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Representatives of Chinese Society as Power Holders in the Images of Chinese Cinema

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Abstract

The study considers the visualization of representatives of Chinese society as power holders in modern Chinese cinema. Cinema has been chosen as the source of research since it visually displays the processes taking place in society. As a result of an analysis of ten films of Chinese directors, the author identifies certain types of heroes who, to one degree or another, are endowed with power in modern Chinese society. Seven groups of power holders have been distinguished and characterized: members of the Triad mafia, police officers, officials, business representatives, the media, teachers, men as heads of families. A comprehensive study of these images is carried out, which includes an analysis of professional activity, social status, age criteria, visual and behavioral characteristics. The emphasis is placed on the complex relationship between the police and the mafia in the cinema: in addition to the traditional confrontation, the cinema presents a new version of the development of relations between the representatives of these groups - a mutually beneficial symbiosis. Still preserved in modern society traditional attitude the teacher and the head of the family as a source of power is shown. The images of business representatives as power-holders are revealed in the cinema through the opposition "material and moral". There are relatively few images of direct holders of power – government officials in modern cinema. This fact can be explained by existing censorship in China.

Keywords: Power, modern China, Chinese cinema, cinema image, power holder.

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Introduction

China is a state with ancient traditions and unique mentality that is fundamentally different from the western one. There is a need for a deep understanding of the national-cultural features of the modern system of the Chinese government and the institution of power. In this regard, the study of the images of modern power holders in Chinese culture is of particular relevance. Culturological approach to understanding the system of power of the PRC allows increasing the effectiveness of cooperation between China and partner states at different levels.

Currently, there is a significant number of scientific works devoted to the study of the image of Chinese power in the context of modernity. Among them, three main blocks can be distinguished. The first block is the study of the image of power in the context of a political and psychological approach. Representatives of this approach, E. Shestopal (2012, p.25), B. Wang (2016), Z. Sun (2017) focus on the theory of political perception. This approach involves comprehensive study of the image of power, regarding its complex psychological structure. The psychological approach requires the identification of cognitive (rational), as well as unconscious (emotional) components of the images of power holders.

The second block is the study of the image of power of the PRC in the framework of socio-historical anthropology. Researchers X. Peng (2007, p.214), E. Breus (2012, p.217), and D. Hartill (2005, p.267) fulfill a comprehensive diachronic analysis of the image of Chinese power in political-law studies and through the prism of symbols placed in official documents of the PRC.

The third block includes researchers that consider the images of Chinese power in the context of political culture. Representatives of this approach X. Wang (2016), T. Aalberg and A. T. Jensen (2007), B. Omurova (2014), and R. Johnston (2008, p.126) support the idea that the formation and transformation of the image of power in the minds of citizens are mainly provided by the political context. Such context, in its turn, has unique national specificity. It includes a system of knowledge, assessments, and norms of society, models of political behavior, political traditions, customs and rituals, features of national character and mentality.

Even though described approaches are interdisciplinary, they all interpret power as a political phenomenon. Meanwhile, a substantial study of such a complex phenomenon as power is impossible without resorting to culture. However, at present, this aspect remains insufficiently studied. In this work, an attempt to research power applying culturological approach is made. This approach requires an integration of various scientific spheres in order to systematize and conceptually interpret the knowledge accumulated by social, historical, philosophical, psychological and other sciences. It identifies and analyses cultural factors in the formation of power images in the context of art (Pickering, 2008, p.214). Therefore, the study of modern power images can be fulfilled on the basis of the analysis of literary works, the media, architectural structures, musical masterpieces.

One of the valuable sources for studying the image of power is modern Chinese cinema which is rapidly developing and is increasingly gaining high recognition at prestigious international film festivals. Chinese cinema is an important tool for creating culturally significant concepts in the minds of representatives of not only Chinese society but also of Western civilization. It allows presenting a complex visual image. That is the special significance of the materials of Chinese cinema for a comprehensive study of power as a cultural phenomenon (Zhang, 2004, p.320).

The purpose of this research is to identify the national-cultural features of modern Chinese power through appeal to the visual images of cinema. The designated goal defines the objectives of this work. Firstly, it is necessary to identify the works of modern Chinese cinema where the images of power-holders are visualized. Secondly, to determine the criteria for the analysis of these images. Thirdly, to establish social groups of modern society endowed with power and to reveal the cultural and national features of the power visualized in the cinema. Chinese cinema is supposed to reflect, directly or indirectly, the real situation in Chinese society and nation that cannot be identified in official information sources.

