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Triad movies and young people's perception of triads in Hong Kong

Alexandre CERDA

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TRIAD MOVIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE`S PERCEPTION OF TRIADS IN
HONG KONG

by

CERDA Alexandre

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences

(Sociology)

Lingnan University

2012

ABSTRACT

Triad Movies and Young people`s Perception of Triads in Hong Kong

by

CERDA Alexandre

Master of Philosophy

Triads are Chinese organized crime groups based in Hong Kong. Their origin remains uncertain despite the many different versions given. As they are secret and illegal, many facts remain unknown about them. Even though they have been associated with values such as honor and loyalty in the past, they are nowadays involved mainly in vice related activities such as gambling and prostitution. Their goal which is supposed to have been nationalistic also seems to have changed to only be profit making. Despite the fact that the scope of their activities have decreased since the 1970`s they are still active nowadays. The police force and the government describe them as dangerous criminals.

Since the mid 1980`s, many movies used the criminal underworld as a setting and Triad members as main protagonists. Triad Movies became extremely popular in Hong Kong during this period. Typical Triad protagonists in Triad movies are associated with values such as honor and loyalty despite their criminal affiliation. They are also often rich and powerful which can lead to think that Triad movies portray Triad members in an appealing way.

Al Bandura`s Social Learning Theory explains that through vicarious experimentation, people tend to endorse actions made by others when those actions are successful. By watching movies, people can change their attitudes regarding a topic or a group of people especially if they are young. This study analyzes the values attributed to Triad members in Triad movies and how the portrayal of Triad members in movies can influence young people`s perception of real life Triad members.

This is a two part study, in the first part, the 10 most popular Triad movies at the Hong Kong box office have been analyzed and coded in order to find which values are associated to Triads in movies. Based on these results, a questionnaire to assess people`s perception of Triads has been developed.

In the second part of the experiment, a pre questionnaire is given to a group of young students before the presentation of a Triad movie and after the presentation, a post questionnaire containing the same items is given to the students, the results are then analyzed.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis “Triad movies and young people`s perception of Triads in Hong Kong“ is the product of my own research and has not been published in any other publications.

Alexandre Cerda

Date


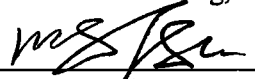
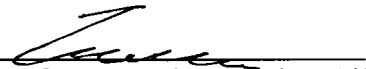
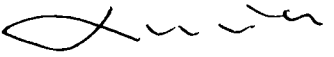
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

TRIAD MOVIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF TRIADS IN HONG KONG

by
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Master of Philosophy

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICAC Independent Commission against Corruption

OCTB Organized Crime and Triad Bureau

TELA Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority

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Chapter one: Introduction

Triads in Hong Kong

Triads¹ are Chinese secret organized crime societies. Even though Triads were already found in Hong Kong before the British takeover in 1842, it is after that event, with the arrival of many Chinese workers on the continent, that they expanded. The origins of the Triads are not clear. It seems that at the beginning, they were linked with Chinese nationalistic ideals, but in the present days they lost their political agenda for a financial one.

Since Triads are secret and illegal groups, it is difficult to differentiate facts from fictions. When talking about the origin of the Triads, one is confronted with different versions holding contradicting and unverifiable facts. It appears that the Triads originated even before the Qing dynasty and that they are truly the descendants of many secret societies merging together; societies such as the White Lotus and the Red Turbans (Morgan, 1960; Booth, 2000) but according to some informants from the Triad ranks, the version given by the Triads themselves goes back to the 19th century (Morgan, 1960; Gutzlaf, 1845; Pickering, 1878; Booth, 2000). It states that around 1675, the Manchu emperor Kangxi requested help from able men to fight them (Morgan, 1960; Gutzlaf, 1845). The monks from the monastery of Shaolin volunteered and defeated the Silu tribes. Gutzlaff (1845) records that 1200 monks participated in the attack while other reports (Morgan, 1960; Pickering, 1878) mention that they were 128. Morgan (1960) adds that at that time the Shaolin monastery was sheltering some Ming dynasty rebels and that helping the Qing was part of a plan to rebel against him later. Kangxi rewarded the monks but shortly after, listening to some jealous ministers, he had the Shaolin monastery destroyed. Only 18 monks were said to survive the attack but they were trapped inside the temple until a divinity came to their help and show them the way (Pickering, 1878). Out of 18 monks, only five were said to survive and they became the 5 ancestors of the Triads. Their names were Tsoi Tak Chung, Fung Tai Hung, Ma Chiu Hing, Wu Tak Tai and Lee Shik Hoi (Morgan, 1960). Those 5 survivors continued to flee until they reached the Cheung Kong, Tai Hoi “Long River and Huge Sea” (Morgan, 1960). There, they found a tripod with the inscriptions *Fan*

¹ Triads refer to the triad societies as a whole by opposition to individual triad groups

Ch`ing: Fuk Ming (Overthrow Ch`ing: Restore Ming). Gutzlaf (1845) and Pickering (1878) mention that they found some divining tools indicating a good omen while Morgan (1960) states that inside the pot, they found a prophecy describing the collapse of the Qing dynasty. Some reports (Gutzlaf, 1845; Pickering, 1878), mention that the 5 monks became sworn brothers before being forced to flee by the Qing soldiers. Morgan (1960) explains that the monks allegedly managed to escape using a grass sandal that became a boat. From then on, the 5 ancestors met many new companions who joined their causes, the two most important ones being Chan Kan-nam, a former Ming general, and Chu Hung-chuk, a descendant of House Ming. The whole group then went to the legendary city of Muk Yeung in Fukien, where they organized their society. The 25th day of the second month, they held a ceremony and created a brotherhood. Chu Hung Chuk became the leader of the society while Chan Kan-nam was named head commander. The society was then strong of several thousand men and they decided to launch an attack against the government (Morgan, 1960; Gutzlaf, 1845; Pickering, 1878). Reports differ regarding the details but as the attack failed and the rebels were suffering heavy losses, they decided to restructure the society. After adopting the name of “Heaven and Earth Society” they divided the society in 5 different lodges headed by the 5 ancestors. The modern Triads are said to come from the Guangdong lodge.

Despite the lack of facts in those different stories, it is certain that the Triads have been linked with the Chinese Nationalistic movement. For example, the 14K, one of the most famous Triad group in Hong Kong, was founded in Guangdong by a Kuomintang general. Following the retreat of the Kuomintang to Taiwan, many generals fled to Taiwan or Hong Kong. It is the case of Kot Siu-wong who created the 14k in China and brought it to Hong Kong. Kot`s original goal was to unify the triad societies and use them to fulfill the Kuomintang`s agenda (Booth, 2000). Dr. Sun Yat-sen joined the Kwok On Wui triad societies in order to use its influence for his political activities (Chu, 2000).

If the aim of the Triads was at one point to overthrow the Manchus in order to restore the Ming Dynasty, it clearly changed in 1911 with the end of the Manchu dynasty. It appears that they kept their structure and used them for more profit oriented activities as well as providing protection. In Hong Kong, for many coolies, joining the Triads

would be one or even the only way to do their trade in relative safety therefore many of them joined the ranks of the Triads (Chu, 2000; Booth, 2000).

As triad groups have often been used when a need for violence was felt, they were employed during the Second World War by both Japanese and anti-Japanese factions. Morgan (1960) observes that the Wo group was involved with the Japanese. Later on, the Triads were also active during the riots of 1956 and 1966, even though they did not initiate them. It is believed that the main motivation behind their actions was profit (Morgan, 1960).

The 1960`s and early 1970`s can be considered the “golden age” of Triad activities as the police was deeply corrupted which allowed them to develop and thrive without being punished. This era of impunity ended with the creation of the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974. After this date, the police force started to take care of the Triad problem more intensively. The Triads did lose some of their power and influence but they evolved and diversified their activities (Morgan, 1960; Chu, 2000; Booth, 2000).

In the 1990`s, outside their traditional illegal markets, the Triads followed Hong Kong`s economic growth to infiltrate other developing sectors of the economy. The Triad`s main activity at street level was protection racket but they were also involved in gambling, prostitution, pornography and drug dealing. They could also be found in more legit businesses such as construction business or the filming industry (Chu, 2000; Booth, 2000; Liu, 2003)

It is very difficult to know the current state of the Triads in Hong Kong, as there are very few sources to get information from outside publications from the police or the media. It nonetheless appears that after the year 2000, Triads had to adapt to social and economic change and therefore reorganized themselves and modify the nature of their activities. Triads nowadays tend to leave their street businesses and invest more on corporate businesses. The structure of the different societies is now less rigid than it used to be. Blackmail, extortion, price fixing and protection rackets are the most common illegal Triad activities, but they are also involved in narcotic trafficking, operating illegal casinos, football gambling, loansharking, prostitution, counterfeit products, pornography, cigarette and fuel smuggling. Triads use violence to do their business and also to protect their reputation but they control their use of violence so

it does not hinder their profit. Triad groups are more than business associations; they also have a social aspect. In their search for profit, Triads tend to gain new businesses ((Broadhurst and Lee, 2009). According to Chu (2005, p5) Triads are “loose cartels consisting of a number of independent gangs that adopt a similar organizational structure and ritual to bind their members together”. The structure of the groups has been simplified and most groups only have senior officials, members and junior members. The ceremonies have been simplified and women as well as non-Chinese members are accepted. Sun Yee On, Wo Shing Wo, 14K, and Wo Hop To are nowadays the most important groups. Each of them has its specific structure and tends to be involved in a specific sector of activity (Chu, 2005). The word “Triads” itself has different meanings depending on the context. The origin of the word has several explanations related to the place where the original society was created, the number of founders of the society, natural elements, so on and so forth. Although it has been used to designate the members of the anti-Manchu movement it will only refer to the Chinese organized crime groups in Hong Kong in this thesis.

