage is the phrase “a new cast of characters by popular demand” (*shinrenchu hiiki*). On the right, there are messages from the publisher to the manager and patron (apparently, a fish merchant) and, on the left, to the child audience with the promise of “plenty of diversion” (*tesusabi takusan*).



Figure 2. “The latest magic-lantern pictures” (*Shinpan utsushi-e* 志ん板うつしゑ)
Published in 1884 by Tsunashima Kamekichi 綱島亀吉. Cotsen Children’s Library.
(Cotsen ID No. 9910023)

This print is an example of what was described earlier as *tatebanko* or *kumitate-e* because the owner would have cut the stage from the bottom of the print and reinforced it with strips of wood or cardboard. They would also have cut out the two white circles on either side of Fukusuke’s head and have reinforced the five levels of “slides” so they could be moved across the back of the stage to simulate a magic-lantern performance.

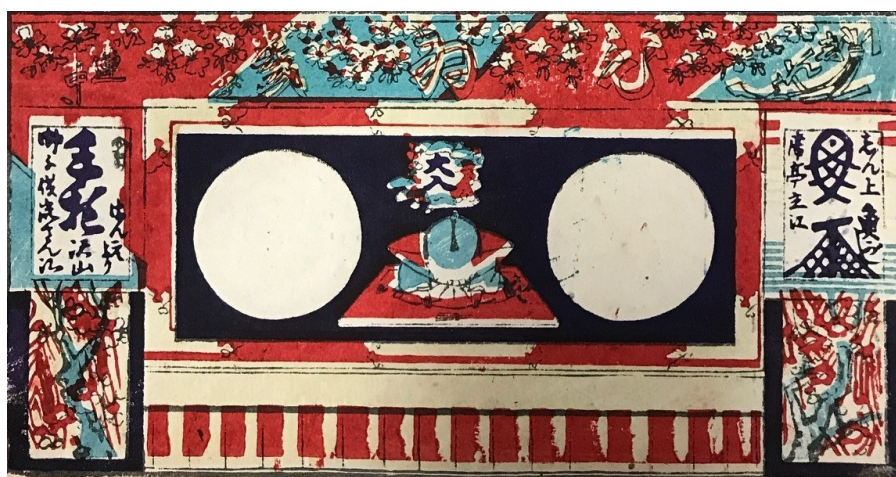


Figure 3. Detail from “The latest magic-lantern pictures”
(*Shinpan utsushi-e* 志ん板うつしゑ) Published in 1884. Cotsen Children’s Library.
(Cotsen ID No. 9910023)

Before proceeding any further, I will provide some background about the emergence of *utsushi-e* and its role in the *yose* theater.

Yose Theater and the Rise of Utsushi-e

Magic-lantern technology made its way to Japan in the 1700s, probably through the island of Dejima, where the Japanese carried on limited trade with the Dutch. Records of a Japanese adaptation of the instrument, called *utsushi-e*, began appearing in the city of Edo in 1801 (Tsuchiya, Okubo & Endō 33). With *utsushi-e*, animation of the characters was possible because pulling a series of illustrated slides quickly before a light source—like the short reel of a film—fooled the audience into thinking the characters had moved.

Japan had a vibrant theater culture during the Edo period (1603-1868) with kabuki and bunraku (*jōruri* 浄瑠璃) perhaps the most widely known, but the popularity of these large scale productions spawned all manner of miniature dramatic formats performed on the streets and in less formal venues. One such venue was *yose* 寄席. Although today *yose* has become synonymous with *rakugo* 落語 (a comic style of oral-storytelling), during the Edo period, it featured an eclectic array of dramatic spectacles (Miya in Tsuchiya et al. 67-71). The Japanese style of magic-lantern called *utsushi-e* found its home in *yose* performances, and the glass slides developed for this venue were inspired by the stock characters and themes from kabuki and *jōruri* plays with which *yose* audiences were already familiar (Tsuchiya et al. 40-66).

Japanese-style magic lanterns were unique in that they were small, portable, and almost entirely made of paulownia wood, which insulated the performers’ hands from the heat (Willis 2011). The projector was a box with a hole at the top so that the glass chimney of the burning oil or kerosene lamp inside could poke out and smoke could vent. This light source projected images painted on glass slides through a *washi* paper screen to viewers on the other side. Some claim that *utsushi-e* was the first real *animé* in Japan because animation occurred not only in the movement of the slides in front of the light source, but also by the performers moving around the space behind the screen, carrying their lanterns with them and projecting characters and scenery from different places (Kata 4). Several lanterns with different slides were used and animated at one time, causing audiences in the western (*kansai*) region of

Japan to refer to these colorful performances as “brocade shadow theater” (*nishiki kage e* 錦影絵). *Nishiki-e* (brocade pictures) was the term used for colorful Edo-period ukiyo-e prints, including some of the *omocha-e* prints under examination here, and there was considerable convergence between the two media (Kusahara 2021, 187). Early Japanese-style magic-lantern shows were projected from behind the paper screen, out of sight of the audience (Tsuchiya et al. 36-37), which made the images seem to appear magically out of nowhere.

I have analyzed all the different levels of slides of the Shinpan *utsushie* print in detail elsewhere (McGowan 2018) but for the purposes of this presentation, I will focus on the level directly above the stage (Fig. 4). Progressing from right to left, the audience would first see the female ghost (*yūrei* 幽霊) appear in the circle on the far right, coupled with the man, falling back in fear with the ghostly fire-ball at center. Shifting the slide one image over, the audience would then see two brave samurai, preparing to battle the apparitions. Note again, that one warrior faces to the right, where we last saw the female ghost, whereas the other warrior faces left, in anticipation of some new drama about to unfold. Shifting one more image over, a *tsukumogami* 付喪神, or a spirit made up of discarded objects, suddenly appears. No doubt, slides could have been moved back and forth in either direction to add further drama and animation to the scene.



Figure 4. Detail from “The latest magic-lantern pictures” (*Shinpan utsushi-e* 志ん板うつし絵) Published in 1884. Cotsen Children’s Library. (Cotsen ID No. 9910023)

As this print demonstrates, the various types of stock shape-shifters (*obake*), ghosts (*yūrei*), and monsters (*yōkai* 妖怪) that have become popular around the globe through the spread of *animé*, *manga*, and video games, were already well developed by the time this print was published in 1884, providing an early example of what Jenkins (2001) calls “cultural convergence,” where characters and stories freely cross media platforms. *Omocha-e* prints helped to spread these characters and new cinematic technologies beyond the urban centers of Edo or Osaka to remote provinces throughout Japan, and no doubt played a major role in paving the way for the widespread fascination with shapeshifters and monsters that continues in Japan to this day.

The Role of *Omocha-e* in the Development of Kamishibai

What has often been overlooked in histories of kamishibai is that *utsushi-e* was most likely transmediated through an *omocha-e* (play print) before becoming what we now know as the first tachie-style kamishibai. Quoting from a survey conducted in Tokyo in 1935, historian Chizuko Kamichi describes the invention of the first kamishibai as follows:

Shin-san was a *rakugo* storyteller, but he was not very good [at *rakugo*]. Instead, he excelled at drawing, so his master, Enchō (Sanyūtei Enchō) had him draw scenes from his popular plays, “Journey to the West” and “Chūshingura” [The 47 loyal retainers]. These were made into wood-block prints and sold in the candy stores, one print for one *sen*. The children would cut out the pictures and paste them onto bamboo skewers so they could play with them [...] Later, Shin-san collaborated with the incense seller Maruyama Zentarō to come up with a *tachi-e* puppet that was not just a wood-block print for children. (Kamichi 24, translated)

Kamichi’s description of wood-block prints sold in candy stores for children to cut up and assemble is clearly a reference to *omocha-e*. According to Kamichi’s explanation, kamishibai was not a direct off-shoot from Edo-period magic lantern shows, as is often assumed, but was first transmediated into an *omocha-e* play print, which later inspired Shin-san to develop this toy into a form of theater in its own right.

Shin-san’s original *omocha-e* print is no longer available, but there are *omocha-e* prints that continue to transmediate his invention for child audiences. This *omocha-e* (Fig. 5) from the Cotsen Children’s Library collection is not dated or titled, but it includes all the *tachi-e* kamishibai puppets needed to recreate the story of legendary *ninja* Sarutobi Sasuke. Just as with the Edo-period magic-lantern shows, still images of scenery are provided on the upper right and left but otherwise each character is depicted in two poses. The two poses would have been cut out and glued to either side of a bamboo stick. When the puppet is flipped around quickly – much like when pulling the lantern slides out of the stage – the puppet would appear to move.



Figure 5. Kamishibai puppets of Sarutobi Sasuke driving out demons,
Artist unknown, c. 1920-30, Cotsen Children’s Library.
(Cotsen ID No. 98569)

Judging from the style of animation, this *tachi-e* kamishibai print most likely dates from the 1920s or 30s, but it depicts many of the same themes and characters—the lantern ghost and three-eyed monster—as the 1884 *utsushi-e* print, revealing how magic lanterns, *omocha-e*

toy-prints, and kamishibai continued to develop *in relation* to each other over time.

It is not clear from Kamichi's description whether Shin-san actually invented this genre of *omocha-e* play print, but what Kamichi does suggest is that he was the first to recognise that this toy could be developed into a type of dramatic spectacle in its own right. By performing these animated puppets in a stage against a black curtain, which helped to accentuate the animation, Shin-san created a new kind of performance, which he called "the *new* magic lantern show" (*Shin-utsushi-e*), but audiences saw that he was using *paper* puppets to perform *theater* and began calling his performances *kamishibai* (Kata 8).

If we recall that *utsushi-e* images were projected through *washi* paper screens for audiences sitting on the opposite side, it may not seem like such a big leap to transfer the images directly onto paper, but Shin-san's apparently simple innovation freed him from the many challenges of performing actual *utsushi-e* magic-lantern shows, which required fire, expensive glass for the slides, and the darkness of an interior room. To say that this invention was a "throwback" is to ignore the imaginative leap from projected magic-lantern images on glass to paper that allowed audiences on the streets in broad daylight to experience the magical illusion of animated cinematic technology.

The Rise of the New Magic Lantern

Utsushi-e was largely forgotten in the push for rapid Westernization in the 1860s, but, when Japan participated in the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, the participants brought back Western-style magic lantern projectors called *gentō* (literally "illusion lantern") (Ishiyama 23). The Meiji government commissioned Tsurubuchi Hatsuzō to create educational magic-lantern projectors and slides to teach about constitutional reforms and civic responsibilities in the new era. The Cotsen Children's Library collection has an *omocha-e* print in the form of a *sugoroku* game board that captures this historic moment through vivid illustrations (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Kyōiku hitsuyō gentō furiwake sugoroku (Important educational magic lantern slides of dividing into different professions board game), 1896.
Artist: Hiroshige III (1842-1894) (Cotsen ID No.101597)

The game follows a series of magic-lantern slides, illustrating historical figures, who led exemplary lives, and other stories of ethical behavior. Thanks to the success of Tsurubuchi and others, magic lanterns were soon adopted as educational tools in schools, religious settings, and private homes throughout Japan.

The illustration for the starting point of the game, at bottom-center of the print, depicts Tsurubuchi himself, instructing a group of young men and women about the life of the legendary emperor Nintoku. It is no coincidence that Tsurubuchi is explaining the magic-lantern slide in much the same way silent film was performed in Japan with a narrator (*katsudō benshi*), providing oral explanation of the pictures (Dym). Magic lanterns were an early form of cinema, and, when silent film first entered Japan, it was referred to as “Moving Shadow Pictures” or “Moving Magic-Lantern Pictures” (Fukujima 6–7). Although, as mentioned earlier, the early *tachie* form of kamishibai may have converged with kabuki or bunraku plays, by the 1920s, *tachie* were similarly converging with popular silent films. In his *Shōwa (1926-1989) History of Kamishibai* 紙芝居の昭和史, Kata Koji recalls that the first kamishibai he was commissioned to make was a *tachi-e* puppet of Charlie Chaplin’s “The Kid.”

The style of kamishibai that is commonly used today was invented around 1929. It came to be known as *hira-e* (flat pictures) to distinguish it from the earlier form of *tachi-e* (standing pictures). However, in corroboration of Jenkins’s claim that “once a medium establishes itself it continues to be part of the media ecosystem,” both of these forms continued to develop in tandem with each other for some time afterward. Although the *tachi-e* and *hira-e* styles of kamishibai appear outwardly to be quite different, they both arose from a similar impulse – to *transmediate* cinematic animation onto paper—and this apparently “backwards” innovation freed the performers from the inconvenience of expensive technology, allowing them to perform outside and interact with audiences in new ways.

Histories of kamishibai often describe the *hira-e* card format as an off-shoot of silent film, with early street performers emulating the vocal style of *katsudō benshi*, or silent film narrators (Dym; Orbaugh), but the connection between the new style of kamishibai and the western-style of magic lantern (*gentō*) is worthy of further exploration, as both increasingly entered educational settings. By 1937, there were 2000 kamishibai storytellers on the streets of Tokyo, and about 800,000 children were watching kamishibai stories on a daily basis nationwide (Nomura and Uchiyama, 1).² The power of this mass medium soon attracted the attention of educators, who wanted to harness its popularity for their own purposes. With the onset of WWII, kamishibai was quickly adopted by the Imperial military government, as a powerful instrument for propaganda, instructing the whole nation on how to work together for the war effort (Suzuki 2005; Orbaugh 2015). From the 1930s until the 1950s, kamishibai and magic lanterns were increasingly used interchangeably as audio-visual formats. In her book about the appropriation of street-performance kamishibai for the purposes of war propaganda, Sharalyn Orbaugh (2015) notes that one of the first kamishibai used in the war effort was a *gentō* magic-lantern show (53).

From Kamishibai-Magic Lanterns to Magic Lantern-Kamishibai

The Cotsen Children’s Library collection houses several propaganda kamishibai-style sets of magic-lantern slides. This one titled *Daitōa sensō!!* (The War for Greater East Asia!!) begins

² Ishiyama puts this figure closer to 700,000 (57).

with the patriotic display of Japanese flags in front of the imperial palace in Tokyo and ends with the bombing of the island of Hawaii (Fig. 7). The narrative progresses over 12 scenes (two on each slide) just like a typical kamishibai story, but these tiny glass slides had a much greater impact than the paper version because they could be projected on large screens for bigger audiences.



Figure 7. Daitōa Sensō!! (大東亜戦争!!), Illustrator/Publisher not identified, c. 1942-45.
(Cotsen ID No. 71688129)

The convergence between these two formats can be further demonstrated in a miniature war propaganda kamishibai-*omochae* created as a children's toy to be cut up and assembled (Fig. 8). Although this might not be an *omocha-e* in the sense of the *ukiyo-e* prints that flourished in the Edo period, I would argue that it is a direct descendent. Only 2 x 2.5 inches, when constructed, this miniature stage is part of an *omiyage*, or promotional gift. The complete package was designed as an advertisement for medicine and other health products, as well as a celebration of the 2600th year (1940) since the founding of the Japanese empire by the legendary Emperor Jimmu.



Figure 8. Omiyage (オミヤゲ), Ōsaka-shi :
Hatsubaigen Kabushiki Gaisha Takeda ChōBee Shōten, [1940?].
(Cotsen ID No. 71687659)

The twelve miniature kamishibai story cards depict a series of victorious battles and events, starting with the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident at the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and ending with the founding of the so-called Reorganized National

Government of the Republic of China (1940-1945). An image of the fully assembled stage is provided at lower left of the card. In terms of size, theme, and illustration style, these cards are very similar to the magic-lantern slide kamishibai shown in Figure 7 above.

After the war, magic lanterns and kamishibai continued to converge in educational settings. In the 1950s, Takahashi Gozan, director of the Magic Lantern Kamishibai Association and a prominent voice in educational kamishibai, oversaw a series of historical kamishibai designed to look like magic lantern shows (Fig. 9). The visual style of this series mimics the pastel colours and light and shadow techniques of magic-lantern slides. Beginning with the historical transition of Japan's capital city from Edo to Tokyo (江戸から東京へ) at the beginning of the Meiji period, the stories in the series include detailed instructions for how to use the cards when teaching older students in public schools.



Figure 9. Edo kara Tokyo e (江戸から東京へ), Tōkyō :
Nihon Kamishibai Gentō Kabushiki Kaisha, Shōwa 31 [1956].
(Cotsen ID No. 99566259)

Efforts to Prevent Convergence

As kamishibai and magic lanterns continued to converge, there were also voices calling to keep them separate. In *Educational University Seminars: Audio Visual Education*, Saki Akio (1951) wrote, “Many people think kamishibai and magic lantern are the same, but they should be treated as different media” (189). Saki acknowledged that both of these media were relatively new to education—especially in the case of kamishibai—but he argued that they both held great promise and had become essential to classroom teaching (187). This certainly proved true in the case of the magic lantern as methods of photography improved and its delivery technology transitioned into the slide projector and, more recently, PowerPoint slides. However, in the case of kamishibai, several setbacks prevented it from reaching its potential in classrooms in Japan. In 1967, the Ministry of Education decreed that kamishibai stages and cards were “expendable goods” and no longer required schools to purchase them. In the 1970s, kamishibai cards were moved out of the audio-visual sections of libraries and placed together with picture books (Kamichi 99–100). Indeed, today kamishibai cards more frequently are converged in people’s minds with picture books because they are used interchangeably in school settings for literacy education and reading aloud. Many illustrators of kamishibai today are also picture-book illustrators, further blurring the boundaries between the two formats. Publishers of kamishibai tend to focus on what will sell and that has led to an emphasis on stories for kindergarten and pre-school children. Today, the general public in Japan often perceives of kamishibai as a medium only for very young children. The fact that kamishibai was initially inspired by early cinema and was created for audiences of all ages

has largely been forgotten in Japan, although this may change yet again as people around the world are increasingly adopting and adapting the format for new contexts and diverse audiences.

Conclusion

As this brief mapping of early cinematic media demonstrates, kamishibai not only converged with magic-lantern technology through the mediation of *omocha-e* from the very beginning, but both audio-visual media—kamishibai and magic lanterns—continued to evolve and develop *in relation* to each other, cross-fertilizing and intersecting as they moved in tandem over time. In fact, it would appear from these examples that the stronger tendency of media is toward convergence, and it is only through concerted and repeated efforts of people like Saki Akio or Iwamoto Kenji that these media remain separate and classifiable. These efforts also raise the question of whether the relatively low social status of all three of these popular cultural media—magic lanterns, kamishibai, and *omocha-e*—made them more prone to convergence because the stakes involved in maintaining purity of form were never as high as the potential profit of coming up with the latest (*shinpan*) novelty.

In *Multimedia Histories: From the Magic Lantern to the Internet*, James Lyons and John Plunkett (2007) write that “Along with ‘interactivity,’ ‘convergence’ is probably the other term most often used to characterize the impact of digital media...In contemporary media practice, ‘convergence’ stands for the dominance of fusion and transferability between different forms...we are in an era in which media are always used in relation to each other” (xxii). Although this may seem like a new phenomenon, the interwoven histories of kamishibai, *omocha-e*, and magic lanterns demonstrate that this complex ecology of cultural forms is anything but new. Taking an ecological and integrated approach to media and how they evolve in relation to each other opens up new ways of looking at the histories of all three media. When viewed through ecological networks, we can see how kamishibai and magic lanterns have and will no doubt continue to regenerate and evolve in new directions as they travel to other cultures and new communities over time.

By way of conclusion, let us return to the question of the role of paper, which has been quietly serving as the material at the base of most of the media examined in this article: Is paper a medium, a delivery technology, or a platform? Although I have only begun to tease out the implications of this question, the mapping of converging technologies in this study suggests that paper was and continues to be an efficient and durable delivery technology, perhaps even a platform, especially in the absence of more expensive or less reliable technologies. I would even go so far as to reword Jenkins’s claim for digital technologies to argue: “When words, images and sounds are transferred onto *paper*, we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow across platforms.” I will conclude with two examples. In 2003, when my son was ten and had no access to video-game consoles, he contrived a “paper video game” over a series of 20 taped together single sheets of paper, complete with associated levels, avatars, and gems. Even more recently, in a spectacular convergence of old and new media, the Japanese kamishibai troupe Spice Arthur 702 performed what they call “Bunraku Star Wars,” (Fig. 10), which transports the kamishibai format back to its roots in both traditional Japanese theater and early cinema, while at the same time recreating that most well-known of futuristic galaxies, all on paper.

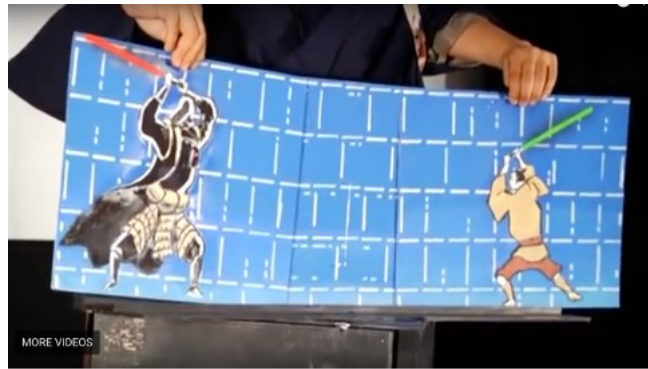


Figure 10. From Spice Arthur 702 “Bunraku Star Wars.”

<https://www.list.co.uk/event/417589-japanese-picture-storytelling-with-spice-arthur-702/#videos> (accessed 02-17-2022)

In this complex example of multiple converging media—incorporating aspects of film, traditional puppet theater, magic lanterns, and kamishibai—Spice Arthur 702 demonstrates the resilience of kamishibai as a medium and shows how the transference of light and shadow technologies onto paper continues to be relevant to performers in Japan and throughout the world today.

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Rebel Within the System: Subversive Style in Four Films by Nagisa Oshima

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Abstract

Nagisa Oshima is a rare figure in film history because he was able to maintain a high level of autonomy in his filmmaking even though he was making highly political, wildly iconoclastic, and technically daring films, all while still managing to make money for his studio. The most remarkable thing about Oshima's style is its fluidity throughout his career—it changed dramatically from film to film. As Japanese film scholar Donald Richie puts it "Each film looks rather different...critics who write about him have their job cut out for them. It's a problem." This is exactly the problem I am confronting in this paper by looking at both the narrative content and cinematic style in four widely varied Oshima films, *Cruel Story of Youth*, *Burial of the Sun*, *Violence in the Afternoon*, and *Realm of the Senses*, breaking down their stylistic idiosyncrasies while also examining the inter-relationship of form and content in each. My argument is that Oshima was never, as has been frequently claimed, merely a sensational filmmaker who maintained his popularity through exploitative shock value, nor was he a director who varied his style willfully, merely trying to keep critics and audiences off-balance by playing with technique, but rather was an artist who carefully chose—and then brilliantly executed—a specific style for each of his films based on the dual demands of its narrative and political content.

Keywords: Nagisa Oshima, Japanese Film, Counter-Hegemonic Cinema, Film Studies

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Introduction

It is ever the fantasy of those who feel oppressed, downtrodden, and powerless to somehow steal control of the tools of power and turn them back against the oppressors—to defeat the ruling clique using the very means of hegemonic control they had wielded to maintain their position over the rest of society. In the years immediately following the American occupying forces relinquishing their control over the Japanese government and culture industries, one angry young man was able to do just that. The 22-year-old Oshima Nagisa quit law school, aced the Shochiku studios “entrance exam” and served a five-year apprenticeship, all the while seething at what he perceived as the dullness and conservatism of his studio’s films. He scoffed at the film journalist Tadao Sato for saying that the giant and successful Shochiku studio was a “Sleeping lion,” because to Oshima Shochiku was “a dead lion” (Oshima, 1992, p. 22). Eventually, Nagisa Oshima would make a string of movies which managed to be both politically and socially transgressive as well as formally challenging, simultaneously making money for his studio and transforming himself into a cultural icon.

Unlike the strict control of the Hollywood studio system of this time, Japanese directors are given almost complete creative autonomy, under the assumption they will behave as good “company men” and toe the line. Oshima’s first movie was a bleak melodrama about class-conflict. It was a commercial failure, but enough of a critical success that the studio felt compelled to give him a small budget for another film. This second feature, a dark, shocking, and unpleasant film about hedonistic teens, *Cruel Story of Youth*, was expected to be his last. However, to everyone’s amazement, it proved enormously popular with young film-goers. At the “height of political turmoil and massive protests against the renewal of the US–Japan Security Treaty, *Cruel Story* established Oshima as a leading figure in the generation of young filmmakers who rebelled against Japanese cinema’s status quo” (Yoshimoto, 2007, p.168), thus kicking off a half-century long career in which film after film would find radical new ways to fire-up the political sensibilities of the audience while simultaneously shaking the traditional rules of cinema down to their roots.

Just as Godard is seen as the intellectual leader of the French New Wave, Oshima was the motivating voice of the Japanese New Wave, and both directors share many ideas about what film should aspire to. Like Godard, Oshima was iconoclastic in his approaches and seemed equally dedicated to the notions of “filmic displeasure” contained in the Brechtian idea that “Realism doesn’t consist in reproducing reality, but in showing how things really are” (Brecht, qtd. in Monaco, 2007, p.321). As Noel Burch tells us, “a true subjectivism” is possible in film, and its criteria are “set forth by Oshima: refusal to appeal to the collective consciousness of the audience; refusal to echo the established forms in any way; [and] insistence upon establishing the subjective individuality of the author”(1979, p.321). Oshima had decided to break down and destroy cinema and then rebuild it based upon his own idealistic goals. To accomplish this, it is imperative that the director overthrow the belief that “the picture exists to tell a story’ and to ‘create a cinematic method whereby picture and editing themselves would be the very essence of cinema.’ And, of course, ‘works so conceived must reject ...traditional methods... naturalism, melodrama, etc.” (Oshima qtd. in Burch, p.327). In such ways, “Bazin’s ideal of objectivity and the *cahiers*’ elevation of sober, elegant *mis-en-scene* were confronted by a cinema of fragmentation, ambiguity, distanciation, and flagrant aesthetic effects” (Bordwell, 1997, p.87). In other words, from the very beginning Oshima had planned to make shocking, disruptive, political films that denied viewers the pleasures they had grown to expect from cinema.

This problem of style is what I want to grapple with in this paper, the bulk of which consists of an analysis of four of Oshima's films, three from the early stage of his career and one from the following decade, and take note of the startlingly different styles he employs in each to shock and jolt his audience as part of his rebellion against social stultification and passivity, the theme which makes up the greater part of his oeuvre, and thus demonstrate that his own stylistic attack on norms is far from empty reactionary iconoclasm, but is instead a creative choice through which he exploits various techniques—both radical and conservative—as demanded by thematic content rather than accepted industry practice.

Through an analysis of style in four of Oshima's films we will see how these various factors and philosophies play out in actual practice. The first three, *Cruel Story of Youth*, *Burial of the Sun*, and *Violence in the Afternoon* were made in the 1960s, and the intensifying of both the thematic and technical elements can be seen to progress in a linear, almost exponential, fashion. The last film we will examine, *Realm of the Senses*, was made in 1976, and although stylistically removed from his experimental cinema, continues on the same trajectory of radical filmmaking, breaking the accepted paradigms of accepted practice to force the audience to re-think social reality by being forced to “re-see” it on the screen.

1960: Oshima's Watershed Year

Oshima's second film, expected to be his last, is about a high school couple who operate a sexual extortion racket on businessman. Both die violently by the end of the film. Unlike Oshima's first film, *City of Love and Hope*, *Cruel Story of Youth* is shot in Cinemascope Technicolor, but remains fairly traditional, narratively, maintaining strict temporal linearity and coherent, readily apprehendable spatial relations. However, the film is unusual in that it eschews standard IMR editing and contains no reverse-field (shot/ reverse-shot) camera work. Instead, the camera simply pans or tilts to reveal the other speaker in a dialogue, or more commonly, contains them both in a two-shot. Frequently the characters will be at either end of the screen and we must shift our attention back and forth between them. The shots themselves are occasionally extremely long, although usually carefully choreographed both to flow smoothly and to hold our attention. However, the overall style is atypical, and can be disconcerting. As Yoshimoto explains:

The combination of the use of Cinemascope and a telephoto lens in cramped interior scenes isolates the characters physically from their surroundings. This claustrophobic feeling is further accentuated by the collapse of distance between foreground and background, the frequent absence of establishing shots, and Oshima's apparent lack of interest in constructing a coherent cinematic space or environment which would give a historical depth to fictional characters on screen. (2007, p.172)

These non-standard elements of *Cruel Story of Youth* are fairly conservative compared to those Oshima would later employ, but they still point towards his tendency to sacrifice accepted narrative practices for visceral feeling: “Many of these techniques, while ruining that perfectly realized technical film image viewers had come to expect of a polished theatrical release, instead heightened the emotional realism of the story” (Buehrer, 2017, p153). Even when narrative events are progressing in a fairly logical and understandable way, various formal, stylistic cinematic decisions are being made in *how* the events are shown that break with the habits of the era. These technical decisions are carefully chosen, not, as in typical “transparent” films styles, in an attempt to erase the presence of the filmmakers, but rather to bring form and content into closer harmony. As Tadao Sato explains the film's:

[S]tyle is closely related to its Theme of cruelty...and since almost everything is shot under a leaden sky, something red, like flowing blood, creates a striking impression when seen through a telescopic lens, burning sensually amid all the gray...Long shots conveying heavy oppressive images are interspersed with shots taken by a roving, hand-held camera, creating a jarring effect. Both these original, contrapuntal cinematic techniques brilliantly capture the tense relationship between a stagnant bottled-up social environment and a young couple who are beaten bloody while looking for an escape-hatch. (1982, p.216)

Cruel Story of Youth was a popular and critical success in Japan, and within a few weeks of its release Oshima was hard at work, again with limited budget and tight schedule, crash-filming his next movie (which would also be made and released in 1960), *The Burial of the Sun*. Where *Cruel Story*, structurally at least, is a fairly traditional melodrama with subversive elements, *The Burial of the Sun* has almost no traditional story elements at all, and while it is still temporally conservative, it is spatially very complex and takes the Bazinian notions of “editing within the frame” to almost unprecedented excess. Shot in an enormous Tokyo slum, the events in *Burial of the Sun* take place in a strange gray environment which is somehow both urban wasteland and trackless jungle, where “men bare their fangs and fight like wolves,” and “the story unfolds like a scroll painting of hell” (Sato, 1982, p.217).

Unlike what we saw in *Cruel Story of Youth*, the narration is disjointed and bounces around within this fragmented, constantly splintering and reforming society. The atmosphere tends to be cramped and busy but not frenetic or disorienting. The characters are usually framed in close or medium-shots with the camera often roaming, capturing the locals almost randomly as they go about their daily lives. The result is a messy, active picture screen with heads constantly being lopped off and bodies frequently disappearing off to the sides of the frame as they walk off-screen or the camera pans away from them. Most characters wear bright clothing that sets them off sharply and gaudily against the dully-hued backgrounds.

In outdoor shots, the action often occurs simultaneously in a number of planes. Often there is an extreme close-up at the far left or right of the frame, with great wells of semi-focused activity going on in the parts of the fore, mid, and/or background which are visible in the rest of the frame. For example, the back of a character’s head will fill the bottom left corner of the screen as he is talking to other people approaching or moving away from the camera in the distance.

Shots indoors are usually in claustrophobic spaces with many people lined up along the perimeter. As the camera cannot pull back to give establishing shots, a state of tension is maintained as we can never be sure what the various off-screen characters are doing. The camera will pan, tilt, and occasionally cut as it meanders throughout the space to reveal new human landscapes. In spite of all of the active and engaging characters and images, “The wide-screen framing maintains an aesthetic distance. Not only does no rapid editing excite the pacing, but the emphasis on composition becomes in itself a signifier...the imagery is visually lush without being romantic or participatory” (Turim, 1998, p.51).

If one graphed the artistic growth of Oshima in the year 1960 with change as the vertical axis and time as the horizontal, the line would begin at a 45-degree angle and then arc sharply upward. Oshima completed and released a third film in 1960, *Shadows and Fog in Japan*, considered a masterpiece not just of the Japanese New Wave but of world cinema. His

Bazinian exploration of the long take and political themes both hit a peak as he filmed a feature length socio-political study which has only 43 separate shots. Oshima's goal was to:

[T]ransform Japanese cinema into an intellectually powerful force comparable to the art, literature, and critical discourse that had had enormous influence on Japanese post-war public opinion...a self-consciously intellectual project, which rejected both studio productions as commodified entertainment and socially conscious films from independent production collectives as mere illustrations of leftist political ideas. (Yoshimoto, 2007, p.177)

To get permission for such an endeavor, Oshima lied to his studio about the leftist inflammatory content of the film, and when a seventeen-year-old boy assassinated the Socialist Party candidate soon after the picture's release (the one captured in the stunning photo in *Life Magazine* retrospectives), the studio promptly pulled the film from distribution. Oshima, just as promptly, quit the studio. It was an extremely bad time for the Japanese language box-office in general (it has never really improved), and in the uneven films Oshima made for various studios up through the mid-60s we can see him struggling in his role as an independent.

However, in 1966 Oshima returned to peak form with the release of *Violence at Noon*, a film even more radical than his previous films, but in stunningly different ways. If it is true that, as Oshima has said, "he chooses the style of his films according to their theme" (Buehrer, 2017, p.152), then extreme subject matter is likely to be combined with extreme style. Previously, Oshima had attempted to document the break-down of society through a variety of realism marked by long-takes with multiple planes of action within the screen, similar to the manner famously praised by Andre Bazin, but executed far less transparently. However, Oshima now sought to mimic social conflict and fragmentation through dialectical montage in the style of Sergei Eisenstein. Where *Night and Fog in Japan* has only forty-three edits, *Violence at Noon* contains 2000, putting the average shot speed very close to Eisenstein's *Potemkin*. The shots themselves often have the graphic, spatial, and size conflicts characteristic of Eisenstein's celebrated "collisions," and indeed, Noel Burch's description of the editing is reminiscent of Eisenstein's descriptions of his own technique.

'Straightforward' narrative has rarely been subjected to a more *excessive decoupage* than in this film. Almost no account is taken of orientational matching; eyeline position and direction are disregarded more often than not, so that every shot rings out like a pistol-shot, so to speak, all the more so as Oshima delights in juxtaposing very different shot sizes. (Burch, 1979, p.331)

Lest the viewer still manage to find traditional "pleasure" in the images, it is also filmed in black and white.

In this complex story of a serial rapist/murderer and two women who are tied to him (his wife and his most significant victim), the manipulation and plasticity of space itself becomes an important signifier. The story moves back and forth frequently between the lives of the two women with little or no regard to either geographical space or time; both women's stories are frequently told in un-cued flash-backs and flash-forwards. Whether in the past or the present, the editing intriguingly but often inexplicably jumps and dances in and out of the action, probing and exploring all aspects of the characters' space for, "in the modernist film 'decoupage articulations [will be] determining the 'scenario's' articulations as much as vice

versa” (Burch qtd. in Bordwell, 1997, p.90). We have no choice when watching but to surrender ourselves to the machinations of the film, and only in so doing does the story become legible, for we quickly realize that “Narrative causality is relegated to the status of one ‘voice’ in a polyphony that gives equal role to purely spatial manipulations” (Bordwell qtd. in Dessser, 1988, p.17). Again, it would seem that we must break through the glossy surface of the typical film’s style through these other modes of representation to find a given situation’s “reality.” The style reminds us of Godard’s assertion that “a brilliantly directed film gives the impression of having been placed end-to-end, but a film brilliantly edited gives the impression of having suppressed all directions” (1972, p.40). And that is the sensation we have in this film. No up, down, right or left, forward or backward, before or after—and yet there is a story, and by watching we learn to follow it. With an average shot length of about 2.7 seconds, this is a film that requires total concentration and immersion to follow.

Regarding the story, there are two narrative trajectories played out simultaneously for each of the two female main characters. In one each reconstructs her relationship to the rapist, Eisuke, in order to come to terms with what he has become so that she can decide what action to take. Eventually the two women meet and agree to first help the police and then commit suicide. However, each woman also has a second narrative line, and these two are related and sometimes overlap. In these, a series of flashbacks acts as a kind of mystery story seeking to uncover the circumstances of Eisuke’s first act of rape which, as the lead detective on the case explains, holds the secret to why he is compelled to re-enact it. “Do they repeat the crime because they enjoy it?” Shino asks the detective. He responds, “What do you think?” to which, with strange conviction, she replies “I think they get tired of it, but it keeps them going.” In fact, she is the only one who can really understand Eisuke’s psychology because not only is she the most recent victim but, as we eventually learn, she was also the original one.

Filtered through the conflicted and tumultuous minds of the two women, the narration finds it difficult to trace its way back to the mystery’s key. We constantly approach it through flashes and brief scenes, but then are sucked back into the present as the women suppress both their own memories and each other’s. To add to the complexity, ghosts enter the scenes and talk to the protagonists, characters listen and respond to non-diegetic broadcasts, night turns to day and back again.

Donald Richie says that *Violence at Noon* has “a narrative so shattered that the audience is left with almost no ‘story’ at all”(1990, p.70). However, this is incorrect, for by the film’s end the story has been completely and clearly reconstructed. But more than that, the style has constructed complex portraits of the minds of three people, as well as what is intended as a snapshot of the mental health of Japanese society. Some of the supposed indicators of the post-modern condition are increased tempo, diffraction, fragmentation, and the proliferation of decontextualized images. With *Violence at Noon*, it could be argued that Oshima is trying to show us our future, and at one level his prediction seems to be coming true. Although the editing speed was disorienting and blindingly fast when the film was released, 2.7 seconds a shot is “Not unusual for a [Hollywood] action picture nowadays” (Bordwell, 2006).

Into New Realms

After *Violence at Noon*, Oshima’s style and reputation continued to morph and grow. With *Shinjuku Thief* and *Death By Hanging* (both 1968), it seemed that he had exhausted the directions he had mapped out in his explorations of the limits of cinema, and with the

scathing *Boy* (1969) perhaps Oshima agreed with many of his critics that he had chastised the degeneracy of Japan enough. Certainly, he seemed to have lost steam and his output fell sharply as he chose to spend more and more of his time on his popular television talk-shows, which continued sporadically nearly until his death in 2013.

In 1976, however, he accepted an offer from the French producer Anatole Dauman to finance the production of a film in which Oshima would have absolute free rein over content, including graphic sexual displays, leading to several firsts in Japanese film, in both financing and content.

In terms of the film industry, Oshima also saw the method of making *In the Realm* as ushering in a new system of filmmaking. By seeking foreign backing, importing film stock, shooting the film in Japan using Japanese actors and technicians and sending the undeveloped film abroad for processing and editing, Oshima...freed directors from the rigidities of the studio system and the constraints of censorship laws at one stroke. (Standish, 2007, p222)

For the final film in this paper, we will jump forward ten years, and briefly look at Oshima's most famous, and infamous, film; one which it was illegal to make or show in Japan due to its content. This movie is based on a true and well-known story, and in most ways is his most technically and narratively simple film, but also his most shocking and disturbing due to its content. Sex films had already become Japan's most popular and profitable genre, and were shown throughout the country, without legal difficulty. Japanese sex films had relatively strict rules on what could and could not be shown, unlike western pornography, which had almost no legal restrictions whatsoever, but did have strict generic conventions which Oshima's film would not adhere to—at all.

It turns out that mixing graphic sex with realism leads to a kind of film which would satisfy neither Japanese "pinku" erotic film fans, nor Western hard-core fans—for it would be one which shows not only actual intercourse, but also exhaustion, considerable flaccidity, and even impotence. When the male member is shown behind the scenes and out of costume, so to speak, it cuts a very unimpressive figure, suddenly seeming more pathetic or comical than radiating traditional phallic power and virility. Oshima does not shy from this in his portrayal; this is neither an extreme version of a typical Japanese erotic film, nor a western porno, but a dark and disturbing portrait of obsession without boundaries.