The importance and originality of this study are in representing the first attempt at a culturological analysis of Chinese power through the visual range of cinema images. For the first time, the significance of the figurative and symbolic functions of Chinese cinema in the formation and broadcasting of national-cultural ideas of Chinese power is revealed.

Materials and methods

Within this research, ten films of Chinese directors released between 2000 and 2017 were analyzed.² This period of development of the PRC is of particular interest for research. It is a new stage in the serious political and socio-economic transformations of Chinese society, change of state power, and increase of democratization. The choice of films is due to the presence of images of modern power holders. Cinema works released by Chinese film studios without the participation of foreign representatives are researched. This approach allows for avoiding foreign influence on the formation of cinema images.

The initial research method is an analysis of the figurative-semantic structure of films in the context of contemporary Chinese culture. This approach includes analysis and interpretation of images of power in directorial work. In the light of aforesaid, it is obvious that the main subject of analysis is the cinematographic works themselves.

The objectives of the study and this methodological approach have determined certain principles for the logical structure of the research. Studying cinema images of power holders allows identifying national characteristics of modern Chinese power. During the experiment, the identified images were divided into seven groups formed by the principle of belonging to a particular social class or professional circle. A detailed analysis of each group is performed.

Results

Among the cinema images of modern representatives of Chinese society who possess power functions, several groups are distinguished. The following groups are formed based on belonging to a particular social and profession class.

1. The police;
2. The Chinese mafia (Triad);
3. The businessman;

² «Needing you» (2000, directed by Johnny To), «Infernal affairs» (2002, directed by Andrew Lau), «Elections» (2005, directed by Johnny To), «Elections II» (2007, directed by Johnny To), «24 City» (2008, directed by Jia Zhang Ke), «Beautiful life» (2011, directed by Andrew Lau), «Life without principle» (2011, directed by Johnny To), «Caught in the web» (2012, directed by Chen KaiGe), «The Grandmaster» (2013, directed by Wong Kar Wai), «Skiptrace» (2017, directed by Ronny Harling).

4. The media;
5. The teacher;
6. The man as the head of the family;
7. The officials.

The police as the power holder

One of the largest groups (60% of films) as appear holding power in Chinese cinema is the police. The Chinese police (公安部) is an executive body and is endowed with a large arsenal of functions, ranging from policing public places to antiterrorist activities and ensuring the security of state political leaders. Serving the police is regarded to be prestigious and profitable but difficult.

In Chinese films, two types of Chinese policemen are traced. The first is an employee of middle or senior rank who holds the position of the head of the police department. This is a middle-aged or close to retirement age man. Marital status is not indicated. He has good manners and shows a high level of intelligence and professionalism. The professional and official affiliation of such an employee determines his high material status.

According to recent research, the People's Armed Police of China is one of the highest-paid in the country (Cockcroft, 2019). Despite this, all police officials represented in the cinema do not have expensive accessories and personal cars; they only use official transport of the PRC Ministry of Public Security. The appearance of a mid-level police officer is common. At the same time, a business style typical of office employee is emphasized. All law enforcement officers wear a black suit and a white shirt. It should be noted that there is no image of a policeman in a uniform consisting of a black jacket with epaulets, trousers and a cap. To a certain extent, it deprives the police leadership of the privileges which people in uniform are associated with.

The employee is often depicted as a plump man constantly chewing something. His passion for eating is shown. In the films "Infernal affairs", "Elections", "Skiptrace", "Life Without Principle" there are several episodes in which a business meeting with colleagues or interrogation of suspects is accompanied by plentiful meal or coffee. Such a conceptual image of a "constantly chewing" policeman is typical only for high-ranking officials and is not observed in scenes representing junior police officers. This fact suggests that in national consciousness of the Chinese there is an entrenched view of the relation between food and the social status of a person.