If in the past the Triads used to have many ceremonies, wore special outfits, and used many different secret codes, all this has seemingly been simplified as well as their structures which are usually composed of individual groups with a main leader (Chu, 2000). Triad members are said to evolve in the criminal underworld (江湖), which can be translated as “river and lakes” this term is also associated with the fictional world where errant martial knights and bandits (sometimes chivalrous as well) evolve in traditional Chinese fiction novels (Cheung, 1995).

As Triads are secret and illegal, it is not easy to have precise information on them. To investigate them, the police rely on informants as well as undercover cops. Most of the information on Triads comes from the police, which count in their rank some “Triad experts”. The Triad life is not well documented but it appears that the main asset of the Triads is their ability to use power which allows them to do their illegal trade but also gives them an advantage when dealing with people outside the “criminal world”, violence also seems to be a way to settle disputes and maintain status inside a group (Chu, 2000).

The media do not hesitate to talk about the Triads, sometimes in sensational ways whether it is to report an arrest or to give news of some Triad members. Some Triad

members became famous and it also happened that some of them did some press conferences (Liu, 2003). Even though being in the Triads is extremely risky and competitive, it appears that some Triad bosses, who avoided early death or a long time jail imprisonment, enjoy wealth and power.

From the point of view of the police and the government, Triads are criminals whose nefarious activities must be stopped, in the words of a former Hong Kong judge “The Triads are devious and treacherous, their activities covert. Worse still, they are repulsive, unscrupulous, and deadly” (Liu, 2003, p11). If it is clear that a part of the population also takes this viewpoint and see Triads as criminals, some people do not necessarily view them as such, indeed, as Triads are usually efficient, some people would seek their help or even join them to resolve their problems. Literature on the subject being scarce for those who do not know any Triad members and have never been exposed to them, it is possible that they form their opinions with the help of fictions. As part of Hong Kong for a long time, Triads are also part of the Hong Kong collective imagination but not only as the vile criminals depicted by the police, some fiction works give them a more humane side and even portray them as heroes.

Triads in films

Triads are popular in Hong Kong works of fiction. Triads as a theme can be found in works such as comics, TV series, or movies. TV series and movies are the supports with the most audience but as studying TV series would be too lengthy a process, this study focuses on movies.

Criminals and especially those belonging to the organized crime are popular all around the world as a subject of entertainment. Whether it is the Mafia in Italy or the Yakuza in Japan, gangs have always been popular in the silver screen. If each country has its specific criminal groups, the manner of depicting them on screen is equally different, whether it is in an American (or Italian) Mafia movie or a Japanese yakuza movie. The Hong Kong Triad movies make no exception as the ability to use violence, the secrecy and the alleged values of the Triads have interested Hong Kong filmmakers for a long time. Triads are found in many Hong Kong movies but not only in movies dedicated to them. They often appear in traditional movies as the antagonists or are mentioned or referred to as source of troubles.

This study will focus on movies with Triads as a central theme with a main protagonist being a Triad member or related to the Triads. Triad movies as a popular genre can be said to have started in 1986 with the release of the movie “A Better Tomorrow” by John Woo. At that time, even though Triad movies had already been made, none had encountered such success. Not only was it a hit on the box office but it also had such an impact on the viewers that some would even dress like the main characters. The film relied heavily on charismatic actors and trendy aesthetics. “A Better Tomorrow” is the movie which launched the trend of Triad movies in Hong Kong. After its release, many movies centered on Triads were to follow. With often the same formula comprising charismatic or handsome actors with trendy looks often playing the part of the hero, Triad movies would often contain characters showing strong friendship bonds. Chow Yun-fat, one of the main actors, the director John Woo and the producer Tsui Hark became internationally famous later on. The Triad movies after “A Better Tomorrow” would often depict the rise and often the fall of a man in the ranks of the Triads but not always. If “A Better Tomorrow” is the tale of two chivalrous Triad members, some movies would take as main characters Triad figures being very far from heroic.

As the 1990`s saw the development of the film industry in Hong Kong, Triads muscled their way into the industry and came to produce their own movies often intimidating actors and directors to work for them in the process. Those movies would give a good or at least powerful image of the Triads. Some movies like “Casinos” or “The Tiger of Wanchai” would even tell the story of real life Triad bosses. Some of those movies have been accused of being apologies of the Triads. It has to be noted that some famous actors are allegedly linked to the Triads.

1997 saw the release of the second most influential Triad movies of all time: “Young and Dangerous” (1997) by Andrew Lau. This movie, made with a cast of trendy rising young actors and being a loose adaptation of the popular comic “Teddy Boy”, was a hit and redefined the Triad genre. If “A Better Tomorrow” and its followers focused on one or two main characters, “Young and Dangerous” introduced a whole group of friends who were young and fashionable. “Young and Dangerous” was followed by many sequels and spin offs as well as a prequel.

“Infernal Affairs” (2002) by Andrew Lau, is another very successful movie which once again redefined the Triad movie genre. With its story evolving around an undercover in the Triads and an undercover Triad in the police, this movie launched again the theme of the undercover cop. This theme was always popular in Hong Kong crime movies but none were as influential as “Infernal Affairs” which also featured charismatic actors with “cool looks” but more mature than those in “Young and Dangerous” who appealed more to younger people.

Triad movies give the audience a possible view of what life in the Triads is like. They often provide a different angle than the regular movies which often only portray them as bad people. It has to be noted that not all Triad movies have a “good” Triad member as main character; some depict very cruel and ruthless individuals. Triad movies often have a cast of either charismatic or handsome actors who are often successful at one point of the movie. Triad movies are naturally violent and contain foul language.

Recent Triad movies are often about undercover cops. With the collapse of the Hong Kong movie industry, less movies are produced which is also true for Triad movies but they are nonetheless still being produced. Recent movies seem to have a more pessimistic view of the Triads than the Triad movies in the 1990`s.

Young people as targets of Triads and moviemakers

Reports indicate that most Triad members enter the Triads during their teenage years. Teenagers are targeted by Triad groups as recruits for several reasons. They are less likely to get the attention of the police and if caught, the sanctions are lower than for older members. Students also have a better access to their peers which allow them to either turn them into clients or recruit them. Involvement of youngsters with Triads is sometimes done voluntarily. According to Chu (2000, p139) “Although it cannot be denied that triad gang members practice extortion by forcing students to join their gangs, it is also possible that triad membership may be a license for some young students to go to school or to gain access to public entertainment places”. Some students, especially those from the poorer areas of Hong Kong might join the Triads to improve their status or to fight against other students in which case the others would join a rival triad group to fight back. Others join in order to avoid being bullied.

Watching movies is a popular hobby among youngsters and Triad movies often target them. By mixing action, appealing and fashionable actors, Triad movies usually aim at teenagers. Those movies rarely have teenagers as main protagonists but the protagonists are often young, at least at the beginning of the movie.

In order to give adults an idea of the movies they watch and to protect the young ones from harm, the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) classifies movies into four categories. Category I indicates that a movie can be viewed by people of all ages, category II A refers to movies “Not Suitable For Children”, the category IIB is “Not Suitable for Young Persons and Children” while the category III is for “Persons Aged 18 And Above Only”. The first two categories are only advisory while the III one sanctions a legal age limit which is enforced in cinemas and video shops.

The criteria on which censors are supposed to judge the movies are “Whether the film portrays, depicts, or treats cruelty, torture, violence, crime, horror, disability, sexuality as well as indecent or offensive language or behavior“ (TELA). One cannot help from noticing that horror and disability (to some extent) are the only theme absent from the Triad movies. All the other themes are typically used to different degrees in Triad movies. If it is obvious why violence, crime, offensive language, and behavior are present in movies portraying members of the organized crimes, the association with torture and sexuality might not be so easily done but Triad movies without a sadistic antagonist torturing someone for various reasons at one point of the movie or committing a rape, are rare. Triads handling prostitution in real life, prostitutes are often seen in Triad movies. For these reasons, Triad movies are generally category IIB or III. In order to reach a broader audience, movie makers often aim at releasing a movie under the IIB category. When a movie is due to be labeled category III, the producers might try to change the elements preventing it to be under the category IIB. They do so by editing their movie but often before submitting the movie and while writing the script and shooting, the director and his team would keep the categorization in mind. By rating Triad movies IIB or III, the TELA implicitly considers that those movies might harm the younger people. Teenagers are not the only category of people who joins the Triads nor are they the only ones who watch Triad movies but they are among those the most likely to be targeted by both groups.

