跨文化丛书
INTERCULTURAL
SERIES

Analyzing Media Hero Reports and Intercultural Identity Construction in *The New York Times* and *Guangming Daily*

吴柏祥◎著

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英雄报道与跨文化身份认同的建构

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List of Abbreviations

AFH	American media reported foreign hero
AH	American media reported hero
AR	American media hero report
CFH	Chinese media reported foreign hero
CH	Chinese media reported hero
CI	Cultural identity
CR	Chinese media report
CTI	A communication theory of identity
FH	Foreign hero
GMD	*Guangming Daily*
H	Hypothesis
IC	Intercultural communication
ICHI	Intercultural hero identity
ICI	Intercultural identity
ID	Identity
IIMT	Integrated identity matrix theory
IN	Identity negotiation
INT	Identity negotiation theory
IM	Identity management
IMT	Identity management theory
NSR	New salient role
NYT	*The New York Times*
RQ	Research question
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
TDEM	Two directional extension model
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Chapter One

Introduction

None of us are free from the ongoing challenge of the simple question, "Who am I?" Most of the time it seems not so difficult to answer, but in our rapidly changing world the answer is becoming increasingly unclear or unsatisfactory. For most, life is a long self-evaluating journey and a never-ending search for an elusive answer. The answers many find have some relation with the tradition, the environment and the media. In our media saturated modern world, at times it seems that many people rely on the media to tell them who they are and how they are represented.

In the present era, media influences nearly everything. Media can persuade people to consider if they are among the "up-to-date", socially acceptable, status-worthy people or just one among the commoners. One's sense of happiness or sadness, success or failure is often a result of media processes, influences, and responses. Noted international media scholar Colin Sparks notes:

> ***There is a huge body of research evidence that demonstrates that the audience for the mass media actively constructs the meanings it derives from the mass media, and that the mass media are very far from being the sole, or perhaps even the most important, source of information about the world. To accept that, however, is not to say that the "raw material" presented by the media is of no importance in the sense-making process ...what they do mean, however, is that such views are very strongly present in popular discourse and is likely to form one of the major poles around which popular opinion is formed. (Sparks, 2009, p. 29)***

All of us have different identities. Some of them we love but others we may not desire. Why do people prefer certain identities? Why do people like some of our identities to have some certain features? Perhaps it is socialization, tradition and new environments that have taught people that these identities are ideal. Society provides numerous samples of these idealized identities and the emerging environment is creating new examples and cultivating the old ones as models for the common people to follow. Often this process of creation, recommendation and enhancement is performed by the media. Though not the only source, as Sparks noted above, media can highlight, create or promote different terms or packaging for all those attractive images. Media enhanced models, icons, idols, great men and women, or superstars all hold great attraction for the common people. Both the hero and heroine can have an everlasting charm, to our ancestors as well as to modern people.

Time and our environments are changing. Our sense of desirable or ideal identities surely is changing as well. With modernization or development, what society considers

as the model identities for people to follow, worship, admire, or imitate constantly change and develop according to the vicissitudes of population segments or loyal fans. The type of people who are suitable to be addressed as "heroes" to one group or another is also changing all the time. In the historic eyes of Carlyle divinities, prophets, poets, priests, men of letters, and kings all are good heroic candidates (Carlyle, 1950). Further more, Edwards considered that the "hero is not royalty or deity, but an average person" (Edwards, 1984, p. 4). Most likely, this kind of argument is one based on the times in which it is set. Fishwick indeed considered that changes in heroic ideals changed over time:

> ***In classical times heroes were god-men; in the Middle Ages they were God's men; in the Renaissance universal men; in the eighteenth century enlightened gentlemen; in the nineteenth century self-made men. In our own time we are seeing the common man become heroic. (Fishwick, 1954, p. 4)***

Besides time, the media of different eras also played a very important role in creating different types of heroes. Strate suggested that the media environment has played a decisive role in what kind of hero people may prefer in different times:

> ***Thus, oral heroes tend to be characterized by the ability to compose poetry and song, typographic heroes are often characterized by some form of publication, and electronic heroes are known for some form of performance on the electronic media. (Strate, 1991, p. 543)***

In Strate's theory, the media environment decides who can be noted or praised. In his view, the heroes of the globalization era only can be those who perform the function of celebrities. The electronic media environment decides this. He further suggests that the development of media is the continuous de-legitimization of the former modes of "hero" (Strate, 1991). Such a process continues and historical heroes increasingly lose their charm and come to be treated just the common people. Who or what is considered heroic in our new age or in our changing context? This is the fascinating question that motivated this study.