In filming *Realm of the Senses*, Oshima abandoned his trend of exploring technical innovations along with the widescreen format most of his films had been shot in. He would not need stylistic devices to be shocking, because the un-augmented images on the screen would be more radical, disturbing, and revolutionary than anything he could have done with technique alone. The editing approach to the material, far from being fragmented, remains unflinchingly focused on spectacle. If his previous experiments had been inspired by exhortations against stylistic beauty such as "whatever is intended to produce hypnosis, is likely to induce sordid intoxication, or creates fog, has got to be given up" (Brecht, 1975, p.38), the material that he was now filming would make such concerns unnecessary. Although the spectacle early in *Realm of the Senses* could give pleasure, as the film progresses, tensions are slowly introduced which not only replace the pleasure with anxiety, but culminate in a scene which is perhaps the single most graphically un-pleasurable in the entire canon of cinema. Interestingly, this anxiety and un-pleasure would not be increased by non-traditional techniques, but *reduced* by anything other than "transparent" representation.

Ironically, Oshima created his most shocking movie by suppressing all of his enormous creative gifts.

Conclusion

Although Oshima would continue to make films—even daringly subversive ones like *Merry Christmas*, *Mr. Lawrence* and *Taboo*—*In the Realm of the Senses* marks the end of his trajectory as an angry young man determined to politicize the national audience by challenging every conception of cinema they held while, simultaneously violating cherished cultural and social principles—not merely to grab headlines and be outrageous for his own aggrandizement, but to force Japanese society to confront its facile complacency and failure to meet its own liberal and intellectual promise.

Whatever Oshima's future reputation will be, it would be difficult to deny that he was stylistically one of the most fluid directors cinema has yet known, and like Carl Dreyer, Oshima was fearless in using extreme choices in form to complement his subject matter, exploring the themes he felt were most important to present to his audience and presenting them as forcefully as possible. Didactic and committed, his filmmaking was a constant battle against hegemonic influences and false consciousness, both within the stale and politically sterile modes of filmic production then popular, and complacent consumerism by post-occupation, industrial-capitalist Japan.

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***Portrayal of Men in Ray's Films, Mirror to Present Heroes in Bollywood:
Comparative Analysis With Reference to 'Mahanagar' and 'Nayak'***

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Abstract

Indian Hindi cinema particularly, Bollywood over the past 70 years has transgressed through various themes and influenced the audience at large. During the 60s and 70s Bollywood thoroughly stereotyped men and projected toxic masculinity. Highly contrasting to this is Satyajit Ray's films and his portrayal of men who were gentle, supportive and masculine all at the same time. Even though Satyajit Ray was a regional filmmaker his contribution towards cinema transcends all linguistic and regional boundaries. This paper tries to analyze how Ray refuted these stereotypes and misogynistic images attached to men through his films and became a window to the present day Bollywood heroes. Theories like, Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory will be used to understand how this aggressive male image projected by Bollywood has further led to violence and crime in real life. The research will be conducted in an exploratory manner through frame-by-frame analysis of two purposively selected films from Ray's body of work - Nayak (1966) and Mahanagar (1963). Nayak (1966) has been narrated from the male protagonist's point of view and Mahanagar (1963) from the female protagonists' point of view, wherein neither of the lead's over-shadowed the other, each enjoyed their own democratic space. Several news articles and research papers were used to analyze the recent trends of Bollywood movies of this generation. The results of this study, also provide a better insight to film critics and researchers about Ray's men who equally stood-out like the women leads.

Keywords: Masculinity, Bollywood, Stereotype, Satyajit Ray, Angry Young Man

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INTRODUCTION

'Bollywood' is a portmanteau derived from Bombay and Hollywood, the center of the American film industry, which started to flourish during the 1970s by overtaking the United State's credit of largest film producers in the world (Goswami, M.P., 2020; Rajghatta, C., 2008). When it started off, it represented the male as an angry young hero, the 'macho-man' portrayed by actors Dharmendra Deol, Amitabh Bachan and others. Soon, succeeded by actors like Sharukh Khan, Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan, et al., who focussed more on having certain physical attributes like chiseled body to fit the 'hero' image (Raj & Goswami, 2020). A study by Bhattacharjee P. and Tripathi P. show that, Bollywood's projection of 'toxic masculinity' shows evidence even through Hindi proverbs like, "*jiski chaati pe baal nahi, uski baat pe aitbaar nahi* (roughly translated as a man with no hair on his chest cannot be trusted)". Bollywood thoroughly stereotyped men creating certain preconceived notions of masculinity, from having certain physical attributes to fighting-off villains, being the savior and behaving in a certain manner - who is robust, rowdy and less emotional. As Bollywood keeps evolving and changing with time, the portrayal of men has also changed. With films like, Mere Brother Ki Dulhan (2011), Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na (2008), Hindi Medium (2017), Tumhari Sulu (2017), Tanu weds Manu (2011) being produced the male protagonist here isn't an angry- young man rather a supportive one. Men or the 'hero's here, are portrayed as one doing the household chores and even expressing their emotional side, parallely showing their masculinity in other manner (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

This change in Bollywood's portrayal of masculinity has occurred roughly post-2000 era. Parallel to '60s and '70s era when Bollywood produced films like Sholay (1975), ShenShah (1988) and others, Ray projected a very different portrayal of male characters. His characters were endearing and real. Be it 'Arindam' from Nayak or, 'Nikhilesh' from Ghare Baire. Even as the turbulent period hurled the protagonists neither of them behaved aggressively, but rather in a matured manner. They played an important part in the flow of the narrative. Portrayal of men in Ray's films never meant reducing the importance of the female protagonists to mere background characters. A fine balance was what the cinematic genius always imbibed. His films had a sense of realism attached to them, which was absent during that time. They did have their own share of struggles, but their determination to live positioned them as real human beings, one which haunts the audience every time you watch them on-screen. (Ghosh, 2021) Neither of Ray's films is aggressively women-centric or spew hatred against men, "instead, in a very subtle manner his work proves that to portray women's perspectives one need not undermine the contributions of men." (Samsal, 2016) His films illustrated men and women as complementary to one another and not as opposite or equal forces (Samsal, 2016).

This paper tries to analyze how the portrayal of men in the 1960s by Ray contrasted greatly from the toxic masculinity projected by the Bollywood films. Through an exploratory manner this paper shows how men through Ray's lenses are a mirror of the 21st century Bollywood male.

Research Problem

The objectives of the study help us to investigate the following problem:

- To understand the portrayal of the men in Ray's films - a mirror to the progressive 21st CE men in Bollywood

- To analyze how Ray broke the stereotypes attached to men by Bollywood in the 1960s

Aims of the Study

The study aims to understand how the supportive male protagonist/ 'heros' which Bollywood try to project in the 21st century, had already been portrayed by Satyajit Ray through his films parallel to the time when Bollywood projected 'toxic masculinity' (especially in the pre 2000s era). It highlights how Ray, the cinematic genius, portrayed the everyday-man through his stories, void of machoism and aggressive behavior. The stereotypical notion of 'men' that Bollywood created of an angry-young man, was something which Ray never acquainted to. It is this that he tried to shrug off.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The audience in India at large has been mostly influenced by the Bollywood films, and that undoubtedly impacted their whole outlook towards life (Raj & Goswami, 2020). After being heavily criticized for their portrayal of 'toxic masculinity' Bollywood now tries to evolve the representation of male through their films, which one can say is a very slow process. Satyajit Ray, the cinematic genius as he was, represented the male protagonist, much ahead of it's time - someone who was supportive, emotional and trying to reform their own stereotypes and shortsightedness. A study on 'Motion Pictures and Real-Life Violence' by Wilber Schramm (1968), suggests that the Bollywood films produced during that time, had a very negative impact upon the viewers so deep that they started to imitate what they have seen on-screen. "There is evidence that violence in motion pictures can contribute to violence, delinquency, and crime in real life" (Schramm, 1968). This can be linked to the **Social Learning Theory** which suggests that audiences learn and cultivate in them the social behavior they have been exposed to, which might be positive or negative depending on the media content they are viewing. Thus, making it conclusive that as a society the equal representation of men and women have to be induced by law and not something that is practiced naturally.

The patriarchal society which had created a domination of men over women, was further fuelled by Bollywood. Movie themes then stereotyped 'male' to be an angry-young man and very aggressive in its approach. This was cultivated in such a manner, that men were made to believe these aggressive portrayals to be real. **Cultivation Theory**, devised by George Gerbner helps to understand how "continuous exposure to media content can cultivate a belief that the social reality aligns with reality portrayed in the media" (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

Thus, the theories discussed above are clearly conclusive of the fact that the Bollywood macho-men had a greater influence on people during that time as they selectively exposed themselves to such content among the plathero of others that existed. The **Spiral of Silence Theory** clearly applies here as the Bolly macho-men were the dominant voice during that time hence influenced more parallel to which conversely existed the male protagonists through Ray's lens which were talked less of. It's only *now* that Bollywood is trying to uphold a male protagonist, who has emotions, which has already been spoken of by Ray during that time.

Thus the **Research Questions** that will help to constitute the basis for analysis are:

RQ1: How did Ray portray the male protagonists - a window to the 21st CE men in Bollywood?

RQ2: How did Satyajit Ray's films break the stereotypes attached to men during the era of 'toxic masculinity'?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In an article, "Bollywood's Toxic Masculinity: The Problematic Portrayal of Men and Women in Hindi Cinema" by Saurabh Samraat highlights, that the patriarchy which was the central theme of Bollywood during the '60s and '70s portrayed the 'heroes' as 'Angry Young Man'. They glorified men as tough and aggressive, whose role was to save the female protagonist and fight off villains. The female protagonist was portrayed as the 'Damsel in Distress' or her role was reduced to an obedient wife who would do as the husband said. The women hardly had their own choice and the men always dominated them, never supported them or tried to even understand them. "This kind of portrayal transforms into peer pressure compelling men and women to fit in this stereotypical mold presented by films, which further affects people's mental health" (Samraat, 2021).

Writaja Samsal, a researcher in an article titled as 'Portrayal of Women in Satyajit Ray's Films: Not the usual brand of Feminism' writes that, Ray's films on the other hand, were inherently simple, but only through careful analysis one can see that it has a lot of subplots and a deeper message attached to it. Reasons why, in spite of being a regional filmmaker his films appeal transcended geographical and linguistic boundaries. The artistic genius had an inherent ability to create a link between the local and global. Even in the patriarchal society of the 1960s and 1970s, Ray tried to advocate for a separate existence of women at a time when society was unable to fathom their social independence. But, through various narratives he even made it clear that "true feminism upholds women's rights not at the expense of that of men" (Samsal, 2016). The men and women in Ray's films complemented each other, rather than being shown as equal or opposite. Ray believed 'human beings' (men or women) can never be black or white, he always believed that there existed some "gray areas of confusion and misperception enunciating behavior" (Samsal, 2016). This was something he never feared to show through his films. For instance, his male protagonists, 'Subrata' in *Mahanagar* supported his wife initially when she wanted to do a job to support the family but not whole-heartedly, it's only towards the end that 'Subrata' restores his unconditional support.

In an article published by Naina Bhargava and Kura Sunaina, titled 'Deconstructing Men and Masculinity through the Lens of Ray' discusses how, Ray in '*Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)*', a story based on Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's Bengali novel with the same name, showed the differential treatment towards the superior male child, Apu in contrast to the female child, Durga. Through scenes where Apu was being educated by his father Harihar, he contrasted that with Durga, who was meant to perform rituals and pray for a good husband. Ray very subtly "speculated this peculiar gendered stigma attached to the identity and its association with domestic work in India" (Bhargava and Sunaina, 2020). There wasn't any dialogues exchanged, but the scenes themselves stand independent which clearly portray people's mentality about the 'gendered roles'. Ray captures closely how Apu notices his mother and the society in general, behaved differently with the girl child, Durga. The sequence has been stitched in a manner that it will raise a question to the viewers, *then*

and even *now*. Today, after years of trying to transform society, there are films in Bollywood who are trying to subvert the ‘gendered roles’.

According to the author and the first asexual student leader of India, Meghna Mehra (2019), the macho yong man era (1960 - 1990) in Bollywood, created a false reality in the minds of the audience that to be a ‘man’ one needs to be angry, tough and less emotional. They shouldn't feel pain and be aggressive in their approach. People soon started imitating the Bollywood heroes and believed that to be a man one has to have some superpowers to fight off-villains and jump from tall storeyed buildings to prove their love. This had a lasting impact on the audience. The actors portrayed an angry macho image enacted by Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra, whom people started to idolize. Movies like, *Sholay* (1975), *ShahenShah* (1988), etc. stereotyped men and through narratives defined what masculinity meant during that period (Mehra, 2019). Thus, people believed that to be a man one has to be robust, rowdy and physically fit (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

The influence of Bollywood in the minds of the Indian audience that the imitation of reel-life heroes in real life resulted in creation of a false reality among people. Ray through his movie, ‘*Nayak* (1966)’ tried to convey that “men” can be someone behind the stardom, reducing him to an ordinary man who has insecurities and fears. In the book, ‘*Satyajit Ray’s Heros and Heroines*’ Amitava Nag writes that the critics failed to fathom the depth of ‘*Arindam*’-s character in the movie *Nayak* (1966). They tried to equate Arindam’s charisma to the stereotypical standards of Bollywood heroes, “who are necessarily more masculine” (Nag, 2019, p.147). The author even quotes Andrew Robinson, “He (Uttam Kuman) lacks elan and seems insufficiently masculine for a matinee idol” (Nag, 2019, p. 146). At the core of the film, Ray criticizes the unrealistic portrayal of ‘heroes’ through few dialogues. Men can be emotionally vulnerable, have insecurities and be masculine all at the same time.

In an interview with Filmfare, Madhabi Mukherjee, “remembers Satyajit Ray on his 100th birthday anniversary”, says that “Bengali Cinema was far more evolved than Hindi cinema back in those days (1960s - 1970s) and Satyajit Ray was a big reason for that.” Madhabi Mukherjee is known for her role of ‘Aditi’ in *Mahanagar*. Amitava Nag, in his book ‘*Satyajit Ray’s Heros and Heroines*’ highlights that Ray was very passive in his manner of criticizing the State or the social and human condition, which he believed was largely man-made. It was never directly hard hitting, rather, subtle and firm but not aloof (Nag, 2019, p. 50 - 52). Satyajit Ray crafted ‘*Subrata*’-s character with universality. His constant dilemma between his male-ego as the sole bread earner and dire financial crisis especially after losing his job hits him hard. “Eventually ending up admiring his wife’s courage and values makes the entire journey of his character extremely relatable and felt.” (Sarkar, 2019) Madhabi Mukherjee very rightfully comments that one has failed to grasp the versatility and depth of Bengali cinema.

In an article, “(Re)Making the Man: Masculinity in Hindi Cinema of the 2010s” by Shilpashree Mishra, she highlights that portraying masculinity in India has changed a little over the years. And when one talks about this, the torch-bearer is undoubtedly Ayushman Khurrana with his films choices. “His movies have given voice to many Indian men who struggle every day with these issues but have been conditioned by society to not speak up about it as it would cast aspersions on their mardaangi (masculinity)” (Mishra, 2020).

However not all has changed, Anna MM Veticad in an article named “The changing face of ‘*mardaangi*’ in Bollywood” writes that, “of the present reigning kings, Salman Khan and

Akshay Kumar are the ones most faithfully adhering to the '*mardaangi*' formula, with their heroines rarely rising above being a pretty." There are still films like, *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017) who in spite of having strong, career- driven women are reduced to mere secondary actors in the background.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methods/techniques used for conducting the research operations are actually understood as the research methods (Kothari, 2004). In other words, research methods are more general that help to generate techniques for studying the research problem.

This study is being done with the objective to portray how a liberal, progressive male protagonist which Bollywood try to project now (in the 21st century) has already been shown by Ray through his films at a time when Bollywood projected 'toxic masculinity'. To fulfill the objective of the study, the study will be conducted among films produced by Ray during the 60's.

Sample design

The entire population of Ray's works could not be represented due to constraints in time and resource, hence a subset of the population is selected which represents the whole population.

For analyzing the 'male protagonist' portrayed in Ray's film which were highly contrasting to the toxic masculinity produced in Bollywood during that time two films have been chosen - *Nayak* (1966) and *Mahanagar* (1963). These films have been chosen because *Nayak* (1966) has been narrated from the male protagonist's point of view and *Mahanagar* (1963) from the female protagonists' point of view. What is interesting to note here is that even as *Nayak*(1966) has been told from the male protagonist's point of view, the role of Aditi, the female protagonist in *Nayak* (1966) is not weak or a mere background pillar. It has a strong and independent contribution to the narrative, similarly Subrata's character (as the male counterpart), in *Mahanagar* (1963) breathes independently. Neither of the lead's overshadowed the other, irrespective of whether it was told from a male-pont of view or a female-point of view. Each enjoyed a democratic space of its own.

Procedure

Prior to answering the research questions, two themes were identified for choosing the two films: first, the male protagonists portrayed in Ray's films were not rowdy and robust, on the contrary, they had a very emotional and humane side to it; second, in Ray's films that dealt with social prejudices/stereotypes, the male protagonist was never shown as a negative character, but gave each character their own storyline and showed how one can evolve as a person, rather than being aggressive. Hence, with careful analysis the two films that have been chosen are - *Nayak* (1966) and *Mahanagar* (1963). After the themes had been identified and films chosen, a content analysis was performed to fulfill the objective. Content analysis can be broadly considered as a method where the content of the message itself forms the base for analysis, logical reasoning and help to draw conclusions. (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). Thus, it is a method which involves careful observation of the content and in the form of an in-depth analysis.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

“Historians often caution about not seeing the past from the prism of today” (Kumar, 2020). Satyajit Ray’s portrayal of male protagonists during the time of angry-macho heroes, is one such area that is least delved into and has a clear reflection of the ‘commercial Indian’ heroes that are portrayed in Bollywood films today (21st century).

Ray as a director has made many films, including documentaries, feature and short films. While most of his films were adaptations, there are three feature films that are original screenplay written by Ray himself (Chattopadhyay, 2018). One of them being ‘*Nayak (The Hero)*’ - a film which takes us through the life of a popular movie star but delving deep into the insecurities and shadows that lie behind the cloud of stardom. Ray’s magic of narrative - adding layers to the characters portrayed on-screen, beautifully intertwines the different stories from the point of view of ordinary-male (their struggles and insecurities) devoid of macho-ism that run in the motion picture parallelly. The real slice to Arindam Mukherjee’s, the popular matinee star (played by Uttam Kumar), fragile side is however discovered by Aditi, who is the editor of a women’s magazine ‘*Adhunik*’. Ray very subtly shuns the ‘commercial Indian’ hero through Aditi as someone who “abhors the glitz and glamor of meaningless commercial cinema and harbors nothing but mute disdain” for such superstars (Chattopadhyay, 2018). On one such occasion Aditi says, “Hero-s shouldn’t be God-like.” She says that there is a lack of realism in such ‘hero-s’, who are champions from playing tennis to swimming, can dance well and even sing as well as have an excellent academic career. She finds them nothing, but unbelievable. On further conversation with Arindam, the journalist gets the scoop for her story - his series of nightmares about losing his stardom. Arindam opens up about his worst fears and believes that he might sink in the pool of quick-success. He even mentions that, “*Amader khoob beshi kotha bolteh nei*” which means, ‘It’s not good for us to talk much’. Even though he speaks for himself as a professional actor, this holds true for ordinary men. They were made to feel that if they let their partners know about their insecurities, emotions and nightmares they might not look towards them in the same manner. Ray wanted to break this stereo-type so deep rooted, that not only the ‘hero-s’ but men in general, did not express themselves the way they should. They did live in a world of shadows putting up an emotionless appeal to the harsh adversities of life. As the story unfolds taking the viewers through Arindam’s vulnerabilities in the form of flashbacks and dream sequences, Ray highlights that it is not only Arindam Mukherjee, the superstar who fears ‘failure’, in his case primarily, failing miserably at the box office, but also the other male characters attached to it. Pritish Sarkar fears failing to keep up with his wife’s expectations and even setting up his business ‘*Spectrum Advertising Agency*’. On the other side, even the aged Statesman columnist Aghore Chatterjee fears that the society, in general “is failing miserably to have a moral fibre” (Dwyer, 2021). Fears and insecurities surround every human but, even today it takes a lot upon a man to talk about their emotions openly.

To kick off the shell that Bollywood, has created for years, for instance the dialogue of *Maard (Man, 1985)*, “*Mard ko dard nahi hota*” (translated as, men don’t feel pain) takes a lot upon them - that includes being bullied and trolled heavily (be it an actor on-screen or, a man in day-to-day life). However, times are changing and Ray’s unabashed portrayal of men’s emotions finds its mirror in present day Bollywood heroes who express emotions other than anger and joy. Like, ‘Iqbal Syed’ portrayed by Vicky Kaushal in *Raazi (2018)* is an example of the evolving men on-screen. He expresses his nervousness post-marriage later, affection towards his wife, and is shown heartbroken towards the end. He expressed himself and yet masculine all at the same time. Even in the Tanu Weds Manu series, ‘Manu’ portrayed by R.

Madhavan expresses himself calmly without being aggressive and toxic. “He treats rejection gracefully and acknowledges the consent of the lead in both movies” (Mehra, 2019).

The masculine image of being considered as the sole bread earner of the family that patriarchy created, increased the dominance of male in the public as well as private spheres. This stereotype did not only reduce women to a mere second-class citizen without having a voice of their own but, also overburdening the male with responsibilities and hovering them with insecurities (of whether they would be able to live up to their family’s expectations). In 1950s, when the Indian New Wave began, Ray envisaged on a journey of making the women in the patriarchy “socially independent in spite of being in a traditional family” (Sanyal, 2021, p. 75) but interestingly, he never compromised on giving an equally democratic space to his male protagonist. Allowing them to express their upheavals and emotional conflict. “The artistic genius Satyajit Ray, who in his ability to create a link within a nuanced society, deconstructed the images of heroes by representing men and masculinities as not monolithic, but diverse and plural, where his protagonists were considered as the demoralized defender of socio-political vortexes and seen as a real ordinary person” (Bhargava and Sunaina, 2020). Shot in the backdrop of a patriarchal society, *Mahanagar (The Big City)* by Satyajit Ray is adapted from the Bengali short story *Abotaranika (The Prologue)* by Narendranath Mitra. It talks about the ‘altered power equations’ in a lower-middle-class family wherein the daughter-in-law (Arati Mazumdar, played by Madhabi Mukherjee) decides to take up the job of a salesgirl in order, to support her family (Vetticad, 2020). As opposed to the film discussed above, *Mahanagar* is narrated from the point of view of the female protagonist, Arati. In spite of that the character of Subrata (Arati’s husband, played by Anil Chatterjee) stands out. The film introduces Arati as the perfect middle class homemaker - a loving wife to her husband, a dutiful mother and sister-in-law; even caring daughter-in-law to her husband’s parents, Priyagopal and Sarojini (Chattopadhyay, 2017). Poverty-stricken as the Mazumdar’s were Subrata was unable to make the ends meet with his job at the ‘Jagat Dhatri Bank’ and private tuitions. Unable to see Subrata being overburdened with responsibilities, Arati takes a firm stand that she would want to do a job to help the family. At first, even though Subrata resented, later he was the one who took the initiative of finding the job and enthusiastically supported her throughout the application process. When Arati got selected, Subrata found it difficult to break the news to his parents, especially to his father who had to run a joint family as well, but he supported his wife’s social independence, and summed the entire situation saying “*Se jug aar e jug ek noy Baba, dinkal bodlehche!*” which translates to, ‘Times are changing father, and one must adjust according to it’ (Mahanagar, 1963). When Arati faced hurdles at the home front, Subrata kept supporting her, and during initial days even encouraged her to push the shackles and step into the world beyond the four walls. However, as the story progresses we see that Subrata in the ‘face of domestic dissension’ withdraws his support as he feels threatened and requests Arati to quit the job (Chattopadhyay, 2017). But, before Arati could quit her job, reality strikes hard at Subrata’s jealousy towards his wife’s better performance at work that he had to lose his full-time job. Left with no other option, Subrata allows Arati to keep her job. After losing his job and Arati getting a raise at work at the same time, fills Subrata with insecurities - on one such occasion he even distances himself from his wife. But, as the story goes through a roller coaster ride of emotions and insecurities, Subrata restores his unconditional support towards his wife when she revolts against her boss’s unjust behavior towards her Anglo-Indian colleague, Edith.

SUBRATA: “Tumi jah korecho ami tah korteh partam nah! Amar sahosh e kulotona.”
(*I do not have the courage to what you did, Arati*)

Even as Arati worries about the future as the couple remains unemployed, a very important conversation takes place between the two.

SUBRATA: “Bhoyer ki ache ami toh royechi tomar pashe.” (*Why are you scared? I am always there with you*)

ARATI: “Tumi acho?” (*Are you?*)

SUBRATA: “Thakbona?” (*Why won't I?*)

ARATI: “Etoh boro sohor etoh gulo chakri. Dujoner modhe ekjon o ki pabona chakri?” (*Such a big city, so many job opportunities...but will either of us get a job?*)

SUBRATA: “Amar bishwas dujonei pabo!” (*I believe both of us will get ...*)

Ray ends the story by depicting how Subrata fights his stereotypical notion of women's performance, rather than being an aggressive male who, unable to bear his wife's success, calls off the marriage, as depicted in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Abhimaan* (Pride, 1973). Subrata, on the other-hand, is an every-man's story. Stereotypical notions exist, humans have vices, but it's important how they fight them. Bollywood today, tries to portray the male protagonist similar to 'Subrata' who supports their wives - in the best of times and the worst as well. What is most endearing about this film is that, even though it is a woman-centric film the characters don't overlap allowing each to empower themselves. A striking similarity with Ray's *Mahanagar* (1963) can be found in the Bollywood movie, *Tumhari Sulu* (2017) featuring Vidya Balan as 'Sulu' and Manav Kaul as 'Ashok'. Initially, the couple is supportive of each other and Ashok helps Sulu find a job. But soon grows jealous of her wife's success. Resentment sets in deeper as Asok's career rots and problems creep in. But, soon they reconcile and Asok lends his unconditional support in 'Sulu'. Important to note that like 'Subrata' even 'Asok' was supportive then grew jealous, but only to evolve and emerge as a supportive spouse.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the two films - *Mahanagar* (1963) and *Nayak* (1966), it is evident that the radical and tough male portrayal of the 1960s in Bollywood film industry, is contrasted highly against the men portrayed by Satyajit Ray who has a factor of universality attached to it. Ray's portrayal of men was something overlooked by the Indian audience highly influenced by the Bollywood films but holds great relevance today. The way he portrayed his women and men characters complementing each other, one can easily see how he envisaged a liberal and progressive society where each gender coexist not over-power the other. Indeed, it is a mirror to the 21st century portrayal of male protagonists in Bollywood who are seen breaking social stereotypes and gendered norms. Innumerable articles, books and research papers analyzing Ray's films lay the foundation of the strong female characters that have been portrayed, but through this study it is evident that not only the female protagonists but even in women-centric films the male protagonists of Ray are strong and independent. They struggle, they fall but ultimately evolve through the narrative. The filmmaker par excellence, voices not only the desires and thoughts of women but also, of men in a hauntingly real fashion. Ray's films didn't scream their messages but told them subtly crafted with perfection that people refer back to even today.

To conclude, the study fulfills its objective of understanding the portrayal of men and how Ray through his films broke the 'stereotypes' that existed during that time. The study however suffers some limitations due to constraints of time and resources. It referred to only two films, there other films by Ray produced during that time, which can be taken into

consideration and studied further. All in all, one must understand that this patriarchy and stereotyping doesn't only affect women but also men at large. The transformation of the society is slow considering, Bollywood keeps making films like 'Kabir Singh (2019)' and Sooryavanshi. However this does not undermine the number of gender-progressive films made which tries to remedy the damage Bollywood has caused to both individuals in particular and society at large.

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Exploring the Possibility of Regional Brand Expression Through Regional Learning by Local Independent TV Stations — Case Study of Mie Television Broadcasting and Kyoto Broadcasting

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Abstract

This research study explores the reasons why specific local independent TV stations have developed sustainably and increased their existence value. Through two case studies on *Mie* TV and *Kyoto* Broadcasting, it is derived that both “regional learning” and “organizational learning” are the key to survive the other Internet tools such as SNS. These two keys could bring a brighter future in Japanese television media. In order to increase the value of the existence of local stations, it is necessary to work on creating a positive environment in which other smaller local stations can work on regional branding that enables local residents and local companies and local governments to work together to create unique and localized programs. In the end, it is believed to lead to the creation of unique programs with individuality in regional areas around Japan.

Keyword: Local Independent TV stations, Organized Learning, Regional Branding

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine a possibility that the “regional resources program,” which is organized based on systematic regional learning by private local television stations, leads to the emergence of regional brands. Although the declining interest in television viewing¹ is increasing and the business environment for local TV stations is becoming increasingly severely, Japan has many regional characteristics, in terms of geographically, culturally and socially. The decline or loss of local stations that represent each prefecture could lead to a loss of diversity, as well as creativity such as local culture and information, and would become a great loss to society. Based on this awareness of the issue, this paper examines the existence value of local stations in the region from the viewpoint of the effectiveness of educational programs organized by independent stations for regional branding. Educational programs are defined as genre programs that mainly include educational and documentary programs².

In this paper, two independent stations, (1) *Mie Television Broadcasting* (hereafter, MTV) in the *Chukyo* wide area and (2) *Kyoto Broadcasting* (hereafter, KBS) in the *Kinki* wide area, are taken as an example, and examine the products and products of each region. First, it is investigated the process of organization and production of broadcast programs called “regional resource programs” that introduce a wide variety of tangible and intangible unique regional resources such as tourism, events, services, and people. In addition, focusing on the practices of organizations promoting this “regional resource program,” MTV’s history is taken, traditional culture and documentary programs, KBS’s event and tourism programs, and disseminate them outside the region through organization and production.

Next, with regard to the research framework, based on field surveys in *Tsu City, Mie Prefecture*, *Kyoto City* and *Kameoka City, Kyoto Prefecture*, and *Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo*³, the contents of programs organized and produced by both program organizers and general viewers are taken. It is considered the relationship with the region.

For brief understanding, local stations are defined as TV stations (122 companies in total) other than the five key stations in *Tokyo*⁴ in the *Kanto* wide area that form affiliated networks nationwide. In contrast to the central station in *Tokyo*, which produces more than 90% of all programs in-house and broadcasts programs nationwide via a network, local stations are television stations affiliated with the network (affiliated local stations). It can be

¹ According to a survey by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2018), real-time viewing time decreased from 184.7 minutes on average on weekdays when the survey started to 159.4 minutes in 2012. Among people in their 40s, the Internet usage rate surpassed TV (83.0%) for the first time, with 83.5% on weekdays.

² There is no clear definition of program type, and there are different classification methods for video research, NHK, commercial broadcasters, program guide information (EPG), etc., which conduct audience rating surveys.

³ This survey consisted of (1) Interview with the person in charge of programming and production at MTV headquarters on September 14, 2018, (2) Street interview in front of JR *Tsu Station* from 12:00 on the same day, (3) Ban referee at home in *Kyoto City* on September 5, 2018 Committee member interview, (4) Student viewer interview at *Kyoto Gakuen University* in *Kameyama city* on the same day, (5) October 4, 2018: Attending a lecture and interviewing a speaker in *Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo*, and (6) Early October 2020 mailing: MTV, KBS organization and production staff questionnaire survey (A. “Applicable” to E. “Not applicable” 5-grade evaluation).

⁴ *Nippon Television Network, TV Asahi, TBS TV, TV Tokyo, and Fuji Television.*

roughly divided into television stations called independent stations that do not have a program network and have a prefectural broadcasting license in the wide area of *Kanto*, *Chukyo*, and *Kinki*. Furthermore, organization strategies differ according to differences in organizational structures. The majority of affiliated local stations have less than 10% of their programs produced in-house. Most of the broadcasting time is filled with programs supplied by affiliated key stations, and there are many stations that have only regular news and some information programs as self-produced programs. This is because it makes sense from a business point of view. On the other hand, independent stations⁵ organize their own programs without belonging to affiliates, and have a high in-house production ratio.

2. Program Organization and Production Example at *Mie* TV Broadcasting

2.1 History and Traditional Cultural Resource Programs

In this chapter, the MTV program example is explored. MTV, with a 13.5% in-house production ratio, was founded in *Tsu* in 1968, and can be viewed in *Mie*, *Aichi*, and the *Ise Wan* (*Ise* Bay) ring belt in *Gifu*.

It is discussed both historical and traditional cultural special programs which are taken as examples of regional resource programs. From 2013's "*Oise-san*" to 2018's "Treasure Sword: Japanese Spirits and Skills," MTV organized a series of ten 55-minute special programs once a month.

Kyoji Yamada, who was the head of the news production department (at the time), explained why he planned "*Oise-san*" in the first place, saying, "For local stations, especially independent stations with no affiliations, the word 'locally-based' is an indispensable keyword. Among the events unique to each region, there are many themes that we would like more people to know beyond the broadcasting area. *Shikinen Sengu*, which is held once every 20 years, is positioned as such, and is a theme that the entire company is working on together⁶."

Tetsuya Tabata, who is in charge of directing "Treasure Blade" and is the director of programming operations and programming, said, "I want to disseminate information to people outside the area in order to revitalize the region. I would like people to know the charm of *Mie* and visit it on a trip⁷." He also said, "In order to convey its appeal, a certain level of program quality is required. Although the production budget was exceeded, there was a track record after that, and it seems that it was sufficiently profitable. MTV is produced entirely at its own expense, and in addition to selling DVDs, it sells programs to more than 20 affiliated local stations, and BS *Fuji* also broadcasts nationwide via satellite waves. No other independent station has a series of this scale.

Following "*Oise-san*," the script was written by *Kiyomi Chikusa*, a writer from *Tsu*. After working as an assistant at NHK(*Nippon Hoso Kyokai*)'s *Tsu* Station, *Chikusa* worked as

⁵ There are a total of 13 independent stations. Established with investment from local governments, and etc. As there is no net distribution, the ordinary profit margin is at the level of 60% of affiliated local stations. A total of 109 affiliated local stations (including 10 semi-key stations in the *Chukyo* and *Kinki* wide areas). Local stations other than a total of 15 key and quasi-key stations are sometimes collectively called local stations.

⁶ "GALAC" 2013.4, Broadcast Critics Roundtable, 26.

⁷ September 14, 2018 Face-to-face interview at MTV headquarters meeting room.

editor-in-chief of the regional magazine *Ise Shima*, and is familiar with history, culture, and the region in addition to broadcast programs. A deep study of the local community and a journalist's perspective are essential in order to convey through the program the unchanging traditions of the region and the culture that should be inherited while being replaced and transformed in modern society. *Chikusa* has learned about the history and culture of the region through her numerous reporting activities, and has cultivated the ability to think about the problems of modern society.

After the broadcast of this program, the reaction was significant, and there were many reviews from viewers in other prefectures. This is believed to be the result of MTV, the local power spot media, aiming to produce with a nationwide awareness from the beginning of program planning, and practiced careful preparation over a long period of time and local learning related to *Ise Jingu* (*Ise Shrine*).

2.2 Human Resources Program

In this chapter, I introduce examples of MTV's social documentary programs. A representative example of this is the special program "*Dai-chan and Tame-san: Landscapes of a Town*" (2016). *Hideyuki Ogawa*, a head of MTV's news production department, learned that many people from within the prefecture were living in sanatoria after the 2001 *Kumamoto* District Court ruling that the isolation policy for Leprosy disease patients was unconstitutional.

Ogawa said that the main feature of this program is that "A lot of it is due to the main character who left a good impression⁸." Prior to the show, he had produced five shows with the same theme. Therefore, he was able to conduct in-depth interviews that were close to the target audience. At the same time, he could use the interview materials that he had accumulated up to that point as a culmination.

Regarding this theme, *Ogawa* (2018) described a video as a program content of about 10 minutes, and attracted a lot of access. On MTV, one of the viewers commented, "I appreciate once again that local stations have been chasing the national theme of leprosy in various ways for many years⁹." The background to this is that problems that should be considered by society as a whole are first translated into local problems, and then re-proposed to the whole country. The current situation is that an environment has been created in which programs with significance and value can be sufficiently transmitted nationwide via satellite broadcasting and Internet video distribution.

When *Ogawa* was a student, he participated in the study group "*Souyu kai*" led by journalist *Kiyoshi Kuroda*, where he learned the "spirit of reporting" from the basic of journalism. Knowing the "weight" of words, he stated that he has devised ways to better convey the appeals of his interviewees to his news and documentaries¹⁰. After joining the company, he also participated in a "Resident Director" course held in *Kumamoto*, where he learned about production methods for local programs.

⁸ Face-to-face interview at the meeting room of MTV headquarters on the previous day.

⁹ Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association Award Special Award Category (Broadcasting and Publicity) [Document 2] *Mie* Television Broadcasting.

¹⁰ From *Ogawa* (2011).

Through organizational exchanges with schools and NPOs, she also practiced local program production.

Furthermore, in addition to systematic learning through cooperative relationships with her shareholders, the *Chunichi Shimbun* (in other words, “the *Chunichi* Newspaper,”) and *Tokai* Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., he regularly conducts interactive learning with the local community, such as “Think Together” and “Civic Society.”

MTV took a different approach from the historical/traditional cultural resources program mentioned in the previous section, and developed the organization and production of a social documentary program that could be called a human resource program that focused on the “actual” or “real” people of local resources. Then, he referred to nationwide problems by limiting them to local areas, and promoted mutual exchanges in the local community as familiar and common problems, created public opinion, and re-disseminated them throughout the country.

2.3 Regional Characteristics and “Regional Resource Programs” on MTV

2.3.1 Characteristics of Mie Residents’ Sense of Belonging

Mie Prefecture is close to Nagoya, and is roughly divided into 5 areas: (1) *Hokusei* centering on *Yokkaichi*, the prefecture’s largest city with a population of about 310,000, (2) *Chusei* centering on *Tsu*, the prefectural capital with a population of about 280,000, (3) *Iga*, a neighboring city of *Kyoto*, which can be reached by train to central *Osaka* for about an hour, (4) *Ise-Shima*, which is famous for its *Ise Jingu* Shrine, and (5) *Higashi Kishu*, which is home to the World Heritage *Kuma no Kodo*. *Takahiro Nakazumi*, a Deputy General Manager of the MTV General Affairs Department, said that *Higashi Kishu* is a typical depopulated area where workers in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism industries are mainly engaged, and that economic disparities and infrastructure development are behind compared to the northern part of the prefecture such as *Hokusei*. He points out that it is called the North-South divide in *Mie*¹¹. Due to its geographical location, *Mie* has borderlines and cultural diversity. Residents are oriented toward the two major metropolitan areas, and residents who regard *Tsu* as the economic center and emphasize the culture and society of the prefecture. It is difficult to create a coherent image of the prefectural character as a whole prefecture.

2.3.2 A Sense of Unity through the “Regional Resource Program”

The relationship between residents’ awareness and MTV programs based on a street interview survey¹² of residents in the middle age should be discussed. According to the survey, over 60% of the viewers of large-scale special program series such as “*Oise-san*” and “*Treasure Blade*.” Also, 90% of the respondents had a love for their hometown in *Mie*.

¹¹ Face-to-face interview at MTV headquarters meeting room on the previous day.