Purpose

Despite their loss of power, Triads are still present in Hong Kong. Some researchers have researched them and the police force, with the help of Triad experts and undercover agents has knowledge of the Triad activity. Nonetheless, the general population does not necessarily have a clear idea of what Triads are. For those who have never been in contact with Triad elements, facts can easily be altered by the myths surrounding the Triads. Those myths inspired many fiction works. Fictions about the Triads have been and remain popular in Hong Kong. Among those fictions, movies about Triads have been a great success and despite the fact that they do not claim to be realistic, for those unfamiliar with the Triad world it might be possible to take them as sources of information concerning the Triads. As those movies aim primarily at an audience of teenagers it is logical that some critics denounce them for perverting youngsters by making them idolize the Triads. These claims state that Triad movies give a good image of the Triads and that the young people watching those movies would be influenced by them and have a positive view of the Triads because of them. This study investigates the messages sent by the Triad movies concerning the Triads and if those messages have an influence on how a younger audience perceives Triads.

Research Report

This study attempts to assess the possible influence of Triad movies on young people. To undertake such a task, it is essential to understand what Triad movies are and how they stand regarding Triads. Therefore, the main part of this study reviews the ten most popular Triad movies in order to find the core elements of Triad movies. This analysis provides a set of common features of Triad movies explaining the views of the Triads usually given by Triad movies. The second part of this research is a pilot study testing if the views expressed by Triad movies can influence young people's perception of real life Triads. As the scope of this study is small, it is intended as a lead for further research. For the content analysis of the movies, the 10 most popular movies at the Hong Kong box office have been analyzed. The 39 main Triad characters of these movies have been coded with the use of a coding scheme. The pilot study has been conducted in a secondary school where 22 students have been divided into two groups and shown a movie. One group watched a Triad movie

while the other was shown a comedy. Both groups were given Triad related questionnaire before and after the movie.

Research Questions

This research is in two parts. The main part analyzes the 10 most successful Triad movies at the Hong Kong box office in order to find how they portray the Triads and what kind of messages related to them they send to the audience. It also analyzes via experimental method if those messages modify in a positive way the perception young people have of Triads. By analyzing the most popular Hong Kong triad movies, the main part of the study aims at understanding the values and behaviors of Triad members in Triad movies in order to assess if they are positive. Traditional reports on Triads would focus on the activities of Triads and the consequences of their crimes. Fictions and especially movies can show the audience the lives of characters, thus possibly giving an insight on not only the professional aspect of their lives, but also the personal side. Movies show the actions as well as the emotions and states of minds of the characters. This study analyzes how the triad characters' actions and values are portrayed and if they give the characters a positive image.

By submitting a questionnaire on Triads before and after showing a Triad movie to secondary school students, the second part of the study researches if the messages sent by the portrayal of Triads in movies can change the way young viewers perceive the Triads.

The questions answered by this study are: How are Triad members portrayed in Triad movies? And do these portrayals improve the way young people perceive the Triads?

Significance

The study of the messages sent by the Triad movies and their influence on teenagers can be useful to the government and the authority in charge of rating the movies, as it can give insights on the efficiency of the present system and if needs be, give some leads on how to modify it. For the law enforcement agencies, it can also lead to reflections on how to resolve the problem of Triad activities in schools and raise awareness of Triads. Schools and school teachers have daily contacts with the students and knowing if films have a negative influence on them could help them limit it.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis contains seven chapters. The first chapter presents the thesis and is followed by a chapter containing reviews of literature concerning Triads in Hong Kong, crime and Triad movies as well as the influence of media on the audience. The third chapter introduces the theories used for the writing of the thesis and provides a tentative model explaining how Triad movies can influence young viewers. Chapter four explains the design and the method of the study and explains how the data were collected. The following chapter is a summary of the findings of the content analysis and the pilot study. The sixth chapter contains discussions aiming at understanding the results provided in the fifth chapter. The last chapter contains a summary of the findings presented, the limitations of this study are also assessed and finally some possible directions for further studies are given.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Before analyzing Triad movies it is important to have knowledge of what are the Triads and how they are generally portrayed in movies. In this chapter, the most relevant works explaining what the Triads are and how they operate are presented. As Triad movies are a genre of movies, relevant studies concerning the influence of the audio visual media on the audience are also selected. After reviewing the activities of Triad groups in Hong Kong, the gangsters in crime movies are browsed before focusing on works related to Triads in Hong Kong movies, finally studies on the influence of media on people are reviewed.

Triads in Hong Kong

In his book, *Triad societies* (1960), Morgan, a former police officer, describes the Triads in Hong Kong as criminal gangs organized in many different unrelated groups. He deems important to differentiate the modern triads (those in the 1950`s) from those of before as they are quite different.

The traditional Triad history recorded by Morgan (1960) states that the Shaolin monks helped the Qing emperor Hong Hei defeat his enemies by sending 128 monks to fight for him. After the monks came back successful they arose the jealousy of some ministers who told the Emperor that the monks wanted to rebel, the emperor then decided to destroy the Shaolin temple and its monks. Only 5 of them escaped and they allegedly decided to unite against the Manchus and created a society whose aim was to overthrow the Manchus. The Hong Kong Triad societies are supposed to be issued from the Guangdong branch of this society.

An 1845 ordinance ruled the Triads and other secret societies illegal in Hong Kong. Already present in Hong Kong before the arrival of the British, the Triads saw their ranks grow in number with the influx of Chinese immigrants. The Triads flourished from then on and it is said that a large portion of the population was part of them. The Triads took advantage of the chaos following the Japanese surrender to further their power in Hong Kong. Although Triads victimized the public, the citizens were unable to fight back due to the bad economic situation at that time. For many of them, suffering under the Triads or joining the Triads were the only choices.

Morgan states that the estimated amount collected by the Triads in 1958 was 40 million dollars which was not enormous but still consequent; this sum was to be divided among 10% of the Triad members of this period. This money came from those seeking protection from the Triads and by doing so they were guaranteed to be able to do business in a relatively safe way. Only the most powerful members had access to the profits and to do so they had to use violent means. It appears that in 1958 no Triad group was truly prominent or at least for a long time as individual groups would rise and disappear quite fast. One might be the leader in one sector but it would not be for long.

The first criminal Triad groups kept the ceremonies and codes of the original Triads whose aim was to overthrow the Manchus. These secret ceremonies and codes were complex and were used to guarantee the cohesion of the group and remind the members of their goals. When the Triads became criminal groups the ceremonies and codes would help them bullying their victims as people were afraid of the Triads. As time went by, the Triads change the way they operated. Morgan states that as the new recruits tended to go through simplified and less mysterious ceremonies and rituals than before, the Triads in the 1950`s were not inspiring the same respect and fear they used to. Morgan describes a lodge and different paraphernalia as well as ceremonies which are all based on traditional Chinese cosmology and history. They all refer to the Shaolin monks and the Ming dynasty. Respect is shown to the deceased brethren. The participants of these ceremonies were reminded of the importance of loyalty, filial piety, moral integrity, righteousness and brotherhood, as well as love for the country. Traitors were to be harshly punished even killed in the worst cases. The structure of the Triad groups at that time was also complex. From Morgan`s account, in the 1950`s the common organization for a Triad group was to have a headquarter branch with a committee, a leader, a deputy leader, an incense master and a vanguard. The sub branches would have a leader, a deputy leader and a committee.

Cheung (1995) mentions the difficulty to know the real story of the Triads in Hong Kong as they are illegal and secret societies. She says that under the Qing, the Triads subculture emphasized patriotism as the original goal of the Triads was to overthrow the Manchus. Loyalty was also an important value, members were supposed to be loyal to the group and to other members. The society was not to be used for personal

gains and information about it was not to be revealed to outsiders. As members were supposed to be brothers they were not to turn on each other. Righteousness was another important value. Triad members were supposed to go against the powerful and help the poor. They were also supposed to help their brothers and their brothers' families. Brotherhood was another main value of the Triads and betraying the brothers would result in a violent death. Brothers' families were to be protected and illicit relationships with a brother's wife or the raping of a brother's wife or daughter was to be punished by death. Secrecy was another important norm as the organization was to remain secret. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the Triads have been used by politicians and started to attract criminals.