Mass famine in China in 1959–1961 that caused death of more than 10 million Chinese people formed special attitude to food in Chinese society (Zhang & Wang, 2019, p.167). In the 1990s, China has entered an era of rapid development and growing prosperity. Food problems no longer existed. Remembering the horrors of famine, the Chinese could eat what and how much they wanted. At the same time, food has become a symbol of wealth, strength, and power. So, there is still a stereotype in Chinese society that a plump man with a big belly who eats a lot is a wealthy person with no financial problems. He is supposed to hold a high post and has an important status in society. Because of this, only high-ranking police officers "eat" in Chinese films.

The second type of Chinese policeman is a junior employee. This is an ambitious young man who has recently begun his service as a police officer, confidently and insistently building a career. Representatives of modern Chinese police are devoted to communist ideology and are ready to follow the instructions of the higher leadership, devotedly fulfilling orders. At the risk of their own

lives, they are ready for responsible and dangerous tasks at any time. Unlike a high-ranking police officer who is depicted in films as a plump, leading passive "office" lifestyle, a young officer is fit, energetic, spends little time in the office and often goes to the crime scenes. He does not make a cult of food and, due to the high speed of his life, has a snack on the go. An example is a scene from the film "Life Without Principle" when the young inspector Chun detains an armed criminal and has threat to his life. In the film "Skiptrace" a young policeman seeks the truth by investigating a case of a powerful enemy - the Chinese mafia.

Along with coverage of the professional occupation of a policeman, details of his private life are also revealed in the cinema. It is not typical of Chinese society where private interests are traditionally in the background. The principle that service to the country and the nation is the first is common for the Chinese. Their lifestyle must correspond to "moral standards" and the "system of social trust". Nevertheless, seven out of ten analyzed films represent details of the policeman's private life. A young policeman does not have serious financial problems; he can purchase expensive housing in a prestigious area of the city on credit. He is not married but is going to start a family soon. At the same time, he often neglects the interests of his beloved, sacrifices personal time for the job. Thus, in the film "Life Without Principles" policeman Chun leaves his girlfriend alone as he receives an urgent call from the police department and must immediately go to the crime scene.

The mafia as the power holder

Along with the images of policemen, another image endowed with power appears in Chinese films is "Triade" (三合会 - 'Three Harmony Society') mafia. This criminal structure is a key figure in six of ten films. Chinese mafia is one of the largest organized crime groups in the world. According to official data from the Organized Crime Directorate of the Ministry of Public Security of the PRC, in 2018 the number of Triads in China was more than 1 million people. For comparison, the communist party has about 7 million members (Gore, 2014). This comparison allows estimating the prevalence rate of the Chinese criminal organization. Neither the emperors of ancient China, nor the modern authorities were able to destroy the largest mafia organization in Asia.

The "Triade" has a strict hierarchical system that determines the role of each member of the organization. Like imperial power, the principle of transferring power from father to son still exists within the organization. Nevertheless, due to the impossibility of observing this tradition because of different reasons, the procedure for electing a new leader is carried out. In the films "Elections" and "Elections II" the head of the "Wo Shin" clan which is one of the strongest in the Chinese "Triade", is endowed with unlimited supreme power. He is represented in the image of a plump man of respectable age. The Head is surrounded by a large number of assistants and subordinates, performing different functions and responsible for various areas of "Triade". There are members responsible for the economic and financial sphere, conducting operations, controlling the "branches" of the Mafia in other cities and regions. There are also so-called "Triade soldiers" who carry out planned attacks and robberies.

"Triade" has been developing in China for many centuries, and all this time it has been coexisting with the official authorities, being in ambiguous relations. On the one hand, initially, the goal of creating "Triade" in the era of the Ming dynasty was to confront and fight the Qing dynasty, to seize power. The activity of the modern Chinese mafia is illegal and that is why it is the subject of prosecution by the authorities. On the other hand, today the Triade makes attempts to be in symbiosis with the government, supporting the priority directions of China's development. So,

despite the illegal nature of multibillion-dollar incomes, the Chinese mafia does not take them offshore. Instead, all the money "work" within the country allowing to develop the PRC. Also, organized crime in China follows an unwritten rule - do not rob foreign tourists, since tourism has been proclaimed by the government as one of the priority areas for the development of the state economy. Along with this, the "protective" function of the mafia is shown in the cinema which is not characteristic of organized crime. On the contrary, protection is supposed to be the mission of the police. For example, in the film "Life without Principle" the local branch of the "Triade" orders 24-hour duty in one of the districts of the city to prevent crimes.