¹² September 14, 2018 (Friday) 12am to 2pm around JR *Tsu* station, street interviews with passers-by. 11 valid responses (3 men, 8 women, 3 aged 20-29, 1 aged 35-49, 1 aged 60, 6 aged 70 and over). Place of residence: 8 in *Tsu* City, 1 in *Chusei*, 1 in *Tokyo*, Occupation: 4 unemployed, 3 housewives, 2 office workers, 1 contract, 1 part-time worker, TV viewing time: 1-2 hours per day on weekdays 6 3 hours or more 2 people 2-3 hours 1 person 30-1 hours 1 person, holiday 1 day TV viewing time 3 hours or more 4 people 1-2 hours 4 people 2-3 hours 3 people, large special program 7 viewers.

However, in response to the question, “What is your favorite place and what is the history and culture that you are proud of?” only half of the respondents answered *Ise Jingu* (*Ise Shrine*), and less than 10% answered *Ise Shima*. From this result, it seems that there is a gap between the image of *Ise Jingu*, *Shima*, and *Kumano Kodo*, which are representative tourist destinations, and the people of *Chusei*. For this reason, it is surmised that the MTV program organizers and producers feel the significance of constantly disseminating in-depth local information to viewers in the prefecture.

In the survey, some people answered that they would like to watch historical programs in the future, but at the same time, they also answered that there was a bias in the coverage area. *Tabata* mentions that the reaction from viewers in *Hokusei* and *Iga* was weak because the study program “*Saio*” (“King *Sai*”) was a topic of *Meiwa-cho* in *Chusei*, which is adjacent to *Ise-Shima*. However, it can be said that it was meaningful to make it a program precisely because its existence was not known even in the prefecture.

In a questionnaire survey¹³ to *Ogawa* and *Nakamura*, both answered that they felt a difference in orientation and sense of belonging between *Hokusei/Iga* and *Chusei/Ise-Shima/Higashi Kishu*. On the other hand, *Ogawa* said that he would like to cover all areas of the prefectures in terms of “program production,” and replied, “Through news programs, I feel that I am contributing to appealing to the residents of the prefecture.”

MTV, which is a prefectural broadcaster, fosters a sense of unity among viewers of *Hokusei*, *Chusei*, and *Iga* by organizing tourism resource programs for *Ise-Shima* and *Higashi-Kishu*. It can be seen that they are trying to play a role in raising common awareness and pride as citizens of the prefecture and fostering love for the local community and their hometown. In other words, it can be said that the organization of regional resource programs contributes to the unity of the prefecture as a whole and plays a role in the expression of regional brands in a broad sense.

3. Kyoto Broadcasting Program Organization and Production Example

3.1 General Viewers’ Perspective

3.1.1 Regional Characteristics of Kyoto Seen by People from Outside Kyoto

In this chapter, the examples of KBS programs are taken. Established in 1951, KBS is an independent station in the *Kinki* region (*Osaka*, *Kyoto*, *Hyogo*, *Wakayama*, *Nara*, *Shiga* and *Mie*), located in *Kyoto City*, which concurrently operates AM radio broadcasting in *Kyoto* and *Shiga* and television broadcasting in *Kyoto* alone. The actual TV viewing areas are *Kyoto*, *Shiga*, *Osaka*, and *Nara*, and the in-house production rate is high at 20.1%¹⁴. Based on an interview¹⁵ with a member of the KBS Program Council¹⁶, the programs that are recognized in the region are discussed.

¹³ October 13, 2020 Answers to a questionnaire survey (*Ogawa/Kitoku Nakamura (Mie TV Enterprise)*) by mail. Sentence composition from two answers.

¹⁴ Calculated by the author based on the Japan Commercial Broadcasting Yearbook 2018. Independent stations average 19.3%.

¹⁵ Sept. 5, 2018 Face-to-face interview at home in *Kyoto*.

¹⁶ It is obligated by the Broadcast Law to ensure the appropriateness of broadcast programs.

3.1.2 Event Resource Program

A jury member, *Yuko Nishiyama*, cites the “*Kyoto Gozan Okuribi Relay*” broadcast every August as a program that left an impression on her. *Nishiyama*, who is from another prefecture, said that at the time of the ban-in, there were many people who believed that the true city of *Kyoto* was the area called *Kyu-Rakuchu* (meaning, “old *Rakuchu*,” hereafter, *Rakuchu*) in the center of *Kyoto*¹⁷. Many people feel that this area is a special place even for the same citizens, and the residents of *Fushimi Ward*, which used to be a city, have little interest in the *Gozan no Okuribi*. In July, the *Yamahoko Junko* parade of the *Gion Matsuri* and *Atomatsuri* festivals will be broadcast live with commentary. It is popular with tourists as it can only be seen from a limited number of places. One traveler described it while watching TV in his hotel as follows: “There is an option to change the way you look at the festival. That is by watching a live broadcast from a local TV station. You can see things that you can’t see no matter how much you rush around, such as the pre-departure scene, the *shimenawa-kiri* of an actual child who was selected in ahead, the lottery, and so on. Slowly and surely, you can see everything from the best camera angles. [Omitted] The TV I was able to see the first important scenes on the live broadcast, and after that I was able to actually feel the atmosphere at the site, so it was quite a good experience.” As described here, it is suggested that KBS’s unique knowledge of relay points and explanations contributes to maximizing the value of local resources (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: KBS *Kyoto* “Live Broadcast *Gion Festival Yamahoko Junko*” Broadcast Program

3.1.3 Tourism Resource Program

Yukiko Sakemi, a KBS Producer, who is in charge of the production of the culture and entertainment program “*Gokujou Kyoto*,” stated¹⁸, “Not only people who do not know much about *Kyoto* but also *Kyoto* connoisseurs could enjoy our programs because there are full of discoveries through professionals and maestros from various fields and genres.” Furthermore, she says, “Whether or not you feel ‘excellent’ is a very personal thing. The places we guide you are places where we can truly feel relieved.” The producers who know *Kyoto* well have appointed maestros in various fields, and the topic of “*THE Kyoto*” has a high added value, with the weight and familiarity of history centered on private *Rakuchu* that only *Kyoto* people can understand. continues to be sent to viewers inside and outside

¹⁷ Generally refers to *Kamigyo Ward*, *Nakagyo Ward*, *Shimogyo Ward* and part of *Higashiyama Ward*.

¹⁸ “*GALAC*” supra, 28.

Kyoto city. This “*THE Kyoto*” means “*Kyoto’s* Local Resources Program.” And this is KBS' strength and differentiation strategy that cannot be imitated by other stations that can only organize universal “*Kyoto* Sightseeing Programs.”

3.2 Program Management for Manifesting Brand Value

3.2.1 Regional Characteristics and Differences in Awareness within *Kyoto* Prefecture

In an interview with a student¹⁹ who belongs to the GBS Broadcasting Club of *Kyoto Gakuen University* (currently *Kyoto University of Advanced Science*), a similar impression was asked to *Nishiyama*. A student living in *Uji* has visited *Yasaka* Shrine with his father, who is from *Kyoto*, but has never been to *Kinkakuji* and does not know the existence of *Gozan no Okuribi*. It is said that he strongly feels the different passion between *Kyoto* city and outside of *Kyoto*. He also said that he thought that “We, outsiders from *Kyoto* City, cannot win people from *Kyoto* City” since he was a child and at the same time, “*Kyoto* citizens seem to believe that they are different from others.”

Haruo Kondo, a GBS adviser (former head of KBS News), said, “I’m from *Shiga*, but the majority of KBS employees are from *Kyoto*. Generally speaking, people are considered themselves as ‘*Kyoto* people’ if they continue for three generations. I don’t know how many (three generations of people) of them were able to summon them, but they all have pride as *Kyoto* people and work with that pride.” Only a minority of *Kyoto* citizens may be the ones who like to watch KBS tourism resource programs. It can be understood that there are main viewers who have a special interest in the extremely limited images and expressions of “*THE Kyoto*” or the content of the program. On the other hand, it is also possible that viewers outside of the *Kyoto* City and outside of *Kyoto* prefecture watch festivals and tourism programs in *Rakuchu* (city of *Kyoto*) with a sense of admiration.

3.2.2 Corporate Culture in *Kyoto*

Compared with other companies in Japan, *Kyoto* keeps the largest number of long-established companies with a history of over 100 years, and there are many global manufacturers such as *Kyocera*, *Omron*, *Nintendo*, *Nidec*, and *Murata* Manufacturing.

At a public lecture²⁰, *Tokuga* (2018) stated, “It’s eye-opening that the values of a traditional craft society can be realized in a corporate society with economic rationality.” He also mentioned that due to geopolitical and historical conditions, as well as the inheritance of values in a traditional craft society, there are many midstream companies that are oriented toward cutting-edge technology industries by avoiding competition rather than imitation, with their own philosophies that differ from American-style management.

As *Sekiya* (2017) mentions, KBS’s revenue from program sales to overseas companies is top class among local stations, excluding semi-key stations.” Most TV programs are outsourced to program production companies, and KBS can be seen as a SPA (Specialty store retailer of Private label Apparel, so-called, manufacturer retailer) in the distribution of

¹⁹ On September 5, 2018, a face-to-face interview with Advisor *Kondo*, *Nao Uemura*, and *Manami Kanekawa* at the lobby of *Kyoto Gakuen University's Kameyama Campus*.

²⁰ “*Kyoto Enterprises -Products of History and Space-*” October 4, 2018 Attendance and face-to-face interview at the *Kyoto Academia Forum* in *Marunouchi*.

program content. Therefore, there are many viewers not only in Japan but also overseas who want to watch programs that are particular about the “genuine.”

It can be pointed out that KBS itself, like other companies in *Kyoto*, practices cutting-edge service-oriented programming and production by avoiding competition. In addition to developing new programs²¹ that have never existed before, such as charity programs and news programs, it is organized regional resource programs that “deeply cultivate historical and traditional events” that are difficult for other stations to imitate. Like MTV, KBS is also active in the Internet video distribution, adopting new technology and disseminating local resources content to *Kyoto* fans both in Japan and overseas.

In a questionnaire²², *Sakemi* felt that the content of programs that KBS viewers want is different from the perspective of viewers in other regions, and that it is meaningful to transmit information that is different from that of other media or stations. and answered. On the other hand, KBS also refers to the contents and production techniques of *Kyoto* programs produced by other stations and tourism programs of other regions.

KBS, which has continued its broadcasting business in *Kyoto* for many years, has organized programs and developed new regional resource programs based on the inheritance of the values of the craftsmanship of a traditional crafts society. It created the characteristics of KBS programming through its’ original strategies through traditional but new *Kyoto*.

4. Systematic Regional Learning and Regional Branding

4.1 Explicit Knowledge Learning of MTV

Mie Prefecture, which has MTV, has five regions with different living areas and historical backgrounds as I mentioned above. Especially in terms of industry, culture, and society, there are large gaps between regions, and historical and tourism resources are concentrated in a few regions. Recognizing this, MTV has organized programs that are conscious of not only the prefecture but also the whole country. From the outset, programs on historical and traditional cultural resources were organized and produced with the aim of disseminating information not only within the prefecture, but also nationwide.

Human resource programs were organized and produced by raising issues from all over the country to local communities, and then giving back to the whole country. In both the history/traditional cultural resources program and the human resource group program, a contrasting relationship is created with the position of *Mie*. Therefore, it contributes to creating a sense of unity within the prefecture by avoiding conflicting axes such as *Chukyo* and *Kinki*, or southern and northern. It can be seen that *Mie* is leading to the emergence of a regional brand throughout the country of Japan.

The key to organizing and producing regional resource programs is systematic regional learning. Appointing scriptwriters who are familiar with programs and local culture, the producers themselves broaden their learning and knowledge to journalists and local communities, and constrain “human activity stages” and “human behavior” as effective

²¹ Organized programs ahead of key stations, such as “*Mariko's Charity Telethon*” in 1975 and “*Timely 10*” in 1980.

²² October 5, 2020 Questionnaire survey responses by mail. Sentence composition from the person's answer.

local resources to programs, are being broadcast in a differentiated manner. Until today, *Ogawa* has kept communicating the knowledge and *Kuroda*-ism he learned at the “*Souyu kai*,” a study group, to his in-house producers. This can be seen as the effect of systematic learning through external, so-called explicit knowledge²³ obtained through a large number of detailed interviews. The knowledge that can be expressed in words, can be communicated and shared in the form of formalities and universal principles, and that is tangible, especially in the “technical dimension” such as products strategies.

4.2 KBS Tacit Knowledge Learning

In *Kyoto* Prefecture, where KBS is located, all social and cultural functions are concentrated in *Kyoto* City and forming a unique regional structure. There is also a large difference in the awareness of residents in each area, and it can be pointed out that some areas in *Kyoto* City are particularly branded. KBS organizes and produces only regional resource programs that specialize in *Rakuchu*, in other words, *Kyoto* city, while being conscious of domestic and overseas. Rather than mingling with other programs or productions, it has adopted a strategy of centrally organizing the *Rakuchu* programs that have been deeply cultivated with a focus on authenticity. Although local experts are appointed in the production process, unlike explicit knowledge that can be seen with the naked eye, the person in charge is able to draw tacit knowledge, cognitive aspects, such as private subjectivity and insight, intuition, and intuition from the local community.

Although local experts are used in the production process, unlike visible explicit knowledge, the person in charge uses “cognitive aspects” such as private subjectivity and insight, intuition and intuition from the local community. It can be analyzed that it has been shaped by learning through knowledge²⁴ and organizational culture. Furthermore, as an organization, like other *Kyoto* companies, KBS has strategically avoided competition and explored new program planning, which is not unrelated to the learning of tacit knowledge. It aims to make *Rakuchu* (*Kyoto* City) stand out by organizing “*THE Kyoto*” programming, which is familiar to the people of *Kyoto*.

5. Conclusion

As a summary, an overall consideration for expressing the regional brand should be discussed. Because independent stations are not subject to organizational control by the “central” key stations, they can play an important role in regional development. The strength of an independent bureau is that it has a high ability to respond to regional resources although it has few or very limited management resources. This regional development circulates is effective for regional branding. In other words, it can be pointed out that creating opportunities for the emergence of regional brands is regional development. Thus, the survival of regional independent bureaus leads to the discovery of regional brands. An independent station is rooted in the region and organizes effective regional resource programs through systematic regional learning. Then, by working with local viewers and creating a common awareness, forming a local public opinion while spontaneously fostering a sense of community unity so-called sharing values, and promoting community development, the local brand can be established and renewed. It can be said that regional

²³ See Furukawa (1988) for the concept of explicit knowledge.

²⁴ For the concept of tacit knowledge, see Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1996).

production which is the regional management and the central media of this model, contributes to the expression of regional brands.

On the other hand, not every prefecture has independent stations like the examples of MTV and KBS. Originally, MTV and KBS are located in favorable conditions such as large populations and industries. The brands such as *Ise-Shima* and *Ancient Kyoto* are the result of its' history and the efforts of local residents to preserve them, and the role that local resource programs have played is significant. However, in *Mie*, only some areas such as areas like *Ise* and *Shima* are tourist areas.

Only part of *Kyoto* City, called *Rakuchu*, is a tourist area, and it seems that the citizens do not recognize approximately 5,000 of all shrines and temples are familiar to them. Interviews revealed that even *Kyoto* citizens are keeping their distance in the *Rakugai* area, which is outside of *Rakuchu* (*Kyoto* City). Even if it is a single unit called a prefecture, not all viewers in the region share the same history and culture. It is possible to create brand value or regional brand for the entire prefecture area from local areas to the whole country of Japan.

The relationship between regional brands and local stations or the meaning of their existence have not been studied. In addition, the status of educational programs in the region, the learning behavior in the process of organizing and producing them, and the evaluation of viewers have not been discussed.

In this paper, independent stations with a high degree of programming freedom, although there are differences in their approaches due to regional characteristics, conduct systematic regional learning and at the same time organize "regional resource programs" to foster interest in and understanding of lifestyle culture. It has clarified the reality that it contributes to the development of the brand of the entire broadcast area by promoting regional development that deepens and encourages local residents. It is something that can be learned from other regions in the country as well.

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Mediatization and Gender Narratives in Chinese Folk Paper-Cutting Art

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Abstract

This study employs the notion of "mediatization" as a theoretical framework to examine one of the folk art: paper-cutting, a national intangible cultural treasure in Zherong County, Fujian Province, China, to examine the mediatization and alteration of folk art through the lens of "gender narratives". This research will explore how the complexity and specificity of folk art's interaction with society and culture as a form of social interaction and meaning-making are reflected at the level of gender narratives, as well as the rules and mechanisms behind this. In further detail, this research will look at research questions like: The paths of communication in the media for paper-cutting in Zherong. How are gender narratives presented in paper-cutting works? The construction of female paper-cutting inheritors and artisans in the media. How male practitioners intervene in paper-cutting narratives? How has the development of digital media technology changed gender narratives? We find that at a time when the art of paper-cutting is dominated by female practitioners and narratives, the emergence of new technologies has driven restructuring of gender. The methodology of this study is mainly a narrative inquiry, supplemented by documentary sources. It can be extended from the case study of paper-cutting in Zherong, Fujian to the process of other type of folk art. The results of this research are related to the perspective of gendered narratives, providing a new kind of theoretical dialogue in the larger proposition of "how media logic affects folk art."

Keywords: Paper-Cutting, Folk Art, Gender Studies, Mediatization

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Introduction

Paper-cutting is a well-known folk art in China and the world. Paper-cutting is one of the most pervasive, regional, historically and culturally significant, and representative art forms of our nation's magnificent culture and art. Folk paper-cutting is ingrained in people's life and permeates the northern and southern regions of the country. In China, the artistic style and aesthetic characteristics of paper-cutting vary from region to region. In southern China, it is the slender, delicate, and gentle, while in northern China rugged, straightforward, and truthful. However, it all contains the beauty of the countryside and overflows with the aesthetic temperament and goodwill of the working people. Paper-cutting accompanies festivals and ceremonial rituals in folklore, or decorates the walls of doors and windows, or is used as the backing for embroidery, etc., in a variety of forms and widely. More importantly, paper cutting is one of the art forms that best reflects the dexterity of working women.

For working women, paper cutting is one of the most skilled types of art. In Zhe Rong County, Fujian Province, paper-cutting has been recognized as national intangible cultural heritage. In the contemporary inheritance and industrial development of paper-cutting in Zhe rong, all three generations of paper-cutting inheritors are women, as are all of the well-known creators, and the substance, purpose, perspective, and mood of the works are replete with feminine traits. In the perspective of mediatization, the art and industry of paper-cutting have been influenced by technology, media, and social changes; concurrently, masculine groups have arisen and grown among Zherong's paper-cutting practitioners. This study explores the influence of the evolution of gender interactions in the paper-cutting business on the content of paper-cutting, the paper-cutting industry, and inter-local and local organisational structures.

Additionally, large number of studies related to rural development, intangible cultural heritage protection and the revival of traditional culture have emerged in China at present. Take paper-cutting, one folk art in Zherong county, Fujian province, China, as a case, and we can identify the following problems in research in this related area: first of all, the majority of research on paper-cutting has focused on artistic ontology, texts, and industrial development; however, few studies have studied the impact of the evolution of media and technology on paper-cutting from a mediatization perspective. Urgent attention must be paid to the link between technology and media in the modern digital age.

Meanwhile, numerous studies on paper-cutting have remained superficial, such as the proportion of inheritors and practitioners and the narrative characteristics of the texts. Still insufficient research has been conducted on the entire process of paper-cutting, from creation to consumption and industrialization, especially from a gender perspective. Such research can uncover the status and importance of women in the field of paper-cutting art and their relationship with environmental changes in a more comprehensive manner.

Even where gender-based research has previously been available, there are more studies focusing on women's perspectives with a simple dichotomy, but there are few comparative studies focusing on the creation and participation methods of males or groups other than women, which is more in conjunction with the case of paper-cutting in Zherong and could provide a comparative perspective. This kind of research perspective also is committed to a pluralistic community, equality, and the relationship between diverse participants, with an openness to debate with those people, resulting in a society that is more just and equitable.

Implication and Innovation

Application of mediatization theory to the subject of folk art - paper-cutting is one of the innovations. Since it has been an important academic concept in media studies over the past two decades, the theory of mediatization has been applied to numerous fields, including the mediatization of politics, religion and sports, which demonstrating the theory's academic vigour. This study applies the mediatization theory to the study of paper-cutting, which has been rarely covered in the previous literature. The research of mediatization is utilised to investigate gender studies as well.

The study of the mediatization of paper-cutting is to show the new interaction between paper-cutting and the media in the midst of changes in media technology, and the changes that this has brought to the development of paper-cutting, to society, and to human development, while focusing on the discovery of a gender perspective: with the development of media technology in recent years, the practitioners of paper-cutting have shifted from being predominantly male to predominantly female. Exists a new gender group and shift in addition to the original?

Another innovation is that this research highlights the role of groups outside women. This viewpoint contributes to the development of a pluralistic society, equality, and the relationships between many individuals and to consider what effects does the participation of gender groups other than women, such as young males, have on the industry's content, transmission, social organisation structure, and various social relations.

Last but not least, the offered conclusions and statistics have ramifications for Zherong's municipal administration. As a basis for decision-making, the cultural sector in Zherong County requires numerous forms of fieldwork data for the development and promotion of the paper-cutting business. The structural changes of practitioner groups in the digital era must be considered while formulating policies.

Research Questions

My research is dedicated to the combined perspectives of mediatization and gender studies, which bring implication and innovation to this field, like: it's an application of mediatization theory to the subject of folk art, paper-cutting, while the mediatization idea is also applied to gender studies. Meanwhile, the role of groups outside women to paper-cutting is highlighted, which contributes to the development of a pluralistic society, equality, and positive interactions among members.

What is important and relevant is the offered conclusions and statistics have ramifications for Zherong's local administration.

My research starts with research questions as follows:

- How has the process of mediatization of paper-cutting impacted the paper-cutting industry (creation, distribution, consumption, and industrial development)?
- What impact has the growth of paper-cutting media had on the status and function of women in this industry?
- In what ways do groups outside women participate in the paper-cutting industry?
- What effects does the current gender structure have on the transmitting of this intangible cultural legacy and the growth of local industries?

Methodology & Data Collection

- Content analysis
A compilation and analysis of media reporting about paper-cutting in Zherong in recent years.
- Narrative inquiry
Interviews with the most significant Zherong paper-cutting practitioners, from inheritors to the most influential representatives.
- Participant observation
Observation of the evolution of the paper-cutting heritage, the development of paper-cutting activities, and the behavior of the local participants.
- In-depth semi-structured interviews
In-depth, semi-structured interviews with other paper-cutting participants.

Conclusion

My findings are summarised in the following ways.

• Mediatization of paper-cutting

What effect does the paper-cutting media process have on the paper-cutting industry (creation, distribution, consumption, and industrial development)?

Mainstream reporting predominates; self-media influence develops; many media are utilized concurrently.

Artistic form

Under the influence of the media, paper-cutting artists have adopted a combination of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary art and culture. They have departed from conventional Yang-cutting and Yin-carving techniques and adopted techniques from oil painting, photographic engraving, photography, sketching, and white drawing, while keeping classic style techniques. Using materials such as coated paper, waxed paper, velvet paper, fabric, and leaves permits the cut-out pieces to be durable and colorfast. Additionally, there is a wealth of topic matter, an increase in application areas, and the production of increasingly inventive goods. Zherong paper-cutting products have been created from paper-cutting garments, paper-cutting lamps, paper-cutting ceramics, and more than 100 more variations after several years of development.

Regarding the medium of communication

Spatial medium has built, like the Zherong Folk Art Museum, and the Zherong Paper-cutting special industries museum to attract paper-cutting enterprises. Education is a medium as well, for example, training courses has been organised for citizens, focusing on organizing primary and secondary school art teachers, young and middle-aged women, and paper-cutting enthusiasts to study and carry out creative work in order to form the backbone of paper-cutting.

In terms of media communication, live streaming and short films can be utilised to strengthen the brand's impression and develop a stronger relationship with consumers. Through the

internet platform, the history of paper-cutting is imparted, blending the charming folk culture of paper-cutting with the practical, creative, and amusing nature of the products, progressively making them creative and entertaining. Research and development has the cultural connotation of paper-cutting, intangible cultural heritage and invention, which are defining traits of the era, and is in close proximity to consumers' actual demands. Concurrently, it can also facilitate some transactions, thereby achieving the unification of quality and efficiency. Use whole media thinking, relying for creative promotion on short video flow platforms such as Bilibili, Watermelon Video, Little Red Book, and wechat. Promotional marketing strategies has been developed in Zherong, such as paper-cutting workshops. Create a variety of short movies targeting the current demographic and trending issues to assist marketers in achieving comprehensive placements.

In present China, live-streaming with products is a great way for marketing. The live broadcast actively interacts with consumers, and the demonstration of product features (also known as experiential consumption) raises consumers' minds more centrally to explode on the brand, expanding its influence, attracting more users through word-of-mouth communication among users, increasing user stickiness, becoming fans and friends, and cultivating a deep customer base. To expand sales channels, establish online stores on Taobao, Jingdong and other e-commerce platforms.

Industrial development

Development and cultivation of Zherong paper-cutting culture creative presents, tourism souvenirs, and other industries. When the paper-cutting plus children's fun and other special industries, really catch the user's pain point through successful marketing in the news media and a wide range of social media, it may affect a greater number of people, which will aid in the spread of the image of the boot Lingwei village township. The implementation of these functions can be achieved through the subsequent projects.

In collaboration with county schools and youth palaces, regular monthly parent-child study activities are organised to deepen understanding of paper-cutting and enhance the significance of cultural studies through visits to the paper-cutting village, understanding of paper-cutting culture, and experience of paper-cutting in Zherong. Concurrently, the development of a netroots hitting point in Zherong with the specific characteristics of paper-cutting will serve as a stunning and distinctive village landmark for visitors to take photographs and punch cards. In the cultural tourism industry, develop rural B&Bs with paper-cutting characteristics, utilising the cultural and creative products developed by the project and local paper-cutting works to adorn the B&Bs and enhance their cultural atmosphere, thereby creating B&Bs that are popular with tourists and highlight the paper-cutting charm of Zherong.

• Gender research about paper-cutting

How does the growth of paper-cutting media affect the position and function of women in the industry?

Statistically, more female subjects are covered in the media. As with Yuan Xiuying, the focus has been sharpened in terms of quality.

"Folk paper-cutting artist Yuan Xiuying of Zherong, 'Paper-cutting artist Yuan Xiuying, 93:

beauty encased in a frame', 'Symposium on the artistic life of paper-cutting master Yuan Xiuying held in Zherong County.'"

The agenda for women was set

In what ways do groups besides women intervene in the paper-cutting industry?

Linda is one example. Lin, a youngster who is deaf and mute, has learned paper-cutting and bamboo carving with the assistance of Inspiration Residence, utilizing her ability for sketching. In 2018, he was named "National Most Beautiful Secondary School Student" and became the inheritor of the "Zherong Paper Cutting" World Heritage for the next generation. He has been working as a volunteer at Inspiration House, a training facility constructed by the Party Branch of the Anju Project Community using the "Nearby Red Station" to provide training services for the crippled and unemployed.

Since its beginning, it has assisted 12 disabled individuals in acquiring a skill and 8 unemployed individuals in finding employment. It has also inspired a large number of residents to join the community's volunteer service team in order to assist the disabled and promote neighborhood relations, making it the most attractive sight in the Anju community.

How does the current gender structure affect the transmission of this intangible cultural legacy and the growth of local industries?

The gender structure: male participation must still be bolstered

The installation paper-cutting beckoning by Lv Shengzhong consists of thousands of paper cutouts like red dolls, covering the walls, floor, ceiling, and surrounding surroundings for four weeks.

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The Viability of Online Distribution for South African Feature Films

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Abstract

Distribution is an important aspect of the film value chain. Despite the growth of the South African film industry, distribution remains one of its central challenges. This can in part be contributed to the country's political history that still affects the economic and social sphere. Issues related to poverty, unemployment, infrastructure, transport, and mobility all affect cinema attendance. Access to the internet remains a challenge because of lack of electricity, poor telecommunication infrastructure and high data costs. Considering the above, this paper investigates the feasibility of online distribution for South African feature films. The paper considers the current dominant streaming services in South Africa (Showmax and Netflix) and off by discussing some of the advantages and disadvantages that online distribution holds for South African film producers and consumers. These factors will be important to consider when assessing the feasibility for online film distribution.

Keywords: South Africa–VOD, Streaming, Online, Streaming Service, Distribution, Film, Cinema, Netflix, Showmax, Audience

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Introduction

In this paper we investigate online feature film distribution and its challenges within the South African context. We discuss the conditions that would affect the viability of using online film distribution and the benefits it holds to producers, specifically in profit generation. Current challenges for online film distribution, including online legislation and policies, local and international Over-The-Top services, data costs, bandwidth restrictions, target audience and marketing will form part of the discussion. It is important to point out that this research is concerned with profitability for producers using online film distribution and is thus framed in this way.

This is a qualitative study that follows an exploratory research design in order to determine the nature of the ‘problem’, namely how to implement online film distribution. The methodology granted the researchers flexibility to slightly adapt and change our scope, especially when the Covid19 pandemic resulted in a great change in the film distribution landscape.

We analysed research reports and policy documents, while conducting unstructured interviews with role players from the South African film industry. These role players included the Film and Publication Board (FPB); the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF); the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT). We also interviewed two South African online Video-On-Demand platforms, namely DSTV Box Office and Showmax, a local film distributor (Indigenous Film Distribution) and the two dominant film distributors / exhibitors Ster-Kinekor and Nu-Metro.

The aim of these interviews was to understand these role players’ views on current distribution structures in South Africa as well as their opinions about online film distribution and the future of online media in a technologically advanced and driven industry. The use of open-ended questions from the interviews provided both the interviewer and interviewee an opportunity to discuss and elaborate on the topic. In particular, it afforded the interviewee the opportunity to share vital information which contributed to the findings of the research.

As this paper forms part of a larger study, we have summarised our main findings up to this point here, while more of our recommendations will be published subsequently as it becomes available. The current scope of the paper focuses solely on feature film distribution, and does not discuss other short or serialised format. research was undertaken within the confines of online film distribution for feature films in South Africa. It did not focus on other formats or mediums such as television series or documentaries.

Film Distribution – a theoretical framework

Film distribution is “a process in which a film, after completion, is made accessible to its target audience” (Mfolo, 2022, p. 1). During this process the producer, sales agent or distributor distributes the film to be sold or screened at cinema, on television, or internet streaming services or video-on-demand platforms. This distribution is done in order for an audience to view the film and for the producers, filmmakers and other role players to earn income from it (Kehoe & Mateer, 2015, p. 97).

Distribution is an integral part of the film value chain. It is aimed at recouping the funds spent during the production phase of the film and to earn additional revenue. This can only happen if a film is consumed by an audience who pays for a cinema ticket, rents a DVD or pays for a television or streaming subscription. Therefore, one must focus not only on distributing your film, but in distributing it to the correct channels where a relevant audience will be able to enjoy the film (Ulin, 2013, p. 5).

In negotiating the distribution of your film, one usually focuses on three central elements, namely marketing, film exhibition and copyright attribution. Marketing entails creating awareness about your content and promoting your film for consumption. Film exhibition enables a audience member to watch a film (Hark, 2002, p. 1). Copyright is defined as the exclusive right granted by law to an author or creator to exploit their original work for a period of time. These rights empower the author or creator to distribute or control the economic use of the work (DTI, 2018, pp. 5, 40-41).

The film value chain was strictly followed: in order to maximize profit, feature films were made exclusively available on one platform (like cinema) before it was released on DVD and then licensed to television (usually to satellite, cable or pay television first, then followed by “free to air” television. Producers would follow these “release windows” in order to make profit, as “content value is optimized by exploiting the factors of time, repeat consumption (platforms), exclusivity and differential pricing in a pattern, taking into account external market conditions and the interplay of the factors among each other,” (Ulin, 2013, p. 5).

In the twentieth century films were made on celluloid and it was a longer and more costly process. Fewer films were produced and according to Parks (2012, p. 1) this made it easier to get a distribution deal. Yet in the twenty first century technology has given filmmakers the opportunity to produce films faster and cheaper. Thus, one could say that the digital evolution disrupted the traditional film industry and led to more film distribution challenges (SACO, 2018, p. 85). Technological advancements will affect conventional rules of competition and eventually even make some of the distribution rules like the “windows” and the film value chain (discussed above) obsolete. This will allow a new value chain to form with new players, products and services in a market, (Ball, 2022, p. 39).

In the next section of the paper we will briefly give a historical background to the South African film industry, with specific reference to how this history has contributed to the fragmented industry and other obstacles that producers face in terms of feature film distribution.

Historical Background

The South African film industry emerged in the 1890s, making it one of the oldest industries internationally. Despite this long history, the current industry is fragmented, especially in terms of audiences and distribution (Mboti & Tomaselli, 2015, p. 622). At the beginning of the twentieth century the country’s film industry were dominated by English South Africans and even during the first two decades of the white National Party’s rule “cinema had remained under the control of English-dominated capital” (Tomaselli, 1989, p. 35).

In 1965, the National Party government made amendments to the subsidy scheme to stimulate Afrikaans language films. In the same year Afrikaans dominated capital, represented by the insurance conglomerate SANLAM, bought out 20th Century Fox “which

gave [Afrikaner interests] a monopoly on the production, distribution and exhibition of feature films.” (Tomaselli, 1989, p. 35). Yet in 1976 it was reported by the Board of Trade and Industries that only four of the 88 films made in the last four years would have made a profit without the assistance of the subsidy. In 1977 “the fixed language differential percentages were dropped and a sliding scale based on net box office receipts substituted” (Tomaselli, 1989, p. 36). At the time of writing this paper, in 2022, it is to be noted that the South African film industry is still largely reliant on government subsidies.

In 1994 democratic elections took place and the ANC became the ruling party. A year later the new democratic government called for a restructuring of the audiovisual industry, resulting in the establishment of the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) in 1999 (Botha, 2007, p. 23). For the next twenty years the industry’s distribution system would largely focus on traditional platforms such as cinema theatres, television broadcasters, and video and later DVD sales and rentals (Mfolo, 2022, p. 2).

South Africa’s film industry has a notable problem that many of our interviewees identified to us: it is that no one can really tell you what a South African film is and looks like. This is in stark contrast to industries like Bollywood. A Bollywood film for example can be identified by its musical traits, a “feel-good-ending” and bright colours in its costumes and art design (Goodyear, 2021; Hafeez, 2016, p. 69). To date, many film investors like the NFVF (who manages film funds on behalf of the South African Government) promotes feature films that have a political backdrop such as the apartheid struggle. Government institutions fund these films because they have a desire to balance and correct the misrepresentation produced during the apartheid regime particularly for black audiences (Goldbaum, 2021). Still, in contemporary times, these films are often regarded as soft advertising for the ruling ANC, as they have faced criticism and a decline in membership and voters in recent years (Desai, 2022).

As opposed to the Hollywood, where the studio will typically control and own the film, the South African film industry is considered to be “independent”, as most films are made by independent one-man-owned production companies. Copyright and ownership of the film is usually held by the producer, however that if a film is commissioned by Multichoice or Showmax that the company will own copyright of the film (Mfolo, 2022, p. 63).

South African Film Distribution

In South Africa cinema attendance steadily declined during the last decade. The declining audience can be attributed to access to cinemas, as cinemas are traditionally located in upper class urban areas, while the majority of South Africa’s black population still resides in townships and other densely populated areas. Townships are areas that were designated to exclusive racial groups under the apartheid government legislation. In contemporary South Africa, these areas continue to exist. Prominent examples of these areas Soweto (Gauteng) and Khayelitsha (Western Cape). Therefore, to travel to cinemas South Africans need to pay for transport costs. Combined with the expensive ticket costs and the high price of cinema snacks, it is more cost effective for the average South African to watch television. All of these factors were highlighted in the *Establishment of the Film Sector as Catalyst for Economic Growth in South Africa: Toward a Sallywood Report* (SACO, 2018).

The international film industry has historically been an industry defined by anti-competitive practices. Therefore, according to Cones (2013, p. 2), filmmakers and distributors were

forced to make adjustments to sustain their respective industries. In South Africa, the declining cinema attendance meant that cinemas relied more on foreign content, mostly Hollywood blockbusters, to attract audiences. It is a rule of thumb at South African cinema chains like Ster Kinekor and Nu Metro that the film title within the theatre that sells the least tickets will be dropped from the circuit. In 2015, the Ster Kinekor cinema chain pulled the South African romantic comedy *Tell me Sweet Something* from their theatres three weeks after its initial release. This caused an uproar among local film producers, as they complained that Hollywood blockbusters are given preference as exhibitors feel that they could generate more profit from these films (Mdaka, 2015). This move came despite a historical plea to South African filmmakers that “a nation’s cinema needs experimentation and funds to stimulate creative energy” (Tomaselli, 1989, p. 39).

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, South African cinemas closed for six months between the period of March 2020 and August 2020. Where the South African film industry used to be a contributor to the country’s GDP, the film industry’s contribution to the economy declined to 2,9 billion South African Rands for the period between 2020 and 2021 (Dumeko, 2021). This can be attributed to producers being used to the traditional value chain where they always released their films in cinema theatres before distributing it to other platforms (NFVF, 2021). It is clear that alternative distribution models, mainly online distribution, is the key for producers to maintain a sustainable film industry.

Dominant Film Streaming Services in South Africa

South Africa’s most prominent streaming platform, Showmax, originated in South Africa and offers a SVOD service similar to Netflix. However, Showmax primarily focuses on distributing content that was produced in South Africa. Showmax is owned by Multichoice. Multichoice also owns the prime satellite pay television service DSTV that operates across the African continent. Multichoice also operates as a type of studio system that produces content that is aimed for target audiences in South Africa and across the continent. The multiplatform pay television service provider is also responsible for the video-on-demand platform DSTV Box Office (Multichoice, 2022).

Unlike Showmax, DSTV Box Office is a transactional movie rental service where one can pay per movie and rent a film for 24 hours while it is still available at traditional cinemas (Multichoice, 2021; Udoakpan & Khan Tengeh, 2020). South African feature films and other local content produced for Showmax will ultimately be recycled to television on DSTV’s respective satellite channels to meet the needs of its target audiences. This is done to further exploit revenue generation from the content the service provider has invested in.

Since its launch in 2016, Netflix has been the main competitor for Showmax in the South African market. Therefore, we have summarized some key attributes of the two streaming services in the table below:

Table 1: Comparing Netflix with Showmax

	Netflix	Showmax
Launch	1997 in USA 2016 in South Africa	2015 in South Africa 2016 launched in 36 other African countries In 2017 Showmax launched in Poland, however it closed down its service there in 2019.
Content	International TV series and films. Limited South African content available, mostly series and films that have been commissioned since 2018.	International and local television series and films. Its content largely consists of programmes, series and films that are produced for a South African market that enjoy watching content in their own languages, such as Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Tshivenda and so forth.
Technology	TV, PC, Games Console, Mobile or Tablet	TV (Requires DSTV Explora if it is not a Smart TV), PC, Mobile or Tablet
Subscription (listed in ZAR)	R 99.00- R 199.00 per month depending on quality and number of devices accessing the service	R 99.00 per month
Accessibility	Over 190 countries, including South Africa	Available in South Africa with limited distribution across 65 countries: Africa, Europe, Asia/Pacific region.

In the last two years, more streaming services were launched in South Africa, such as eVOD, Disney+ and Amazon Prime (known as Prime Video).