"When the world enters into the 21st century which is characterized by the buzzword 'globalization', it inevitably faces new challenges." (Jia, 2009, p. 4) One of the challenges is that it is even harder for one to find his or her own identity in this ever changing and culturally intertwined world. The question "Who am I" will be continuously asked and answered by each intercultural communication (IC) practitioner as the identity research and construction continues.

Globalization is primarily a term from the world of economics but its impact affects all aspects of life and people from all nations and states. Not limited to just the economy, its influences are on culture, society, politics as well as people's psyche. The bright side is that people are generally hailing this "one world, one dream" (the theme of the 2008 Beijing Olympics) vision because of the spread of education, technology and the globalization of democracy. But as Kim has said, people have identity problems to worry about:

> ***Through direct contacts as well as via mass media and other technological means of communication, people around the world are increasingly exposed to the images and sounds of once-distant cultures. (Kim, 2008, p. 359)***

"Riding on the horse" of globalization, these "once-distant cultures" become omnipotent and ubiquitous. They are facing those particularities and localities that are the main elements for our identities. Are those particularities going to survive? Or should people open their arms to welcome all those universalities from this "once-distant culture"?

This identity issue is a major topic for many modern disciplines. Anthropology, psychology, sociology and IC all consider that it is a very important concept in their specific disciplines. As Guoming Chen (陈国明) commented, "identity has become a magic word in the disciplines of social sciences and humanities" (Chen, 2009a, p. 109). Since the 1960s, identity theory and social identity theory represent two main perspectives in this line of research. The former emphasizes personal identity with three different levels, namely "ego, personal identity, and social identity", a tradition started by Erikson (1968/1980) in psychology. The latter puts more emphasis on social reality and social relationships in the sociological paradigm. In the IC field, scholars generally have agreed that identity is socially constructed, interactive, negotiated, relational, multifaceted, and space claimed (Chen, 2009a; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988a; Hecht, 1993). On the basis of this identity perception, research on the construction of identity, especially that of developing an IC identity, has been attracting more and more attention.

Intercultural personhood, a special identity or personal orientation that promises greater fitness in our intercultural world and globalization era toward the construction of an IC identity, is one of the major topics in the research. Adler (1985) used the idea of "multicultural man" while Kim (2001) advocated the idea of "individualization and universalization" to describe a similar idea. Dai Xiaodong agrees with neither of the above mentioned intercultural identity (ICI) concepts. Instead, he believes that the blurring of cultural boundaries does not mean we can ignore the cultural border

completely. Thus he uses Two Directional Extension Model (TDEM) to study interculturalness (Dai, 2010). Other concepts of interculturality include Byram's (2011) "intercultural citizenship" and Yoshikawa's (1987) "Man of In-betweenness". They have all contributed to the construction and conceptualization of IC identity.

Culture, as the platform for all these IC identities, is multilevel and multi-dimensional. As such, Kulich (2007a) proposed a multi-level framework for cultural analysis. He further developed the framework into an Integrated Identity Matrix Theory (IIMT) for the study of IC identity construction (Kulich, 2010b). In Kulich's multilevel cultural diagram, all IC identities are the results of the contextual cultivation and decision-making process from three sources: social opportunity, social volition, and personal expectations (a kind of personal-social gamesmanship). Generally speaking, most identities that media has constructed as models and samples for people to follow are the results of social expectations and cultural construction. This cultivation proposes that media constructed IC heroic identities in this globalization era are the results of the media version of universal expectations.

Lin Xinhua (2004) once declared that heroes are losing their ground in this era of democracy and globalization. By analyzing the modern media, people find that heroes are still there very much alive and real. Of course they are different from the traditional ones, but heroes across history were seldom the similar to each other. They are developing and changing even today. Some are going to be represented as more perfect identities and some are facing de-legitimatization. Media will cultivate and create a range of desired identities, culturally or interculturally, in response to the needs of social expectations, consumerization, and increasingly individuated self-actualization.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

1.1.1 Why study ICI construction?

We are living in the era of globalization, a time that features international communication and intercultural collision, adaptation, and integration. Actively or passively, numerous people are being challenged to undergo experiences related to the stress of adaptation to some new cultural environment. With each new cultural context and new reference for values and ideals, one may not be so sure about identities once familiar and certain. Some people need readjustment and undergo a process of identities clarification. Others endeavor to construct new identities in the intercultural environment.

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