Turning to the visualization of the image of the Triad leadership, his deep traditionalism and ritualism are revealed. The "Grandmaster" begins with the scene of young guys joining the mafia. One of the "Fu Shan Shu" (the head of a local branch of the "Triade") is dressed in ritual monastic clothes, symbolizing the transfer of tradition and knowledge from the master to the student. Those who join must read the oath, glorify Buddha and perform bows before the altar. In the film "Elections II" the office of the mafia is decorated with traditional statues of Chinese ancient emperors, symbolizing the connection of the Heaven and the Earth. According to ancient tradition, these statues represent Chinese Heaven governors. In the movie "Caught in the Web" instead of the typical and unchanging office attribute - a portrait of Mao Zedong, there is a portrait of Emperor Huang-di in the boss office of the local "Triade" branch. Important guests are presented with golden figures of Chinese philosophers.

The leaders of "Triade" strictly observe ceremonies. Thus, "San Shu", the leader of the local "Triade" branch, performs ritual murder of a cock before an upcoming important task. This tradition is rooted in ancient times when the Chinese believed that the blood of a cock could protect from evil spirits, bring good luck at work and help to avoid failures and disasters. As a gift to the boss, all mafia members present traditional Chinese 红包 (red envelope). All representatives of "Triade" depicted in the films have a large number of sacred tattoos. In most cases, these are images of Chinese ritual animal symbols. For example, a dragon, representing strength, power, or a tiger, symbolizing military valor and ferocity towards the enemy, or a snake as a symbol of cunning and will. There are also tattoos, depicting traditional Chinese plants: pine, lotus, plum, peony, magnolia. As a symbol of superiority, the image of a demon can be found. Such a tattoo can be applied only to key figures in criminal circles and means victory over temptations and dark forces.

In addition to a large number of colored tattoos on the body, the jade jewelry in the form of necklaces and bracelets emphasize the deep traditionalism of mafia members. Jade has been considered a sacred stone in China for many centuries and has been symbolizing immortality, connection with higher powers, a tandem of the Heaven and the Earth. In the film "I Need You" the head of the local mafia and his deputies do not part with jade rosaries. This is an indicator of high status and wealth. Making an analogy with the ancient world, it must be noted that only members of the ruling family had the right to wear jade jewelry. Criminal authorities are also fond of gold accessories, the number of which indicates the respectable position of their holder. Although the members of the "Triade" honor old traditions, strictly observe sacred rituals, follow the basic principles of Chinese society, they hunt for the benefits of the modern "rich" world. In all the analyzed films, attributes of the luxurious life of Mafioso can be seen. Bosses go by expensive cars, accompanied by security. They wear white shirts and brand black suits.

Just like with policemen, criminal leaders show off a large belly which is a sign of a prosperous life. Their offices are furnished with expensive wooden units. Mafioso only stays in fashionable hotels and prefer the best restaurants. In seven studied films the leaders of "Triade" smoke in every scene with their participation. Moreover, it is especially emphasized that criminal authorities smoke expensive cigars. Smoking in China is a special cult that, to some extent, serve as an indicator of a person's social status. The higher is the status and position, the more expensive are cigarettes. So, the following saying is widely known in China: 你怎么吸烟, 你就是什么样的人 ('Tell me what you smoke, and I will say who you're) (Xu, 2004).

Rich feasts in expensive restaurants also indicate high status and financial stability of the members of "Triade". In the film "Beautiful Life" dinner in the best restaurant of Shanghai is not only celebration of the anniversary of "Tai Lo" leader but also an important meeting for "Triade" to discuss urgent issues. All the guests take places at the table to varying degree of remoteness from the leader in accordance with their position in the mafia. Ordinary "soldiers" are sitting at the farthest tables, those responsible for the local branches of "Triade" are closer, and the deputies of the boss are at the same table with him. Thus, hierarchical relations within the mafia are strictly observed and a mini-model of the "power - subordinate" relationship, typical for Chinese society from ancient times, is presented.

The businessman as the power holder

The third source of power presented in Chinese cinema is leaders and managers of various levels. Studies reveal that over the past few decades China has "adapted" to solve all state aims by accelerating the pace of economic development. Chinese authorities began to reduce the usage of traditional ideological and political instruments of government, giving preference to economic ones. Thus, in the 21st century, the PRC is gradually transforming from a totalitarian country into a state where almost everything is determined by the economic sphere. In such conditions a new social class — entrepreneurship begins to take strong positions.