Launched in November 2012, three years prior to Showmax, Wabona was actually South Africa (and one of Africa)'s first a pay-per-view video on demand streaming services. However, because of low internet penetration, a lack of content and poor marketing, the company closed its doors in 2015. Wabona folded due to lack of funding and difficulties in developing a sustainable business in the African VOD space (Mulligan, 2016). In contrast, Netflix and Showmax (backed by Multichoice) have the financial muscle to maintain their platforms' operations and expand it, even in difficult financial climates (Chatikobo, 2018).

Building on the examples set by the above streaming services, the advantages and challenges for online feature film distribution will be discussed in the section below.

Advantages and Challenges for Online Film Distribution in South Africa

Advantages

South Africa is a developing country faced with several issues, such as a high unemployment rate. If online film distribution could be implemented successfully, the film industry could expand and contribute more employment opportunities, even in other sectors like travel and business tourism which has been identified as industries that could benefit from the growth of the film industry (Urban-Econ, 2017).

The growth of the film industry will not also contribute to economic development, but also to cultural diversity. South Africa has eleven official languages and a range of ethnic and cultural groups. If more feature film content is made available through online platforms, it can contribute to a broader knowledge and understanding of each other as well as to the nation building within South Africa (Sikobi, 2019; Urban-Econ, 2017, p. 11).

Distributing films on online platforms like streaming services means that you are offering your viewers the ultimate convenience of accessing content without having to travel outside their home. VOD offers the buyer a variety of films at a cheaper rate, namely a monthly subscription that would often cost the same price as the entire traditional cinema experience. Viewers are also not limited by timeslots as they would be when watching a film in a theatre or on television. However, one has to note the negative effect it will have on traditional cinema attendance (and one can already witness this at the current point of time). In the last five years ticket prices have already increased in order for exhibitors to invest in digital infrastructure and to pay the rent in shopping malls. One would expect that online film distribution may bring more disruption. As it stands, many of the art house cinemas in South Africa recently closed down, such as the *Cinema Nouveau* in Brooklyn, Pretoria (South Africa's capital city). As the so-called "die-heart" cinema supporters were forced to stay home during the Covid 19 lockdown, they became used to consuming their subtitled art house content on streaming services such as Netflix, Showmax, Disney+ and Amazon Prime.

Gaining access to a streaming service often means that a producer can instantly get a global audience for its feature film – and a wider range of audience connection.

Challenges

In South Africa one of the greatest obstacles to online film distribution used to be the lack of access to the internet. The South African population that lives in the rural areas do not have fiber connections and other uninterrupted forms of internet access. However, with mobile phones granting users access to the internet, the internet user population has steadily grown. In 2017 the 'internet user penetration' was at almost 54%, by 2021 it had grown to more than 60%, and by 2026 it is expected to be at 66,6% (Johnson, 2021). Yet it is still quite low when one compares this to the internet market penetration of the United States of America. The USA with its 92% internet penetration is the country with the third highest number of internet users in the world (CNBCTV18.com, 2022; DataReportal, 2022). South Africa is ranked third in terms of internet penetration on the African continent, however, it is still far below the global average of 66% (Saleh, 2022).

While we have pointed out in our 'advantages' section that online content consumption is convenient to the audience, it may not be as easy to the filmmaker to gain maximum profit from its online distribution deal. While the previous window system granted the producer access and potential profit from every step of the process, many online deals contain copyright clauses which does not allow the producer to sell their film to more than one streamer at the same time. This means that producers will only get a once off fee from a streaming service (like Netflix) for their feature film and (depending on the contract) they will not be able to exploit the film in other territories or platforms.

The classification and content regulation of feature films in South Africa is regulated by the Film and Publication Board (FPB) under the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies. The institution was established in 1996 under the Films and Publication Act. In

our interviews with the FPB, it was confirmed that an online content regulation system (OCRS) is still being put in place for online film classification and regulation (Mashele, 2018; Pithumber, 2021). Therefore, the legislation and regulation to govern these practices still needs to be implemented. Furthermore, South Africa's government has faced challenges in regulating international streaming services, notably Netflix. Initially Netflix resisted FPB's classification regulation rules. Netflix only registered with the FPB in to adhere to the country's classification content regulations and rules. They argued that they wanted the freedom to regulate content itself and be free from government censorship. The situation of Netflix paying tax to the South African government is also not entirely clear (Ferreira, 2021).

In our interviews we found that filmmakers often focus so much on the technology that they neglect to consider the audience's preferences and the way audiences connect and interact with these new technologies and platforms.

Lastly, in terms of film production and content generation, the following stood out from our interviews with role players in the industry: If South African producers want to distribute more feature films through online distribution, they would have to make films that are contemporary and depict South Africans' daily lives (as opposed to feature films that are most often set against the turbulent times of apartheid). The head of content at Multichoice, Jan du Plessis (2018) emphasized in an interview with the researchers that for online streaming services to grow, there needs to be a continuing stream of newly released films that resonates with local and international audiences. He also explained that South African filmmakers need to understand film business in order to generate revenue and make profits from their films.

Conclusion

The profit generation within the film business largely depends on the marketing and distribution phase. It is apparent from our research that both traditional and online film distribution pose advantages and disadvantages in revenue generation.

Traditional platforms suggest the exclusivity of revenue windows as a better option for profit generation as it allows for maximum exploitation, however buying tickets at cinema theatres are more expensive for consumers than subscribing to a streaming service. the costs are greater for the audience. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, such as cinemas being closed during hard lockdown periods, and consumers moving to streaming services will further influence the affordability of the cinema experience for audiences. While online options are cheaper for viewers, it costs producers money as they will no longer be able to earn profit from the traditional 'window' system in the film value chain. Since the South African film industry does not a formal studio system like Bollywood and Hollywood, independent filmmakers might not be able to gain as much from these distribution models as their international counterparts, especially when signing over their copyright and distribution rights to streaming services that have a global reach.

The growth of SVOD platforms such as Showmax and Netflix in South Africa, as well as the recent establishment of other streaming services, points to the potential for the successful implementation of online distribution for feature films. other types of online platforms exclusive to South African feature films for the sustainability of the industry. However, producers need to understand the film business and produce feature films that can appeal to South African and international audiences alike.

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How Does Government Social Media Platform Play Its Role in Chinese Digital Government: Focusing on the Three Cases of Local Government Social Media Platform

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Abstract

Rapid digital transformation and the use of digital technology and social media platforms in government are utilized across the world. The Chinese government is also attaching great importance to adopting social media platforms to create its own Government Social Media Platform (GSMP). The GSMP created by the government has gone through three stages of social media adoption in the past few years: Weibo adoption in 2011, WeChat adoption in 2013, and TikTok adoption in 2018. This paper aims to discuss the role that GSMP plays in the Chinese digital government context. And this study focuses on these three local GSMP cases, including Shanghai Municipal GSMP, Gansu Province Yinchuan GSMP, and Sichuan Province Chengdu GSMP, considering the characteristics and roles of each. In this paper, we found that the Chinese local GSMPs mainly serve the following roles: to publish local municipal government affairs and policy information; to deliver digital service to the public; to encourage government agencies to reply to the public's concerns, and to provide a communication link between the government and the public and to publicize local government to establish a good image.

Keywords: Chinese Digital Government, Government Social Media Platform, Chinese Context

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1. Introduction

Entering the 21st century, digital government is designed and operated by governments around the world to take advantage of digital technology and big data to create, optimize, and transform digital government services. The purpose is to ensure administrative efficiency and convenience for the public. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic period, governments used digital technology to make rapid policy decisions based on real-time data and analytics, and to deliver digital services to those who needed them most. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digital transformation of public service delivery and government use of data.

Since 2002, the Chinese government has started to promote digital transformation. The first implementation was in 2002, the State Council Informatization Steering Committee issued Guiding Opinions on the Construction of E-Government. In 2015, the government introduced an 'Internet Plus' action plan which integrated mobile Internet, big data and digital technology within the economic and social sectors thus creating new industrial modes. In 2016, the government carried out the 'Internet Plus Government Services' model which has simplified administrative approval procedures, making government services more convenient and transparent. In 2019, President Xi Jinping called for the development of digital government as a national government construction strategy. Alternatively, the internet in China has rapid growth, with the number of users reaching 1.051 billion in June 2022¹ and the number of users utilizing online government services reaching 843 million in December 2020².

One of the most important elements in the Chinese government digitalization is the adoption of social media, mobile phone applications, and other digital technology platforms. Since 2011, the Chinese government has begun to create its own Government Social Media platform (GSMP) by using China's domestic social media accounts, mobile phone applications, and other short-video platforms. Weibo, WeChat, and TikTok are the most used social media platforms. Such GSMP plays roles in delivering government digital services, releasing government information, and providing a communication channel between the government and the people. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to discuss the role that GSMP plays in the Chinese digital government in a political context.

2. Literature Review

Lots of Chinese E-government and digital government studies, mainly in the administrative studies or political science fields discuss the design and overall operation of digital government, or the relationships in e-government communication or interactive processes among government, businesses, and citizens (Balutis, 2001a, b; Tuen-Yu Lau, 2008), or the evaluation of Chinese E-government and digital government in public service delivery quality and administrative efficiency. For example, Tuen-yu Lau et al.'s study (2008) discussed that the Chinese government maximizes service quality, enhances economy and cost-efficiency, and model of democracy in the development of e-government. They found that the Chinese E-government leaned toward a service model with their bureaus which were primarily used for economic purposes.

¹ The data is from 'China Internet Development Statistics Report (2022)' edited by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC).

² The data is from 'China Internet Development Statistics Report (2021)' edited by CNNIC.

Alternatively, most studies on social media use in the Chinese government mainly discuss how they adopt social media for self-promotion to respond to Chinese citizens participating in public affairs (Zheng, 2013; Zheng & Zheng, 2014), or discuss interactions between government and citizens (Wang & Luo, 2019), or discuss how social media delivery digital public services and evaluate social media in public service delivery (Jiang, 2021). These researchers mainly focus on only one type of China domestic social media, such as Weibo, WeChat, TikTok. For example, Jiang Tingting et al.'s study (2021) mainly focused on how WeChat was used in government service delivery and discussed the evaluation of WeChat usage.

Therefore, this paper explores the Chinese digital government and social media use, and the role that the Chinese GSMP plays in it. Chinese digital government studies provide a macro perspective for clarifying the character of the Chinese model. First of all, this paper aims to illustrate the strategy and objectives of the Chinese government to adopt digital technology and social media accounts by using the Chinese digital government approach. Second, the paper focuses on the government's use of various types of social media, not just a single type. Finally, this paper discusses three different cases of local governments using social media to present the scenario of GSMP in China.

3. Methods and Data

This paper employs case studies and online ethnological methods. Three local GSMP cases were highlighted to illustrate the context and purpose of local governments adopting social media accounts in three different cities. The case studies include Shanghai municipal GSMP, Gansu Province Yinchuan municipal GSMP, and Sichuan province Chengdu municipal GSMP. Each of these three local GSMPs is active and influential among the nationwide GSMP.

In addition, the online ethnological method is applied for this study. This method aims to consider the characters and roles of the three GSMPs by analyzing their online contents.

This study collects data from the above-mentioned three social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Weibo account, WeChat account, TikTok account, mobile applications, and internet website.

4. GSMP in China

At present, the use of social media in the development of digital government has become a worldwide trend. With the rapid growth of social media users in China, the government also attaches great importance to the adoption of social media platforms. Since 2011, the Chinese government started to adopt social media and went through three stages of development on different platforms.

During the first stage, in 2011, the government started to create its own official accounts on Weibo platform called Government Weibo. Weibo was released by Sina Corporation in 2009 and becomes the most popular social media platform in China. It is often labeled as the Chinese Twitter, and is a much more open and public platform. Government Weibo is defined that Weibo official accounts created by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) committees, government departments, courts, and prosecutors, as well as committees of local

people's congress and political advisory bodies. Some of the accounts were created by individual cadres and officials under their real names. Since its appearance in 2011, the number of it has grown rapidly. By December 2019, the total number of Government Weibo has reached over 170,000³.

During the second stage, in 2013, Government WeChat accounts appeared on WeChat platform. These accounts are opened by the CCP organizations, central and local governments, the people's congresses (legislatures), and the committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (political advisors). WeChat platform was released by Tencent corporation in 2011. It is an instant messaging system much like Facebook's Messenger or Line and often labeled as the Chinese Line. At present now, WeChat is the largest social media platform in China, with over 1 billion monthly active users. In September 2012, the Ministry of Public Security of China opened its own official account on the WeChat platform, creating China's first Government WeChat. Since then, the number of Government WeChat users has grown rapidly, reaching more than 100, 000 in 2015⁴.

During the third stage, from 2018, the government started to open its own TikTok official accounts called Government TikTok. TikTok is a video-focused social media released in September 2016 named Douyin. Its short videos from 15 seconds to three minutes are very popular with young people. By October 2020, TikTok had surpassed over 2 billion mobile downloads worldwide. Government TikTok accounts are created by the CCP Committees, government departments, and other authorities such as people's congresses. For example, an active and influential Government TikTok account named @ the Center of the Communist Youth League, which is owned by the center of the Communist Youth League. Since its appearance in 2018, the number of Government TikTok has grown rapidly, reaching 26,098 in 2020⁵.

5. Case 1: Shanghai Municipal GSMP

The Shanghai Municipal Government News Release Office opened its official account on Weibo named @Shanghai Publication in 2011 (picture left in Figure 1). @Shanghai Publication ranked sixth among the 10 most influential nationwide Government Weibo owned by the CCP and municipal government in 2020⁶. Also in 2013, the Shanghai Municipal Government News Release Office opened its official account on WeChat platform named Shanghai Publication (picture right in Figure1). In 2017, Shanghai Publication ranked first in the influences of nationwide Government WeChat. As of April 23, 2018, the number of its subscribers exceeded 4 million⁷.

³ The data is from 'People's Daily & Government Index Weibo Influence Report (2020)'.

⁴ "Ten years for WeChat (Weixin Shinian)" <https://xueqiu.com/9209504318/169704722>.

⁵ The data is from 'The 47th China Statistical Report on Internet Development' edited by CNNIC.

⁶ The data is from 'Government Weibo Influence Report (2020)' edited by People's Daily Online Public Opinion Data Center.

⁷ "Shanghai Publication ranked first in the influences of nationwide Government WeChat, with its subscribers exceeded 4 million", https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2091714.



Fig. 1. The homepage of @Shanghai Publication (left) and Shanghai Publication (right).

5.1 The role of @Shanghai Publication

As the Weibo official account of the Shanghai Municipal Government, @Shanghai Publication plays a role in releasing government affairs information by creating numbers of hashtags such as #Policy Analyzing, #ShangHai News, #Connect Districts and Counties, #Latest News, #Focus on Press Conference, etc. For example, the hashtag #Latest News published news about the Shanghai Municipal Digital Office issued the 'Shanghai Manufacturing Industry Digital Transformation Implementation Plan' on 8 October, 2022 (picture left in Figure 2).



Fig. 2. #Latest News (left) and #Traffic Information (right).

Second, @Shanghai Publication plays its role in delivering public service information. It also creates numbers of hashtags such as #Goodmorning Shanghai, #Traffic Information, #Weather Forecast, #Convenience for the People, #the Price for the Food, etc. For example, the hashtag #Traffic Information delivered an information about the Shanghai Passenger Shipping Corporation would implement the winter schedule from 16 October, 2022 (picture right in Figure 2).

Third, @Shanghai Publication builds a new interaction channel between the government and the public by collecting opinions and demands from the public and encouraging the government to reply to the opinions on Weibo. It also creates some hashtags such as #You Ask and I Answer, #Q&A on Weibo, #Interviews on Weibo, #Investigations on Weibo, #Reply, etc. For instance, on July 9, 2019, a citizen's question about how to deal with wet garbage was answered under the hashtag #You Ask and I Answer (Figure 3).



Fig. 3. #You Ask and I Answer

5.2 The role of Shanghai Publication

As the WeChat official account of the Shanghai municipal government, Shanghai Publication provides digital public service to the public through the use of WeChat service account functions. It has created lots of portals that provide access to various public services (picture left in Figure4). It provides access to lookup of time for bus arrivals, lookup of traffic conditions, enrollment information, weather forecast, payment of social insurance, etc. These services include transportation, tourism, education, weather information fields, etc.

Also, Shanghai Publication always publishes government affairs information. It created a WeChat Matrix that provides access to Shanghai's 16 district official WeChat accounts, 35 bureaus accounts, and 33 official agencies' accounts (picture right in figure4). This WeChat Matrix provides an access route through which Shanghai governments at different administrative levels disclose information to the public.



Fig. 4. Shanghai Publication provides public service (left) and publishes government information (right).

In addition, Shanghai Publication provides the government with a communication channel that gathers citizens' opinions and then replies. For example, picture left in Figure 5 demonstrates the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Ecology and Environment responded to individual citizens' complaints about air pollution and published the results of how dealt with it.

Furthermore, Shanghai Publication also promotes Shanghai from various aspects frequently, helping the Municipal Government and the city to establish a good social image. It provides a page named I Love Shanghai (picture right in figure5) that mainly publicizes Shanghai's traditional culture and city construction, food, history, etc.



Fig. 5. Shanghai Publication's deal with citizens' complaints (left) and I Love Shanghai (right).

6 Case 2: Gansu Province Yinchuan Municipal GSMP

In 2010, the Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee and Government opened its own official account on Weibo called @Weibo Yinchuan. Also, in 2011, the General Office of Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee and Government launched its own official Weibo account called @WenZheng Yinchuan. In February 2012, the Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Department and News release office opened its own official account called @Yinchuan Publication. This paper mainly focuses on these three Government Weibo accounts in Yinchuan.

6.1 The role of @Weibo Yinchuan

As the official Weibo account of the Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government, @Weibo Yinchuan mainly publishes local government information and the latest policy developments. Figure 6, picture left demonstrates @Weibo Yinchuan portal that published the municipal government's announcement on citizens' opinions collection about their livelihoods.



Fig.6. @Weibo Yinchuan (left) and @Wenzheng Yinchuan (right).

6.2 The role of @Wenzheng Yinchuan

In Chinese, ‘Wenzheng’ means that the government seeks and collects citizens' opinions and requests through social media platform, so as to promote government agencies to respond to citizens' demands for improved policies and services. Weibo, often referred to as China's Twitter, is a more open and public platform than WeChat, thus it has attached the government's importance to its adoption for Wenzheng. As the official Weibo account of the General Office of Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee and Government, @Wenzheng Yinchuan mainly gathers citizens' voice and provides government agencies a route to reply (picture right in figure6).

6.3 The role of @Yinchuan Publication

As the official Weibo account of the Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Department and News Release Office, @Yinchuan Publication mainly releases public service information to citizens, and meanwhile promotes Yinchuan, helping to improve the city's good image. As seen in figure 7, @Yinchuan Publication published an official announcement about the implementation of anti-COVID-19 measures for the public.



Fig.7. @Yinchuan Publication portal on Weibo

7 Case 3: Chengdu Municipal GSMP

In 2016, the Chengdu Municipal Government of Sichuan Province created its own GSMP, which integrates various types of digital technology tools for government use. Such as publishing the mayor's mailbox and the CCP secretary's phone number on the government portal website, using mobile phone applications, and creating social media accounts. Figure 8, picture left demonstrates the Chengdu Municipal Government official portal website. In addition, Figure 8, picture right shows the mobile application created by the Chengdu Municipal Government, which mainly provides citizens with digital public services such as social insurance payment inquiry, personal tax payment inquiry, provident fund inquiry, and vaccination inquiry.



Fig.8. the Chengdu Municipal Government official portal website (left) and mobile application (right).

7.1 The role of @Chengdu Publication

The Chengdu Municipal Government created its official account on Weibo called @Chengdu Publication. It mainly publishes Chengdu government affairs and policy information. Meanwhile, it also publicizes Chengdu city to help with improving the image of Chengdu (Figure 9).



Fig. 9. @Chengdu Publication



Fig. 10. Chengdu Municipal Government WeChat

7.2 The role of Chengdu Municipal Government WeChat

Figure 10 demonstrates the Chengdu Municipal Government WeChat account page. As seen picture left in Figure 11, this WeChat account creates five portals that publish municipal government affairs and anti-COVID-19 implementation information for citizens to access. These portals, respectively, are named 'Important News', 'Municipal Government executive meeting', 'Government Affairs Information', 'COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures at Various Regions'. Also, the Chengdu Government WeChat creates five portals that help the government to collect public opinions and demands. These portals, respectively, are named 'I Say a word to the Prime Minister', 'I Want to Write a Letter', 'Inquiry by a Letter', 'COVID-19 Prevention and Control', and 'Public Opinions Collection' (picture middle in Figure 11). The Chengdu Government WeChat also created four portals that provide access to various digital public services for citizens and enterprises. These four portals, respectively, are named 'Tianfu Rongyiban' (a mini application on WeChat that provides inquiry service for social insurance, traffic, map, housing management, etc.), 'Service for Enterprise', 'Convenient Service for the Public', and 'Inquiry Service for the Public' (picture right in Figure 11).

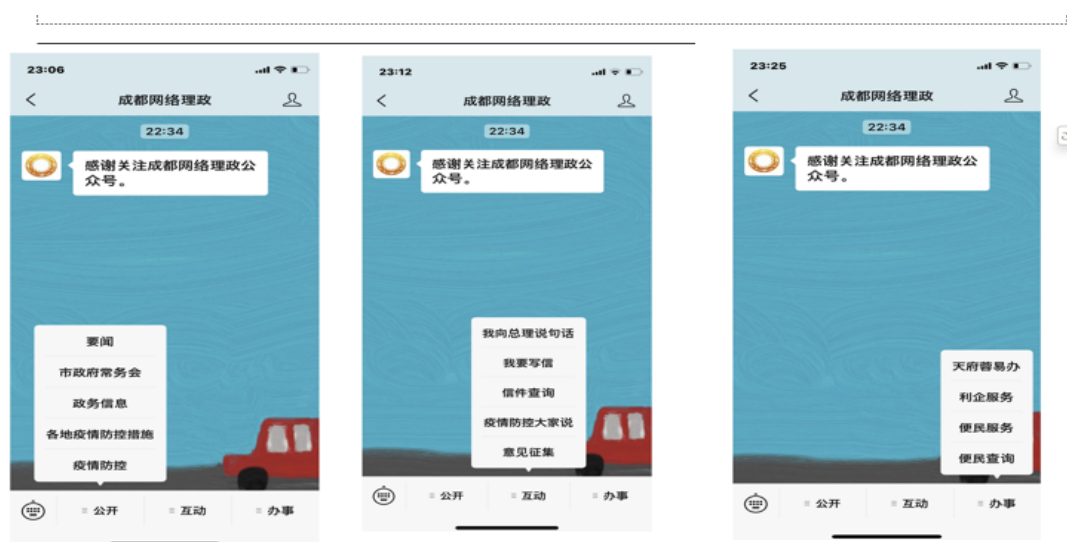


Fig. 11. the portals on the Chengdu Municipal Government WeChat

8. Conclusion

By understanding and discussing the GSMP of three different places, so as to understand the current situation of China's digital government to a certain extent, and then clarify the strategies and objectives of the Chinese government to adopt social media in the context of digitalization. With the rapid growth of internet and social media users in China, the public can express their thoughts and opinions much more actively than in the past 10 years ago. Social media undoubtedly facilitates Chinese citizens' participation in public affairs. This has driven the government to adopt social media, to gather the public's opinions or demands for enhancing its political legitimacy. In this paper, we found that the Chinese local GSMPs mainly serve the following roles: to publish local municipal government affairs and policy information; to deliver digital service to the public; to encourage government agencies to reply to the public's concerns; to provide a communication and interaction channel between the government and the public; to publicize local city for helping local government and local city to good image promotion.

Alternatively, the design and operation of digital government and how to use digital technology depends on the governments' opinions. In China's authoritarian political regime, the government is strengthening its control for internet and social media. The Chinese government's adoption of social media and digital government is emerging as a potential mode of digital surveillance that will be brought into future research.

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Visualization of Social Inequality in South Korea in Bong Joon-ho's Parasite

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Abstract

Social inequality in South Korea is considered a huge problem that has been rising over these past decades. Known as one of the poorest countries in the aftermath of the Second World War, South Korea's economic growth soared significantly in the early 1960s through rapid industrialization and export-led development, turning South Korea into a developed country in a short period. However, the rapid economic growth initiates the highly competitive job markets that cause a high unemployment rate and worse income distribution, generating massive contrasts in social hierarchies among South Koreans. The upper-class societies, embodied by chaebols, South Korea's large conglomerates, dominate 60 percent of the country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product), while the rest are filled up by the middle-class and lower-class societies. Terms referred to the rising inequality in South Korea, such as "Hell Chosun" and "Spoon Class Theory", are widely spread, implying South Koreans' deep sentiments on this issue. One of the most intelligible indicators which contributes to stipulating a considerable contrast between the upper-class and lower-class societies, exposed in an Oscar-winning South Korean film, *Parasite* (2019), directed by Bong Joon-ho. This film contains various implied signs and symbols related to the vertical comparison of high and low which depicts a vast disparity between the upper-class and lower-class families, represented by their residential conditions, which stands for the reality of social gaps in South Korea that reveals the existence of social inequality.

Keywords: Social Inequality, South Korea, Sign, Parasite, Semiotics

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Introduction

Every nation in the world, even the most developed ones, must have been struggling with the social inequality issue for hundreds of years. Social inequality becomes a huge problem within many countries since it deals with unequal distributions of resources and opportunities needed by all people in society (Hiraide, 2013). In other words, certain groups of people get a bigger chance to gain more wealth, income, power as well as wider access to social goods, such as employment, health, and education, while the rest does not, which gives rise to the division in the society into classes or stratification, for instance. The high class, middle class, or lower class are the social class categories that sound very familiar and common in our society. However, the wide gap between the richest and the poorest has consciously or unconsciously created an unfair system that could harm the inferior ones.

The phenomenon of social inequality occurs in many countries, which includes developed and developing countries around the world. One of them is South Korea. South Korea is famous for its rapid economic growth, from one of the poorest countries to a developed, high-income country (Nordea, 2020). However, the spectacular economic transformation of South Korea does not make the people free from economic problems; it, on the contrary, creates a large gap between the rich and the poor and leads to extreme poverty in that nation since the employment markets are highly competitive and cause high rates of unemployment and worse income distribution (Chung, n.d.). Meanwhile, the family-owned conglomerates called *chaebol* dominate South Korea by operating many business lines simultaneously (Ahn, 2016). This fact, consequently, provokes the decrease in South Korean public sentiment toward social class mobility (Arirang News, 2016).

The social inequality issue is considered a politically sensitive topic; yet, many people are concerned with this issue as they live with it daily. To talk about the issue a bit “safely”, a film can be used as a visual medium to represent reality and communicate thoughts due to the combination of sound, image, and story as three powerful elements which are able to give context as well as meaning to the film (Cloete, 2017). Owing to the fact that a film narrates stories about day-to-day experiences, it could help the audiences understand the societal opinions and even unmask the issues within society (Pautz, 2014). Consequently, a film is attractive to people of all ages on account of the stories with which they could associate.

Film is considered language on grounds that it fits the definition of language as a ‘medium’ that uses signs along with symbols to represent concepts, feelings, and ideas in a particular culture (Hall, 1997, p. 1). Nonetheless, these concepts, ideas, or feelings may not always be conveyed explicitly as sometimes they tend to be implicitly conveyed.

In this regard, this paper aims to find out not only the explicit but also the implicit meaning in *Parasite*, an Oscar-winning film released in 2019 and directed by Bong Joon-ho, a South Korean writer and director. Bong Joon-ho is well-known for his satirical style about social phenomena and he often applies social themes in most of his films which are wrapped up in a black comedy and genre-mixing (Lim, 2020; Su, 2020). Besides *Parasite* (2019), other Bong’s films are *The Host* (2006), *Mother* (2010), *Memories of Murder* (2003), *Snowpiercer* (2013), and *Okja* (2017), which are all considered the greatest films of the decade that involve black humor as well as social critique as Bong’s outstanding characteristics (Lim, 2020; Su, 2020).

Parasite (2019) becomes fascinating to analyze considering that it includes remarkable symbolism and visual metaphors as the elements that contribute to forming the underlying message of the film (York, 2019). This South Korean film has a genre of black comedy thriller as it raises a serious or taboo subject matter, which is the social inequality issue in South Korea, which is packed with humor and a few violent acts. The plot is evolved on the members of the poor Kim's family who are struggling in their tiny and cramped semi-basement flat since they are jobless. By virtue of opportunity, wits, and luck, they can infiltrate the incredibly wealthy Park's family by conducting fraud to be employed in their household. However, everything turns out to be chaotic in the end as they find a ghastly fact that someone has been hiding in the Parks' underground bunker for four years to escape loan sharks.

Many scenes of this film portray an extreme contrast between the Kims' and Parks' living conditions through not only explicit but also implicit signs which imply their social classes respectively, one of which is their residential conditions. Their residential conditions are richly imbued with implicit signs and symbolisms related to vertical comparisons, representing a vast disparity between the upper-class and lower-class way of living, which then unfolds the social inequality issue. Consequently, the residential conditions of those families become compelling to be analyzed further. In analyzing the signs and symbols of this film, theories of representation and semiotics are applied.

Hence, the problems that are going to be answered are:

1. What are the implicit signs found in *Parasite* that show the vertical comparison between the upper and lower classes?
2. How do those signs found in *Parasite* represent social inequality issues in South Korea?

Literature Review

Representation

To understand both the explicit and implicit meanings of the symbolism and metaphors in this film, the representation theory is applied. Representation is "the production of meaning through language" (Hall, 1997, p. 28). In producing meanings, representation works through two processes. First, in one's mind, one indeed has the concept of anything which is called mental representation (Hall, 1997, p. 17). In short, if one has the concept of something, one will know what it 'means' in one's head. Nevertheless, the concept of meaning in one's mind is different from that in other people's. Accordingly, one needs to represent or exchange this concept of meaning through language. This leads to the second system where language is needed to communicate the meaning of something to other people. Language consists of signs that are recognized by society (social convention), which makes it possible to represent the concept and meaning of the 'real' or 'imaginary' worlds (Hall, 1997, p. 17).

Semiotics

In interpreting the meaning produced by a film, Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs in Semiotics is employed as a tool to analyze the signs and symbols in the film. In his theory, he claims that sign is structured by three interrelated parts: sign, object, and interpretant, with the sign to signify something else beyond itself, the object as the thing that is being signified, and the interpretant which explains how the relationship between sign and object could be

generated (Atkin, 2010, p. 367). By understanding this triadic model of signs, he divides signs into three fundamental types: icon, index, and symbol.

An icon is a sign that shares similarities or resemblances between its object or what it signifies (Atkin, 2010, p. 367). A realistic sculpture of an existing object could be an icon if it resembles the object in real life. Another example is the sound effects in a film, such as the sound of a door opening or a water stream. They are icons since they imitate the actual sounds in reality. An index is a sign that has some direct physical or causal connection between the sign and the object (Atkin, 2010, p. 367). In short, the sign and the object have a causal effect relationship and nearness in space and time. For example, smoke is a sign of fire, while a facial expression indicates emotion. A symbol, furthermore, means a sign that is understood to signify something because of some convention, law, or general agreement that connects the sign with the object (Atkin, 2010, p. 367). This makes the interpretation of symbol different depending on the society, for example, red symbolizes happiness and property in Chinese culture but love in Western culture. Here to notice, a sign can be a symbol if there is no resemblance between the sign and the object; thus, their relationship must be learned (Chandler, 2017), for instance, a dove symbolizes peace.

There are several previous academic researches using the Semiotics analysis method to analyze a film, three of which are by Paramuswari, Lesmana, and Budiana (2017); Syafei, Nurhadi, and Raturahmi (2017); and Baharsyah, Ardayati, and Triyogo (2020). Syafei et al. (2017) with their data from an Indonesian film, *Kawin Kontrak*, along with Baharsyah et al. (2020) with their American film, *Get Out*, as the data source, use Peirce's theory of icon, index, and symbol. Nevertheless, Syafei et al. additionally apply Hall's representation theory to find out how Sundanese culture is represented through the verbal and visual signs in the film, whereas Baharsyah et al. merely focus on classifying and describing the icons, indexes, and symbols of the signs in the film without relating them to a particular issue. Paramuswari et al. (2017), on the other hand, study the African American representation in an American film, *Ghostbusters*, by employing John Fiske's semiotic method of reality, representation, and ideology, which accordingly carries the racism issue.

Methodology

In analyzing the implicit signs in *Parasite* and relating them to the concept of social inequality, this research adopts qualitative and descriptive research methods. This analysis begins with collecting relevant screenshots of the film which contain signs and, afterward, selecting the main screenshots based on their relevance to the social inequality issue as well as classifying their signs into icon, index, and symbol. The main screenshots taken as the data represent the vertical contrast between the rich and the poor portrayed by their residential conditions so that the class division or social stratification between those classes can be thoroughly analyzed. The findings, therefore, are classified into two major categories: the geographical positions and the housing conditions. Furthermore, in supporting the interpretative analysis of the signs, the library research is utilized by means of gathering information and comparing the findings with other literature to find possible explanations (O'Connor & Gibson, 2003, p. 76).

Findings and Discussion

Geographical Positions

Geographically speaking, the geographical locations where Kim's and Park's families reside are vertically disparate, signaled by the existence of some stairs as the pathway between Kim's and Park's houses. Figures 1 and 2 are the main screenshots that show the residential areas of Kim's and Park's houses, whereas Figure 3 emphasizes the contrast between their residential positions.

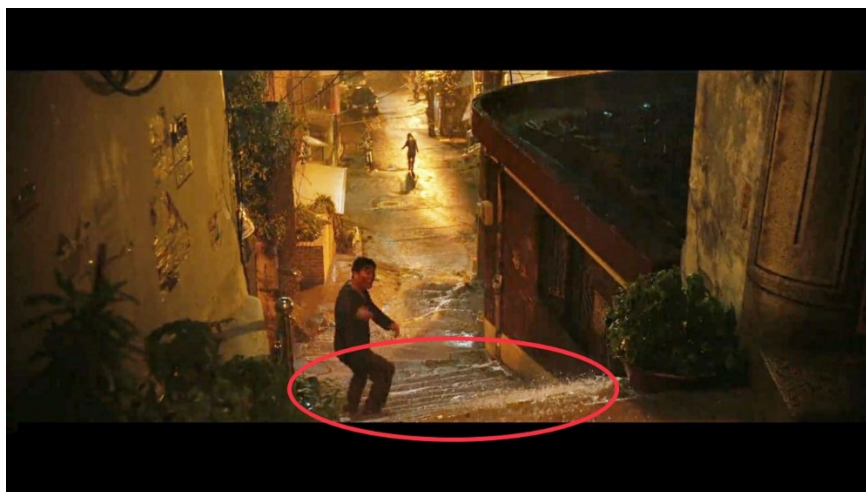


Figure 1: The Low Residential Area of Kim's House

Figure 1, taken during the rain when Kim Ki-Taek, Kim Ki-Woo, and Kim Ki-Jung are running towards their house in the night, provides a portrayal of Kim's residential location. The man on the stairs, Ki-Taek, is going down the stairs since his body is facing forward to the road although his head is directed to the audience because in this scene he is shouting to Ki-Woo to hurry. The stairs at the bottom middle of the screenshot serve as an icon which refers to "a set of steps that lead from one level to another, especially in a building" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Stairs are typically used by people to move upward or downward because it performs as a bridge of a vertical distance – between the upper and lower levels. Considering that Ki-Taek and his children are moving downward to go to their house through the stairs, it indicates that their residential area is on the low ground, or lower than where they come from.

The angle of the shot in Figure 1 also supports the position of the Kims' residential area. It is shot with a high-angle shot, a cinematography technique in which the scene is taken from an elevated perspective in which the camera looks down on the subject (StudioBinder, 2020). It is said that a high-angle shot is used to make the character in a film look powerless (StudioBinder, 2020), which implies that the high-angle shot not only emphasizes the descending road from the top to the Kims' residency but also indicates the Kims' vulnerability.

On the other hand, the Parks' residential area is depicted in Figure 2 below where there is a slope between two great buildings.



Figure 2: The High Residential Area of the Parks' House

The scene happens when Ki-Woo is going to the Parks' house. The slope in this screenshot, which exists between the two buildings, is an icon, which refers to the "ground that forms a natural or artificial incline" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). It means that some points on the slope are higher than the others due to the inclination. The highest point of the slope in this screenshot is on the spot where Ki-Woo is standing. Because the slope is the road or path to Park's residence, it indicates that Park's residential area is higher than Ki-Woo's previous location since he must walk higher and higher through the slope to reach Park's residence. Thus, the slope is an index of Park's residential area which is in a high location.

Besides, different from the previous main screenshot, this screenshot uses a low-angle shot which is done by positioning the camera angle below the eye level and pointing upward (StudioBinder, 2020). The purpose of using a low-angle shot in a film is to make the character seem powerful as well as increase the perceived height of an object (StudioBinder, 2020). This camera angle, as a result, emphasizes the elevating road of the Parks' neighborhood and implicitly expresses the Parks' power. This also indicates that Park's residential area is in a high position; therefore, the low-angle shot is an index.



Figure 3: Stairs in *Parasite*

The vertical disparity between Kim's and Park's families is emphasized more through Figure 3 that provides several pictures of stairs appeared in the scenes when Ki-Taek, Ki-Woo, and Ki-Jung are going from the Parks' mansion to their semi-basement apartment. They go down these stairs to reach their residential area, which conveys that the stairs function as the infrastructure to go from the Parks' residence to the Kims' dwelling place or the other way around. In other words, the stairs connect the Kims' residential area to the Parks', which consequently shows that the Parks' residential area is much higher than the Kims'. The stairs, as a result, emphasize the contrast between the geographical positions of the Kims' and Parks' residential areas.

The stairs which function as a vertical link between the Kims' and Parks' houses also carry a symbolic meaning. The stairs shown in this film symbolize the social stratification of Kim's and Park's families. As proposed by Hiraide (2013), social stratification refers to the way society is arranged into a hierarchy based on the distribution of socioeconomic resources which are wealth, income, status, and power. In the social stratification system, the most privileged groups are on the top layer, while the misfortunate ones are at the bottom of the strata (Hiraide, 2013). This implies that the top layer of social stratification is more powerful than the ones at the bottom due to access to socioeconomic resources. Since both the stairs and social stratification involve the concept of vertical levels, it could be concluded that the contrasting geographical areas of the Kims' and Parks' residences symbolize their social stratification in the society where Park's family belongs to the upper class, while Kim's family belongs to the lower class. Owing to the fact that social stratification leads to the division of society, which is unequally ranked based on their resources, this symbol definitely contains a social inequality issue.

Housing Positions

In the film, Park's and Kim's families are depicted to come from totally different social levels as shown through the homes they live in. Among other differences, the existence of the window is one of the most noteworthy elements that uncovers a huge contrast to the Parks' and Kims' dwelling places.

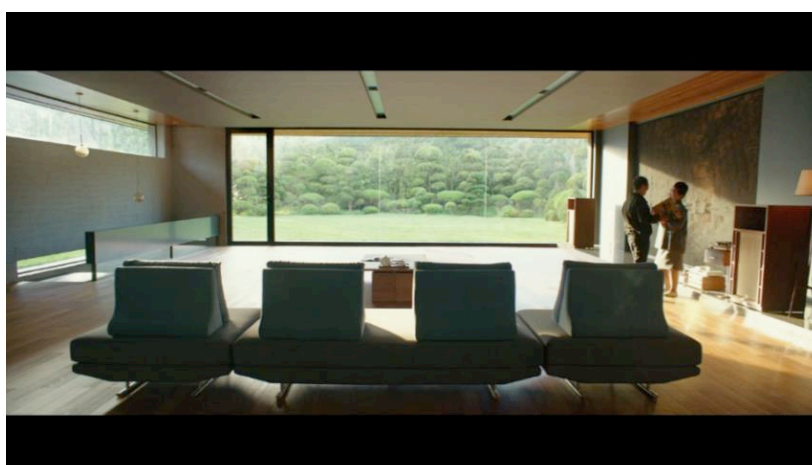


Figure 4: Parks' Huge Transparent Glass Window

Figure 4 shows that Park's family's house has a giant transparent glass window that covers the entire side of the wall, from floor to ceiling; accordingly, it serves as not only a window but also a wall. The glass window wall, based on YR Architecture Design (2016), is one of

the most defining characteristics of modern and contemporary residential architecture, which is shown in the picture below.