Triads were already present in Hong Kong when the British arrived. After the 1842 ordinance that made them illegal, they operated under the guise of guilds and would not hesitate to use strength to make more money. The 1970's presented the Triads with many opportunities to develop their activities. At that time, even though some female triad members would be recruited, most of the recruits were male. Many new members would be recruited by force. New members would have to give a symbolic sum of money referring to the brotherhood among Triad members. As corruption was rampant in the 1970's even some police officers would be part of the Triads and many were bribed by them until the creation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974. The ICAC arrested 5 senior police officers accused of being part of the Triads. Their stories have been adapted in many films. Cheung mentions that triad leaders and leading corrupt police officers were considered part of the "Jiang Hu" (river and lake) or the criminal underworld, which would make them people of worth, in her own word "In the romantic world of Jiang Hu, members viewed themselves and were perceived as patriotic, heroic, righteous and loyal" (Cheung, 1995, p58). The names of different Triad groups stand for the chief value they allegedly stand for. They stand for values such as filial piety, faith, righteousness, victory, loyalty, profit, group belonging. Cheung notes that there was a shift in Triad values and even though they kept on referring to righteousness and loyalty, their main goal became profit, bravery, and victory.

The triad societies in the 1990's were different than those of the previous times says Cheung. Based on interviews with experts she says that even though most of the groups were independent, some would follow the orders of a main leader. Most

Triad groups elected their leader during elections. Triad groups would have one leader by district. Even though area leaders might report to a higher leader they were almost independent. Societies often competed for the same districts and several societies could be found in one district. To become an area leader one was to have charisma or seniority. To be a leader, being part of the “Jiang Hu” and showing qualities such as resolution, strength, righteousness, and faithfulness as well as being resolute were required. The leader was also supposed to be able to defend and help his brothers. The most important quality was to be smart. To be promoted in the Triads, being “smart, tough and brave” were the most important. It is said that the leader only acted in case of problems or conflicts but rarely interfered in the members’ activities otherwise.

Cheung states that from different reports, the average age to enter the Triads was 13years old. For youngsters, joining the Triads could procure friends, fun, excitement, protection, face, power, as well as money. Cheung accounts the female participation in the Triads at that time for 10%. At the street level, members of gangs used violence to meet their goal or protect their turf. Some leaders would leave their society for another one or to create their own in order to obtain more money or power. According to Cheung the main goal of Triads in the 1990`s was money. If their main activities remained drug dealing, prostitution and gambling, they were also involved in legal activities by the ways of extortion or protection. Triads also laundered money by investing their illegally acquired money in legit businesses. From various observations made out of case studies Cheung found out that it was common for Triad members to change societies and that they could easily quit the Triad life. She found that the leaders` control on their followers was rather loose and that the core values of the Triad members in the 1990`s was money.

Cheung stresses than even though Triad societies simplified their rituals they would still have them in order to spread fear. By studying the slang used by the Triad members and its meaning, she found that values of the Triads in the 1990`s were violence, excitement, hedonism, fate, face, status, autonomy, superiority, possession of girls and profit. On the other hand she states that the traditional values were still embraced but not constantly expressed. She recorded that some leaders would use their followers for their own benefit without helping them in time of need.

Triads influence could be felt everywhere including in the entertainment field and the Government but from surveys and case studies Cheung found out that people would get their perception on Triads from personal experience, family ,peers ,society`s values and media. Triad members were viewed by the public as violent. It appears that they often use violence to preserve face, status and profit. Triad members relied on the fear they inspired and often threatened people to make them obey. Even though many people viewed Triad members as violent criminals others saw them as heroes. From the interviews conducted by Cheung, it appeared that young people between 20 and 30 had contradicting views on Triads since they viewed them as criminals but also heroes. She also found that people hold false beliefs concerning the Triads and she imputed those to the movies. People regarded Triad leaders as great people when in fact, according to this study, some leaders only cared for money. Also from the surveys, Triad protectors were perceived as heroes while the study proved that they bowed in front of the powerful and oppressed the weak. People in the surveys also seemed to think that there was a sense of unity among the Triad. While in reality they would often have fights. While most of the interviewees thought that the Triads have a happy life, Cheung states that their lives were in fact fearful.

In his account of the activities of the Triads in Hong Kong, Chu (2000) explains how the mythical origin of the Triads links them to the Shaolin monastery and to the anti-Manchu resistance. The real origin is not certain as there are many conflicting reports and stories but the Triads activity since the arrival of the British is more documented. There were Triad members in Hong Kong prior to the British Rule in 1842 but most of the Triad groups have been created by Chinese immigrants coming from the continent. If at first the objective of the Triads might have been to overthrow the Qing dynasty (which has been done in 1911) it appears that before this event took place the Triads had already started to be involved in other activities. Hong Kong having an important population of coolies wanting to go abroad to do their trades; the Triads would organize them by setting up boarding houses where the coolies would wait before leaving. They would do so for a fee that could be high.

Most of The triads in the early stage of the British rule were already members prior their arrival to Hong Kong. The Chinese immigrants can be said to have developed the Triads system. Many coolies and hawkers would join the Triads only for the

protection it would bring them. According to Chiu, Triadisation, the fact of joining Triads in order to be protected appealed to many because even though the different Triad groups are not related, their members share a sense of belonging to the same brotherhood, in his own words (Chu, 2000, p 19) "As they are 'brothers' and under the same roof of the Hung Family, according to the rules, Triad members have an obligation to protect each other. Their main victims are thus non-triad people".

Triads in Hong Kong did not all belong to the same group. In the 2000`s, they were made of different unrelated local groups. Since the creation of the ICAC in 1974, out of the 7 main groups of Triads in Hong Kong, 4 were left: the Chiu chow /Hoklo, 14K, Wo and Luen. Even though some of these groups shared a common origin or shared symbolic relationship, their chain of command was unrelated and there was no main Triad authority.

If in the past complex ceremonies were held for the initiation of new members, they have been simplified but still existed in the 1990`s. The structure of the Triad societies in Hong Kong has evolved and most of the groups nowadays have one office bearer called red pole (426), ordinary members (49) and probationary recruits called blue lanterns(3). Well-organized societies have a central committee whose members are the most senior and influential members. As members of a secret society, members used various signs and verses to recognize each other.

From Chu`s research it appears that Triad members often use violence to establish or prove their power at the organizational or personal level. Triads could be found in legal as well as illegal markets. In the legal markets they mainly offered protection. Their involvement in legal activities included entertainment, construction sites, street hawking, mini bus services, fish markets, interior decoration, and dispute settlement of any kind. Regarding the illegal markets, they were active in drug dealing, gambling (which is legal only in private premises and if not run as a business), prostitution (which is not illegal but highly regulated) and human smuggling.

In their article on the transformation of Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Broadhurst and Lee (2009) explain that the socioeconomic and political changes in Hong Kong changed the structure of the Triads. The activities of the Triads went from the streets to the companies where they mixed with legal activities; they also moved some of their activities to China where it is less risky to operate.

Broadhurst and Lee assess that Triad societies are more than criminal organizations, in their words: “Triad societies are not exclusively criminal organizations but are multifaceted brotherhoods in the form of loose cartels bound by social as well as economic ties” They relate that some of the Triad rules and functions have been inspired by the rules of Jiang Hu (river and lake) and that at one time it justified the use of violence as Triads used to be patriotic societies. Triad culture has also been shaped by movies about Triads. The goals and structures of the Triads evolved and they are nowadays much looser in their organization than they used to be. Triad crimes represent around 3% of all crimes in Hong Kong.

Around 50 groups were active in the 1980`s but the current number is unknown. Sun Yee On, WoShing Wo, 14K (Tak, Ngai and Hau ‘factions’), and Wo Hop To are the most important groups with Shui Fong and Luen Ying She following. All those groups were involved in a way to triad related homicides between 1989 and 1998. Some Triads operate in only one district while others are found in several. The current number of Triad members is unknown but some foreign Triad members have been found recently. Triads often employ youth from poor districts to help in their vice activities. Those youngsters use their Triad affiliation to improve their authority. The most common Triad activities are blackmail, extortion, price fixing, and protection rackets. Triads target almost any type of local business. Narcotic trafficking, operating illegal casinos, football gambling and loansharking are their traditional street level activities with the addition of prostitution, counterfeit products, pornography, cigarette and fuel smuggling which they operate as far as Macao or even China. Organized crime is not necessarily done by Triads in Hong Kong. Triads based their fame on the use of violence which allowed them to offer protection but also to gain illegal markets. They use violent means to protect their businesses, their honor or to gain access to new markets or territories but also to enforce contracts or take care of discipline related matters. Broadhurst and Lee write that Triads are not only about making profit; their groups also have a social function. In order to better compete and adapt to the police control, Triads societies modified their structure to make them corporate-like. Triads can use their abilities to work with and protect illicit entrepreneurs. Even though Triads base their power on violence it is not necessarily lethal and is often controlled in order not to disrupt business. The police intervention and economic growth led to a change in Triad

business. In the 1980`s, Triads oriented their business towards China. Triads got involved in new markets such as copyright theft, waste disposal or internet-driven gambling while continuing their activities in their traditional markets.

In his account of the Triads societies activities from 1997 to 2004, Chu (2005) explains that Triad members from different societies tend to team up together to make profit. They also increasingly associate with legitimate entrepreneurs and invest more in legit businesses. He states that among the estimated 50 active societies in Hong Kong, the most active ones are :

The Sun Yee On, 14K Hau Group, 14K Tak Group, 14K Ngai Group, Wo Shing Wo, Wo Hop To, Wo On Lok (Shui Fong), and Luen Ying Sh'e. The Sun Yee On was the dominant group in the 1990`s but it appears to have been replaced by the Wo Shing Wo. The 14k group is said to be the society with the most members.