Initially, the majority of private enterprises were founded by representatives of local authorities. They provided support to entrepreneurs and officially received decent percentage of income of such enterprises. In its turn, the success of the company has become dependent on personal relations of the entrepreneur with the government. Over the past two decades a great number of government officials have linked their occupation with business, involving their relatives in it. Such situation has led to closer interaction between Chinese business and the authorities. Nowadays entrepreneurship is often perceived by the Chinese as a source of power (Vinogradov, 2014).

In 2019, a sociological survey to identify the degree of satisfaction of Chinese entrepreneurs with business environment was conducted in China. According to its results 75% of the businessmen were quite satisfied with existing tax system and inspection procedures conducted by government bodies. In general, the conditions for doing business in China are considered to be favorable (McGregor, 2019). The "careful" attitude of the authorities to private business is explained by desire to create supporting environment for rapid and effective development and, as a result, increase of welfare of the population.

The image of a businessman, manager is becoming typical for modern Chinese cinema. All these heroes are to some extent endowed with power. Analyzed films represent two types of images of entrepreneurs. The first of them can be defined as "the manager of the older generation."

The film "Caught in the Web" depicts Mr. Shen, the director of the enterprise. He is a middle-aged married man, accustomed to luxury and perceiving himself as the master of life. He owns an expensive luxury car, wears branded suits, has a driver, secretary, and personal assistant. His office is located in a skyscraper- business center of Shanghai and is furnished with expensive furniture and exclusive interior elements. Shen is a typical representative of traditional style of running business, where customs and ritual play an important role. There is no place for haste, all decisions are pondered and discussed for many times with "trusted" partners. Personal contacts and acquaintances are of great importance, especially in the matter of finding business companions. The vast majority of transactions are concluded during informal dinners that traditionally require drinking much alcohol.

Relations with employees are also built on the basis of the model of "master - subordinate" firmly rooted in mentality of the Chinese. The essence of it is strict dependence of the employee on his boss. At the same time, personal devotion to the "owner" is most valued in the employee. Thus, company employees always mind business etiquette and do their best to please Laoban (boss). For example, a driver rubs the Laoban's car to shine; the secretary offers delicious meals as soon as the boss appears on the doorstep of the office; business partners flatter, generously giving compliments.

Another element that points to the deep traditionality of businessman Shen is his attitude to marital status. Marriage is extremely important for him, as it is an indicator of stability and reliability and this is valued by potential partners and investors. Shen is married but his relationship with his wife can hardly be called prosperous, and the marriage has long been on the verge of breaking. The only thing that saves the family is a kind of mutually beneficial symbiosis. Shen's spouse receives financial stability, and he receives a certain bonus for his business under the false appearance of a strong reliable family.

It is important to note that the opposition "material- moral" is revealed in the image of Shen. The businessman is going to sign a million-dollar contract. His personal assistant Li Ning is responsible for preparation of the documents. Suddenly she feels bad and after medical examination she gets a disappointing diagnosis - cancer. Li Ning asks the boss for a break in work but does not reveal the real reason for this. Shen, realizing that only a serious problem can force his assistant to stop working, faces a moral choice. That is to help his valuable employee but, probably, to lose profitable deal, or to do everything for the contract to be signed without considering Li Ning's interests. After thinking about this problem for a long time Shen shows humanity and lets his assistant leave.

The second type of images of business representatives is a "new generation" of managers. It should be noted that the images of this type in Chinese cinema are much more numerous than of the first type. Seven of ten analyzed films have the image of the manager of a "new generation" and only two have the image of the leader of an "older generation". It can be supposed that this phenomenon reflects the real trend in development of private business and position of Chinese authorities towards the top managers of large companies. As noted earlier, a situation when young members join the board of directors has recently become typical for China. These young people run business under the patronage of parents – the officials. Some young top managers were educated in the business administration program abroad. As a result, in their professional sphere, they implement methods of government innovative for China. It is fundamentally different from the traditional one used by the older generation of managers.