Figure 5: Glass Window Wall

The floor-to-ceiling glass window wall in Figure 5 is similar to the Parks', with its huge clear glass material occupying the entire side of the wall to let the inhabitants look outside without any distractions, which allows much sunlight to come in. Likewise, in Figure 4, the room where the window is installed seems spacious with a minimalistic design which is also one of the characteristics of the modernist architecture style (Spacey, 2019). The Parks' large glass window wall accordingly serves as an index of Parks' house being modern and contemporary.

As a house that applies a modern architectural design, the Parks' house must have been constructed by a professional architect, which would cost dearly priced. More than that, as cited in Daily Monitor (2013), to construct a glass window wall in a house, professionals are required because it needs significant consideration to avoid any risks in the future. In the film itself, the house is mentioned to be designed by a famous Korean architect, as shown in the utterance of Moon-kwang, the housekeeper who has worked for the architect of the house and Park's family, when she lets Ki-woo see inside the house, "You know the architect Namgoong? He's famous. He used to live in this house. He designed it himself." Through her utterances, it could be concluded that Park's family's house is built by a professional who has good calculation and consideration. Over and above, YR Architecture Design (2016) states that the glass window wall is a big concern for most people for its high cost. This again confirms the indication that the Parks' house is assuredly expensive.

In addition, according to InterNations Go (2020), every square foot that is available in densely populated South Korea is precious. For South Koreans, a big and spacious house is reserved mostly for rich people by virtue of its high price. Thus, the spacious room and wide garden behind the glass window wall cue that the size of Parks' house is remarkably large and therefore, it must be absolutely expensive. In consequence, the Parks' house is an index of an upper-class house in South Korea.

Besides, considering that the window functions as a path for the sunlight to come into the house, its size and location would influence the amount of sunlight exposure inside the building. The smaller the size of the window is, the less sunlight will come in through it (Eljojo, 2017, p. 1). On top of that, the smaller the sky section that is seen through the window is, the less exposure to daylight goes into the building (Müller, 2013, p. 237). Since

the Parks' house window is made entirely of crystal-clear glass with an enormous size from floor to ceiling, it indicates that the Parks' house receives an abundance of sunlight; therefore, it functions as an index.



Figure 6: The Window of Kim's Family's Semi-Basement

The other window that appears in the film is Kim's family's house window in Figure 6 above. The window in Figure 6 is an icon since it relates to the previous definition of a window as "a space usually filled with glass in the wall of a building or in a vehicle, to allow light and air in and to allow people inside the building to see out" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). In the screenshot, the Kims' house window is depicted to be small in size, has a rectangular shape, and is covered with an iron trellis. The position of the house window is literally close to the ceiling as there are socks in front of the window hanging from the ceiling; consequently, it could be interpreted that the window is located in the highest position of the house wall where there is no other remaining space above it. Nevertheless, the outlook behind the window installed near the ceilings begins from the street surface, which signifies that Kim's family's house is placed below the street. To support this interpretation, here is Figure 7 which shows the position of the Kims' house window if it is seen outside their house.



Figure 7: Kims' Semi-Basement Window Above the Ground

It could be seen in Figure 7 that the Kims' house window is placed above or near the ground because they live half underground, or in other words, they settle in a house that is partly below the ground level called a semi-basement or *bajinha* (a Korean term for a semi-basement housing), which is presented in Figure 8 below.

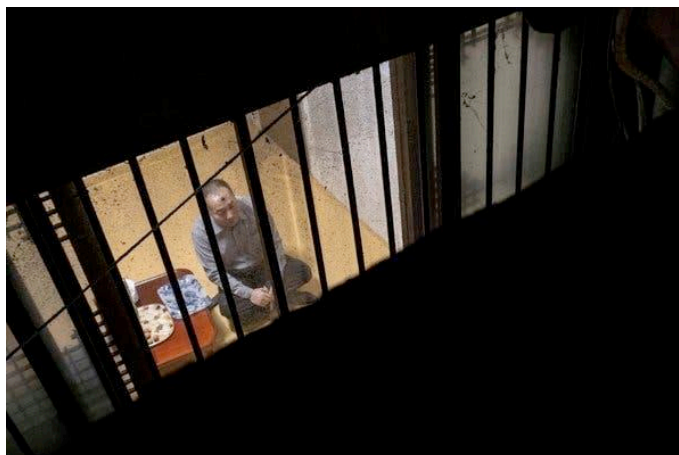


Figure 8: The Window of *Bajinha* in South Korea

Figure 8 gives a portrait of a real semi-basement flat in South Korea captured by Lam Yik Fei, a journalist photographer for The New York Times (2020). This semi-basement flat is similar to Kim's family's flat in Figures 7 and 8, where the floor is halfway below the ground and there is a small rectangular window barred with a metal trellis. This kind of window is a typical window of semi-basement apartments. Indeed, the reason why most semi-basements have a small window is due to their underground location so that the window could only appear on the side of the wall that is partly above the ground to allow the air and sunlight in. Since the location of the window is literally on the street level, it increases the chances for outsiders to access the window. Accordingly, to protect the semi-basement apartment from any harmful and threatening conditions – such as robbery, burglary, and theft – the dwellers have metal trellis bars installed. In conclusion, the window of the Kims' house is an icon of a window in a semi-basement or *bajinha* on account of the similarities they share.

As mentioned before, the size and location of a window affect the amount of sunlight exposure to a house. The decreasing size of the window and its lower position to the sky would diminish the daylight that enters the room. Thus, the semi-basement window is an index because it indicates that Kim's family's semi-basement gets minimal sunlight owing to its small size and location which is on the street level.

In South Korea, semi-basements have become one of the affordable housing options since house prices are rapidly growing (KBS News, 2018). Based on a website of an international relocation service company named InterNations Go (2020), the price of a dwelling place might depend on several factors, two of which are which floor the apartment is on and which side the windows are facing. The higher the floor is, the more expensive it would cost. The more sunlight comes into the window, the higher the price would be. For the reason that a semi-basement is partly underground, which could be said at the lowest floor of an apartment as well as getting limited exposure to sunlight, it makes the price of a semi-basement apartment cheaper than other housing alternatives. As a result, it could be afforded by the lower-class society, which means that *bajinha* or semi-basement is an index indicating the house where the lower-class society lives in South Korea.

The distinction of the ground level between the Park's and the Kim's houses is made on purpose to illustrate their social class discrepancy. Again, in social stratification, the high-class people are on top, while the lower-class people are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The Kims' *bajinha*, which is semi-underground, implies the Kims' position in society as lower-class people who have no power, resources, and capital to afford a more livable place

for themselves. By living underground, they have sparse exposure to sunlight, which is one of the natural resources that can be enjoyed by all human beings, and higher risks to be exposed to any crimes since it has limited security. This shows their helplessness as lower-class people who are more vulnerable.

The Parks, on the other hand, live above the grounds, with huge space, a beautiful garden, an outstanding interior, and considerable exposure to sunlight. Park's house, in the film, is at the highest point of the residential area since stairs are needed to go to the house. The Parks' housing position represents their position as the upper class who have an abundance of resources, power, and capital. The garden itself functions as the boundary that separates their house from the outside surroundings, which makes them exclusive. Thus, their housing position strengthens their upper-class characteristics that are powerful and exclusive.

To conclude, the vertical contrast of their housing placements symbolizes their positions in social stratification, with Kim's family belonging to the lower class, whereas Park's family is the upper class. This, for sure, leads to the symbolism of social inequality that is implicitly conveyed.

Conclusion

Overall, this research examines the visualization of class divisions in the film *Parasite* shown by three icons, seven indexes, and two symbols. In relation to the social inequality issue found in the Parks' and Kims' residential conditions, index is the most dominant type of sign compared to icon and symbol. Considering that index is a type of sign that possesses a cause-effect relationship with its object, the audiences, therefore, could observe as well as figure out easily what the film director, Bong Joon-ho, tries to convey or represent in his film. The interpretation of the indexes in the analysis of geographical positions and housing conditions has explicitly revealed the social classes of the Parks and the Kims because of the fixed relationship between the sign and object, which is something that happens on a day-to-day basis. Above that, indexes are also dominantly used to portray the social classes since the film director wants the audience to be able to interpret the film by connecting the signs in the film so that the plot becomes understandable and easy to follow.

Despite the fact that indexes appear dominantly, the use of symbols is the most influential in conveying the social inequality issue implicitly. The symbols consistently lead to the social inequality issue by presenting the contrast between the upper-class and lower-class families through the vertical distance between the Parks' and the Kims' residential positions, while the icons and indexes do not relate to the social inequality directly owing to the fact that they function as a bridge which clarifies the signs and their contexts to build symbolisms. For this reason, the vertical discrepancy between these families' residential positions could become an intriguing element as it represents something deeper than what is explicitly shown.

The application of icons in the film gives the understanding that the plot happened in South Korea as it portrays the housing conditions in South Korea through the appearance of *banjinha* as one of the common housing options available for the lower class. By this perception, the icons indicate that the film is based on the real living condition of South Koreans.

Besides, showing the opposites between the upper-class and lower-class society through the vertical comparisons between their geographical and housing positions is indeed a smart way

of getting to the idea of social inequality so that the issue could be easily comprehended. All signs in this analysis successfully show the gap between the upper class and lower class – represented by the Kims and the Parks – as they are on different levels. This reflects the reality of social stratification in South Korea as a result of worse social inequality.

However, this research has limitations because it only discusses two major signs, which are the geographical positions and housing conditions of the families out of the many signs in the film due to time constraints. Hence, future researchers are recommended to continue the research by analyzing the other signs. It is also necessary to have extensive knowledge of South Korean culture to be able to grasp the signs in order that the study could be more accurate and thorough.

Acknowledgments

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From E-Government to Social Media: An Analysis of Political Communication in the Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident

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Abstract

New media platforms have the characteristics of fast speed, a wide range of communication, and multiple subjects (Li, 2022). The government uses social media to communicate with people and releases government-related information through e-government (Graham, 2014). New media platforms change the original top-down agenda setting, making the dissemination of events and information on the web sometimes uncontrollable. This article explores how the government uses new media tools for political communication through the analysis of the Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident (XEMI) public opinion diffusion and platform distribution and internet users' sentiment data. In mainly, it discusses how the government uses e-government and social media platforms for information dissemination, government image building, and crisis PR event management. The results show that although the government used e-government and social media platforms in XEMI to better solve some of the public opinion problems, there are still problems in handling public opinion in the beginning period. At the same time, the government's control over new media platforms also makes the collective silence of mainstream media criticized by domestic and foreign netizens, which is also considered a point worthy of future consideration and research in XEMI.

Keywords: Political Communication, New Media Platform, Risk Management

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Introduction

Political communication on new media platforms has been on our horizon since the day they were born. New media platforms have the characteristics of fast speed, a wide range of communication, and a plurality of subjects (Li, 2022). Based on the characteristics of new media, which are not available in traditional media, the government uses social media to communicate with the people by publishing government-related information through e-government (Graham, 2014). Some studies have shown that such electronic public services significantly affect economic growth and quality of life (Magro, 2012). At the same time, new media platforms are also characterized by a wide range of information sources, difficult to discern, and rampant fake news (Wu&Liu, 2015). This means that the government does not have smooth sailing when using new media platforms to deal with public affairs and often faces many challenges. This paper examines the recent Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident, which was at the center of public opinion on the Internet, to analyze how the Chinese government used new media platforms to promote its policies and handle online public opinion crises this case. The paper begins by reviewing the literature on e-government and political communication on social media. The paper then analyzes the four stages of public opinion development of the Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident and concludes with a discussion and conclusion. Finally, the directions for future research and the existing shortcomings of this paper are given based on the analysis.

Functions of e-government

E-government has been in the minds of academic researchers for a long time. Silcock (2001) defines it as an online tool that uses Internet technology to build a partnership between government and citizens and enhance government delivery and access. "Delivery" is mainly in information disclosure and agenda-setting (Zhang, 2002). e-government tends to disclose relevant information and recent government developments so that citizens can be informed of government policies. "Access" is mainly manifested in the suggestion boxes set up by e-government to obtain citizens' opinions and suggestions. It also manifests itself in obtaining commercial investment (e.g., bidding) after the government has made the information public in the first place (Huang, 2020). Some scholars argue that e-government has many advantages, such as making digital procurement data transparent and reducing the chance of backroom deals. E-government has facilitated the progress of specific public projects by allowing citizens to give their opinions and has built a nation in the minds of citizens (Li et al., 2020). However, citizens' opinions are within the government's tolerance range. In other words, citizens do not have complete freedom of speech on the e-government platform. The government can select the positive messages they want through e-government and choose not to display messages that have negative sentiments (Ali et al., 2020).

Moreover, some studies show that citizens are very concerned about their privacy in e-government. They fear that the government will steal their personal information through the database, sometimes even threatening their safety (Lee&Vandyke, 2015). Medaglia and Zheng (2017) have pinpointed that the primary purpose of e-government is to provide information to the government. Government is mainly for self-marketing and political marketing, not transparency, participation, and better service. The government's information disclosure only allows citizens to see what the government wants them to see, thus building its image. E-government is top-down agenda-setting, and this setting is one-way (Lee&Vandyke, 2015). The e-government platform only carries out the transmission of information and does not have a form of dialogue. Citizens can only passively accept the

information and does not have a form of dialogue. Citizens can only passively accept the information that the government delivers to them.

Political communication on social media

Unlike e-government, where political content is disseminated on fixed government websites, political communication in the new media era is usually carried out through third-party websites (i.e., social media platforms) (Medaglia&Zheng, 2017). Political communication includes writing and oral statements and the creation of political identity and political images (Ali et al., 2020). The Internet has expanded the sources of political information, and social media has simplified the process of dissemination and access to information. Agenda setting is no longer monopolized only by politicians and journalists, and people have more freedom to comment (Gurevitch et al., 2019). Governments and politicians have become adept at using social media to package their images, and the widespread use of social media for presidential debates and campaigns has become routine (Magro, 2012). The most classic example of this is the election of President Barack Obama, who, according to Riaz (2007) analysis of data, received at least 30 percent of the vote through new media. This is a very significant figure. In addition to its excellence in political elections, the government has also used new media for information dissemination in major disasters. For example, in the Queensland disaster and the Haiti earthquake, the government quickly used social media to release information and reach out to the public quickly and effectively (Magro, 2012). More concomitant hazards associated with significant disasters were avoided. In addition to natural disasters, governments have used new media for information disclosure and notification of significant health issues. Governments are updating the public on COVID-19 in a Twitter column called "COVID-19" to inform the public of the latest developments in COVID-19, creating a positive image of the government while promoting policies to combat COVID-19 (Wright et al., 2022).

Unlike developed countries like the United States, the most essential purpose of government control of new media in developing countries in Asia is policy advocacy and opinion control (Riaz, 2007). China has been cautious in controlling political communication on social media as a developing country with stringent political censorship on the Internet. Laws and regulations have been enacted to control information on social media, such as the "Network Security Law" and the "Three Network Integration Promotion Program" (Duan, 2018), creating a pattern of mainstream media as "gatekeepers." The mainstream media act as opinion leaders in news reporting, guiding the direction of other media's judgments (Cheng et al., 2020). With the increasing number of Internet users since 2008, the number of official media accounts as mainstream media has increased dramatically. As of December 2021, there were 94,14566 government media websites in China (China Internet Network Information Center, 2022). Regarding reporting and propagating information related to the CPC, China's official media have been timely, elaborate, and authoritative (Zhao, 2019). For example, in the reports related to the celebration of the centenary of the founding of the Party, CCTV News was the first to continuously release on-site videos, information, and other news content on social media platforms such as Bepier and Weibo to promote the event. The related videos all had more than 200,000 views (China Internet Network Information Center, 2022). In addition to the function of publicity, the Chinese government also used new media platforms to control online public opinion. The control of public opinion did not start smoothly (Graham, 2014). During the SARS crisis in 2003, the Chinese government blocked information from the public. It even controlled the news media to prevent them from reporting the news, resulting in a severe information blackout. The lack of timely handling of

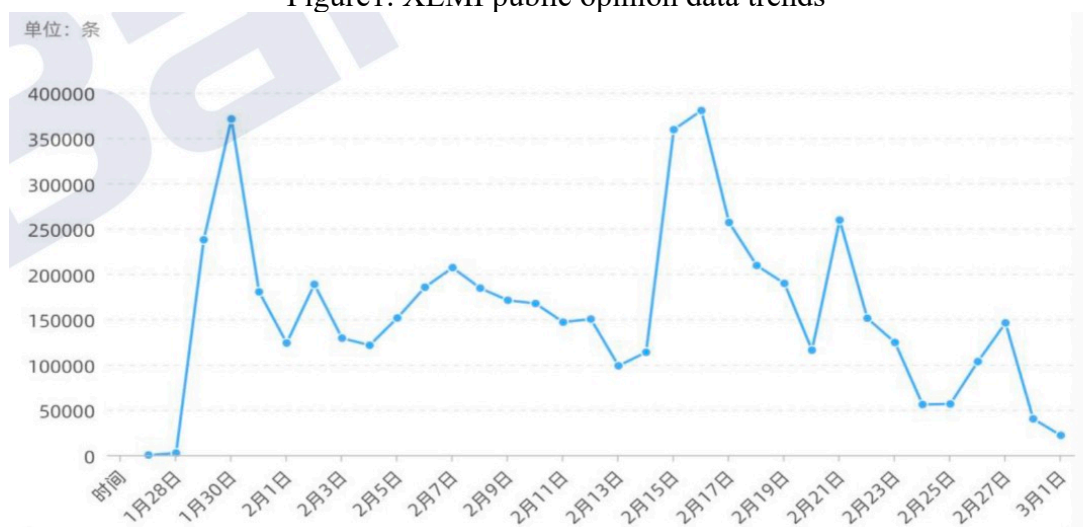
the crisis-affected social stability and even seriously damaged the image of the Chinese government (Yang, 2013). After that, the Chinese government learned its lesson and used the power of social media platforms such as microblogs in the "microblogging to fight abduction" campaign and the "9.27 Shanghai Line 10 subway rear-end accident". Live microblogging, microblogging, and apology to the public have controlled public opinion and prevented rumors from damaging the government's image. In addition to safeguarding the public's right to know, we also interacted with the public positively (Chen et al., 2020).

From the above literature review, we can find that governments have both successes and failures in using new media. This may be because the information flow on the Internet is from many sources and is complex. The government needs to spend more effort screening information and dealing with public opinion (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). Recently, the Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident (XEMI) has had an enormous public opinion impact on the Chinese Internet. The local government issued four inconsistent announcements through new media platforms. Instead of calming public anger, they have contributed to the widespread growth of negative rumors against government. This paper examines how the government used new media to control the spread of public opinion in XEMI, resolve the public opinion crisis, and build the government's image.

New Government Media in Xuzhou Eight-Child Mother Incident

XEMI took place in Huankou Town, Feng County, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province, China. A video of a mentally abnormal and imprisoned woman who allegedly gave birth to eight children went viral. Eventually, the incident sparked a huge public controversy as multiple investigators uncovered the truth. In mid-February 2022, the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee and the provincial government formed an investigation team to investigate the incident and issued a final investigation report. According to the detection of the public opinion monitoring system, the public opinion data in the XEMI incident showed several apparent peaks. Figure1 shows the trend of XEMI public opinion spreading on new media-related platforms. The highest peak of public opinion spreading occurred after the Jiangsu provincial government set up an investigation team on February 17.

Figure1. XEMI public opinion data trends



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Fermentation period of public opinion

The fermentation period of public opinion mainly occurred before January 28, 2022. Internet users posted a video through a new media platform (Weibo) and attracted the attention of netizens. This is the same as the findings of Liang and Zhang (2021). Many public and marketing numbers republished the content, and the online public opinion spread quickly. At this stage, the government did not respond to the new media platforms and the government's e-government, resulting in many netizens rushing to the government's new media accounts to get the government to intervene in the matter.

Development period of public opinion

During the development period of public opinion, the government noticed the incident on the new media and responded on Feng County People's Government and China Jiangsu Online. These two platforms are authoritative as the government's e-government platforms. The Feng County government issued two government investigation announcements to control public opinion through government websites with authority (Ma, 2021). At the same time, the government is also making efforts in new media platforms. The content on e-government was redistributed on channels such as public SMS platforms and official microblogs. The content of the two investigation bulletins issued by the government stated that the woman who gave birth to eight children was adopted as a vagrant and suffered from mental illness.

Moreover, the announcement clearly states that the woman who gave birth to the eight children was not found to have been abducted by the government civil affairs bureau staff at the time of her marriage. From Figure1, it can be seen that the public opinion trend over this period is up and down. This illustrates that the announcement issued by the Feng County government could not satisfy the citizens' concern about XEMI.

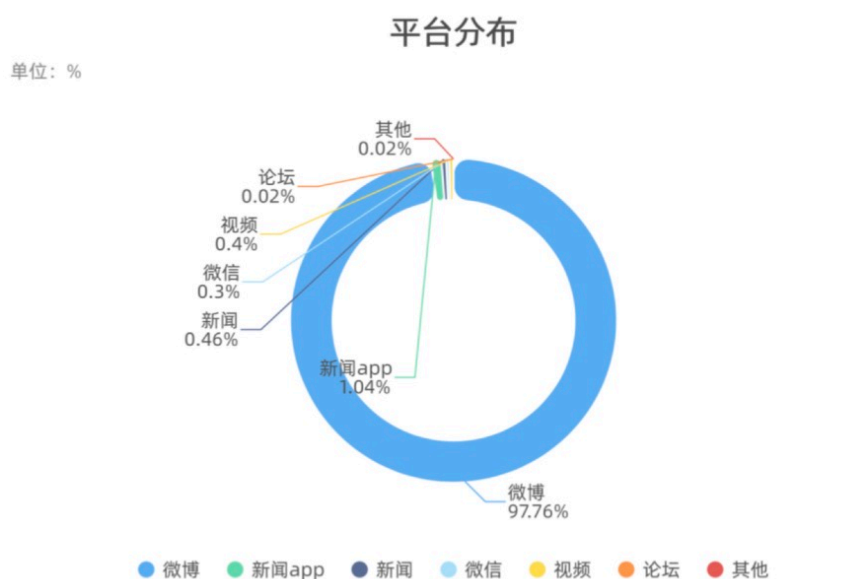
From February 7 to February 10, 2022, the Xuzhou Municipal Government, to which Feng County belongs, released an updated survey via Sina Weibo, "@XuzhouPublish." The investigation clearly stated that the woman who gave birth to eight children was brought to Xuzhou from Yunnan by her hometown, and the woman's identity was clearly defined. At the same time, the investigation also took coercive measures against the suspects suspected of illegal detention and trafficking in women. As seen in Figure1, the development of public opinion rose to a small peak on February 7. After the Xuzhou Municipal Government issued a notice through new media on February 7, the discussion of public opinion showed a decreasing trend. It shows that the Xuzhou government's investigation notice has played a role in pacifying the public. This success is not only related to the depth of the Xuzhou government's investigation but also inextricably related to the new media strategy they used. In the government's use of new media platforms, there is often a degree of neglect of the Internet's function in public political participation, democratic consultation, political decision-making, and agenda-setting (Han,2019). This problem was well addressed by the release of two circulars in Xuzhou. The government did not close comments and selected comments. All netizens could leave comments on the microblogs, and agenda-setting achieved two-way and interactive nature.

The climax of public opinion

On February 17, 2022, the Jiangsu provincial government set up the "XEMI Investigation Team" to investigate the incident. The data trend of Figure1 shows that the public opinion of

the whole incident reached its peak on 2.17. From Figure2, we can see that Weibo is the main platform for public opinion fermentation, accounting for 95.76%. CCTV News, People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency and other mainstream media followed up the progress of the incident. In the morning of Feb. 23, the investigation team of Jiangsu Provincial Government announced the investigation and handling of the case through the new media channel "Jiaoyuan News". The report mentioned that the woman who gave birth to eight children was indeed abducted and sold to Feng County, and the relevant government personnel involved in the investigation were punished. This largely answered the netizens' questions about XEMI. After the Jiangsu provincial government submitted its report, the official media on the new media platform Xinhua, CCTV and Jiangsu Provincial Radio and Television simultaneously released a series of follow-up interviews and comments.

Figure2. Platform distribution of XEMI public opinion



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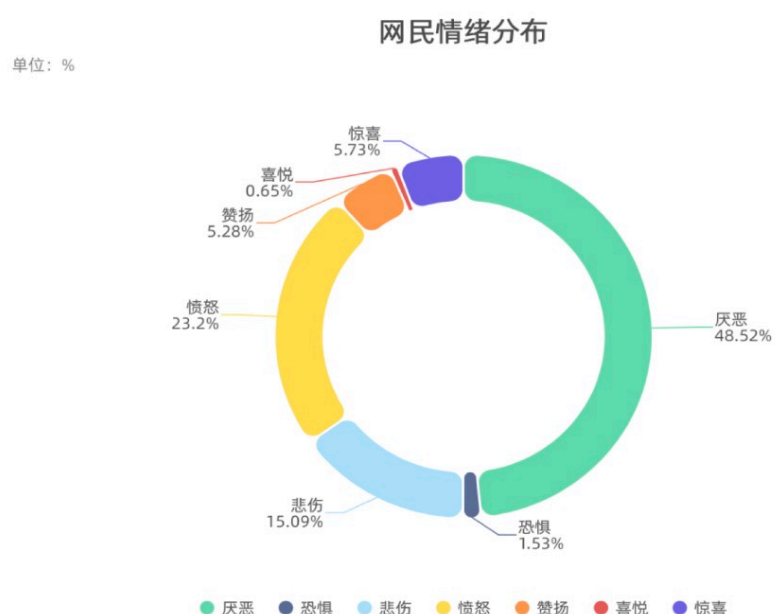
The period of quiet public opinion

By searching the e-government platform of "Feng County People's Government," we found that the platform had deleted the initial reports on the XEMI incident. The existing reports are the follow-up activities to learn the lessons of XEMI. These include leadership visits to the grassroots, reorganization of municipal staff functions, and meetings to combat trafficking in women and children. It can be seen that the government has focused on re-establishing its image after the public crisis event by posting the corrective measures for XEMI on the new media platform (Jia et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, it is worth being mentioned. In XEMI, the government-controlled public opinion by restricting mainstream media coverage and controlling new media to release the progress of the investigation. For at least 20 days since the incident came to light on January 27, no Chinese official media expressed a position on the incident or published investigative reports. Only a few official announcements from the local government were reproduced. It was only on February 17 that CCTV news quoted the Jiangsu provincial government's decision to set up an investigation team, and only on the same day did the All-China Women's

Federation's organ, China Women's Daily, and the People's Daily issued an article on their official microblogs calling for the truth to be found as soon as possible and saying they were looking forward to a "definitive" investigation. This collective "silence" was quickly followed by a one-sided public opinion on the Internet (Liang&Zhang, 2021). According to Figure3, netizens' sentiment towards XEMI is mainly negative, accounting for 88.34%. This "silence" brought negative sentiment from Chinese netizens about the government investigation and discussion from foreign governments about the collective silence of the Chinese official media, with the BBC, New York Times, Washington Post, and other foreign media following up on XEMI. While questioning China's protection of women's rights, they also called on the Chinese mainstream and official media not to deliberately avoid the XEMI story, as this would damage the media's image.

Figure3. XEMI netizen sentiment distribution



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Communication Analysis of the Eight-Child Mother Incident in Feng County

Discussion and conclusion

The e-government platform and social media platforms are widely used by the government as new media tools for XEMI. The government publishes authoritative information announcements on e-government. The social media platforms are spreading the information and guiding the opinion on the social media platforms. e-Government is not naturally authoritative. People are persuaded by the information released on e-government because e-government has the authority of information source, policy interpretation, and platform release(Xu,2017). These are all government policies for responding to unexpected public events. The "collective silence" of the media in XEMI is perhaps the most noteworthy element. On the one hand, Feng County media's own inadequate investigation and perfunctory response to provoke public anger, on the other hand, the mainstream media collective silence. The government should be used to control public opinion of the two tools, coincidentally disappeared. The only voices that have been heard have been dry paraphrases of one side's lies in response to the other. The lack of mainstream media coverage has helped to feed the rumor mill. This illustrates the government's inadequate response to and control of

new media opinion in the XEMI case. Although the fact that the civil opinion field forced the official response reflects the two-way nature of agenda setting on the new media platform, the government should still improve its control over the new media. It should not only focus on official introspection and re-establishment of the government's image after the incident.

Limitation and future direction

This paper is based on official information because no academic literature directly related to the case study could be found at the case study time. The absence of references to relevant case studies is perhaps the first drawback of this paper. Second, this paper only analyzes the government's initiatives on e-government and social media platforms in China. There is no analysis of the government's overseas versions of media accounts, which is perhaps the second shortcoming of this paper. Finally, the voices of politicians with political identities on new media platforms are also not included in the analysis of this paper, which is perhaps the third shortcoming. This is also considered a possible research direction to be done in this case in the future.

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Revisiting Collective Memory of the Nation Through Cartoon Violence

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Abstract

Rendang of Death is a short animated film that contains 38 scenes of violence, which take place in 3:30 minutes from the whole duration of the film, 6:13 minutes. Violence scenes are visualized vulgarly as well as hilarious to local audiences in Indonesia. This paper examines the function of cartoon violence in the animated short Rendang of Death. *Animation* is a visual medium that is often utilized as a strategy to convey subtext, an underlying message. Indeterminate fear of the violent act during the New Order regime in Indonesia triggered people to use subtext to hide their disapproval of the government. The indeterminate fear of violence became part of the collective memory of the nation, which was then accessed by the generation born after the New Order regime. In Rendang of Death, cartoon violence works in two ways. The first is to point out the community's approval of rendang as food that is "worth killing" to eat. The second is to challenge the indeterminate fear and persuade to move on from what happened in the past. To examine the function of the cartoon violence in Rendang of Death, the authors tried to connect the nation's collective memory with how animation conveys a subtext. The first connection is taken from rendang, food that triggers violent acts in the film. The second connection is from the violent animated scenes, mainly in a food stall. The third connection is from the animation medium itself.

Keywords: Animation, Cartoon Violence, Nation's Collective Memory, Rendang

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Introduction

Rendang of Death is an animated short about an incident in a Minang food stall (Devine, 2021). Due to high demand, the seller is running out of rendang. The film's scene then quickly escalated from humane to brutal, where the customers were slaying each other to fight over the last slice of rendang provided. The violent act in the film includes stabbing and impaling, jabbing, puncturing, and mutilating one's body. However, all visuals use an animation medium, which helps to refract the context from brutal to comedy.

Rendang is an Indonesian dish cuisine originated from West Sumatra, usually uses meat as the main ingredient. Meat is thickly sliced and cooked together with coconut milk and herbs and spices until the meat is tender and the gravy is thickened. Rendang should be cooked for hours until all ingredients are caramelized, making it one of the most delectable foods "worth killing for". The cooking process of rendang takes time and requires complex steps; not many people are capable enough to prepare it properly. People usually buy rendang at a food stall called *Restoran Padang* (Padang/Minang food stall) to avoid some hassle in the making, which makes Padang food stalls as one of the most visited food stalls. Rendang is usually consumed with rice as the main course, with other Minang-style side dishes and sambals (spicy condiments). Although the price for a portion of *nasi Padang* (rice with rendang and other Minang-style side dishes) is not low for many Indonesian people, Padang food stalls are always full of customers.



Figure 1. Screenshot taken from the opening title of the animation, visualize the distinctive looks of the Padang/Minang food stall from the outside.

(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgyD9Pt5HRs> Rendang of Death)

Rendang of Death is a 6:13 minutes short animated film that contains 38 violent scenes. The violent scenes begin when the customers start to exterminate each other, fighting over the last rendang. For the rest of the 3:30 minutes, viewers watch scenes with violence-related props and tools, including blood spills, mutilated bodies, scattered body parts, sharp and explosive weapons, or house appliances that utilize for the slaying. However, the violent scenes look more amusing rather than horrifying. The animation uses a style where the characters are

cartooned, and the settings, music, and dialogues are hilarious so that blood spills or any detaching parts of the body generate hilarity rather than gruesome.

Why did the filmmakers use rendang as a trigger for violence? What are the connections between rendang and act of violence in the film? To what extent are rendang and cartoon violence relevant? This article examines the function of cartoon violence in the animated short Rendang of Death.

Methodology

The authors approach the methodology as a spectator to connect the film's meaning to relate with the experience as a citizen of Indonesia. Rendang of Death abstraction in its animation scenes, inviting spectator to contemplate the message (Sobchack, 2016). Using a theorem from Stuart Hall which applies encoding/decoding a message with dissemination and interpretation of its social contexts through collective understanding (Xie, et.al, 2022), authors try to read the Rendang of Death subtext to interpret its meaning.

To examine the function of the cartoon violence in Rendang of Death, the authors try to connect the nation's collective memory with how animation conveys a subtext. The first connection is from rendang, food that triggers violent acts in the film. Later, we attempt to develop a connection from the function of cartoon violence as an object of laughing. Further, both connections are associated with the nation's collective memory from when the New Order regime came to power in Indonesia.

Rendang as 'worth killing' traditional food

Food has functioned more than just as a primary fulfillment. Furthermore, food has a political function. Rendang is a pride for Minangkabau tribe, one of the tribes from 1.340 tribes in Indonesia (Indonesia.go.id., 2017). Originally, rendang was a cuisine that resulted from the preservation technique, which Minang descendants developed from slow cooking techniques and spices from India. Apparently, assorted spices and the cooking process, which takes hours, shrink the water content in the rendang mixture and make it well-preserved (Nurmufida, 2017). As the Minang tribes developed the customary of traveling overseas, rendang was suited as a food supply during the traveling period. Thus, rendang becomes prominent outside Minang due to its delectable flavor. Furthermore, rendang has become the income source for numerous Minang tribes who settle outside Minang area. They open Padang food stalls that sell rendang and many additional delicious dishes, making Padang food stalls flourish outside the Minang area.

Rendang became one of the foods representing Indonesia in CNN's list of 50 most delicious foods in 2011, 2017, and 2021 (CNN, 2021). Furthermore, when rendang was selected as the number one delightful food in the world, it was celebrated by most Indonesian people, not only Minang tribe. Indonesia is a country with high index diversity which, consist of 1.340 different tribes with different beliefs and customs. The country faces countless strains related to the issue of diversity, but when it comes to rendang, the population of the country bonds by approval that rendang deserves to be the most delectable food in the world.



Figure 2. The screenshot from the animation visualizes the story when the rendang served and starts the conflict.

(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgyD9Pt5HRs> Rendang of Death)

When food has a political function, it represents identity in the form of nationality and beliefs. When rendang's popularity has skyrocketed since CNN tipped it off as the world's best food, it functions as national pride. Its. The pride doesn't only belong to the Minang's pride but is greater at the state level pride. The Indonesian people, who are diverse in countless ways, abruptly are unified. They voted, confirmed, and celebrated the accomplishment of rendang as the most delicious food in the world.



Figure 3. The screenshot from the animation visualizes the story when a diverse group of people starts to fight over the rendang.

(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgyD9Pt5HRs> Rendang of Death)

Although the main ingredients for rendang could be replaced with other ingredients such as chicken, eggs, oysters, or others (Fatimah, 2021), the Minang community, predominantly Muslim, makes rendang seem synonymous with halal food. When there was news about someone selling rendang with pork as the main ingredient, the public suddenly became angry and persecuted the pork rendang producer (Primadhyta, 2022).

Cartoon Violence as Object of laughing

While the differences between animation and cartoons have been another subject of discussion, we may correspond that both cartoons and animation are mediums that convey meaning. When it conveys meaning, cartoon violence can be analyzed further from its function and purpose, and beforehand it contributes outcomes to the spectators.

The relationship between cartoons and violence was developed early when the animated cartoon medium was introduced. In *Fantasmagorie* (1908), one of the oldest animated cartoons, Emile Cohl, showed a stick man who was mutilated and shot by a corked bottle. In 1920, Max Fleischer's character Koko the Clown and his companion, Fitz the Dog, are seen combating each other in *Koko's Earth Control*. In Disney's (1928) *Steamboat Willie*, Mickey was beaten by his superior, and the acts of animal harm packed the celebrated dancing and singing scenes. However, watching those violent scenes in cartoons gives us enjoyment and laughter.

Cartoon violence refracts the situations from their references in real life. What we perceive in cartoon violence is the act of violence without dread of consequences that might happen in real life. No matter how brutal the action is, the characters' injuries and pain are irrelevant. The spectators experience the contrast from the diversion, which generates hilarity. Although it may be brutal and gore, a cartoon's violence is used as a part of exaggeration. Exaggeration is a necessary formula for an animation to emphasize the pleasure of watching. Acts of violence are indeed prohibited and never tolerable in real life. Somehow, watching the act of violence in the film brings pleasure because it is not real. Animation allows us to see what we will never see in real life and creates enjoyment.

Collective Memory of the New Order Government and Reformation in Indonesia

As one of the newly sovereign countries in 1945, political developments in Indonesia were in line with the change in power of each regime. The New Order regime was the regime that ruled for the most extended period (1965-1998) for 32 years. This long period provides space for the nation's collective memory of when this regime was in power.

The New Order came to power in Indonesia after Soeharto dramatically overthrew the communist party rebellion in September 1965. A series of issues regarding this party's ferocity and violence in various regions emerged and created fear. Amid this situation, the New Order government emerged as a hero who saved the country from instability.

The depiction of the new order government was mainly done by institutionalizing the various achievements of the reign. Museums, films, and TV broadcasts became the product of the New Order's institutionalism. The character of the new order's government, which on the one hand is repressive and on the other side is full of political branding, has developed one of the strategies used by the community to make peace with conditions, including humor and comedy.

One of the best-selling film genres in the New Order era was comedy. Thirty-two years after 1965, the New Order government intensively carried out various developments in all fields, but there has never been any clarification of what happened in 1965. When the New Order fell in 1998, the events that marked the fall of this government were dramatic. A series of riots marked this event and spread fear and trauma. A clarification of what happened has never been officially published 24 years after the fall of the new order.

Fifty-seven years after the New Order came to power, and 24 years after the fall of the New Order, what happened has never been clarified. However, this event became the nation's collective memory for over two generations. On the one hand, New Order institutionalized its government through various museums or monuments so that the memory is eternal. However, on the other hand, along with the passing of the Reformation, historical writing began to balance (counter) by presenting other parties who offered different points of view from the historical alternatives offered.

Discussion

We want to point out some essential points regarding questions: Why did the filmmaker use rendang (traditional food) as a trigger for violence? What are the connections between rendang and act of violence in the film, and why is it relevant? Why are exaggerations in the violent act in the film becoming the object of laughing?

Now that we know, some food has gained retention and popularity due to its supporter. Thus, it becomes political. Rendang has become a cuisine that unites Indonesian, a country with a high cultural diversity index, and encounters many complications regarding diversity. In Indonesia, rendang can be a reason for the country's people to unite to celebrate and to unite to persecute others. The filmmakers named rendang food worth killing for, which resonates with why violent scenes happened in the film.