Chu recognizes that triad societies are secret organizations and he defines them as “loose cartels consisting of a number of independent gangs that adopt a similar organizational structure and ritual to bind their members together” (Chu, 2005, p5). The hierarchical structure of the Triads has been simplified and usually consists of red poles (leader), 49 (members), and blue lantern (new recruits). The initiation ceremonies have also been simplified and now only consist of an oral agreement. The relationships between members are looser, as “Big brothers” do not have to look after their members and it is easy to change society. Even if very few women and non-Chinese people are accepted, they can join those groups. Between 1994 and 2004, the police estimated that 3 to 4 % of the criminal cases involved Triads.

Chu notes that organized crimes are not necessarily done by Triads. Triad members can do business as independent agents without the help of their society, they can even do so with people from other societies or people non related to the Triads. Triad bosses might use violence to assert their power but they usually prefer using “settlement talk”. Many Triad members turned to the Chinese market for business. The Sun Yee On was originally a Chiu Chau society but today it accepts Chinese members of all origins and even non-Chinese members. Its members tend to help each other. Individual members of the society can engage in any street level activities without seeking permission from the society. The Sun Yee On diminished its heroin trafficking activities. Its members tend to engage more in non-violent crimes and also associate with legit people.

Wo Shing Wo was part of the Wo Hop To group but broke out in 1930. Its members are quite diverse and some of them are Hong Kong born Indians or Pakistanis. The central committee of the society elects the chairman (Cho Kun) and the treasurer (Cha So). The role of the central committee is to take care of conflicts within the group or with other societies, but they do not interfere with the members' activities. The members engage in street level activities without sharing profits with the group. Pirating VCDs and DVDs is the group's main activity. They commit more violent crimes than other groups and are prominent at street level.

The 14 K was founded by Chinese nationalists in the 1950's. It is not as well organized as the other main groups as it is divided in several sub groups who frequently compete with each other. The members do not share the profit of their street level crimes. The group's main activity is illegal gambling and most of its activities are street crimes. The 14k used to be involved in politics but it does not seem to be the case anymore.

Criminals in Movies

In her book about American crime films, Raftner (2000) analyzed how American crime films relate to the American society. Even though American crime films are a broad topic which is different from Triad movies, some of her findings can nonetheless be applied to Triad movies as they are also crime movies. In Raftner's view, crime films and the social representation of crimes mutually shape each other, filmmakers make films according to the public ideas on crime and their films give the audience a new perception on crime.

Her leading thought is that crime films carry ideologies, in her own words, "My approach is less concerned with the realism of representations than with their ideological messages, by which I mean the assumptions about the nature of reality that are embedded in film narratives and imagery" (Raftner, 2000, P7) those ideologies are in fact collective notions that people might assimilate by watching a movie. She adds that those ideologies are as much formed by what is shown in a movie that by what is not, in the case of Hong Kong Triad movies this could be exemplify by the fact that the absence of strong female characters contributes to the thought that women do not have a role in Triads (besides prostitution).

Many crime movies try to explain the reasons why criminals commit crimes and usually those explanations reflect the leading thoughts on the subject at the time of the movie making. Raftner mentions that the most successful crime movies are those giving a new angle regarding the explanation for committing crimes. She recorded 3 common types of reasons for people to commit crimes in crime movies:

-External environment in which the criminal is “pure” at the beginning but is made to commit crimes because of his environment, in which committing crimes is normal.

-Mental illness, in which one person would commit crimes because of insanity, she notes a difference between those people and those who are born “bad” and systematically commit crimes without any justification but because they`re born this way.

- A desire for a better life is the final type of reasons she gives.

Raftner found 3 different types of main protagonists in crime movies: The “official heroes”, who are on the right side of the law, and the “outlaw heroes “, who are on the other side. The outlaw heroes are appealing to the audience because they do all the things the audience members wish they could do but do not dare to do. She also describes a category of movies where the lead character lacks the qualities to be a hero. She adds that crime movies are based on an opposition of values sometimes opposing lawful society members to criminals but not always, those values are:

| | |
|----------|---|
| Criminal | lawlessness,freedom,violence,danger,cruelty,cynicism,guilt,autonomy,integrity, spontaneity,sassy,repatee,subculture,adventure,courage,life,youth,masculinity, mean streets ,broads, strength ,wise guys |
| lawful | conformity,constraint,peace,safety,kindness,idealism,innocence,commitment, compromise,deliberation,polite speech,dominant culture,routine,timidity ,spiritual death,age, femininity and weakness. |

Triad movies are a particular type of crime movies as they are set in Hong Kong and involve triad members therefore they differ from the typical American crime films about gangs but they still have some common elements with them. Many Triad

movies would provide an explanation (sometimes quite brief) of how some characters joined the Triads, these reasons are usually the same as those in the American crime films, either the characters are raised in an environment that makes them become Triad members or they want to have a better life. As being a Triad member is a way of life it cannot really be explained by mental illness so this explanation is not commonly used also if some explanations regarding why the main character and eventually his friends join the Triads are sometimes provided it is not always the case and these type of explanations are rarely provided for other characters. For many main characters of Hong Kong Triad movies the environment is a key reason of why they joined the Triads. Many times the hero will have no other choice than joining the Triads because everybody, on both sides of the law considers him a Triad member or someone likely to be one; as no other opportunities appear in front of him he will have no other choice to become a Triad member. Another popular reason for people to join the Triads in movie is the desire to have a better life. Often coming from a very poor background or being immigrants, those characters have the choice between living in poverty and often without respect from others or joining the Triads to, if successful, become rich and powerful.

Heroes in Triad movies are most of the time Triad members who no matter how many killings or beatings they engage into are “good people” at heart, that is why they adhere to some values commonly found in everyday people. These values would allow the audience to relate to these characters. All the values described by Raftner as belonging to the criminals can be associated to the Triad members in Triad films but some she associated with the lawful citizens can also be associated with them, values such as kindness, idealism, commitment or even compromise can all be found in some main characters (or allies) in Triad movies. Some Triad movies have a main character with very few or even no good qualities about him which makes it difficult for the audience to like him but those main characters are rare. Often the characters without morals are the antagonists of the main characters and for them often no reasons are given to explain why they commit crimes.

In “dying to belong: Gangster movies in Hollywood and Hong Kong”, Nochimson (2007) disserts on American and Hong Kong gangster movies. As the filmography she uses for the Hong Kong movies is quite narrow and her knowledge of Chinese

culture does not seem to be extremely deep, her analysis needs to be handled with care but some of the points she makes still apply to many Hong Kong Triad movies.

Nochimson describes the Hero of the Triad movies as a modern day kung fu hero following a chivalrous code in order to uphold justice. She emphasizes on the Triad code of honor that the hero is supposed to protect. Nochimson often refers to the Triad hero as a “Taoist warrior”. She notes that the main character of triad movies is often at odds with a society which is losing its values, a society which is also more and more capitalistic. For her, the hero tries to uphold his values in a world without values and his first duty is to protect the values of the group he belongs to.

She also separates the Triad movies depicting a hero on a quest from those depicting groups of friends in which the core values are brotherhood and friendship. Nochimson adds that the movies centered on a group of friends such as “Young and Dangerous” transcend the personal destiny of the sole protagonist to reflect on the nature of Triads.

She also considers that the protagonists of Triad movies find relief by breaking the law, as they can't live in the mainstream society, the Triad subculture allows them to live and express themselves. The spiritual aspect of Triad movies might not be as developed as Nochimson thinks but it nonetheless exists in many movies. Its most common manifestation might be through the worship of Guan Yu and the adherence to Buddhism. The legendary general Guan Yu being a symbol of loyalty, he is revered by Triad members. This element is found in almost all Triad movies showing that loyalty and brotherhood are the alleged core values of the Triads in movies. No matter how evil a character may be he will almost always worship Guan Yu which indicates that loyalty is an ideal value for Triad members in movies. Triad characters are also often praised by their “brothers” for being righteous. Frequently, remaining “righteous” when everything pushes him not to be or when everybody else is not is the hero's challenge. Many movies would show protagonists and antagonists worshipping Guan Yu together while one is truly righteous but not the other. As for Buddhism it is also one of the rare indicator of Triad`s spiritual beliefs but it is also often a superficial spirituality as those who are allegedly Buddhist in Triad movies do not really follow any Buddhist principles nor

commandment besides going to the temple or wearing amulets and it rarely prevents them from ill behaving.