The film "Needing You" represents the image of a top manager of a large financial corporation. Zhang Qian is young and attractive in appearance. He is well off and owns a big house. Unlike businessman Shen, he is not married, and this fact does not prevent his career growth. On the contrary, Zhang Qian is almost all his time busy with work and does not "waste" time for personal life. The film "Caught in the Web" depicts an image of a young assistant of a big businessman. Mei Li is young, single, financially independent, has her own housing. She is directly subordinate to the CEO of the company, and at the same time, she directs the work of several employees, thereby having certain authority.

The film "Life Without Principles" presents two images of managers. One is the young head of the bank credit department. Min Zhu is ambitious, extremely demanding of the employees. She is a workaholic, striving to withstand fierce competition and be the best employee. She requires full dedication to work from her subordinates. The second image depicted in the film is the main specialist of a credit department, the young girl Yan Lin. On the one hand, she submits to strict requirements of Min Zhu boss, and on the other hand, she exerts influence on clients, often acting in the interests of the bank, not the client. Thus, the heroine is under the authority of a superior leader, and at the same time, is a source of power in relation to the clients of a financial organization.

The media as the power holder

The next analyzed image of power is the media. Currently, China's media is a multifunctional information system. It should be noted that about 10,000 periodicals and about 2,000 newspapers are published in the country, and about three hundred television and radio stations are broadcast. About two hundred publishing houses operate (Meng, 2018, p.78).

The studied films represent an image of media as a source of influence on public opinion thereby fulfilling power functions. It should be noted that all the sources of media in China are state-owned and are under strict control of the central propaganda committee. According to the Press Freedom Index, in 2018, China ranked 177th out of 180 countries (The 2019 World Press Freedom Index, 2019). In view of the foregoing, it can be proved that Chinese media is a reliable tool for the government to convey "necessary" information to common citizens. Thus, they influence society, form certain ideological ideas, and, therefore, perform power functions.

The picture "Caught in the Web" describes the professional life of the young journalist Yu Ming who is trying to get promotion in the career by means of her scandalous reporting. Once on a bus, she becomes a witness to a situation when a woman behaves rude and refuses to let a seat to an elderly person. Yu Ming takes pictures of what is happening. Later she finds out that the woman, involved in the incident, is a deputy director of a well-known company. A sensational report can bring great success to a young journalist. Here Yu Ming becomes the source of power a business representative. Both realize that provocative materials, broadcast by the media, can ruin the career of a businesswoman who, because of it, is aware of dependence on Yu Ming. The deputy is ready to fulfill all the demands of a journalist in order to avoid publicizing an incident. This episode demonstrates the punishing function of the media which is also typical for the power system.

The power of media is also shown in the movie "Skiptrace". Here, bank representatives use television to cover and advertise a new offer for customers. The Head of the bank is aware that the proposed investment product is failed. Most customers do not trust a tempting offer until they watch a colorful report about potential over-profitability of a bank product. As a result, under the

influence of media, the bank manages to attract a significant number of consumers. Here it is convincing function of media, similar to the function of influence of the authorities on society.

The teacher as the power holder

Chinese cinema represents an image of a modern teacher as a holder of power. The cult of the teacher has been traditionally preserved in Chinese mentality for many centuries. The essence of it is a deep respect for the tutor and recognition of his authority. The word "teacher" in Chinese sounds like "师父" (shifu). Literally, "师" (shi) means "teacher, tutor, educator," and "父" (fu) translates as "father". This translation reflects that the role of a teacher in China is much higher than a person who just teaches something. This tradition originates in ancient China with the cult of Confucius who is considered to be the first Chinese great philosopher and educator (Li, 2012). After the death of Confucius, numerous temples were erected in his honor, and ritual sacrifices became a sign of worship of the great teacher. In modern China, the role and status of a teacher is as high as in ancient times, and the name of Confucius is not forgotten despite the significant changes that have occurred in society over the centuries.

The film "24 City" describes the school life of a Chinese boy, Meng Chung. His father is the leader of the local mafia group, and, in general, all the problems of his son are solved by the "authoritative" parent. However, when the child has problems with the study and attending classes, and the schoolmaster prepares documents for his expulsion, the head of the mafia cannot help his son. He is powerless against the authoritative decision of the teacher. So, the last word remains with the teacher on whom the fate of Meng Chung depends.