Violence scenes in the Rendang of Death are a form of cartoon violence as an object of laughing since it is refracting the way it was visualized from its reference. In this context, violent references in the real world are refracted, cartooned, and animated into hilarious scenes, which become an object of laughing/fun. Additionally, animated cartoon medium creates other reality where the pain is irrelevant to any act of violence, such as stabbing, impaling, and mutilating. Without pain, any violence-related conditions and tools, including blood spills, mutilated body, scattered body parts, sharp weapons, explosive weapons, or any object or appliances which are sharp or explosive, is far from gruesome or deadly.

The way violence related to the object of laughing is inherited from a human's coping strategy to ease fear, pain, and any discomfort feeling related to being repressed. Rendang of Death is the form of suppressed indeterminate fear of the generation born many years after the New Order collapsed. Residual memory of the ferocity of the New Order from the former generations lingers and is not inherited by the way it is institutionalized through a museum or monument. However, it lingers and is institutionalized by how it remains vague and cryptic. The only way to cope with vagueness is by accessing a reality where fear and pain are irrelevant; the reality of cartoon violence.

Conclusion

As an animated story, Rendang of Death is the form of suppressed indeterminate fear of the generation born many years after the New Order collapsed. The residual memory of the ferocity of the New Order from the former generations lingers and is not inherited by the way it is institutionalized through a museum or monument. However, it lingers and is institutionalized by how it remains vague and cryptic. The only way to cope with vagueness is by accessing a reality where fear and pain are irrelevant; the reality of cartoon violence.

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A Brief History and Systematic Review on Editing Techniques for Film Making

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Abstract

Film making is a dominant art form among all the art forms, which is able to combine the features and abilities from other art forms and affect the large audience. The features of the ideal film are that it must not confuse the audience and must be able to convey the message it is intended to convey. In order to create the effective films different processing steps needs to be performed. Editing is one of such processing steps used to cut and arrange the raw shots of the film. Various editing techniques are available in the literature for different purposes like continuity editing, cross-cut, dissolve, fades, etc. In order to incorporate those techniques into our project, we must know the purpose of each editing technique and the stepwise procedure to use them. The proposed study describes the evolution film editing techniques and provides a systematic review on recent film editing techniques along with their purpose and stepwise procedure to incorporate them into the project.

Keywords: Film Making, Film Editing, Continuity Editing, Cross Cut

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1 Introduction

The seven forms of art are painting, architecture, sculpture, music, literature, dance, and film, with film being the most recent. On the other hand, film was regarded as the most powerful of all mediums. To integrate and transmit the tale of life and society, it is possible to combine the abilities and features of all six media [1].

In order to deliver a complete and effective film, various processing steps need to be performed. Film editing is the part of the post-production process of film-making, representing the art and craft of cutting and assembling completed film. As technology and viewer expectations have changed, editing has evolved over time like most other parts of film-making [2]. Previously, there was no editing in the movie. A single stationary camera filmed the entire sequence. The fascination with a "moving image" was sufficient, and using the technology to tell fictional stories would have to wait a few years. Film editing back then consisted primarily of cutting from one scene to the next. The history of film editing isn't particularly fascinating, but it did have a start that paved the way for it to get to where it is now. Editing in film was just a question of joining frames to create scenes in the earlier days of cinema, in the 1890s [3].

Only a few films used "continuity editing" during this brief era, which meant that continuous shots were smoothly put together. During this time, Georges Méliès, a well-known French director, was also experimenting with editing as a visual effect. Filmmakers quickly realised that editing shots into a sequence not only added to the audience's sense of story, but also allowed them to tell more complex stories, as evidenced by Edwin S. Porter's primitive examples of editing in films like *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) and *Rescued by Rover* (1904). Following that, editing is influenced by D. W. Griffith, one of history's most significant directors. He didn't invent any of the editing techniques he used, but he gave them emotional and thematic significance [4].

Following that, more filmmakers began experimenting with the concept of film editing, with some wanting to utilise it to make strong points. With his famous Kuleshov Experiment, filmmaker Lev Kuleshov pioneered the Soviet Montage movement in the 1910s and 1920s. It involved switching between film of a man with a bowl of soup, a child in a coffin, and a seductive woman, with his expression remaining constant before cutting to one of the three. The idea was to persuade the spectator that the man felt a certain way about any of these circumstances by using the power of editing [5].

There are now a variety of editing techniques accessible that have evolved over time to provide new forms of cinematic language.

2 Literature review

Several studies in the literature have examined various film editing techniques to assess their suitability for various purposes. In addition, the investigations compared and contrasted various film editing approaches. For example, the study [6] compares two quite distinct editing versions in great detail. The first version roughly matches the order of footage trimmed in the film-by-film editor Arthur Schmidt. The second version is generated automatically using the authors' new algorithm [GRLC15] and the same set of cameras. Similarly, the [7] This paper analyses instructional techniques for students with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) studying digital editing for film-making. It starts by exploring into

the digital audio formats history known as "Podcast," as well as the term's increasing popularity and acceptance among the general public. Second, this study looks into two different types of class activities that can assist learners acquire the skills they'll need to construct their own short movie: a podcast and a music video.

The study [1] aimed to examine the film editing tools used in Thailand's best editing feature film, "Bad Genius" (2017). This is qualitative research of the theory, principle, and concept of film editing used to evaluate Thailand's "Suphannahong National Film Awards" for best film editing. Examining the sources, watching the film, and evaluating the film editing tools used in Bad Genius are all part of this research. The outcome indicates that Bad Genius' film editing approach is a concept-based edition. Film editing approaches were used to not only connect all of the story's elements, but also to elicit emotions and comprehension. The film editing methods create empathy, affinity, and emotional connection from the audience. By outlining the various applications that require autonomous film editing, reviewing current models and methods, and delivering a description of recent models and approaches, The study [8] indicates both prospective paths and important topics for future studies.

Objective of the study

- 1) To provide details about concept and history of film editing.
- 2) To provide the systematic analysis of different film editing techniques.
- 3) To provide details about incorporating the editing techniques into our own project.

3 History of film editing

A. The Early Ages of Cinema

In the year 1878, Eadward Muybridge was the first to uncover the foundations of motion picture and cinema. He observed that taking multiple shots of a moving or developing subject in a short period of time causes the image to appear to move. The Kinetograph was invented by Thomas Edison and a group of innovators in the late 1890s. It was designed to snap images in fast succession to create the appearance of moving subjects. Edison and his team went on to invent the Kinetoscope not long after. A device that allows people to view these moving images [9].

Edwin Porter, Thomas Edison's assistant, challenged the perception of film producers that the industry had no future. He accomplished this by using 'cutting' shots and 'jump cuts' between distinct scenes that were occurring at the same time. He claimed that you will be able to elicit emotional responses from your audience by doing so. In 1903, he made his first picture, 'Life of an American Fireman,' which showed this [10]. D.W. Griffith, an American film producer, was one of the first to apply ground-breaking editing and cutting techniques in cinema, such as the jump cut and match on action cuts. He also used new types of views in the film that had never been seen before, such as extreme close-ups of characters' faces to convey emotion [11].

The sound was also becoming increasingly popular and significant in film in the 1930s. Previously, the sound was mainly just background music that had nothing to do with what was going on visually. However, the ability of sound and the power it can have to impact audiences became relevant to filmmakers. Editors and filmmakers began to incorporate music

or actor dialogue into the story. After the 1940s, the way films were edited grew more consistent and predictable [12].

B. The Digital Age of film

The evolution of editing had essentially halted until the 1970s and 1980s. At this time, many of the various modes and conventions had mostly been established by filmmakers and had become the norm. The new developments of digital editing brought a non-linear style of editing into play among filmmakers and editors. Non-Linear editing is the process of editing sequences out of order and going back to make various changes in a film later on in the editing process. This was a significant benefit over linear editing since it enabled editors to make adjustments to a sequence without being required to re-edit the scene. Non-Linear editing was mostly done on computers and, therefore, digital [13].

In recent years, advances in digital editing tools have enabled new approaches to editing movies. For example, using editing tools such as Premiere Pro or Final Cut Pro X. Where cuts and edits can be made finely and minutely to allow for the best sequence possible. The typical modern film has over 200 hours of video; however, software like this helps editors and filmmakers to trim this down to about 2 hours easily. The software used to make modern digital films has a profound effect on the outcome of the final product, and the potential for filmmakers to edit and manipulate their films is endless [14].

Nowadays, the technology used in movies is constantly developing. With advances in personal computing technology, software, and hardware, it's getting easier to make our own amateur films with the tools we already have.

4 Film editing techniques

This section provides a systematic overview of the different film editing techniques.

A. Continuity editing

The technique of organizing and reordering shots in film and video to construct a sequence that makes perfect sense on screen is known as continuity editing. "Continuity editing" or "cut-on-action" are other terms for continuity editing. The concept of taking many shots, typically out of order and stitching them together so they emerge in chronological order, is referred to as continuity editing by filmmakers. The goal of continuity editing is to ensure that each shot builds on the previous one and preserves a consistent flow all across the film. Continuity editing is the technique of a story's editor synchronizing shots to create a smooth flow. Continuity editing is important in film and television since it enables the director to tell the story with multiple shots of the same scene [15].

Incorporating continuity editing in film

There are a number of editing techniques that ensure continuity within a scene as follows [16]:

Eyeline match: In order for the images to be spliced in post-production, when a filmmaker shows characters staring at each other in a wider angle, the direction of their glance must appear the same in close-ups.

Diegetic sound: Diegetic sound is important to temporal continuity editing because seamless sound makes a scene feel as if it exists in continuous time, even as you move from one cut to the next shot.

Matching action: An editor will apply this method, also known as match on action, to combine cuts from one shot with others from a different view that resembles or continues the action of the original picture.

180-degree rule: This camera movement rule aids to narrative storytelling by helping viewers comprehend how two individuals stand and feel their surroundings in reference to each other.

B. Cross cutting

Cross-cutting is a technique for film editing those mixes various sequences to portray simultaneous actions inside the narrative structure. Cross cuts are frequently used to illustrate large-scale events that take place in several places, although cross-cutting "laws" are not well stated in terms of magnitude and time. The distance between those two places could be as tiny as a single house or as vast as the universe. The primary concept is to provide the audience different perspectives from different areas. Filmmakers frequently employ the technique of cross cutting between two characters on the telephone. Crosscutting can keep audience stick to their seats. Consider an actor trying to defuse a time bomb, with cutaways of the ticking clock weaving in and out of the hero's efforts [17].

Incorporating the cross-cutting in film

Some points need to be considered while incorporating the cross-cutting in film as follows [17].

Get Your Hands on the Right Footage: To set yourself up for success, get a video that you will crosscut. Consider the following considerations when making your shot list.

Colour Coding: As you start post-production in Premiere Pro, use label colours to designate your scenes and help you recognise them.

Experiment with Music: Music and other audio effects may be used to connect your various scenarios. This might possibly be used in a movie or commercial.

Maintaining the Flow of the Scene: Try imitating movement in both videos to link your character. Cut to the character in the next clip doing the same thing if the character in the first footage moves across the camera frame from left to right.

Do Not Confuse Your Audience: Confusion is not considered as suspense. You want your audience to understand what they're seeing so they can ask questions.

Seek Feedback: The way to identify if you're confusing your viewers is to share your work. Show your crosscut scenes to a buddy and get their critique when you're no longer sure in your own judgement.

C. Cutaway

A cutaway represents the shot in cinema and television which focuses on any other things except the main subject or actions. A sequence could start with the primary shot, then move to a cutaway shot before returning to the main shot. Cutaway shots are very helpful for filmmakers by enabling them to 'cut away' from the key actions to a secondary actions or response. Cutaways are frequently used for visual punchlines in the lengthy animated television sitcom Family Guy [18].

Incorporating cutaway editing in film

Creating a cutaway shot is one of the easier maneuvers in the domain of film editing. Here's how to do it [19].

Assemble your footage from two single shots: You'll need two different pieces of film to make a cutaway shot. Even though they're most certainly digital, we'll call them rolls. Your main film is on Roll 1, and your cutaway film is on Roll 2.

Create two video tracks in your editing software: Assign Roll 1 to the first video track and Roll 2 to the second video track.

Interrupt Roll 1 by briefly cutting to Roll 2: Cut from Roll 1 to Roll 2 after you've reached the right moment for a cutaway. Allow Roll 2 to display any information you'd like to express, then cut back to Roll 1.

D. Fade

Since the beginning of film-making, fades are being used. Transitions between fades are commonly referred to as fade-out and fade-in. They're progressive transitions in which a scene fades from black to black or vice versa. Fades and dissolves were commonly utilised in early film-making and are now considered an antiquated technique by many filmmakers. On the other hand, modern fades and dissolves have been utilised to great advantage in a variety of ways [20], [21]. Fades can indicate a shift in time, provide insight into a character's mind, or imply parallelism [22].

Incorporating the fade

The following steps represent the procedure to apply fades using Animotica software [22].

To apply the fade in/ fade out on a single clip:

1. Tap the clip on which you wish to apply the fades. This will open up some of editing choices for you.
2. Select Fade.
3. Simply change the Fade In/ Fade Out Duration slider in the new window to choose when the clip should fade in or out. You can now pick between white and black backgrounds for Fade In/Fade Out.

To apply fade in/fade out between two clips:

1. Between the two clips, select the transition icon.
2. Adjust the Length of the Transition slider by selecting Fade Black or Fade White.
3. Set the clip's duration to 3 seconds.
4. Set the opacity transition duration to 2 seconds.

You'll get a smooth fade-in or fade-out effect this way, which is ideal for changing the scenario in the movie or converting it into a seamless loop.

E. J & L cut

J and L cuts are simple but effective film editing methods for keeping viewers focused throughout scene transitions. Both are split edits, or scene transitions between shots, in which the audio and visuals change at different times. The J and L cuts are widely utilized as transitions between the content in scenes instead of traditional effects of transition like a cross

dissolve or fades because they enable the audience maintain visual consistency. "It gives people a cushion to move on to the next spot," explains videographer Nainoa Langer [23].

Incorporating J&L cut in film

The steps for incorporating J&L cut into film editing are as follows [24].

Insert a J and L cut.

- 1 Add B-roll and primary footage (together with its soundtrack) to your timeline.
- 2 Remove any gaps between the clips with the Ripple Edit tool.
- 3 Drag the second clip over the primary video footage where you want the audio to overlap.
- 4 Select the Rolling Edit tool and select the primary video while holding the Alt or Option key. Overlap the B-roll film as much as you wish.
- 5 Use the Audio Effects menu in the Effects panel to smooth out the audio transition for a more natural cut.

Add an L cut.

1. A similar procedure is used for L cuts. The key difference is that a L cut uses the Edit tool to roll back the video rather than the audio.
2. Add your primary video footage, B-roll, and audio to your timeline.
3. Remove any gaps between the clips with the Ripple Edit tool.
4. Stretch your primary video material over the audio track linked with the B-roll using the Rolling Edit tool.
5. Use an effect from the Audio Transitions menu to smooth out the transition between the video clip and the voice track.

F. Jump Cut

Jump cuts are a basic editing technique that may give your films and social media videos a spectacular finale. They date all the way back to the 1890s. It deletes a period of time by removing film between two places. Most filmmakers use them to portray characters moving in front of a static background. It's a form of stylistic editing that emphasizes the cut. It can produce some unexpected or startling effects as a result of this [25].

Incorporating jump cut in a film

Follow these procedures to make cuts with the Razor tool [25]:

- 1 Add the video clips to your timeline.
- 2 Make sure the Snap setting is enabled and your audio is locked so that your clips may snap into place next to each other and your audio remains in sync after a cut.
- 3 Select the Razor tool (or press C) and click the beginning of your cut in your clip.
- 4 Re-click the tool and make a cut where you want the action to resume.
- 5 Use Alt/Option (depending on your operating system) + Eliminate to ripple close the space between clips as you make cuts, making it easier to choose and delete pieces.
- 6 Zoom in on the timeline (touch the + key) and repeat your Razor work to fine-tune your cuts even more.

G. Match Cut

Any cut that stresses spatio-temporal continuity is referred to as a match cut, and it is the foundation for continuity editing. When we talk about continuity editing, we're talking about procedures that assist generate a logical flow between dissimilar shots, resulting in a smoother narrative transition that doesn't jar or confuse the spectator [26]. A match cut is an editing technique used by directors to establish a relationship between two things and to generate a visual metaphor. It's a spatially appropriate cut inside a scene. This can be between two different things, two different environments, or two different compositions in which an object graphically matches in both photos [27].

Incorporating the match cut

Whether you want to improve and streamline your personal projects, corporate movies, wedding films, or whatever, here are some pointers to remember when shooting and editing match cuts [28]:

Plan and storyboard: While a match cut may occasionally be discovered during post-production, the finest ones are those that have been storyboarded, shot-listed, and prepared from the start.

Pick your spots: The most important and useful technique is to be cautious of how and when you use match cuts.

Mix in different transitions: Similarly, there are a variety of additional transition kinds to incorporate from time to time. While direct cutting is effective for connecting sequences and scenes, you can also experiment with crossfades, dissolves, and other creative transitions and motions.

Get creative: The final and most critical piece of advice is to be inventive with your match cutting.

H. Montage

Montage is a technique of cinematic editing that mixes a series of brief pictures or clips into a single sequence that is usually accompanied by music. Montage is a French term which means "assembling" or "editing." Montage sequences are a vehicle for conveying a large amount of information to the audience at once, and they usually indicate the passage of time or multiple concurrent events. For example, in a romantic comedy, a montage can show the rising love or connection between two lovers as they get to understand each other [29].

Incorporating montage in film editing

After you've collected all of your clips, you can edit them anyway you wish. "First, get into the habit of generating movies in a systematic manner, and then focus on the originality," Park recommends. Stick to the necessities and come back to the creative components later. It's easy to get hooked up on artistic choices and details when you first start editing. Here's an example of a workflow you may use [29].

Make folders for your media files: When you have a lot of video clips, you can organise it by file type, such as sound effects, voice-overs, and background music in a folder for audio files.

Figure out your who and why: Before you start, make sure you know your target audience and why they should care about the video.

Storyboard your video: Storyboarding is the process of planning out the shape of a video. A storyboard can be anything from frame-by-frame doodles to notes on the story's progression.

I. Shot/Reverse Shot

The shot/reverse shot is a movie making technique where two individuals shot from different camera angles can appear in the same scene. One camera setup in a shot/reverse shot (also known as a shot/counter shot) is a medium shot or close-up shot of a character engaging with someone offscreen. The action then switches to a reverse aspect, showing the offscreen character engaging with the first character, except this time the first character is the one who is offscreen [30].

Incorporating shot/reverse shot

The steps for incorporating the shot/reverse shot are as follows [31].

Establish your first shot: This will be a single shot of a character conversing with someone on the other side of the screen.

Create a reverse angle for your second shot: Create a second shot that focuses on the character who was off-screen in the first. When setting up this shot, keep a 180-degree rule in mind.

Conduct an eyeline match: Both characters' eyelines must appear in the same section of the frame while filming a shot/reverse shot sequence at sight level.

Embellish your shots: Different variations of the shot/reverse shot sequence exist. If you want to maintain consistency, make sure to match shot sizes. If your first shot is a close-up, the second shot should also be a close-up. If you combine two photos with differing frame lengths, the feeling of continuity may be disrupted.

5 Conclusion

The film being the most significant art type able to combine the abilities of all the other art forms. Editing being an important process in the field of film-making affects the quality or/and the effectivity of the final product if not chosen wisely. The techniques for film editing have evolved with the time, starting from the movie without any editing until the recent more advanced techniques for high quality film editing. The ultimate purpose of the film editing techniques employed in this film is to elicit empathy, affinity, and emotional engagement from the spectator. The film editor is the person responsible for film editing task, it uses the raw footage, performs selection and combining of shots in certain sequence such that the finished motion picture is the result. However, the selection of the proper technique according to the need of the task is important and must be done wisely.

The presented study discussed the evolution of editing techniques and provided the brief history of the editing technique for film making. The study also presents a systematic overview of different film editing techniques, and the process of incorporating them into your own project. In this way the proposed study will be beneficial for the freshers in the field of film editing to get the overview of different techniques for film editing.

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Using a Smart Chatbot System as a Communication Tool for Campus Navigation

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Abstract

First-year students and visitors to South African universities often lose their way. This is due to widespread areas and complex routes or pathways on campuses. The experience can be intimidating and confusing to students and visitors who ask for directions from senior students or university personnel at helpdesks. This paper presents a potential answer to this dilemma – a hybrid chatbot system named SoshaMapBot. This chatbot was developed and tested on the Soshanguve campus of the Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa. The SoshaMapBot uses the entity recognition technique of natural language processing to process the written texts that the user types into the chatbot. The SoshaMapBot asks the users to upload photographs of their surroundings to the program via text. The chatbot then captures these images as inputs and returns textual responses with directions to the user. This study evaluated the proposed chatbot to confirm whether using image processing in chatbots is a viable and sustainable methodology. During the evaluation process of the developed chatbot, the researchers found that the developed chatbot exhibited a 75% accuracy rate in determining where the students or visitors find themselves on campus and giving the correct directions to them. The research found that image processing is a feasible way to develop chatbots and the findings are explained in this paper. However, image processing must be combined with the correct choice of technology, algorithms, and methodologies. Therefore, by developing this chatbot, this study contributes to communication technology for enhanced communication techniques.

Keywords: Chatbot, Campus, Navigation, Communication, Communication Techniques, Communication Technology, Image Processing, Location Finding, Algorithm

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Introduction

A chatbot can be defined as a “computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the internet” (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). The computer program combines artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) to understand the user’s questions and automatically respond to them (by using text-like human conversation). NLP is a technology that uses machine learning algorithms to give a machine the ability to understand, learn and make sense of ‘human’ text. The machine can then respond to the text or voice data with text or speech of their own that is understandable to humans (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). Chatbots are thus very convenient as the chatbots can be used to respond to the user’s questions quickly (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). Machine learning algorithms (also called reinforcement learning algorithms) allow the chatbot to learn new data and information over time. This results in the responses’ accuracy also increasing over time (Singh et al., 2019).

This study elaborated on in this paper investigated the development of a chatbot. The chatbot aim is to support new students and visitors to find specific locations on a large university campus where there is no information or guidance available on Google maps or other similar programs. ShoshaMapbot, the chatbot developed in this study, will guide the user when navigating to the destination they are looking for on campus. The chatbot uses a photo to determine the user’s position on the campus. A photo, also called an image, consists of a number of pixels. Every pixel has a specific shade, opacity or colour. The number of pixels in the image is dependent on the height and width of the image. An image of 500x400 will have 20000 pixels. These pixels are used for image processing. Image processing converts an image into a digital format (pixels) that can be used to enhance the image or get specific information from it (Arthur et al., 2017, p. 123). Our study’s chatbot uses image processing to predict the user’s current location, and identifies the required destination from the conversation on the chatbot.

Chatbots do not often use AI with image processing. This can be attributed to the challenges in implementing the combinations of natural language and image processing (Adamopoulou & Moussiades, 2020). This study focused on the development of a chatbot and how image processing can be incorporated into chatbot development. The image processing in the chatbot is used to predict the user’s current location and provide campus navigation.

The next section of this paper provides the literature review we conducted before developing the chatbot. The methodology follows the literature review. Then we provide a discussion on the development and implementation of the chatbot (ShoshaMapBot). A presentation of the results follows, and then the conclusion is presented.

Literature Review

The following studies were found in our survey of the literature. These studies identify the algorithms and techniques incorporated in image-processing chatbots.

Dechert et al. (2019) developed a disembodied conversational agent (CA) chatbot. This chatbot was aimed at collecting geotagged images called Dengue Detector (DD). The Dengue Detector receives and prompts the user's location and provides instruction indicators for taking images. The Dengue Detector is developed using DialogFlow in conjunction with

basic Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques, intent recognition, and the Facebook application programming interface (API) for the user interface.

Lee et al. (2019) developed a web-based chatbot that provides a so-called 'social magazine' consisting of video content. Their chatbot feeds on news from various social media platforms and then creates a video or magazine based on the results of the 'social media news analysis'. The video is created by combining sets of images, repetition, and video effects such as fade-in and fade-out techniques. The developers then used the Fast Forward MPEG (FFMPEG) library to create background music synthesis for the videos.

Another interesting system quite similar is a video chatbot developed by Li et al. (2016). This chatbot system allows users to comment on each other's posts using video and has a text-based feature as an added functionality. Users can extract and search visual features from videos. In order to extract visual features of the video, they used convolutional neural networks (CNN), and for searching through the video, they used the approximate nearest neighbour (ANN). The chatbot could only be accessed on a computer or laptop with a web camera.

Pardasani et al. (2018) developed a hand-gesture recognition chatbot model that can be used to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing people. They aimed to fill the gap between the use of voice chatbots amongst abled and deaf, and hard-of-hearing people.

Sathit developed a financial trading system composed of an image processing service that checked whether the customer had uploaded a valid image for the transfer. All the responses in the database were predefined, and the system did not produce any new responses outside of the predefined scope (Prasomphan, 2019).

In the literature that we studied and summarised briefly above, we have observed that we could develop a unique chatbot different from the ones developed as part of the abovementioned studies. The main novelty of our research with the SoshaMapBot system is that this study introduces a unique technique for developing task-based chatbots that incorporates image processing. Additionally, the explicit difference between the systems developed in previous research and this study's chatbot is that none of the prior chatbots uses image processing to predict the user's locations. When an image processing technique is applied in the previous studies, it does not have feature matching in which at least two images are compared.

Methodology

This study adopted the design science methodology. Design science research focuses on the innovation and utility of the artefact produced, which in this study is the image-processing chatbot. The artefact contributes as an innovative solution towards implementing chatbots that can read images and use information retrieved from an image to determine the current location. Therefore, the developed artefact is evaluated based on meeting specific requirements and serving a human purpose (Hevner et al., 2004; Jansen van Vuuren et al., 2016). The outcomes of a design science-based research artefact can vary depending on the problem being addressed. As such, the contribution of an artefact is based on the usability of an existing artefact for a new purpose or in a new environment or context (Cannas & Gosling, 2021).

Figure 1 (adapted from Jansen van Vuuren, Grobler, Leenen, Chan, and Dawood, 2016) demonstrates the adopted methodology's iteration process in design science format. Stage 1 in Figure 1 highlights the conceptual and explanatory research, including requirements extraction and literature study. Stage 2 highlights a description of the model, an evaluation of the results, and the maintenance process (Jansen van Vuuren et al., 2016).

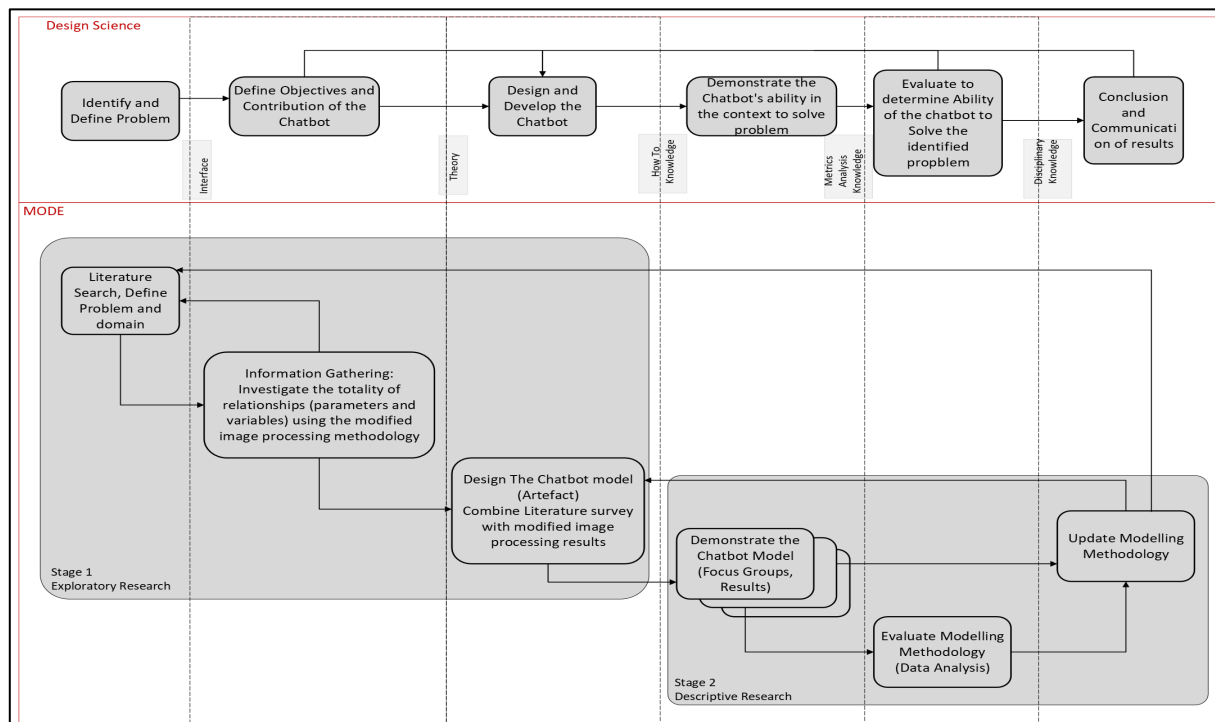


Figure 1: Methodology (Jansen van Vuuren et al., 2016)

This study also used machine learning methods in the image processing stage of the creation of the chatbot artefact. This method is proposed by Arthur et al. (2017) and includes *dataset creation*, *digitalisation*, *background subtraction (interpolation)*, *element segmentation and cropping*, and *feature matching*. The image processing technique used to find matching features of the images was adapted to use feature matching instead of feature extraction. Feature matching is “the act of recognizing features of the same object across images with slightly different viewpoints” (Roelke, 2013). This feature-mapping step uses the k-nearest neighbour (KNN) classification algorithm and Euclidean distance. According to Raschka (2018, p. 3), “nearest neighbour algorithms are among the ‘simplest’ supervised machine learning algorithms” that can be used in the field of pattern recognition. A supervised machine learning algorithm “relies on labelled input data to learn a function that produces appropriate output when given unlabelled data” (Harrison, 2018). The technique applies the Gaussian elimination rule to the image pixel to find and verify matching features within the images when they are being compared.

The next sections discuss how these methods are used to develop the image processing model that takes an image as input and predicts the user's current location.

Development of the SoshaMapBot

The ShoshaMapBot is an image processing-based chatbot with five components: mobile application, bot service, multimedia database, image processing (IP) service, and digital file

storage. Authentication and authorisation information security protocols are necessary to ensure the chatbot communicates with the correct users and does not mix-match responses. A unique username allocation authorisation process was used with the user's internet protocol (IP) address as the username to ensure that when the location identification results come back from the IP service, they get sent to the correct user. This username is allocated at every session start and revoked at every session end. A new IP username is allocated to the user during every session. This ensures that the response is sent to the user with a specific IP address and immediately deletes the records after responding to avoid duplications and miss matching results. The architecture of the ShoshMapBot is shown in Figure 2.

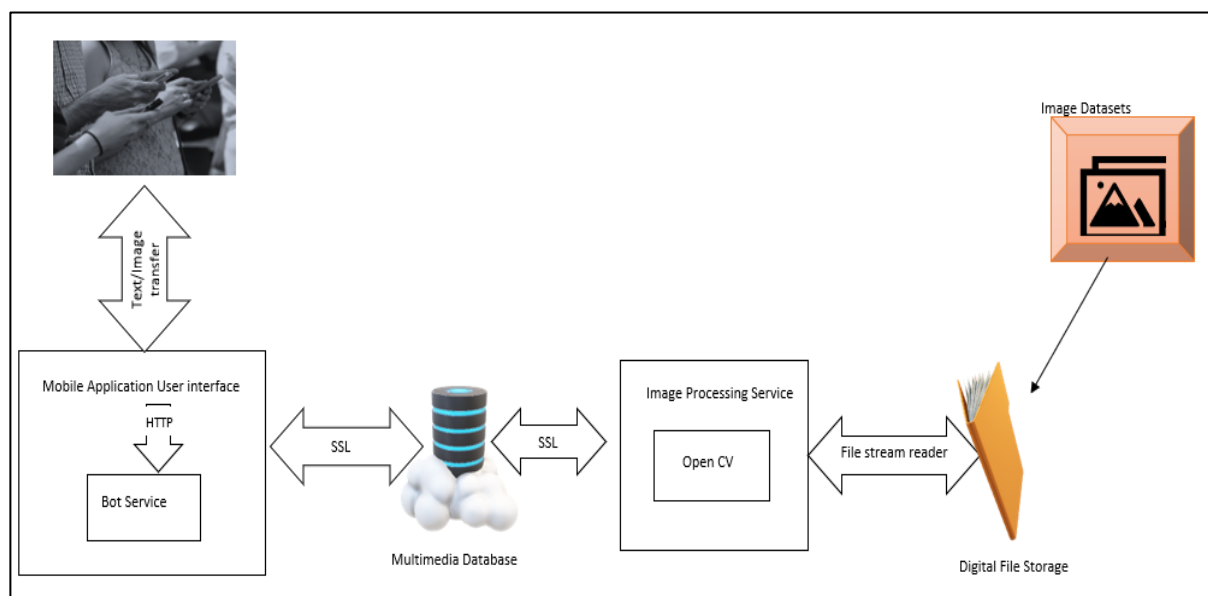


Figure 2: *Architecture of the ShoshMapbot*

User Interface

The SoshMapBot interface is developed for communication between the user and the chatbot service. This self-created mobile application interface is developed and integrated with the chatbot service, thus allowing the user to initiate and maintain communication through the mobile application service. The user interacts with the service using text and can upload the image using an attachment button. The user interface is shown in Figure 3.

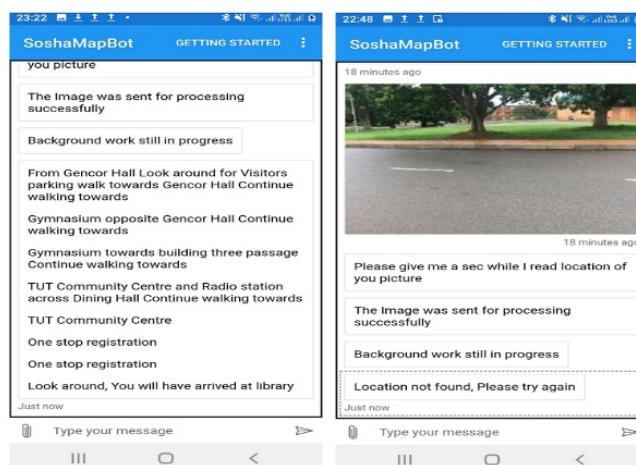


Figure 3: *SoshMapBot – user interface with directions*

The user interacts with the chatbot to find the campus directions, instead of the chatbot asking for the user's current location. The chatbot requests an image from the user of their location and sends it to the image processing model in the background. When the image processing model has completed its tasks, results are returned to the user as directions or information messages notifying the user that the location could not be found.

Bot Service

A bot service is a web service that can be integrated into many applications to provide front-end functionality. In the case of ShoshaMapbot, the bot service is a web service with a single line of HTTP WebView referring to the bot service. Microsoft's Azure Bot Service was used to create the bot service. The SoshaMapBot chatbot system needs an image to determine the user's location. The bot service provides the conversational flow between the user and the chatbot. The user uses a mobile device to capture the image, which is then uploaded to the chatbot system. The service is deployed on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform as a web service accessed on the mobile application through a webview URL that provides a user-friendly interface to the user.

In order to make SoshaMapBot understand the user's requests for the location, the bot uses the named-entity recognition NLP technique. The named-entity recognition algorithm identifies the destination location from the user's response by performing a dictionary word search of specific locations of the campus stored in the location dictionary. It then computes directions from the source to a destination following the user's image upload.

Multimedia Database

The multimedia database resides at the heart of SoshaMapBot and is used as an intermediate point of communication between the image processing service and the bot service. It consists of four databases and five collections. The main functionality of the database is to store statically constructed information on campus areas. Unique symbols, identifiers, and names were used to identify the proposed areas, directions, and paths. The data collected must be dynamic to make provision for the performance of quick changes or improvements on the system if necessary. The multimedia database was built using MongoDB. The bot service, deployed on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform, performs requests using secure socket layer (SSL) protocol calls from the Microsoft Azure servers to the MongoDB servers to retrieve and store specific data. Each component sets up a communication pipeline for the communications.

Image Processing Service

Dataset Creation and Digitalisation

Dataset creation and digitalisation were used to get the necessary dataset for the ShoshaMapBot prototype that could be used for the development and training of the model. A wide range of datasets was required for learning the chatbot system. The images were collected, filtered, and sorted in a way deemed fit for the development process. The development process was done in five stages: data collection, image collection, dataset filtering, file storage, and database structure.

During data collection, information about the campus, especially those normally visited areas, was collected for use in the prototype. That included information such as campus buildings, monuments, campus area spaces, and campus residences. Over one hundred names of campus areas and spaces were recorded. These datasets and a dictionary were used to develop the prototype and for training of the model.

For the image collection stage, photographs (images) were taken at the various campus areas previously identified in the data collection stage. Originally, 591 images were captured using these cell phones: Samsung A2 core, Samsung A10, and Apple iPhone 6. The images collected included all the identified campus areas and were captured from various angles. The reason for using various devices and capturing various angles was to increase the accuracy of the image or critical pointer detection process using various image pixels and to make provision for various mobile devices that will use the system. The pixels of each image are calculated by multiplying the width and the height of the image. A pre-written Python script was used to perform the calculations.

For the dataset filtering, images were manually filtered by creating collages of images with various angles in the same area, reducing the number of images stored. Originally 591 images were captured. The collaging technique reduced one group of images from 566 to four images. In order to ensure that this technique was effective, it was tested with the training model to determine if the images could still be recognised. An example of the collaged images is provided in Figure 4. After the data filtration step, there were 65 records of campus areas and space records left.

The images were then stored in the virtual file storage. After filtering, the images collected, with the location areas, were stored in a non-relational database, MongoDB. The database also included the names of campus locations and the directions for various route options from one campus area to another.



Figure 4: *DataSet Sample – Gencor hall of TUT Soshanguve Campus*

Background Subtraction (Interpolation)

In order to predict the user's current location, interpolation handles the raw image uploaded by the user on request of the chatbot. The interpolation converts the raw image into a machine-usable format (binary format). This stage includes data import and background subtraction. The data import step occurs on the front end of the mobile application via the bot service.

The first background subtraction is performed on the image-processing service. The data import process is done when the chatbot asks the user to upload the image using the standard Microsoft bot service attachment prompt.

The second background subtraction stage starts with the conversion of the image to greyscale. The subtraction includes the application of functions to turn the image to a greyscale that will reduce its size. The width and height are reduced to 50% of the original size to ensure that the image processing service is able to ingest the image. An example of such an image is given in Figure 5.



Figure 5: *Black and white image during interpolation*

Element Segmentation and Cropping

For image processing, the images are divided into parts to create segments and regions based on interchangeable critical pointers of the independent images to enable the comparisons that will lead to image recognition. Image pixels are cropped to eliminate corresponding edges. OpenCV's scale-invariant feature transform (SIFT) method of detecting and computing image segments was used for this process. This process also includes an analysis of the image pixels. Figure 6 shows an image after element segmentation and cropping was done. The resulting image will be a (M x N) matrix with a set of integer values.