Triad movies often show triad members relying on a Triad set of values such as “brotherhood” which seems to be one of the most important. Problems generally happen when one character betrays those values. The main character of the Triad movie is indeed often the one who opposes those who do not follow the rules but things are not always this simple as it often happens that those values contradict each other or are simply impossible to live by. In such cases it is sometimes the main protagonist who breaks the rules and his antagonist who lives by them. For example in most movies the Triad code’s most important rule is loyalty to the group, to the boss and to the brothers but those 3 entities do not always have the same goals. If it is true that Triad members in movies often refer to their values, ethics or rules, for many those are only empty words they manipulate in their best interest.

Lone protagonists are rare in Triad movies even when the focus is on one character he will be bound to have at least one ally, whether it is a good friend in his group or a lover. Some movies put the emphasis on one character while some others will be more concerned by the destiny of several characters closely related.

Most of the Triad characters in Triad movies do not really choose to become Triads, often they naturally become one or if they have another alternative the only one they have is to be at the bottom of the social ladder. It seems that Triad members in movies can’t exist in regular society. Being a Triad member, one is expected to break the law and to be tough but main characters would rarely commit “amoral acts”. In triad movies, almost all the characters smoke, drink, have premarital sex and gamble. These actions are not illegal and even if they might not be praiseworthy they usually do not hurt innocents. The “good” Triad member sometimes fights and even kills but only for self-defense or the victim is a bad person, if not they would regret it. They also usually avoid drugs and are against those who want to sell them. “Bad” Triad members would indistinctively kill, rape or sell drugs.

Those who try to leave the ranks of Triads rarely succeed in fictions. In movies there are typically two different types of characters who try to quit the underworld, those at the bottom of the Triad society and those at the top. Those of low ranks in the Triad society who want to join the regular society are usually prevented to do so by their

fellow triad members or boss who will not allow them to leave and by society who will not accept a triad member, in this cases the character (often the main protagonist) is rejected by both worlds. The second type of characters trying to leave the Triads are the bosses who try to associate themselves with important figures in the civil society but they also most of the time fail to do so because their can't change their ways or because their can never escape their past.

Nochimson based her analysis mainly on "A Better Tomorrow" I&II and the "Young and Dangerous" series which are certainly two of the most successful sets of Triad movies but it does not grasp the genre in its entirety especially since she focused on hero protagonists, excluding antagonists and second roles. Triad members are outlaws who belong to an organization but in movies it does not guarantee that they are bad people.

Triads in Hong Kong Movies

Tony Williams, in "The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity" (Desser & Fu, 2000) links John Woo's movies with an anxiety towards Hong Kong Future, he also sees Woo as a follower of the famous Kung Fu movies director Chang Cheh. Woo's movies illustrate Hong Kong's contradictions and the difficult relations between past present and future in Hong Kong. According to Williams, Woo's heroes are similar to modern knights sheltered from the outside world. The fact that many heroes of John Woo's movies would find a way to come back after their death expresses a sense of hope.

Laik Wan-pang, in *Masculinities And Hong Kong Cinema* (Pang & Wong, 2005) found different and complex forms of masculinities in Hong Kong movies, she opposes the heroes of "Too Many Ways to Be Number One" to those of "Young and Dangerous" and she recognizes the former as a satire of the latter as the heroes of too many ways to be number one are neither powerful nor intelligent. Travis Kong (Pang& Wong, 2005) notices that while real life triad members are criminals, those in movies are depicted like men of values and honor. According to him violence and homoeroticism in John Woo's movies are used to resolve a masculinity crisis. He also notes that the character of sister 13 in "Young and Dangerous" embodies several types of masculinity.

In “City on Fire”, Odham and Hoover (1999) recognize traditional Chinese and Christian values in John Woo’s heroes, follow a code of honor based on Confucian, Christian and chivalric values. These heroes hold dear self-sacrifice, courage, and loyalty. Male bonding is an important theme in John Woo’s work and villains often represent the dark side of capitalism. Odham and Hoover differentiate the movies similar to “Young and Dangerous” from the other Triad movies and call them “triad boys” movies. According to them the heroes of those movies are like orphans looking for father figures that they often find in the senior Triad members. Those movies also put the emphasis on change and the need to adapt to it as well as the search for identity.

Teo, in Johnnie To and the Hong Kong action film (Teo, 2001) analyzed Johnnie To’s work and notices that in “election”, violence is used not to celebrate the use of violence but to criticize it and carries a deeper meaning. In election, says Teo, the Triads are established as an institution and reflect Hong Kong society who lacks democratic elections. In the movie the Triads have elections but they are not really democratic and are thus void of meaning. Since no guns are used in those movies Teo qualifies their violence as “feminine violence”.

David Bordwell in Planet Hong Kong (Bordwell, 2000) notices that The “Young and Dangerous” series was targeting a young audience which might have been connected to the Triads, he recalls that critics saw this series as optimistic. He adds that in the 1980’s, Triad movies tended to glorify the Triads and that Triad societies had infiltrated the movie industry.

Influence of Media on People

In their article, “Cultivation Analysis: Conceptualization and Methodology“, Morgan and Signorelli (1990) described cultivation as the effect of a long time and repeated exposure to a similar set of messages. For them, the effect of cultivation is a long process which can lead to a modification of people’s perception as it would make them interpret events in a different manner. They also state that the first step in cultivation analysis is the identification of the messages sent by the medium (which is television in their study). They noticed that even though heavy television watchers seem to adhere to the messages sent by TV, the impact of TV watching on the audience is a complex phenomenon which can be influenced by several factors such

as family and peers but also who they watch TV with and their own experience, media cultivation can be reinforced or neutralized. Morgan and Signorelli also explain “Mainstreaming”, a phenomena that sees heavy TV watchers sharing the common view of the World given by TV, with this process the differences between groups tend to disappear as they all share the “mainstream” view.

In their account on the “Divergent Psychological Process in Constructing Social Reality from Mass Media Content”, Hawkins and Pingree” (1990) note that what lead to the cultivation effect are not an action itself but an aggregated pattern of actions. They think the cultivation process happens over months or years and at the very least over several weeks. Also, TV influence is weaker when people have a related personal experience. According to them there are reasons to believe that TV watching influence people’s evaluation of the likelihood of an event happening (First order beliefs). They also state that the relationship between TV watching and second order beliefs (which would be emotion like fear or trust) might exist but is difficult to explain. They finally raise the point that stories seen on TV are lessons and that the most important in them might not be the acts that constitute them but their general meaning.

In her study on “TV’s mean and dangerous world”, Signorielli (1990) studied the link between TV watching and people’s view of the world regarding violence and their fear. She found out that people who watch a lot of TV view the world as meaner and more dangerous compared to those who watch TV less. She also found that heavy watchers were more likely to have feelings of gloom and alienation.

While studying the effect of pornography, Hall Preston (1990) found that college men who watched pornography expressed firmer beliefs in traditional sex role stereotypes and sex traits than those who did not. College women who watched pornography were not affected by pornography when it came to sex role stereotypes but they were affected in their views of sex traits. In fact, they were affected negatively by pornography as they tended to perceive men as less ambitious and competitive and women as less emotional and irrational than men. She also found that men who watched a lot of pornography were more likely to believe in sexuality stereotypes, these findings were also reversed for women. Some differences were noted between the women having regular sexual relationships and those who did not.

Finally, she found no correlation between pornography watching and acceptance of rape myth.

Humble (1990), in his study of the Mennonite community in America and their relationship with TV found that the members who watch TV had more open minded views than those who didn't watch TV. In effect, those who watch TV were less likely than those who do not to say that smoking and drinking are always wrong. He states that TV watchers in the community are less likely to tolerate pre-marital sex (which is positively portrayed in TV) than those who do not watch TV, he also found some differences regarding the age and the sex of the viewers. Almost no significant correlation has been found between TV watching and extra marital sex (which is portrayed negatively by TV). Heavy TV viewers were less likely to say that abortion is always wrong and they were a little bit less likely to say that Homosexuality is always wrong. For them, going to church, (which is negatively portrayed by TV, was less important than for non-watchers, they were also more prone to see voting and holding public office as a good thing. Finally TV watchers were less likely to oppose war. Humble concludes by stating that even though TV had an impact on some Mennonites some special moral values were not affected by it.

In his article on cultivation called "advancing on the path of righteousness" Gerbner (1990) defines the second order cultivation by explaining how heavy TV viewers might start to take the symbolical meaning of what they see on TV for true, he gives the example of the overrepresentation of men on TV and how heavy TV viewers might think that in the real world there are much more men than women. Gerbner is skeptical about surveys involving special types of groups. He stressed that one of the most important feature of cultivation is that heavy watchers of TV would tend to share the same views and that the differences inherent to their subgroups would fade away.