The film "Elections" demonstrates a model of Chinese education, the fundamental principle of which is complete submission to the teacher. Here, the teacher is endowed with absolute power over his students. Young woman Lee Ning is taking her child to a new school due to the change of residence. This school is considered one of the best in the area, and students show good results at the Olympics and competitions. The mother of the child observes how her son is forced to eat «good» food, taught to draw rain "correctly" and prohibited to take medicine on time. The teacher explains that the child should not attract too much attention to himself, that the interests of the group come first and then the personal ones. In turn, the parent does not doubt the correct choice of the teacher's method, but, on the contrary, expresses gratitude to the school management and explains to her son that the teacher's punishment is always indisputably deserved. This situation clearly shows that the teacher has great power, and he is respected by both children and parents.

The head of the family as the power holder

Modern China is a state not only with rapid economic development but also with significant changes in society. Canons and rules that have determined the foundation of social order for centuries are transformed in the manner of Western models. As a result, the feminist movement, popular in the West, is confidently entering the life of modern Chinese women. Today, women in China, along with men, receive education, drive cars, do business, get high positions in government, and manage the money they earn. Despite the apparent equal rights of Chinese men and women, this impression is often misleading. In fact, as it was established in ancient society, only a man is considered to have all the rights. That is why, to some extent, a female is still considered a lower class creature and a male is the first in solving some questions of great importance.

China strives to be the leader on the world stage. Therefore, the patriarchy system, which is often regarded by Western society as a backward relic of the past, is carefully veiled. There is a tendency of “demonstrative” gender equality when social roles seem to be equally distributed between men and women. Nevertheless, the real distribution of these roles in the family remains hidden. Meanwhile, a Chinese family can be imagined as a miniature model of the Chinese state in which men and women take traditional roles. So, the man is the head of the family and the woman is in his shadow. In addition, in some provincial regions of China the idea that a woman is the property of her husband and his close relatives, a powerless creature, has survived up to now. The man is believed to be on the highest stage of development (Powell & Cook, 2006).

The film "Caught in the Web" depicts an image of a married couple that can be a vivid example of the above. Mr. Shen is a successful businessman owning a large holding company. His wife is an attractive middle-aged woman who devotes all her time to home and personal care. In fact, there is not a single mention of the name of Mr. Shen's wife in the film. So, her image is depersonalized. Relations between spouses are complicated. They have no mutual interests and do not care about each other. Thus, they live in the same house as neighbors. Moreover, their marriage is based on financial dependence on each other. A long-term stable marriage ensures Shen with social status. In case of a divorce, he risks losing property and his authority. His wife, in turn, is financially completely dependent on her husband, and forced to live by his rules. At the same time, Shen keeps reminding his wife of her position and financial dependence. A man needs a wife as an attribute, the presence of which, perhaps, contributes to his career growth and increase in well-being.

The film "Life without principle" demonstrates the position of a man in the family of a young policeman. The husband spends most of his time at work, often ignoring family holidays, dinners, and his wife's requests for help. He explains that service is in the first place for him. As in the story with businessman Shen, marriage for a policeman is a traditional indicator of stability and reliability in society and an additional bonus to career opportunities. The man makes decisions on purchasing of housing, the place of vacation, not leaving his wife the opportunity to make suggestion. Thereby he shows his superiority. Illustrative is the episode when the young policeman is invited to his boss' birthday dinner. This event is not an ordinary celebration for the policeman but also a chance to get closer to the leadership. The wife due to her poor health refuses to participate in the event but under the pressure of her husband, she has to go. During the celebration, the policeman tries to show ostentatious gallantry and attention in relation to his wife. Such behavior is very surprising to her because in daily life the spouse does not show attention. The reason for this behavior is not ignorance but the spouse's desire to emphasize the hierarchy in the family, to point to a “modest” place to his wife.

The official as the power holder

Several of the studied films present the image of an official. It should be noted that the bureaucratic system in China is vast. This is due to the fact that power in the PRC is delegated to regions and each province has its own minister. The activity of all local officials is united by a common goal - the development of the state. Nevertheless, there are no instructions from the leaders "from above" what methods should be used to achieve the final result. Because of this, each local official independently decides on the methods of economic and social development of the province (Moser, 2019, p.144).