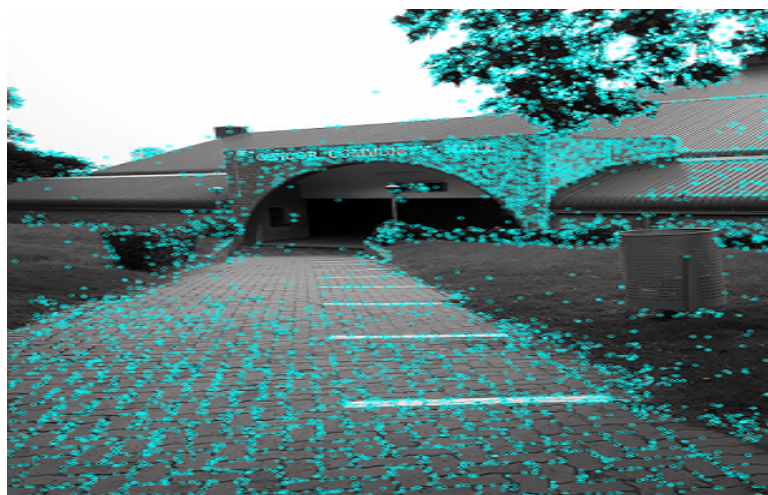


Figure 6: *Segmented image*

Feature Matching

Feature matching is the most crucial step in the methodology for this study. It ensures that images are matched correctly to predict the user's location. This step has been modified from the original methodology used by Arthur et al. (2017) and uses feature matching instead of feature extraction to satisfy this study's aim. The features required are extracted from the image and matched with the dataset images for training the datasets. This is performed by identifying and marking features matched in the compared images. The matching is computed using the KNN algorithm provided by the OpenCV library. The Euclidian distance formula is also utilised to increase the prediction probability, and a K scalar multiple reduces the distance second image.

A test was done to verify if the image processing procedure would give the correct results. Figure 7 indicates the test to see if feature mapping was done correctly.

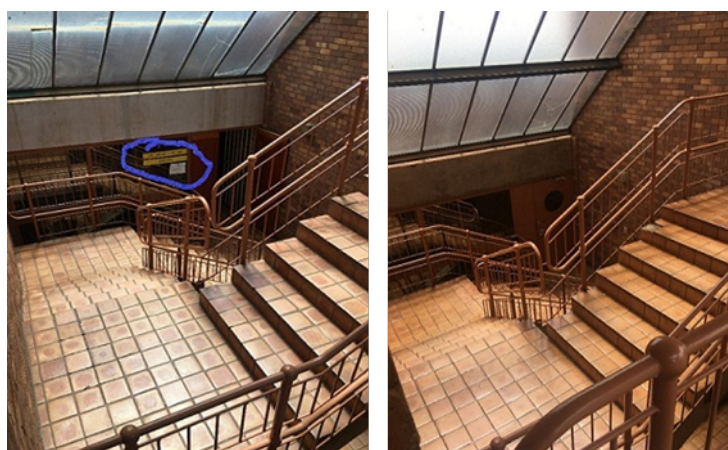


Figure 7: *Colour images featuring the 'mapping test'*

When the user-coloured image is provided to the system, the image goes through the interpolation. Figure 8 presents the results of the image processing service after processing the images provided in Figure 7. In this test case, the system possibly would identify the grey images as the same. However, one aspect was different. The purple circle on the left of Figure 7 shows that the two pictures are not identical and is the prominent significant feature

tested. The system had to identify that one of the features differs between the two pictures, and therefore it is not the same location. The test's goal was for the service to accurately forecast that the features differ; thus, the areas in the photos were not in the same place. As in this case, and in some other cases, the image processing service cannot find the difference, as seen in Figure 7.

The training model found as many matches as possible but not the critical feature in question. Even while the differences are visible, they are insufficient to provide a clear indication or forecast whether the images provided are from the same place. In such circumstances, using the Gaussian elimination to test and confirm the coordinate is extremely valuable. This validity testing should be enough to ensure that SoshaMapBot's image processing training model can detect and predict whether the image's location matches the user's current location.



Figure 8: *Image processing results*

Results

The developed artefact proved usable and innovative, as it injected a self-developed chatbot application to provide campus directions. Based on the outputs of the chatbots, the image processing model was then evaluated based on the F1 score to determine the model's usability and suitability in chatbot development. Following several tests of the chatbot, we found that the developed image processing model exhibits 50% true positives, 0% false positives, 33% false negatives, and 17% true negatives using the F score for validation.

The F1 score ranges from 0 to 1, in which 0 means the model is bad and 1 means the model is good. Therefore, the closer the results are to 1, the better the model. Therefore, observed from the above F1-score calculations resulting in 0.75 (75%) means that the performance of the image processing service prototyped in this study is fairly good, and it is able to send and retrieve correct information as per information perspective requirement from the chatbot knowledge base. This requirement entails that the information gathered by the chatbot must be appropriate and meets the information needs of the users (Peras, 2018).

However, the system is slightly slow, and another type of algorithm must be considered to make the feature selection due to the time used for single images to be analysed on a virtual server. An algorithm that can analyse images in a non-linear manner would be ideal.

This study used the scale-invariant feature transform (SIFT) algorithm provided by the OpenCV library in addition to the KNN algorithm. SIFT is an image processing algorithm to extract image features. We learnt that the SIFT algorithm is inefficient for SoshaMapBot on large image datasets due to the time it takes to analyse the images. The speeded-up robust features (SURF) algorithm, CNN or SIFT-CNN can be used to as an alternative to SIFT algorithm to decrease SoshaMapBot's time performance.

The speeded-up robust features (SURF) algorithm is similar to SIFT algorithm, but much faster and more robust for local, similarity invariant representation and comparison of image, its drawback though is that it is unstable to changes in rotation and illumination (Jain et al., 2017). The advantage of using SURF over the SIFT approach is its fast computation of operators using box filters that enable real-time applications such as tracking and object recognition (Bay et al., 2006), and it has also been proved to give good results outputs of image analysis (Khan et al., 2011).

The convolutional neural networks (CNN) is a classification algorithm which operates in a set of non-linear functions and consist of a number of layers Fischer et al. (2014). When compared to SIFT, CNN has been found to yield a better performance time. Zheng et al. (2018) reported that SIFT takes approximately 1-2 seconds to extract regions from a 640 x 480 image, and it takes 0,082 seconds and 0.347 seconds to iterate through networks of 224 x 224 and 1024 x 768 image. Additionally, Fischer et al. (2014) examined the performance CNN on matching tasks when compared to SIFT, they found that CNN performs better than SIFT when extracting descriptors to perform a matching task. Drawbacks of using CNN over SIFT is that it requires large amount training datasets Fischer et al. (2014) and CNN has a weak performance on grey scaled images (Zheng et al., 2018).

SITF-CNN algorithm, proposed by (Tsourounis et al., 2022) is a an algorithm combining both the SIFT and CNN to form one algorithm. It works by feeding the SIFT image representation into CNN. The grey scale image remains an issue with SIFT-CNN algorithm as with CNN algorithm, and is highly suitable for small datasets (Tsourounis et al., 2022). The advantages of SIFT-CNN are that it has potential of eliminating the amount of training required by CNN algorithm by using the results from SIFT to train the model and use end-to-end learning scheme (Tsourounis et al., 2022).

From the above possible alternative algorithms provided, this study recommends the use of SIFT-CNN algorithm for future related work. This is because the SIFT-CNN algorithm has been proved to faster that both SIFT and CNN algorithms when implemented individually.

Conclusion

The focus of the research was the development of an innovative solution to support new students and visitors when searching for locations on a large campus. The SoshaMapBot solution is a chatbot that can identify the user's location by analysing an image uploaded to the chatbot using image processing. The chatbot identified a location where the user wants to go by analysing the text. The chatbot then directs the user with text to find the required location. This study adopted the design science methodology to design an innovative and usable chatbot artefact.

In order to predict the user's current location, feature matching was used in combination with OpenCV's SIFT method to match features of the image and predict their similarity.

Additionally, Gaussian elimination and Euclidean distance were used to determine the validity of the matched features. The chatbot uses the entity-recognition technique to process natural language and was built using the Microsoft Azure Bot Service.

The artefact developed proved itself to be usable and innovative as it injected a self-developed chatbot application to provide campus directions. The model was evaluated based on the F1 score and exhibited a score of 0.75, which is an acceptable score in the field of human-computer interaction (HCI) development.

For future development, the researcher recommends using the combination of SIFT and CNN (SIFT-ANN) algorithm instead of the SIFT algorithm to decrease the computation time, as the SIFT algorithm was slower when processing a large number of images. CNN algorithm is another alternative which can be used instead of SIFT algorithm, however, there are several factors to consider when choosing to use the CNN algorithm. Factors such as number of datasets, training time and complexity of the model. SURF can also be used as opposed to SIFT, however the rotation and illumination of the image's needs be considered as SURF is unstable to rotation and illumination changes.

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Who Are the Misogynists That Stigmatize Feminists in China?

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of rising feminist activism on digital platforms, global misogyny is thriving. Anti-feminists around the world have adopted strategies to stigmatize feminists, making feminism a dirty word. However, the predictors of such stigmatization has been understudied. Therefore, drawing from research on far-right ideologies and intergroup contact theory, the current study employed an online survey to identify the profile of Chinese misogynists that stigmatize feminists based on womanhood. Results demonstrate that nationalism and offline contact with feminists reduced stigmatization of feminists, while patriarchal beliefs exacerbating said stigmatization. Life satisfaction was not significantly related to stigmatization of feminists, which highlights the cross-cultural differences in anti-feminist research and calls for more nuanced, quantitative studies on the stigmatization of feminists in China and beyond.

Keywords: Stigmatization of Feminists, Nationalism, Life Satisfaction, Intergroup Contact, China

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Introduction

With social media providing alternative spaces for sexual violence survivors and feminists to share unique experiences and perspectives, conservative claims for restoring traditional gender roles have also become louder (Saresma, 2018). While misogyny is considered as central to the far-right ideology and closely related to ultra-nationalism, white supremacy, anti-environmentalism, homophobia, and xenophobia in Western societies (e.g., Agius et al., 2022; Barla & Bjork-James, 2021; Koronaiou & Sakellariou, 2017; Saresma, 2018), the predictors of stigmatization of feminists in the Chinese context have been understudied.

Feminism has long been stigmatized around the world, even in nations such as Finland (Saresma, 2018) that maintains a great gender equality record (World Economic Forum, 2022). As a nation that boasts a long history influenced by Confucianism, traditional Chinese society advocates the moral principle of “Three Obediences” that require women to obey their fathers, husbands, and sons in different life stages (Ling, 1998). Partly due to this age-old ideology, China ranks 102nd in terms of gender equality among 146 participating regions (World Economic Forum, 2022). Compared to Western democracies, Chinese news media are owned by the state and tend to more frequently feature national pride items (Liu et al., 2021). Such propaganda—in combination with the nationwide patriotic education campaign (e.g., Naftali, 2020) and the wolf-warrior diplomacy (e.g., d’Hooghe, 2021)—has fueled nationalism (including but not limited to pride in traditional Chinese culture) among the population. This is the patriarchal system where misogyny takes root in contemporary China.

Prior research suggests that the relationship between nationalism and feminism varies, depending on socio-political contexts. For instance, white nationalists in the United States argue against feminism in order to defend existing systems (Bjork-James, 2020), while in some European countries, femonationalism promotes cultural superiority of societies that claim to protect women’s rights and stigmatizes Muslim immigrants as a threat to their societies (Farris, 2012; Möser, 2022). Even in the Chinese context, on one hand, nationalists frequently label feminists as national traitors (Q. Huang, 2022), while on the other hand, some pro-state feminists resort to nationalistic rhetoric to advocate for women’s rights (Yin & Fang, 2022). Given such conflicting findings from qualitative research, the current study set out to quantitatively verify the complicated relationship between nationalism and stigmatization of feminists, aiming to test the applicability of Western feminist and political communication theories in the Chinese context.

Moreover, low-status men reported higher levels of female-directed hostility (Kasumovic & Kuznekoff, 2015). Additionally, intergroup contact when characterized by equal status and cooperation helps to reduce prejudice between majority and minority groups (Allport, 1954). Therefore, the current research employed an online survey to examine whether offline interpersonal contact with feminists and life satisfaction reduce stigmatization of feminists, while nationalism and patriarchal beliefs exacerbating such a stigma.

Literature Review

Stigmatization of Feminists

Globally, feminists are excluded from “normal” women and typically suffer from criticisms or humiliation of their physical appearance, relational status, and personality (Q. Huang, 2022). Being stigmatized as “deviant women” who violate the social expectation of

femininity and gender roles (Q. Huang, 2022), feminists feature “butch woman with all the masculine qualities” (Alexander & Ryan, 1997, p. 559), being unattractive or sexually unappealing (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). They are perceived to possess unfeminine traits, such as “aggressive,” “radical,” “extreme,” and “stubborn” (Houvouras & Scott Carter, 2008; Breen & Karpinski, 2008; Swirsky & Angelone, 2014). Individual reluctance to identify as feminists is further fueled by the false perception that feminism poses a threat to conventional gender dynamics and family values (Houvouras & Scott Carter, 2008; Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). Worse still, womanhood-based stigma around feminists also embodies homophobia by labeling feminists as homosexuals. For example, a major stereotype of feminists held by men is feminists being ugly and man-hating lesbians (McLaughlin & Aikman, 2020; Rudman & Fairchild, 2007; Swirsky & Angelone, 2014). Therefore, feminists are not only stigmatized as being “not woman” but also not heterosexual women, which further marginalizes them based on gender norms.

Nationalism and Feminism

The connection between feminism and nationalism has been examined from different angles. One of such perspectives revolves around the imagined community of the nation through the categories of gender (Hogan, 2009). The traditionalist understanding of man as the head of the family and nation is associated with nationalism (Saresma, 2017), because in order to defend the traditional order of society, men should defend their country just as they protect their women (Nagel, 1998). Nation and family are taken as rooted in differences emblematic of the natural order that should not be altered (Koronaïou & Sakellariou, 2017). This black-and-white rhetoric (Wiberg, 2011) advances a rigid binary system that divides people into ingroup and outgroup members based solely on biological sex and nationality. Therefore, advocates of such ideologies promote exclusion as they defend “us” against the “others,” be they feminists or individuals that do not share the nationalistic sentiment (Saresma, 2018).

Patriarchy refers “to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways” (Bhasin, 2006, p. 3). With patriarchy remaining an important organizing principle in many societies (Agius et al., 2022), right-wing traditionalists are warning that patriarchy is being threatened (Wodak, 2015), largely by feminists, and feminism is believed to undermine the moral standards of society. Empirical research has demonstrated that right-wing traditionalist ideology is strongly correlated with patriarchal beliefs (e.g., Wiberg, 2011), and conservative voters are less likely to prioritize the issue of violence against women (Araújo et al., 2021). It stands to reason that the proponents of patriarchal ideology blame feminists for creating tension within society and undermining existing social order because they are resistant to patriarchal ideas. Based on the above reasoning, it is postulated that:

H1: Patriarchal beliefs will be positively related to stigmatization of feminists.

In Western contexts, nationalism and anti-feminism are central to contemporary far-right movements (e.g., Koronaïou & Sakellariou, 2017). For instance, Koronaïou and Sakellariou (2017) observed that the Greek neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party has been trying to reproduce a nationalist habitus consisting of anti-feminism and anti-homosexuality that expects real Greek women to internalize. In line with far-right theories that attribute the decline of the traditional family and birth rates to feminists (e.g., Wilson, 2020), the Golden Dawn Party also considers women as reproductive vessels that sustain the nation and the white race (Koronaïou & Sakellariou, 2017). The valorization of hierarchy and traditional values (Agius

et al., 2022) supports “masculinized discipline and tendency of anti-pluralism” (Yin & Fang, p. 5) and is thus destructive to feminist advocacy. Furthermore, gender-ideology and feminism are frequently framed as threats to state sovereignty (Agius & Edenborg, 2019).

In the Chinese context, the relationship between nationalism and feminism is also complicated, albeit for different reasons. On one hand, in 2015 five Chinese feminist activists were detained for 37 days because of planning to hand out anti-sexual harassment stickers on public transportation (Xiong & Ristivojević, 2021). After their release, several of them moved out of China and started to organize feminist campaigns overseas (Lv, 2019). As a result of incidents like this and long-time propaganda that stigmatizes feminists, feminism is widely considered as a Western cultural invasion that threatens Chinese culture (Y. Huang, 2016) and interferences in China’s affairs (Xiong & Ristivojević, 2021). However, on the other hand, a number of Chinese feminists have embraced nationalism while promoting gender equality (Yin & Fang, 2022). Given the plurality of feminisms in China and complexity of the relationship between nationalism and feminism, the following research question was proposed:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between nationalism and stigmatization of feminists?

Relative Deprivation and Intergroup Contact as Predictors of Stigmatization

According to Dohm (1902), anti-feminists include the conservatives who subscribe to the moral superiority of the existing social order, the masculinists who believe in the natural inferiority of women, the practical egoists who reject women’s rights for fear of losing their own privileges, and the cavaliers who claim to protect women’s honor. As previously demonstrated, those who believe in patriarchy tend to stigmatize feminists. In this section, the authors of the current study aim to establish the link between relative deprivation and said stigmatization.

Relative deprivation theory (Stouffer et al., 1949) suggests that individuals’ dissatisfaction with their status is not simply a function of their objective status, but rather contingent on their subjective assessment of their status, especially when they feel entitled. Gurr (1970) maintains that perceptions of relative deprivation lead to frustration, which could trigger violence. This theory explains why lower-status men increased hostility toward women (Kasumovic & Kuznekoff, 2015). Since misogynists believe that traditional gender relations are a zero-sum game, they claim that women deprive men of male privilege and that feminists are going too far (Agius et al., 2022). For instance, the #HimToo movement—as a backlash against #MeToo—which portrays men as the victims of unfounded accusations of sexual assault (Barla & Bjork-James, 2021) is mainly composed of male participants who are not able to find a romantic partner (Donnelly et al., 2011). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Life satisfaction will be negatively related to stigmatization of feminists.

According to the intergroup contact theory, certain types of intergroup interactions could improve intergroup attitudes and reduce discrimination (Allport, 1954). Based on this theory, Wu et al. (2017) demonstrated that interpersonal-mediated interactions occurring between Chinese social media users with a heterosexual orientation and LGB celebrities reduced stigmatization of sexual minorities. Even imagined contact with stigmatized outgroups can prepare people for successful face-to-face intergroup communication (Turner & West, 2011).

Therefore, the current study predicts that individuals who have had contact with feminists tend to not stigmatize feminists. More formally:

H3: Offline contact with feminists will be negatively related to stigmatization of feminists.

Method

The current study collected data from Chinese people who had at least heard of feminism through an online survey. To ensure understandability and semantic validity, the two bilingual authors translated all items into Chinese and then back-translated them into English. Data were collected in October, 2022 using snowball sampling with the anonymous survey being hosted on www.surveypplus.cn, as online censorship prevented the researchers from drawing a more representative sample on a more widely used platform.

Study data were based on responses from 305 Chinese adults with an average age of 27.21 ($SD = 9.31$) with a gender ratio of 69 men to 228 women. The screening question first asked participants if they had heard of feminism before, and those who had no prior knowledge of the topic were directed to the survey's conclusion. Following McLaughlin and Aikman (2020), feminism in the present study was defined as "a belief in equal rights for men and women," and "feminists are those who advocate for women to have equal rights to men." After reading the definition, participants were asked if they considered themselves to be feminists: 257 respondents confirmed their feminist identity, while 48 did not self-identify as feminists. Participants then responded to questions regarding offline contact with feminists ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.23$), stigmatization of feminists (adapted from McLaughlin & Aikman, 2020, $\alpha = .84$, $M = 1.89$, $SD = .95$), nationalism (adapted from Hyun & Kim, 2015, $\alpha = .92$, $M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.53$), patriarchal beliefs (adapted from the measure of institutional power of men in Yoon et al., 2015, $\alpha = .96$, $M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.27$), and life satisfaction (Diener et al, 1985, $\alpha = .92$, $M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.33$) using seven-point Likert-type scales. A full list of measures is presented in Table 1. Demographic data, including gender, age, sexual orientation, and marital status were also collected as control variables.

Table 1. Measures

Variable	Item
Offline Contact with Feminists	I know many feminists in my real life.
	I have worked with many feminists in my real life.
	I have many feminist friends in my real life.
	I interact often with feminists in my real life.
Stigmatization of Feminists	Feminists are homosexual.
	Feminists are unattractive.
	Feminists are masculine.
	Feminists are man-hating.
	Feminists are rude.
	Feminists are radical.
Nationalism	I am proud to be Chinese.
	Chinese people are one of the smartest and most diligent peoples in the world.
	Chinese cultural value is superior to other cultures in the world.
	Chinese traditional value is superior to that of other civilizations in the world.
	Generally, the more influence China has on other nations, the better off those nations are.
	For me, China is the best country in the world.
Patriarchal Beliefs	I would feel more comfortable if a man, not a woman, was running the country's finances.
	It is important that men – not women – make the big decisions that will affect my country.
	A man, not a woman, should be the head of a company.
	Men, compared to women, would make for more competent CEOs of financial institutions.
	The powerful roles that men play on TV/movies reflect how society should run.
Life Satisfaction	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
	The conditions of my life are excellent.
	I am satisfied with my life.
	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

Results

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for all the independent and dependent variables. Under the linear regression procedure run on SPSS 26, collinearity diagnostics showed that there was no collinearity problem because the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were all under 1.85.

Table 2. Means Standard Deviations and Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Stigmatization of Feminists	-				
2. Nationalism	.08	-			
3. Patriarchal Beliefs	.51**	.43**	-		
4. Life Satisfaction	.002	.35**	.15**	-	
5. Offline Contact with Feminists	-.28**	-.12*	-.31**	.15**	-
<i>M</i>	1.89	4.22	2.26	3.87	4.74
<i>SD</i>	0.95	1.53	1.27	1.33	1.23

Note: $p^* < .05$, $p^{**} < .01$

A multiple regression analysis was conducted, with stigmatization of feminists serving as the dependent variable. Covariates were entered in the first step, with the aforementioned four independent variables being entered in the second step. The model was significant, $F(4, 295) = 17.57$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .34$, $\Delta R^2 = .15$). Hypothesis 1 predicted that patriarchal beliefs would be positively related to stigmatization of feminists. In line with this hypothesis, patriarchal beliefs were positively related to stigmatization of feminists ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$). Hypothesis 3 expected that offline contact with feminists would be negatively related to stigmatization of feminists. As expected, offline contact with feminists was indeed negatively related to stigmatization of feminists ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .03$). However, inconsistent with Hypothesis 2, life satisfaction was not related to stigmatization of feminists ($\beta = .06$, $p = .30$). Therefore, H1 and H3 garnered support, while H2 was not validated. Lastly, regarding the relationship between nationalism and stigmatization of feminists (RQ1), results from this study showed that nationalism was negatively related to stigmatization of feminists ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .03$).

Discussion

The present research is one of the first quantitative studies that analyze the predictors and inhibitors of stigmatizing feminists in the Chinese context. Drawing from theoretical exploration of far-right ideologies and intergroup contact theory, this study highlights the implications of re-examining the western-centric feminist assumptions in different geographical and temporal contexts (e.g., Q. Huang, 2022).

First, patriarchal beliefs drove people to stigmatize feminists as deviant women. Patriarchy values the presumably natural gender order and emphasizes men's leadership in both public and private realms (e.g., Agius et al., 2022). As a result, family becomes the end goal for women (Koronaïou & Sakellariou, 2017), and feminists who advocate for women's ambitious involvement in the public domain or display unfeminine traits are stigmatized. Notably, anti-feminism can transgress the bi-polar gender system—both men and women can internalize patriarchal beliefs and subscribe to the anti-feminist ideology (Saresma, 2018).

Moreover, offline contact with feminists reduced the stigmatization of feminists. Compared to online communication featuring rampant incivility and increasing polarization (Chen, 2017)—which discourage people from political expression (Weinstein et al., 2015)—offline

communication provides more favorable contexts for improving acceptance of minority opinions and communities (e.g., Wu et al., 2017), especially when people interact with feminists in a cooperative and non-competitive manner (as shown in the offline contact items presented in Table 1). In addition, being exposed to cross-cutting perspectives (e.g., feminism) helps people build up their knowledge, which also facilitates tolerance and acceptance of the stigmatized, out-group members (Wu et al., 2017).

Interestingly, people who scored higher on nationalism refrained from stigmatizing feminists. As observed by Jayawardena (1986), in a number of third-world countries, women's struggles for emancipation often constitutes an essential component of national resistance movements. This finding echoes Kim (2009), who maintains that nationalism and feminism in South Korea complement each other in a constructive way. In China, the entanglement of feminism and nationalism may result from both an active choice and passive acceptance of reality. Since offline grassroots feminist campaigns have largely been cracked down (e.g., Xiong & Ristivojević, 2021), nationalism serves as a main device to unite people from diverse backgrounds and improve public acceptance of feminism (Hyun & Kim, 2015; Yin & Fang, 2022). Because the state functions as a significant collective for action, in the Chinese context, a complete denunciation of the state might be detrimental to contemporary feminist movements (Mansbridge, 2003).

Lastly, life satisfaction was not significantly related to stigmatization of feminists in the present study. This non-significant finding might be explained by the less representative sample drawn mainly from the authors' personal networks as a compromising solution to circumventing censorship in the process of data collection. Specifically, in our sample a majority of the respondents were young women who at least received college education and self-identified as feminists. Since feminist ideas are considered to be held and pursued only by the middle class (Q. Huang, 2022) or even academic elites (Saresma, 2018), these people may enjoy an affluent lifestyle while only remaining unsatisfied with Chinese women's status. However, the life satisfaction measure used in this study did not differentiate sources of satisfaction. Therefore, researchers should practice caution when they are generalizing study findings to other sectors. Additionally, only one type of stigma (i.e., womanhood-based stigma) was identified in the current study, while rights-based stigma (e.g., "Feminists want to enjoy more rights than men") (Q. Huang, 2022) may be more relevant to relative deprivation theory and life satisfaction. Future research should address such limitations and conduct a more nuanced examination of the predictors of the stigmatization of feminists in China and beyond.

Conclusion

On balance, the current study extended prior critical and qualitative work on global anti-feminism by establishing the links between nationalism, offline contact with feminists, patriarchal beliefs, and the stigmatization of feminists in the Chinese context through an online survey. The fact that offline contact reduces stigmatization of feminists provides support for the notion that intergroup contact in a cooperative environment helps reduce discrimination against minority groups. By contrast, patriarchal beliefs drive individuals to stigmatize feminists. Moreover, study findings also validate the negative relationship between nationalism and stigmatization of feminists, highlighting the prevalence of pro-state feminists in contemporary Chinese society. However, life satisfaction does not affect stigmatization of feminists, calling for a closer examination of different types of stigmas, as well as different demographics.

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***Changing Behaviours Through Design:
An Educational Comic Brochure to Help Prevent Childhood Obesity***

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Abstract

Communication implies engagement with the message, and it becomes more relevant when the primary purpose is to educate while having an entertainment experience. Based on the literature review, we know what types of illustrations will capture most of the attention of specific age groups. This project aims to develop a set of artefacts to increase children's literacy concerning childhood obesity. Therefore, being illustration the most suitable method for our materials, we surveyed to evaluate children's preferences based on four illustrations previously selected by a panel of experts. Our target group was children between 8 and 12 years old. Based on our results, we identified the preferred illustration style for 8-10 years old children and 10-12. Also, we verified differences in the chosen illustration per gender. This project integrated research undergoing in HEI-Lab, Lusófona University of Porto and was developed in the academic context, evolving undergraduate students and professors from Physical Education and Communication Design. These pedagogical approaches proved to be an added value for students, resulting in a compelling opportunity for them to work on a real-life project and see their work recognised, published, and used by the community as a valuable resource for children, educators, and doctors.

Keywords: Child Obesity, Health and Well-Being, Comic Brochure

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Introduction

Illustration and comic books stimulate readers through a mix of different design elements. This is one of the reasons why they are used not only as entertainment products but also, often, as didactic material to support children's literacy.

Yes aimed to create a comic brochure to be playful and didactic, following edutainment learning strategies that propose a compelling mix of education and entertainment so that the target audience learns quickly and engagingly. In this case, reading a comic book promotes literacy about healthy eating and physical exercise.

As the first stage of this project is the most visual and least interactive, as it is expected that this project develops and progressively engages children in more immersive activities, the research team's focus was on producing a practical object, either in the language used, appropriate to the age group in question and in the choice of graphic style to be used.

It is possible to have an empirical idea of what kind of illustration will be most suitable for each age group or to follow general trends. Still, the decision-making must be more grounded, despite possible difficulties in this definition. Studies show that human preference has differences and instability throughout life stages; adults have more defined personal aesthetic preferences and children under ten and adults over 65 show less stable aesthetic preferences. Over two weeks, the consistency of personal preference proved to be tenuous even in adults and even less in children [1]. It should be noted, however, that the existence of inconsistencies in children's choices and preferences is something consistent and attributed to a question of what children consider novelty as well as to be conditioned by the repetition of questions of priorities and comparison, as proven in psychological child development studies conducted by Hinton Bradbury [2].

However, to maximise its effectiveness, it is necessary to understand what captivates the target children and their specific needs seasonally and aesthetically [3]. Individual aesthetic preferences and predetermined age groups result from a combination of preferences regarding colour choices, shape, spatial structure and composition [4]. These factors influence children's choices and preferences in picture books, correlating criteria of attraction, theme and form.

There is a consensus on the definition of 3 stages of development of aesthetic appreciation, with the first, at ages up to 8 years old, there is a general attraction to colour and interest in the subject and, from the age of 8 to a greater degree—the realism of forms and the relevance of the theme [5]. Although many of these studies refer to the appreciation of art and painting, they offer exciting data regarding human development at stages correlated with different degrees of aesthetic sensitivity. These stages were confirmed in several research projects, such as a statistical study by Almeida-Rocha T, Peixoto F, Neves Jesus, S. [6].

The relation between text and image is crucial because “images are the words we lack” [7]. The complement between the two is a highly effective form of communication and literacy in the way of sharing what starts in the word and gets to the visual image and what starts from the visual image and arrives at the verbal expression [8].

The contribution of the children's illustrated album to children's mental health literacy is highly relevant and is explored in works by influential authors such as Maurice Sendak and

Léo Linonni, proving that it is possible to have a positive and effective impact on children through illustrated narratives [9].

A simple design and easy-to-read layout make the book accessible to children and readers of all ages [10]. On the other hand, cognitive skills develop throughout life [11]. Therefore, the choice of languages and images must be appealing, appropriate to the target audiences and easily understandable.

The role and importance of illustration in the concept of Education for Global Citizenship (EGC) should be valued, especially because children are great consumers of illustrated (books, comics) and animated (cartoon series and films) content. The specific case of comic books, with their text/image interaction, is an enabler of practical developments in its cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural dimensions [12].

In its Education for Global Citizenship document, UNESCO highlights that from the fascinating reading and observation of the carefully constructed and chosen illustrated narrative; persistent foundations can emerge for meaningful reflective attitudes and behaviours in children's lives so that design, illustration and literature are positive transforming elements in their lives [13].

Yes intends to improve literacy to fight obesity and provide well-being for all children.

Work Methodology

The Narrative

Yes is a comic brochure with the size of 230x165mm, colour printed and stapled, with sixteen pages. A bilingual and annual edition, in which the story in the first eight pages, is written in Portuguese and the last eight in English. The previous page from the cover has three opinion texts addressed to parents, written by the Director of Pediatrics Services of Pedro Hispano Hospital (HPH), Dr Cidraís Rodrigues; Dr Patricia Santos, a Pediatrician from HPH; and two professors in Physical Education and Sports, Dr Inês Aleixo (Bachelor Course Leader) and Dr Lucimer Bohn.

The reasons for the magazine being bilingual allow for a reinforcement of the message, and also, in Portugal, children since form 3 had English classes.

Students in the 3rd year of Bachelor in Physical Education and Sport at ULP were responsible for the text narrative. In the first semester of 2020/21, four groups of three students and individual students created a story about Health and Physical Condition conducted by two professors, one from Physical Education and Sport bachelor and the other from Nutrition.

The Illustration

In the second semester, twenty-two students in the 3rd year of Communication Design bachelor's illustrated the narrative text selected. The illustration work was carried out for six weeks, conducted by two professors – one from Communication Design IV and the other from Illustration classes, with 54 work hours. The reduced number of students in this class allowed for more excellent monitoring and guidance of the work carried out by students.

The creative process was done through the Design Thinking methodology [14] [15] and began in the following order: *problem definition, ideation, prototype and implementation (problem-solution)*.

Problem definition:

The process began with a brief; students were asked to create individual illustrations for a comic brochure. The objectives were taken into account: the target (8-12 years old), available time (six weeks), and proposal (preventing childhood obesity, increasing levels of literacy in the context of healthy eating and physical exercise through a comic brochure). Illustrations should be age-appropriate, simple, functional, appealing, and easy to read and understand. Students also had to consider the schedule with start and end dates for each project stage. “Almost like a scientific hypothesis, the brief is a set of mental constraints that gives the project team a framework from which to begin, benchmarks by which they can measure progress, and a set of objectives to be realised (...)” [16]

When the brief was delivered and the narrative analysed, an expository class was prepared to present to the student's comic magazines and illustrations to teach specific terms applied to comics and to make them understand how comic creators combined in a few frames pictures, captions and dialogue to tell the story and convey the message. This class was also crucial because it highlighted the importance of characters, environments, and colours in children's engagement with the comic. These factors can be decisive in the way they will understand the message.

Ideation and Prototype:

This term, ideas were generated with tools such as words, images, colours and shapes through brainstorming, keywords, action verbs, a mind map and a mood board. Students presented the creative process and a set of ideas, an exercise that starts with a divergent approach to create an extensive range of options.

In this phase, students must:

- Create characters. Several quick drawings were made on the sketchbook (drawing faces and expressions, drawing bodies and dynamic poses, people in motion and clothes to distinguish characters) (Figs.1, 2 and 3);
- Drawing backgrounds and environments;
- Choose the illustration technique from analogue (sketching, inking, acrylic painting, watercolours, or other), digital (Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Procreate, or other) or mixed media;
- Choose the bubbles style (speech bubbles and thought bubbles);
- Choose the typography and the size (comic, fun but easy to read considering the age group);
- Choose the colour palette depending on the target and the topic. This study was based on Johannes Itten's theory of *The seven colour contrasts* that establish harmony and create dimension in design: hue, light-dark, cool-warm, complementary, simultaneous, saturation and extension. “We speak of contrast when distinct differences can be perceived between two compared effects.” [17]
- Choose the page layout and the storyboard. In this stage, students also decided which template would better fit their comic strip according to brochure dimension (230x165mm) and the number of pages (8) to organise the narrative sequence. Due to its condensed format, a comic strip must highlight only the most essential elements of its targeted topic.

Most students showed difficulties on:

1st difficulty: Synthesizing the information to represent only the essentials in each box. As a result, some elements were not visible due to the small-scale box.

Solution: In the one-on-one sessions student and teacher discussed the student's work in progress. Students were advised to review the illustrations and summarise the visual information as little as possible. Each case was analysed with the guidance of the teacher. Sometimes drawing one element was enough instead of drawing two or three that didn't add value to the story. And since only one part is represented, it could be readjusted to have a larger scale.

2nd difficulty: Spreading the images across the strips and the pages.

Solution: To overcome this problem, students were advised to cut the strips into individual boxes and rearrange them appropriately. Each page must contain a maximum of 6 boxes/vignettes, and the eight pages can only have a maximum of 48 boxes. Based on this number, the text can be spread among the boxes. However, the pages must have a different number of boxes and strips to establish a rhythmic and harmonious reading.

These suggestions have allowed students to overcome their issues and difficulties effectively.

After ideas were tested, students presented the advantages and disadvantages of each solution in a convergent process. The strengths and weaknesses of each solution were analysed to get the final answer. At this stage, students printed their pages to be aware of the legibility of the text and the images.



Figs. 1, 2 and 3. Joel Maia's quick drawings of characters.

Implementation (problem-solution):

The final solution was developed, finished, and presented with all the creative processes and steps justified. Storyboarding and page layout, including the full illustration on all the boxes, strips, and pages. The complete sequence of images and text with speech bubbles and thought bubbles, the number of boxes per strip and the gaps or ellipses (space between boxes). In this term, students must have created a story sequence, and organised ideas by combining pictures, captions, dialogue, thought bubbles and speech bubbles to tell the story and enthusiastically express the message to convey the message.

The *Ideation* and *Implementation* process was always guided by the teacher in small group dialogues or individually by the one-on-one desk critique (crit), in which student and teacher discussed the student's work in progress where the student began by reporting the state of the

project and describing its development since the previous crit. Projects were analysed, and the weaknesses were discussed to find solutions to overcome them and help the student progress in the desirable direction.

Form assessment

The final assessment in the Communication Design IV form and Illustration form considered the following metrics:

1. Value-Added. How does the illustration complete and enrich the text?
2. Is it attractive and engaging for children between 8 and 12?
3. Visual language and authorship – expressivity, creativity and own identity.
4. Is colour robust, bright and vibrant that attracts readers?
5. Typography – Is the font suitable for the project and the target and easy to read?

Jury assessment results

The illustration assessment was carried out by six experts in the areas of Design (two teachers), Illustration (two teachers), Videogames (one teacher), Sports (one teacher), and Nutrition (one teacher), who were determined by a majority the best proposal, taking into account: the target (8-12 years old); proposal (preventing childhood obesity, increasing levels of literacy in the context of healthy eating and physical exercise through a comic brochure); illustrations should be age-appropriate, simple, functional, appealing, and easy to read and understand. Joel Maia's illustration won by a majority of votes.

It was an exercise that added value to fulfilling the objectives of the curricular units because students knew they were participating in an internal competition in which one would be chosen. For those whose text and illustration were selected, the possibility to see their work recognised, published and used by the community (Children, hospitals and schools).

Image preference assessment survey – methodology

To assess the kind of visual languages that children prefer, a survey of children's preferences (8-12 years) was carried out in two Porto schools – *Flori* (lower school, form 3 and 4) and *Francisco Torrinha* (middle school, form 5 and 6). This first edition will be a model for future editions — an exercise in alterity that may reveal children's preferences.

The survey was carried out anonymously. Students just wrote their age, gender and the name of the school. Students must focus on the images, so all the text was taken from the speech bubbles. Students just had to choose which illustration they preferred from four options. The four illustrations were selected according to the following criteria: the three most voted by the jury and a fourth with a visual language entirely different from the previous ones. For this purpose, one strip from each illustration author and the same part of the narrative was selected. All text was covered in speech bubbles with the aim of children only focusing on the images. (Figs 4, 5, 6 and 7.)

Students whose illustrations were selected for the survey: Joel Maia (Figure 4); Eduarda Borges (Figure 5); Clara Tapadas (Figure 6), and Diana Ferreira (figure 7) were the other student whose illustrations were selected because she has visual language utterly different from the others.

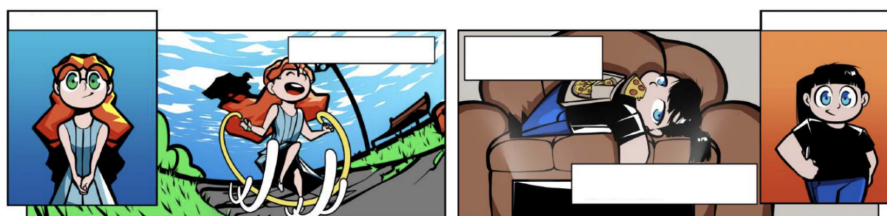


Fig. 4. Joel Maia's illustration.