In his account of the social learning of aggression from Television, Tan (1981) notes than for an aggressive event to be modeled, its context and consequences must be understood by the viewer. He also states that people usually do not act violently by fear of the negative effects of violence so for them to perform violent acts this fear has to be neutralized, as he says "One way that disinhibition can occur is by the reinforcement of aggression either before the actor observes the model, vicariously

by observing the model being rewarded, or after a matching performance of the learned aggressive act". According to him, if a violent act is already present in a person's everyday life, this person will be more likely to act violently after seeing a violent behavior on TV. He furthermore says that according to previous studies by Bandura (1979) Pearl et al (1982) and Tan (1981), when TV violence is legitimized or rewarded, it has more chances to be followed by a violent act from the viewers. He reports that when children are rewarded for performing a violent act they are more likely to do it. Based on Bandura's (1975) and Milgram's findings (1974) he explains that a reason for not performing violent acts is the bad feelings, essentially of guilt resulting from a violent act but with cognitive restructuring the subject can stop associating the bad feelings with the violent act. This can be done either by giving a good status to the violent act, using another worse act to make one's own act feel better or putting the responsibility on someone else. Dehumanizing the victim and reducing responsibility have also been mentioned. He finally states that even though there is a correlation between TV violence and acts of violence it is not strong because it is only one of the causes of violence.

In their study on the Priming effect on media, Berkowitz and Rogers (1986) state that the way people react to media is conditioned by their perception of the message sent. They mention the concept of spreading activation which states that when a thought appears in the mind it triggers other thought related nodes which makes it more likely for these thoughts to appear. Following this theory they believe that watching televised violence would probably trigger violent thoughts. They say that when one is exposed to a negative message he will automatically and without being aware of it have negative thoughts for a while after that. They mention the Velten mood introduction procedure (1968) in which subjects, after reading statements with a particular mood would associate them with past memories of the same tone hence having the same mood as the statement they read. They say that Media triggers associated thoughts but if such thoughts are not presents the effect will not be the same. According to them the priming effect is a short term one and it diminishes as time goes by but by triggering related thoughts, the subject might overestimate the frequency of one type of events. They also mention the cultivation theory and how watching TV can influence one's perception of the world, so as to make it seem mean and dangerous. Berkowitz and Roger indicates that some studies, Wober

(1978) and Doob and MacDonald (1979) show that outside America, cultivation might not apply. Some other researchers, Cook and al (1983) concluded that if there really is a cultivation effect it is very mild. Berkowitz and Rogers attribute these heterogeneous findings to the fact that some conditions might be required for cultivation to happen besides if the subjects might contest the validity of what they see on TV. Based on experiments previously done, they also state that seeing an event can trigger some related thought and make the person act accordingly to what they have seen. They, for example cite a study by Carver and al (1983) in which college students having heard a hostile message were more likely to shock severely another person when she has done a mistake. They explained how watching repeatedly violent acts can lead to a reduction of the anxiety produced by violence, as showed by the study of Umble and Bryant (1982) in which subjects having watch many pornographic scenes would, have a high estimation of the rate of performance of unusual sexual practice in the general population, oppose less to the public showing of pornography and would also give shorter jail time to rapist.

They discussed the fact that watching violence also decreases physiological arousal, basing their claim on a study by Thomas, Horton, Lippincott and Drabman (1977) in which young people and college students showed less reaction to a real depiction of violence after watching a fictional one than when they have not. According to the authors, one condition for a violent act seen in a media to influence a viewer is that this viewer perceives this act as violent as a Berkowitz and Alioto study (1973) shows; college students were given to see either a boxing game that they were lead to perceive as violent or a football game categorized as a sport between teams of professional. After the showing they were asked to shock a person that had made them angry before. Those who watched the boxing game tended to shock more severely. The Donnerstein and Berkowitz study (1983) also shows this point as men angered by a woman, would shock her according to the level of violence they've previously seen in a movie. Associating oneself to the perpetrator of a violent act is also way for people to be influenced by the violence in the media say Berkowitz and Roger, following Berkowitz and Turner's experiment (1972), in this study, college men who were asked to watch a boxing game and then to imagine themselves as the winner of the fight while thinking "Hit" each time the winner would punch the opponents, usually shocked more a previous tormentor. A similar study made by

Anderson (1983) had the same results. According to the authors, violent thoughts would be triggered by words with violent connotations which have been proved by the Turner and Layton study (1976) in which subjects having memorized a series of words with a violent connotation would shock their partner more. Also following the authors, identifying with a character perpetrating a violent action would make people think of themselves as if they were perpetrating this action. Berkowitz and Roger cite Bandura (1971) who stated that what have been seen by a person might be replayed in his mind according to his own interpretation which would enhance the effect of the violent act on him. They concluded from this that when one think about the act he has seen ,and think that he has committed it through the character it triggers even more related thoughts.

Following studies by Bandura (1971), Comstock (1980), Comstock et al (1978) and Huesman (1982), it appears that people watching another person performing would think that by performing this act, the same consequences would apply to them. As showed by Goranson (1969), it appears that even if the bad consequences of an act do not apply to the perpetrator of the violent act, if those consequences are serious enough, people will tend not to reproduce them. Following studies by Berkowitz (1965), Berkowitz, Corbin & Heironimus (1963), Berkowitz and Geen (1967), Berkowitz, Park, Leyens & West (1974), Berkowitz and Power (1979), Geen & Stoner (1973), Hoyt (1970) and Meyer (1972) there would be a correlation between how the perpetrator and the victims of a violent act are perceived, if the perpetrator is seen as “good” and the victim as “bad” it should elicit a disinhibition of violence in the viewer`s mind; by identifying himself with the aggressor the viewer might see the use of violence as justified. Geen & Stonner (1973) and Meyer (1972) found that that viewer have more violent thoughts if they think of the violence they see as an act of vengeance. According to Geen (1976) the effect of watching a violent act depends of how the viewer perceives the circumstances of this act. Studies of Berkowitz & Geen(1967), Donnerstein & Berkowitz (1981), Geen & Berkowitz (1966, 1967) as well as Donnerstein & Berkowitz (1983) showed that angered subjects viewing a violent act would tend to emit violent thoughts or behavior toward people reminding them of the victim of the act they have seen. Studies of Fesbach (1972) and Berkowitz & Alioto (1973) on children and young men exposed to real and staged violence concluded that violence has more impact on viewers when they think that it

occurs in real or realistic settings. Geen & Rakosky (1973) and Geen (1975) further explained that when viewers think of the violence they see as staged they are less psychologically involved and therefore it has less impact on them than when they take it for real. Moreover following an experiment by Leyens, Cisneros and Hossay (1976) where they asked the participants to focus on the aesthetic qualities of the violent scene they were about to watch it appears that the scene also had less impact. Berkowitz and Roger acknowledged that viewing violence might induce violent thoughts that can turn into violent behavior. They also say that an increased viewing of violence might have a decreased effect because of desensitization but according to them the opposite effect is more likely to happen. They finally conclude that witnessing violence on any form has an influence on people's violence related thoughts but this is only one of the factors influencing it.

In her study, Kalof (1999), showed a music video supposed to carry gender and sexuality stereotypes to one group and a conventional music video to another group. She then measured the participants' level on scales measuring sexual beliefs, gender role stereotyping and rape myths. She found that watching videos with sex stereotypes can influence American college student's attitudes towards adversarial sexual relationships. She stresses that this effect hasn't been found on researches made on movie violence and objectification in advertisement so it might not apply to every media. According to Kalof, one possible explanation for her findings is that people might associate the scenario of music videos with their personal experiences. She also found that the video had different effects on men and women.

In her qualitative study, Rogge Steele (1999) used Steele & Brown's Media Practice Model to try to understand how Media influences teenagers' sexuality and view on sexuality. She conducted group interviews with 51 teenagers from different backgrounds. Some were also asked to keep a recorded journal and to comment the important items in their rooms. The Media Practice Model states that teenagers chose the Media they watch according to who they are and those media help them to define who they are. The Media Practice Model can be broke down into different stages: Selection, Interaction, Application, and Identity. Those stages all interact together in order to create what the author calls the "lived experience". Selection is explained by the fact that teenagers choose the Media they watch in accordance with situations they encounter in their own lives, they will be more likely to watch a

program if they can identify to the characters or if some characters are similar to people they know in real life. Also it is stated that for the teens to believe in the Media they watch “it must correspond with what they know of the world through lived experience” (Rogge Steele 1999). Interaction refers to how the teenager watches media, it is different that simple exposure as the context is extremely important. Application is used to cover what teens understand from the media and how they use the information on a conscious or less unconscious way. Resistance is cited, it is a way for marginalized teens to embrace media which supposedly challenge society. It is also said in this study that teenagers looking for answers in media might reproduce in real life the same action in real life if they think what they see in the media is similar to what they experience. For teenagers, consuming media is not necessarily a lonely act as some enjoy watching or listening to it in groups and will talk about what they saw or heard with their peers. The author concluded that as teens `life experiences shapes their interaction with media the effects of media on teenagers can be quite different, especially since the context in which the Media message is delivered is also important.