Many business representatives have close ties with the local administration, even being in kinship relations. Friendship with local authorities guarantees patronage and opens up more development opportunities. For this reason, local government is often regarded as holders of real “material” power and the central governing apparatus is considered as something far, mythical. A similar attitude to authorities was observed in ancient China when the Emperor was called the Son of Heaven. At the same time ministers and officials represented him on the Earth.

The initial scene of the film "24 City " shows the demolition works of a provincial textile factory. This decision is made by local authorities. Hundreds of specialists are left without work, and they appeal to provincial officials with a request to save the enterprise.

The film "Elections" depicts the interaction of the Head of the mafia branch and a local official. Representatives of a criminal organization prefer to maintain friendly relations with representatives of the authorities. This can guarantee their protection in illegal practice. The authorities, in turn, are accustomed to expensive gifts. Undoubtedly, such a situation inevitably leads to increased corruption, which has recently become a state-level problem in China.

Conclusion

The results of the study allow concluding that in modern Chinese cinema the images of power are represented rather frequently and variedly. It is established that power is personified and visualized in the images of representatives of different social classes of Chinese society. Power holders in the cinema are visualized in the images of government officials, security services, financial employers, businessmen, representatives of education, media, criminal structures, and heads of families. Along with this, it should be noted that police and Mafioso are the most numerous images.

The image of a policeman has a positive connotation. Thus, his education, professionalism, reliability, promise, and high moral principles are noted. The focus is on the stability of the financial situation. It can be explained by the fact that in modern China the profession of a policeman is one of the most prestigious.

According to the results of the analysis, it was found that along with the images of police, the largest group of power holders is Chinese mafia. A detailed study of these two groups reveals the following pattern: Chinese police and the mafia are presented in the cinema as two prevailing sources of power that are in a complicated relationship. Traditionally the priority aim of the police is fighting against crime. "Triade", in turn, carries out illegal criminal activity and thereby opposes law enforcement authorities. However, a new development of relations of the mafia and the police is revealed in the cinema. That is mutualism. This phenomenon reflects the actual situation in China, where corruption and protectionism has become an urgent problem of modern society.

It is established that the characters representing the financial sphere are also endowed with power. This fact can be explained by the new priority policy of the Chinese state to increase economic growth.

The opposition “material-moral” is identified in the cinema. Through this the images of power-holders are revealed. This vision of power is supposed to be due to the serious increase in corruption in China. Because of it a problem of choice between mercantile interests and ethical principles arises. Nevertheless, in the cinema, there is no definite answer what wins in this opposition.

Analyzing three above indicated groups of images, it can be concluded that the older and younger generation are represented in each of them. The older generation is the heads of financial corporations, heads of departments, high ranks, leaders of mafia structures. Low-level managers, rank-and-file police officers, and "beginners" of "Triade" represent the younger generation. At the same time, it was established that young specialists become a symbol of progress and innovation. Experienced colleagues symbolize stability and commitment to traditions. The symbiosis of the new, progressive and old, traditional is characteristic of real system of modern Chinese power. In addition, analysis of the above images allows concluding that the idea of connection between youth and success, progressive ideas, material well-being, strength, and power is deeply ingrained in modern Chinese society.

This study allows declaring that the cinema presents a new function of the Chinese media as a source of power. In addition to the traditional influence on the formation of public opinion media acts as "power over power". This reflects certain dependence of those in power: business structures, officials, authorities on interpretation of them in the media.

As a result of the analysis, it was found that the images of a teacher and the head of the family occupy an important place among all the cinema images of power. This can be explained by observing traditional reverence and deep recognition of the teacher from ancient times. In addition, in the national consciousness of the Chinese, there is a historically formed belief that the high social position and service post depend on educational level. In the cinema the authority of the teacher and his ability to influence students and their parents are obvious.

Revealing national features of the image of the head of the family gives the right to establish that the traditional idea of dominant role of men still prevails in Chinese society. A man is an indisputable authority for his wife and children. Moreover, all the holders of power represented in the cinema are visualized in male images.

In Chinese cinema, there are relatively few images of officials. That is supposed to be due to existing broad censorship and a kind of taboo on attempts to open interpretation of power.

Summing up, it should be noted that the works of modern Chinese cinema have high representative potential. They visualize in detail an image, style of thinking and behavior, specifics of functioning of various social groups. This opens up wide prospects for further studying images of power in Chinese cinema, involving additional sources, for example, materials of scientific research and media.

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