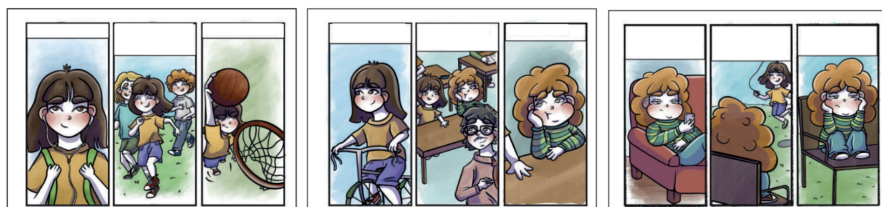


Fig. 5. Eduarda Borges's illustration.



Fig. 6. Clara Tapada's illustration.

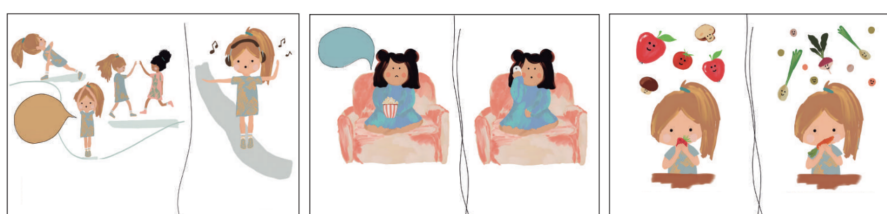


Fig. 7. Diana Ferreira's illustration.

Results

As described before, the creative process of *Yes* 1st edition has different phases and players. The first challenge was the message (story) carried out by students and guided by Physical Education and Nutrition professors. An evaluation committee of three experts in the same areas, Physical Education and Nutrition (E), selected the best proposal – *A healthy life, a better life!* From Isabel Izquierdo Rufino, an Erasmus student. This narrative tells the story of two children of the same age who study at the same school but with different eating and exercise habits. Ana eats healthy foods and practices physical exercise – playing ball, jumping rope, and walking or cycling to school. Laura usually eats fast food, soft drinks, and ice cream, and she doesn't like to exercise and spends many hours on her smartphone and watching TV. But one day, the two girls met at the supermarket, and their organs spoke to each other. From that moment, Laura became aware of the importance of healthy eating and regular physical exercise and changed her lifestyle. A fun and educational story to advise the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle and healthy eating. Based on the criteria described before, from the Communication Design IV and Illustration classes, from 22 students' work, seven were selected to be submitted to an evaluation panel. Following those criteria, the chosen

workgroup aligns with our target group's literature recommendations. This second stage group prefers the realism of the forms and the theme's relevance (5).

As a multidisciplinary project, the final decision was delivered to six experts in Design, Illustration, Sports, and Nutrition. Each expert selected the three most suitable illustrations and classified them with a 3 points scale: three for the first and 1 for the last. The three illustrations with more points were from Joel Maia (Figure 1) with 12 points, Clara Tapadas (Figure 2) with 10 points and Eduarda Borges (Figure 3) with 9 points.

Table 1. Expert review results

Illustration author	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	Total
Clara Tapadas	3	3	1		2	1	10
Eduarda Borges	1		3	2		3	9
Diana Ferreira				1			1
Joel Maia	2		2	3	3	2	12
Nicole Hermida		2					2
Fernando Barbosa					1		1
Sofia Almeida		1					1

Joel Maia's work (Figure 4) was selected from five experts and was always evaluated with 3 or 2 points.

Clara Tapada's (Figure 6) work was also selected by five of the six experts and has been evaluated with a maximum rate (3 points) by two of them.

Only four experts selected Eduarda Borges's (Figure 5) work and evaluated her with 3 points. Aware that our target should perform the final validation, we decided to validate our illustration's selection by developing a survey based on children's preferences.

Of 181 children (8-12 years old), the preferred illustration from Joel Maia, the one chosen by 50 children, coincides with the expert panel's decision.

However, and because we know that there is a considerable evolution and consequently a change in personal preferences at these ages, we looked at the results of 103 children from the last two years of Elementary School, from 8 to 10 years old and the first two years of Middle School, from 10 to 12 years old. In the first group, 78 children (8 to 10 years old), 25 preferred Diana Ferreira's illustration, and children from 10 to 12 preferred Clara Tapadas and Joel Maia's illustrations, with 32 selections from 103 (Table 1).

Table 2. Several illustration selections by age and gender

Author	8 to10 years-old			10 to12 years-old			TOTAL
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	
Clara Tapadas	6	7	13	18	14	32	45
Diana Ferreira	21	4	25	12	8	20	45
Eduarda Borges	8	14	22	7	12	19	41
Joel Maia	9	9	18	16	16	32	50
	78			103			

We also verified a significant difference in the female and male gender, mainly in children between 8 and 10 years old and in the most voted drawing (Diana Ferreira) (Table 2). Out of a total of 25, 21 were girls. Interestingly, this same illustration is also the most significant difference in the 10 to 12 age group, but it is not so expressive. The illustration in which there is no disparity in gender in any age group is also the most voted and coincides with the selection of the panel of experts – Joel Maia's illustration. We can find in this illustration expressive and fun characters with solid colours and a unique style that completes and enriches the text.

Conclusions

The methods applied up to this stage were designed to:

- i. Develop rapprochement with the target audience by applying design thinking in the creative process;
- ii. increase children's literacy concerning childhood obesity with a narrative developed, guided, and selected by students, teachers, and experts in Nutrition and Physical Education;
- iii. create an appealing illustration that motivates and stimulates reading to develop a reflective and transformative behaviour in a child's life.

Since the inconsistency in personal preference (reference) is known, we aim to create an ecosystem of communication and interaction with children to educate them about the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. Therefore, we decided to verify our selection with children by asking their preference between four selected illustrations. As a result, our first selection aligned with the children's preferences from 8-12. Following Sandi's (10) orientation that a simple design and an easy-to-read layout make the book accessible to children and readers of all ages, we produced a few units of the *Yes* brochure.

Yes, it will be disseminated to schools and childhood obesity appointments in children's hospital at HPH and will be the next stage of this project: evaluate the impact of the message on children.

We believe this methodology developed a valuable resource for children, educators, and doctors — growing awareness of the designer's role as a social agent of change. *Yes*, intend to improve literacy to fight obesity and provide well-being for all children.

Also, Design students took an immersive design-driven project that focused on a specific social problem and applied the methods, tools, and frameworks learned in the curriculum.

These pedagogical approaches also added value for students, resulting in a compelling opportunity to work on a real-life project. It also allowed the selected storyline and illustration authors to see their work recognised, published and used by the community.

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***“I See the Urgent Needs of Children”:
A Dialogue With the “Firefighter of Charity Work”***

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Abstract

This paper explores the career journey of an award-winning founder of a charity. The interview data comprised a Zoom recording, which was auto-converted into verbatim transcript, and then analyzed using social-cultural discourse analysis with a focus on the use of descriptive metaphors by the speaker. The first part of interview consisted of an informative public speaking by the speaker whose impetus in the narrative accentuated his spiritual calling to establish a charity that sponsored left-behind children with HIV AIDS positive whilst fighting social stigma. Metaphors were used, particularly when the speaker referred himself as “a firefighter trying to put the fire out” seeing the urgent needs of underprivileged children in rural areas of China. The second part of the interview consisted of dialogues between the speaker and audience, in which the speaker gave reasons for the changes in his career journey from being an investment banker to the founder of charity. The figurative speech of a “wagon” depicted his identity struggle as a result of “jumping off from investment banking wagon”. The transformation of the speaker’s self-discovery associated with career change could be observed from the analysis.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Metaphor, Interview Verbatim Transcript

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Introduction

Natural language is dynamic and complex, sometimes people write and speak using metaphors, which is to use visual symbolism that evoke mental images. Aristotle explained that metaphor “gives style, clearness, charm, and distinction as nothing else can” (Aristotle, (n.d.), p. 141). His view of metaphor as “decorations of human speech acts” has lasted for centuries. In recent decades, scholars have started to perceive metaphors as the medium of meaning making, which helps a speaker to better encode messages to an audience. In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, a linguist and philosopher, wrote *Metaphors We Live By*, which is considered to be the most extensive theoretical exploration of metaphor to date (Lakoff, G., Johnson, M., 1980) It was pointed out that people use metaphors not only to make spoken discourse more interesting, but that metaphors actually structure people’s perceptions and understandings of the world.

Metaphors are considered as “figures of speech used to compare one thing to another, signal more complex meaning making and thus metaphor analysis can be useful as a means of qualitative data analysis.” (Redden, S. M., 2017) The use of metaphors in spoken discourse is viewed as “mechanisms that are integrated in how people think, act, and communicate”, as well as “an important avenue for researchers interested in understanding why people communicate as they do” (Redden, S. M., 2017).

In this qualitative case study, we look into the spoken discourse of an award-winning founder of charity. The speaker used quite a number of metaphors to depict his career journey: he “saw the urgency” of helpless children with HIV in rural area of China, which was described as “seeing a fire”; he then “jumped off from the investment banking wagon” to become a founder of charity, meaning that he quitted his job at investment bank in Wall Street all of a sudden. The guest speaker possesses a postgraduate degree of Harvard University, and has over 14 years of work experience in the field of investment banking. He then quit his job and founded an award-winning charity, aiming at helping HIV AIDS positive children in rural area in mainland China. These kids were born with HIV AIDS due to congenital issues, they faced the issues of social stigma, discrimination, poverty, as well as the lack of financial support for education.

The speaker once visited the rural area in mainland China and was shocked to see a number of helpless children, he then founded a charity targeting this group of children. Scholarships and financial assistance were supplied for these children to fulfil their education needs, thousands of these beneficiaries had the chance to receive formal education at public schools and even admitted to top universities later on. Apart from education, they also offer vocational training for these children to learn different skills such as baking, whilst social enterprises (e.g. bakery) were established to provide job opportunity for trainees.

The speaker shared his story under an impromptu context, with a free-thinking atmosphere and within a limited time frame. It is therefore interesting to notice that the speaker unconsciously attempted to use metaphor as a “short hand” to express and substitute with certain ideas. With the application of metaphor analysis, the speaker’s expressions, in which images were used to convey the ultimate meaning of his speech acts, can thus be interpreted systematically. The implications of metaphor analysis can potentially help public speakers to understand and refine verbal communication strategies.

Literature Review

Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in research on language and discourse. A number of metaphorical discourse analysis also spanned across disciplinary borders. For example, metaphor analysis on discourse has been applied to understand organizational change, evaluate pedagogical strategies and learning outcomes, understand divorce, critique public speech, and assess leadership styles, to name but a few.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) first introduced Conceptual Metaphor theory, which suggested that the essence of metaphor is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Metaphor is cross-domain mapping from the source domain to target domain, with the former typically referring to abstract and intangible concepts and the latter to concrete and tangible ones. For example, the saying of “Time is Money” is a metaphor, in which the intangible concept of “time” comprises the target domain and tangible concept of “money” is the source domain. (Guo, S., 2013) Lakoff and Turner (1989) stated that we “constantly rely on metaphors in daily speech acts, unconsciously, and automatically”. It is so much part of us that it cannot be easily resisted, to a large extent that it is “barely even noticed”.

Objectives

1. To examine and interpret the layers of meaning of metaphors used by the speaker
2. To deduce the potential reasons for using different themes of metaphors

Methodology

In gathering qualitative data via interviews, researchers might use a “forced metaphor approach” (Tracy, 2010) which asks people to assign metaphors to their experiences. For instance, educational researchers could ask students to describe their time in college using metaphors. They may even offer a list of metaphors and let subjects to choose from the limited range of words.

Many scholars, however, consider an idiographic approach to metaphor analysis to be the most convincing method. Redden, S. M. (2017) has pointed out that “less scholarly work used an emergent, inductive way of assessing meaning making from metaphors found organically in data”, and hence viewed inductive based qualitative research regarding metaphors is an opportunity for exploration. In this qualitative study, an idiographic approach to metaphor analysis is adopted to examine the verbatim transcript of the speaker’s sharing on Zoom. The guest speaker was invited to an undergraduate business class to give a sharing for a group of undergraduate students via Zoom. The sharing lasted for approximately an hour, it consisted of two sessions: the first part was a solo talk by the speaker, in which the speaker shared his story of career change in the form of “impromptu” (without the assistance of script or PowerPoint slides); the second part involved Q&A session, in which students were free to ask questions for the guest speaker.

In the metaphor analysis, four major themes of metaphors were identified and categorized:

1. **“Problem” Metaphor**
2. **“Solution” Metaphor**
3. **“Family” Metaphor**
4. **“Object” Metaphor**

Findings and Discussion

The numbers of different themes of metaphor found in the verbatim transcript are as follows:

1. “Problem” Metaphors: 9
2. “Solution” Metaphors: 6
3. “Family” Metaphors: 3
4. “Object” Metaphors: 3

“Problem” Metaphors

“I saw *a fire*. This is very urgent.”

“There were older students who are working we were able to introduce them to better for better job. They have *broken windows*, we were able to fix the broken window, so they have a warm winter.”

“It is much more than just giving them money. We have to empower them, inspire them so that they can live out of *the shadow* of AIDS, and become more self esteem.”

“So when I started that foundation, I decided to have no pre-set quota, then actually have *driven my finance director crazy*.”

“The society that the general public, have seen that Oh, even the Marriott supports AIDS work is a tremendous value, and I think HIV AIDS now is just like *leprosy*.”

“It would be wonderful if a rehab, *a drug rehab centre* can hire a lot of former *drug addicts* who have able to successfully get rid of the *drug addiction* to come back to work for the rehab centre it gives a lot of trust and tremendous confidence.”

“The same thing can go by with former *prison inmates*.”

“Solution” Metaphors

“They have broken windows, we were able to *fix the broken window*, so they have a *warm winter*.”

“So we have also a student who also went to very prestigious schools, including the United world college to the left. In Hong Kong, there's a united world college to, which is called the *leap potion*.”

“I *get off from my investment banking bus or investment banking wagon*, and then try to *put out a fire as a firefighter*, because when the fire is put out, I can always jump back on the investment banking random and, you know, continue my job.”

“That's why I care a lot about the voice of the alumni and I try to put in an important position so that they can *voice out their feelings* and the future direction of the foundation.”

“Family” Metaphors

“They have become our *big brothers and big sisters* to the villages to inspire the younger children in the village to become our Goodwill Ambassador.”

“So, all the university students will become a *Big Brothers Big Sisters*, also would have to teach summer school in the villages, is a free program.”

“The alumni network is an important part of our program. And they are the *guardian* of the foundation too.”

“Object” Metaphors

“In Chinese saying there is a saying that Oh, there's a *golden villa* in education.”

“So, we have a very *tightly knit network*. As I said, we have 5000 students who have already graduated from university.”

“So, can this really be replicated. I think so. So, about three years ago we have evolved, because we called our HIV family students *starfish*.”

Given that it was an “impromptu” speech act (without the assistance of script or PowerPoint slides) of the guest, he was unaware of the constant use of metaphor throughout the sharing. The unconscious use of metaphors can be seen as a form of “shorthand” to help the speaker explain the details of his charity-founding story for the audience within a short period of time (approximately an hour). The additional layer of meaning rooted in the sharing can be interpreted and perceived as the number of “solutions”, the support of “family”, and the availability of positive “objects” can cast out the “problems” encountered by HIV AIDS positive children, including social stigma, poverty and the lack of financial support for education. This implicitly reflects that the speaker is optimistic towards the charity work as a helping hand for the HIV AIDS positive children.

Conclusions

In this case study, one of the reasons for using metaphors in verbal behaviour can be determined as a form of “shorthand” to help audience effectively understand speaker’s expressions. Zinken, J. (2007) considered the use of metaphors as “an attempt to bridge the gap between analogies and verbal behaviour”, which can help listener(s) better comprehend the expressions of a speaker. On the other hand, Tannen, D., (2007) proposed that the use of metaphor can “create rapport between the speaker and audience”. The use of metaphor in speaker’s sharing can be seen as creating a connection with the audience. Redden, S. M. (2017) has put forward that colloquial meanings vary widely based on cultural context. It is therefore crucial to also consider the embedded cultural meaning of metaphors used by the speaker.

Context has a texture-like property which the linguistic sub-discipline of lexical semantics will shed light on the texture of contexts using a rule-based calculation of word proximity and correlations of words in the text. For future research directions, it is suggested to look into the conditions under which metaphor usage changes in particular contexts with the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) such as Atlas.Ti, it can produce powerful interactive visualization amenable to further human-researcher interpretations because the meaning hence becomes emergent from the text itself and not predetermined with selective analysis of the researchers. In other words, verbatim script on the topic, after subject to software analysis can reveal further high-level concepts displayed in immersive, interactive visualizations and manifested in data exports, delivering the key ideas and actionable insights that are needed for synthesis and researcher’s evaluation.

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The Rise of the Documentary Film Movement in Thai Cinema During the Current Political Conflict

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Abstract

Throughout the history of Thai cinema, documentaries have only recently become popular with Thai film-goers and young filmmakers. With the establishing of Doc Club, a documentary distributor, youngsters have become more exposed to documentary films. The success of a new generation of documentary filmmakers in international film festivals have inspired newcomers to try their hands at documentary filmmaking. Moreover, a new political consciousness, fueling the new generation during recent political protests, made them look for chances to speak on social problems. Documentary films have become a space for filmmaker to voice their concerns while trying to reach out for international audiences. This paper attempts to capture this moment in time where several documentary films, including, *School Town King* (Laisuwanchai, 2021), *The Cave Lived* (2020), *Come and See* (Boonprakob, 2019), and others have made it onto cinema screens and even being recognised with national awards. This paper will take a closer look at what lies beneath these films, contextualized by the rising of Pro-democracy movement since 2019 when the country had its first generation election since the 2014 coups d'état by General Prayut Chan-o-cha who was re-installed as elected Prime Minister. The demand for radical change in society by the new generation has kept its momentum up to the present day; these afore-mentioned films could give an insight into their mentality while attempting to destabilize the establishment's traditional values in varying ways.

Keywords: Thai Documentary Film, Thailand Political Conflict, Political Communication, Film and Politics

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Introduction

Throughout the history of Thai cinema, political situations have propelled a crop of filmmakers to look through social lenses and make their voices heard. The recent political conflict was sparked by the coup d'état in 2014 led by General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, the head of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) junta who would continue as Prime Minister in the 2019 controversial general election. Another important incident was when the new monarchy, Maha Vajiralongkorn, son of revered former King Bhumibol Adulyadej who died in 2016 after reigning for 70 years, ascended to the throne. Under several years of military rule and economic melt down, the young generation feel like they have power in their hands with many becoming first time voters, their hopes up for the general election in 2019.

Reality hit hard when General Prayuth returned as Prime Minister; the last straw was when the new pro-democracy Future Forward Party were forced to disband in 2020. It was then that the pro-democracy protest has been gathering pace. The majority of protesters changed from the previous protests which started between the second half of 2000s and continued until the 2014 coup d'état. The current protesters are comprised mainly of those in their 20-30s, as well as the younger generation still in their school uniform, compared to previous protests which had an older demographic. Beside calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth, they demanded amendments to the constitution which will give fair elections and curb the king's power. The latter provoked a wide discussion in the country, as it has never been publicly discussed before during former King Bhumibol's reign.

In this paper, I will focus on films made after the general election in 2019 which captured the recent moment of the pro-democracy movement through the documentary genre. The films included will be *Come and See* (Boonprakob, 2019), *School Town King* (Laisuwanchai, 2020), and *The Caved Life* (2020). These films are considered independent films with the filmmakers having less constraints and more freedom to address their subject as they want. They give insight into people's current mentality and also the film's own attempt at destabilising the establishment and its traditional values in certain ways. I will look into how these films provide an oppositional or alternative framing of contemporary socio-political problems. Moreover, I argue that these films become a space for the unspeakable. for subjects whom have been long suppressed. I will also look at how documentary films are used as political communication among the masses in order to subvert narratives meanings imposed by authority.

I am aided by how the relationship between film and politics can be seen as political communication. Films have their own system of communication, allowing us to read semiotically into how they communicate to supposedly large and diverse audiences (Combes, 2014). The potential of films have been realised throughout history through both explicit propaganda films or mainstream cinema, from Soviet films of the 1920s to contemporary Hollywood films. In terms of political communication, scholars may have an interest in films with political subjects whether explicitly or implicitly. According to James E. Combes (2014), it is also the case that non-political films can be 'legitimately interpreted for what they tell us about the politics of a particular era' (p. 21). He further suggests that political communication may become part of an internal sign system of movies without the filmmakers realising it. In the same way, Cornolli and Narboni (1971) go so far as to suggest that every film is political (p.30). Also, Jacques Rancière (2010) argues that "art and politics each define a form of dissensus, a dissensual re-configuration of the common

experience of the sensible” (p. 148). By following the line of political communication and Rancière’s notion of ‘dissensus’ and ‘consensus’, what follows will not only demonstrate how these films are used as political communication, but also how they disrupt and potentially reconfigure the politics. In the following, I will take a closer look at each of these films in focus. Firstly, I would like to illustrate the relationship between documentary films and politics in the context of Thai cinema.

A Brief History of Thai Documentary Films and Relationship with Politics

“We don’t have documentary films,” Chalida Uabumrungjit (n.d.) quoted Dome Sukvong, a founder of the National Film Archive. It is a startling truth in the early 2000s for Thai Cinema, a genre comparatively well developed in Southeast Asia as a whole. Documentary films are not the first that comes to mind when a filmmaker chooses a medium to convey his/her idea or artistic vision. Not until recently has it become popular among filmmakers. As a filmmaker and film scholar myself, I have a direct brush with documentary films, having made a couple myself in the past few years and seeing many young filmmakers launch their careers as documentary filmmakers. Although the film scene has not always been this lively.

Looking back at the history of Thai documentary films, they have not been entirely non-existent, considering that it was long used by Royalty to record their daily lives in the early days of 1887. It was also used by the state to disperse information to the public since the 1920s, such as those made by the Royal State Railway’s own film unit, the Topical Film Service, which continued on for many decades (Uabumrungjit, n.d.). The unit acted as the centre for national filmmaking and the train was a means to distribute films to different parts of the country. They were also responsible for making the first travel documentary programme to be aired when Thailand became televised in 1955. Another prominent documentary film tradition can be found during the Cold War. During this period, the United States Information Services (USIS) were active in producing both narrative and documentary films that would promote anti-communist messaging around the country. Despite the USIS being discontinued in the late 1990s, they still produced many films in the past decades before they were discontinued. Unfortunately, most of these films were lost except for the few excerpts preserved by the Thai Film Archive including *Bangkok, Our Capital* (1957), portraying Bangkok as a civilised city representing the free world (Uabumrungjit, n.d.). As we can see, films here have been used as political communication, with both the Royal State Railway and the USIS being early examples in Thailand’s case.

As a country sprinkled with coups d’état since the 1932 revolution, transitioning Thailand from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional system, the first brief moment of freedom was between 1973-1976. This was when the student demonstration movement gained momentum and forced the military leader at the time, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, into exile before a new coup d’état in 1977 took place. During this time, according to Anchalee Chaiworaporn (2002), the youth counter culture blossomed, giving birth to ‘social-criticism’ film and so-called new wave cinema (p. 142). The new generation were awakened to political consciousness and this overrode every aspect of their lives. Among them, *Tongpan* (1975) and *The struggle of Hara Factory Workers* (1975, Jon Ungpakorn), accused of being leftist films, were considered early Thai documentary films which addressed the injustices faced by both rural and urban poor that implicated with political message. This freedom was short-lived; documentary films did not continue to flourish.



Figure 1: The Struggle of Hara Factory Workers (1975)

In the 1980s and 1990s it was mainstream genre films, especially teenage, action and horror films, that dominated the scene. With the coup d'état in 1991 that brought about another political bloodshed, came with it another generation of filmmakers fuelled by the rise of early digital technology, the cheaper 8 mm. and 16 mm. used by these independent creatives filmmakers. *Bat in May* (1992) was made by Hamer Salwala, an early independent filmmaker, which was an impressive record of the May demonstration.

Since 2005, the political conflict was at its height resulting in mass protest from two divided groups, one being anti- and the other being pro-Thaksin Shinawatra, a populist prime minister among the rural poor, alongside his sister, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011-2014). The protests ended up with coups d'état in 2006 and 2014 which ousted both Thaksin and Yingluck, both escaping to live in exile. During this time, a number of interesting documentary films were been made, including, *Sua Ronghai* (*Crying Tigers*, Santi Taepanich, 2005), featuring four Northeastern people in Bangkok, that was also the first documentary film to be screened on a commercial cinema. This was followed by *Innocence* (Areeya Chumsai and Nisa Kongsri, 2005) and *Final Score* (Sorraya Nakasuwan, 2007), the latter of which was produced originated from a commercial film studio. Documentary films have become more familiar for mainstream audiences.

After 2005, more direct political documentary films can be seen in *The Truth Be Told: The Cases against Supinya Klangnarong* (2007, Pimpaka Towira), about a media activist who was sued for libel by Shin Corp, owned by Thaksin's family and *Citizen Juling* (2008, Ing K and Manich Sriwanichpoom), about the conflict in the Muslim-dominated deep-south region. The two films have brought political issues into the foreground for feature length documentaries, especially the latter one with images of the coup in it. Since then many documentary films have been made which launched the careers of a few successful documentary filmmakers, careers which would not have been possible before, including Urapong Raksasad (*Stories from the North* [2005], *Agrarian Utopia* [2009], *Song of Rice* [2014]), Nontawat Nambenchapol ([*Boundary*, 2014], *By the River* [2013]).

Films during Pro-Democracy Movement

During this period, documentary films have become increasingly popular among young filmmakers. Although there are other factors which explain why documentary films have become more popular in recent years, beside the changing political climate. The first factor is the establishment of *Documentary Club* or *Doc Club*, by Thida Palitpolkanpim, former

editor of the cinephile magazine, *Bioscope*. *Doc Club* started as documentary distributor and expanded its role into screening documentary programs at their own cinema space. Secondly, the success of Thai documentary filmmakers in both national and international venues have kept documentary films in the interest of younger filmmakers. Moreover, the expanding popularity of streaming platforms gave documentary filmmakers the hope that their films will have a chance to be distributed beyond the limited screening in Bangkok. We have seen more people with cameras in the recent protests that carefully frame their records of events than in any other previous time.

Come and See (known in Thai as *Ehipassiko*) is a film about Dhammakaya, a controversial Buddhist temple, where its Abbot, Dhammajayo, was charged with money-laundering and receiving stolen property. The subject of corruption within the temples is not new to Thai society, but in this case it has become front page news and talk of the town. It is of course no longer a simple corruption case in light of the recent 2014 coup d'état. Though at first glance, the film is about a controversial Buddhist sect, but gradually focuses on the head-to-head clash between faith and politics. Dhammakaya's teachings have always been in question for many years as it represents a sub-denomination of Theravada Buddhism which is at times referred to as cult. In a way, Dhammakaya gives us a picture of reality where capitalism consumes the religious aspect of life, where donation influences the condition of one's afterlife. Their empire has grown larger and larger from the donations of millions of followers, resulting in forceful marketing strategies and its own television channel. Over the years it has formed an alignment with the followers of the former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and inevitably became part of the political conflict between 'Red Shirt' and 'Yellow Shirt' that eventually led to the 2014 coup d'état. It was one of the priority tasks for the military junta to investigate the Dhammakaya temple and to use this case to establish itself as righteous upholders of religion (Kulabkaew, 2010). The film was filmed during 2016-2017, during the height of the tension when the temple was locked down with many devotees inside.



Figure 2: Come and See (2019)

By being an aberration of the norm, the sect and its followers challenged the dominant ideology and the power of authority. With its expansion of wealth and the public display of the mass followers during Buddhist special days, this aberration had to be curbed and

punished in the eyes of the military Junta. At a time when the military took a firm grip on the nation, it could easily become a possible a threat to the new reign. They needed to protect the Thai traditional trinity of nation, religion, and monarchy; a concept often used as an excuse for any coup d'états in the past with this instance being no different. Furthermore, the military junta claimed to own the right to decide what Buddhism should mean for the Thai people. They not only controlled religious faith but also the other two pillars of the trinity as well. Vichak Panich suggests that the 'fears of the Dhammakakaya as emblematic of the fears harbored by the cultural establishment' (Rojanaphruk, 2016). Dhammakaya is thus deemed a threat not only to religion but to the entire trinity. The sect and its devotees were then put in the same position as political opponents. Its devotees had to defend their faith with two bare hands against the military junta.

The film gives them a voice and offers a counter-narrative different from the mainstream media and one framed by the military junta. From what we normally hear from the mainstream media, which villainizes the sect and paints a strange picture of its followers, the film gives a rather different picture. *Come and See* shows us an insight into what the life of ordinary devotees look like, when we see them talk of the life changing experiences they had after becoming devotees. Instead of the conflict between the Dhammakaya and the military junta, the film carefully builds upon *Bumpen* and her family as a protagonist who stands by her faith. The audience views the situation from inside the sect through her participation in it. The film constructs a narrative for the audience whereby ordinary small people are facing up against the military junta. The way in which Dhammakaya's gigantic structure is portrayed in the film makes it that one cannot help but feel small and humble. In a way, the people are not only up against the military junta, they are also inevitable caved in by the dominant religious institution.

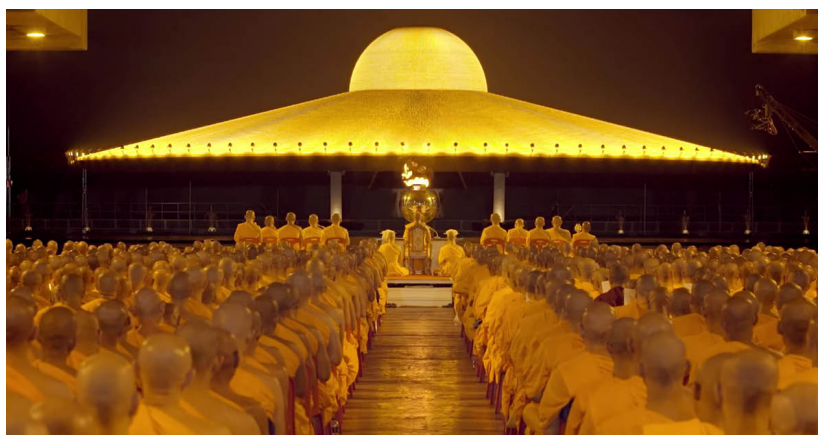


Figure 3: Dhammakaya's Buddhist Rite

The grandeur of the Dhammakaya's Buddhist rites contrasts with Theravada Buddhism, who form the majority in Thai society, preferring simplicity and closeness to nature. According to Rancière (2010), film and other art forms 'may open up new passages for political subjectivation, but they cannot avoid the aesthetic cut that separates consequences from intentions and prevents their from being any direct passage to an 'other side' of words and images' (p. 151). Throughout the film, religion is brought into the realm of politics, providing a space for the audience to rethink the question of faith. Not only in terms of religion but also, as the film was released in 2019, the other two pillars of nation and monarchy, during a time when the public seriously called them into question. The case of Dhammakaya demonstrates how 'dissensus' opens up a gap in contrast with consensus,

which is the means for the ‘police’ to manage the public by means of exclusion and prohibitions. For Rancière, ‘police’ refers to ‘the allocation of roles, positions, places, and functions in a social order on the basis of a set of assumptions about the competencies and qualifications of individuals and groups’ (Gündoğdu, 2017). According to Tanke (2011), ‘this form of consensus employs a particular series of operations to convert democratic struggles into a series of managed conflicts. It frequently exploits the cover of political realism, the doctrine that justifies war, social hierarchies, and economic inequalities by invoking necessity’ (p. 26). This is demonstrated by the military junta’s attempts to other the Dhammakaya from the rest of Buddhism and Thai society.

While *Come and See* directly challenges the dominant ideology towards Theravada Buddhism and the authority of military junta, *School Town King* (2020) does not seem to directly address politics but instead challenges a long-standing problem within the education institution. The heightened political awareness among the new generation made them raise questions towards the old establishment. The recent pro-democracy movement driven by the youth saw young students participate in flash mobs and campus protests. *School Town King* started filming in 2017 when we see the students voice their frustration through rap music, as their weapon to attack authority and the problems they face in life. Their courage to openly and frankly talk about politics in the crude language of rap music pushed these students out of the system which would prefer more docile students who are moulded accordingly. Peace and order are challenged by *Non* and *Book*, the two protagonists of the film. Certainly, school has to deal with this aberration that needs correcting just like any other non-conforming behaviour the school previously dealt with. The school system often resorts to violence, hitting students with a caning stick being the traditional method of punishment. The stick is a way of physical threatening analogous to the weapons used by the military junta.

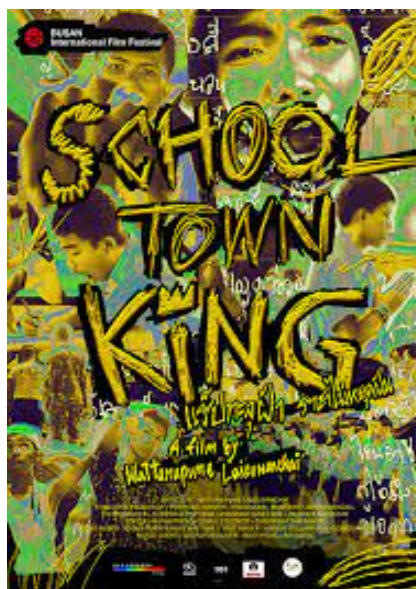


Figure 4: School Town King (2020)

School Town King gives us an insight onto how Thai people are prepared to surrender to authority by threat of the use of violence. The school environment is the wishful version of reality for the military junta. Every year, the Children’s Day slogan or the 12 virtues are what children are made to recite to unconsciously hypnotise them about how one should behave. It also prepares Thai people to be good citizens who are also prepared for the past 13 coup d’états and any more to come. “We live in reality not in a dream world.” This is what

View tells her friend, *Non*, warning him not to follow his senior, *Book*. *View* is the model student who complies with the rules and regulations in order to have a chance of getting a degree and a job like everyone else. His prime follower, *Non*, tries to tell *Book* with the hope that he should compromise with his dream, to be in the system as long as possible and follow his parents' dream. The film ends lamentably, as *Book* finally lets the audience into his head tells what inside his mind, when he cries out of guilt for failing to fulfil his parents' wishes out of wanting to be himself.

For many decade, Rap music has been used for political resistance. According to Morena Cuconato and Natalia Waechter (2012), the Middle East and Northern Africa have rap events that are used not only for personal expression but for mobilising the young masses (p. 150). This is the same in Thailand, wherein rap music is used to speak out about political injustice, poverty, social problem and the oppression felt by young people. It has become an anthem for the pro-democracy movement among the youth. In the context of 2020 when the film was released, the rap music of *Book* and *Non* no longer stood alone in the fight against the system they viewed as oppressive. Rap music in some ways invokes Rancière's dissensus. He associates it with the term 'political subjectivation' to explain the struggles of disenfranchised or marginalized groups who make themselves visible, audible while forcing a redistribution of the sensible. He emphasizes how this process entails disidentification, or breaking up of one's assigned identity, place, or role in an inegalitarian order (Gündoğdu, 2017). Rap music enables those under representative voices to be heard while also making a break with all political communication which privileges the political elite's perspective.



Figure 5: The Caved Life (2020)

The two films discussed above do not declare themselves as political films, but both use the recent political conflicts as a backdrop. The conflict started with the individual and takes us to the root of the problem, before moving onto a macro level. *The Caved Life* (2020) may not be about the contemporary political conflict, but it is undeniably a political film. It is similar to the first two in how it portrays the conflict of small people who become involved with the bigger picture. It centres on the aftermath of the Tham Luang cave rescue that took place in 2018. The film is divided into four short films directed by different directors.

The first film centres on a stateless football player, part of the Wild Boars football team, whose friends were trapped in the cave. He thinks he might be better off if he got stuck in the cave as the state may decide to give him a Thai citizenship and subsequently a better future. The bureaucratic process makes it ordinarily impossible for children to get citizenship. He struggles to pursue his dream in the same way many of the stateless children do in the area.

Unless some extraordinary event occurs and sheds light on this marginalized corner of society, which is what happens with the Tham Luang cave rescue incident. The second film is about a farmer who once sacrificed his rice fields in order for water to be drained from the cave. He alone has to fend his crops from any natural disaster without any help from the authorities. He believes that while the government does nothing to help him, it uses the law to slander small people like him. For people like him, maybe nature is less destructive than government policies.

The third film is about a buffalo herder who lives in the same fault zone as Tham Luang, and since the Tham Luang incident there has been a new urge to develop the area. While both the government and capitalists have their eyes on managing the area, the day-to-day struggle of a buffalo herder's family is far from the state's priorities. The mundane life of a buffalo herder is only concerned with caring for the wellbeing of his buffaloes and his family, while his surroundings change without help from any outsiders. Buffalo herders have been part of the rich history of the area for a very long time. But their voices have never been heard like those stuck in the cave. They have been left out from local history, and folklore legends only prefer noble people such as the Sleeping Princess associated with Tham Luang. Their ordinary life has often been ignored and they can only count the days until they totally vanish from society as modern life has taken over.

The last film is about a hill tribe student torn between family tradition and the modern world. When tourism took over the more traditional life of the locals, this meant that the younger generation were cut off from their past. With central policy being to promote tourism at the expense of local culture, their only connection to the past is through selling traditional souvenirs to tourists. School education is also centralised meaning that little relates to the protagonist's culture or everyday life in the area. Though her family have lived in Tham Luang for a very long time, she only began to learn about the cave after the incident.



Figure 6: The Caved Life (2020)

All in all, we see no solution for each of these people as their problems continue to loop, being metaphorically trapped like the ones trapped in the cave. “How many of you?” the now famous question posed by the first rescue team, asked about the number of survivors upon first contact, should also be directed to many other metaphorically ‘caved’ lives in Thailand. The traditional trinity, once again, becomes questioned particularly in terms of what it means to be a ‘nation.’ The voices of small people at the border towns, who have been previously neglected and given no participatory voice in political communication, in one way or another make themselves heard. The counter narrative of individuals, who are often ‘ignored,

marginalised or used as a tool to score political points also challenges what political communication often assumes is only associated with the political elite (Wasserman, n.d.).

Conclusion

This paper attempts to demonstrate how documentary films released during the pro-democracy movement, including *Come and See* (Boonprakob, 2019), *School Town King* (Laisuwanchai, 2020), and *The Caved Life* (2020) are prime representatives of the mentality of individuals who stand against authority. They contrast with the mainstream media's role of contributing to consensus, by subverting its narrative. According to Brian McNair, the media plays an important role in 'reinforcing and reproducing a generalized popular consensus about the inherent viability of the system as a whole'.³ In a way, these films demonstrate Rancière's dissensus. In the recent political conflict, they also represent 'dissensus' in how they speak for the young generation calling for change. It is not only about changing the government, but the whole of Thai social structure, which by extension questions the basic tradition trinity. The three films centre on the small people who are up against the outdated system that governs religion, education, government bureaucracy and the demarcation of the notion of nationhood. According to Rancière, political change takes place when the disenfranchised forces a redistribution of the sensible. The films provide space for periphery subjects to stand against the official narrative of the state, and for the audience to reimagine a different scenario of eminent change urgently in need.

In the coming years, there will be several documentary films made in response to the political conflict of the recent years. This includes: *Breaking the Cycle* (Aekaphong Saransate & Thanakrit Duangmaneepon) about the charismatic leader of the now dissolved Future Forward Party; a new film by Uruphong Raksasad recording the protests of 2020, *Songs from the Angry People*; *Last Gen* (Sopawan Boonnimitra & Peerachai Kerdsint) about high school students and their involvement in pro-democracy movement. A crack in the consensus of society has begun to take place, and documentary films have become important tools for communicating a new discourse that will lead to change in society.

³ Brian McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication*, New York: Routledge, 2011, p.

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