According to Bandura (1969), observing others is a necessary and safe process in socialization. Observing the outcome of the actions perpetrated by social models allows one to modify its own behavior without going through personal experimentation. Learning from others is not only a safer process but also a faster one. Bandura (1969, p214) describes identification as the process “in which a person patterns his thoughts, feelings or actions after another person who serves as a model”. Even though parents and children have similarities, those similarities are not all due to imitation as other processes are involved; moreover parents are not the only models that children can possibly learn from. An identificatory event is referred by Bandura (1969, p217) as “the occurrence of similarity between the behavior of a model and another person under conditions where the model`s behavior has served as the determinative cue for the matching responses”. Such events are difficult to analyze as often events prompt similar reactions from different persons without them modeling their actions on a model. Bandura explains that observational learning makes use of a verbal and an imaginal representational system. The imaginal representation is a process where a person codes the observed stimulus events of a model into his mind in order to access it and reproduce it at a later time. The verbal

representation, which is the most common representation, involves coding the observed stimulus into verbal symbols. For one to reproduce a behavior, he has to pay attention to all the cues prompting the behavior. Bandura states that the retention process, how one remembers a coded behavior, can be enhanced through practice. Through the motoric reproduction process, a person will use coded behavior from models to react to a situation but one cannot always act upon the coded behavior due to self-limitation. The impossibility of grasping the totality of the model behavior can also limit the observational learning. For Bandura, a person chooses which action to model based on incentives. He adds that social sanctions and the reinforcing consequences can partly determine the use of identification process. Action and models rewarded tend to be imitated while those who are punished are avoided but there are limitations such as the role of the model and how he is perceived by the observer. A high status model is more likely to be copied (Bandura, 1965, 1968).

Bandura (1977) states that people`s behavior come from the interaction of several processes and divides those processes into those involving “learning by response consequences” and those involving “learning through modeling”. The first group of processes is triggered by the outcomes of actions while the second group is based on the observation of others. Bandura explains that observational learning contains several important processes called the attentional processes, retention Processes, motor reproduction processes and motivational processes. Attentional processes refer to the selection of the observed action, retention processes to how people remember the observed action, the motor reproduction processes involves going from symbolic representation of actions to the implementation of those actions by the observer while the motivational process refers to how one analyze the likeliness of an outcome for his own actions. The motivational processes involve choosing a rewarded action for model other a punished one. Bandura notes that reinforcement can play a minor role in observational learning mainly by influencing the choice of the model or modeled action. An observed action can be coded through physical demonstration, pictorial demonstration or verbal description; verbal description is the dominant way. Bandura recognized the influence of media on behavior, in his own words ”another influential source of social learning is the abundant and varied symbolic modeling provided by television, films, and other visual media. It has been

shown that both children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling” (Bandura, 1977, p39). The responses acquired through modeling can take new forms diverging from the original model. Abstract modeling, where an observer applies an observed behavior in a similar but different situation exemplifies this phenomenon.

For Bandura, the formation of moral judgment is a complex process involving many criteria such as the nature of the act and the nature of the one performing the act. By the way of attentional, cognitive and disinhibitory mechanisms, one can have his moral judgment modified if he is exposed to a model with a divergent behavior says Bandura. The moral views expressed by a model can raise attention on elements, allowing a person to reassess previously judged situations and change the moral standards of the observer in the process. The influence of the model regarding moral judgments can be limited if the observer does not understand the action or judge it insufficiently rewarded. The conceptual skills of the observer and the consequences of the action are essential if an observer is to change his moral judgment. All moral judgments are not easily modifiable reminds Bandura. If exposed to several models, observers can mix features of those different models, creating a new response; this process is called creative modeling. The observation of models can inhibit or reinforce previously learned behaviors. High status people are more likely to become models than low status people. Status can be seen as an indicator of how successful the actions of an individual are, resulting in the fact that high status people are assumed to act in a proper way. Appearance, style, age, speech, symbols of socioeconomic success, as well as signs of expertise can indicate that the actions of a model are right.

The people the most likely to be influenced by a model are, says Bandura (1977, p89) “those who lack confidence and self-esteem, who are dependent, and who have been frequently rewarded for imitativeness”. The features of the models matter more when the outcome of an action is unclear. If an action performed by a model is rewarded, it will more likely be endorsed by an observer. Bandura adds that if a socially sanctioned action is performed by a model and goes unpunished, it will have the same effect that a rewarded action. Seeing an action being punished will deter the observer from performing it. People can learn the results of an action by

observing others performing it especially if the observer has some similarities with the model. By observing a model performing an action, people can understand the circumstances prompting punishment or reward but also what kind of reward or punishment they would obtain in a similar situation. One can also learn how to react when faced with a particular situation by watching others. When a model is rewarded for performing an action, his status becomes higher in the eyes of the observer while being punished lowers it unless he is being punished for defending something he believes in. The observers usually not only pay attention to the outcome of a performed action but also to the perception of the outcome by the model.

For Bandura (1999) people learn through the results of others` actions but not merely by passively observing. When observing an act, they make hypothesis concerning the mechanisms behind the action and its outcomes and change their thoughts according to them. Through abstract modeling, people extract the rules ruling an action or judgment and apply it to different settings or improve it. Bandura notes that mass media give people access to many models. People learn while watching others through symbolization. Symbolization is a cognitive tool allowing people to make sense of their environment. People observe others performing and pay attention to their success and failures, they deem actions leading to failure negative while they view positively behaviors leading to success. Computer simulations allow people to test outcomes outside the constraints of real lives if the simulations are similar to reality.

Grusec (1992), in her comparison of the social learning theory approach of Sears and Bandura, states that Bandura and Williams saw imitation as key to the social learning process. She adds that they found that results of the model`s actions could have an effect on the observer`s action. As a result, it appears that someone might be deterred for performing an action without experiencing the negative effects of it. Modeling, is a four parts process including: attention, retention, symbolic representation, and processing of motivational variables. Grusec notes that according to Bandura, self-regulation is an important part of modeling. Different factors regulate the choices of people regarding their observed actions and models. Amongst those factors she cites the perceived differences of ability between the

observer and the model, the value given to an action and how much control people think they have on their life. Grusec understands that for Bandura, environment, behavior, cognition and other personal factors shape each other. She adds that Bandura considers cognition essential in observational learning as it allows interpreting an observed action.

O'Rorke (2003) notes that Bandura found that observing other's action was a simple way of learning. Bandura's social learning theory describes observational learning as a cognitive process. O'Rorke mentions how, through vicarious reinforcement, people can observe the rewards models obtain from their behaviors and expect these rewards to be obtained for similar behavior. Attention, retention, motor skills capacity (being able to reproduce a behavior), and reinforcement contingencies are all part of observational learning. O'Rorke mentions that some groups try to change the models depicted in media in order to change society. According to Bandura (1986) vicarious influence can modify the observer's attitude, emotional reactions and behaviors. O'Rorke notices that television often portrays real life world and that it might lead people without strong real life models to take it for the real world. He further adds that commercials can be especially influential as they often show success and people are more likely to take successful people as models. Through social interaction, people are exposed to media content even without watching which make them possibly influenced by them.

Table 1.1 theories related to organized crime

| Name | Content | Possible application to Triads |
|--|--|--|
| Rational choice theory (Beccaria, bentham) | due to lack of social opportunities youth engage in criminal activities | Not being able to find a well-paid job some youth might join the Triads |
| Miller`s learning theory (Miller, 1958) | People commit crimes because of specific mental conditions, sociopathic personality. | As Triads often rely on violence Triad members might be people prone to violence or sociopaths |
| Psychological traits (Farrington, 1988) | Youth gang provides a practice for criminal activities leading to organized crime | Triad groups might be the natural evolution for members of deviant youth groups |
| Differential association theory (Sutherland, 1973) | people learn criminal behavior by associating with criminals | Those with friends or relatives in Triad groups might join them |
| Relative deprivation (Blan & Blau, 1982) | The proximity of a rich neighborhood with a poor one might some people living in the poor one to commit crime as they have a feeling of injustice | Those living in a poor area might be frustrated if a rich neighborhood is near , they might join the Triads as they are dissatisfied |
| Anomie theory)Merton, 1938) | Not being able to reach societal goal one man see crime as easier way to achieve those goals. | Triads might be seen as a way to obtain success and money |
| Differential opportunity theory (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960) | young male from poor district find it impossible to reach societal goals and change their condition while organized crime provide them with a sense of purpose | Poor male teenagers might feel alienated from society and find friends and a way to achieve success in the Triads |
| Blocked opportunity theory(Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973) | When chances of success are unequal some people might turn to crime to attain it. | Triads might be seen as a way to become rich and have power |
| Culture conflict theory (Sellin, 1938) | Members of groups not fully accepted by conventional society develop their own norms diverging from those of the mainstream society. | Members of poor neighborhood might not easily fit in traditional and Triads might be more accepted |
| Enterprise theory (Smith, 1980) | Organized crime responds to a demand not fulfilled by the traditional market place | People in legitimate business might seek Triads for protection or help when they feel the law is powerless |

Despite the illegal status of the Triads and the difficulty to gather accurate facts about them, some detailed studies or accounts of Triads in Hong Kong have been made. These studies and reports present a fairly detailed view of the Triad activities until the end of the 1990`s but do not provide information on the evolution of the Triads since then. If American gangster movies are well documented it is not the case of Triad movies as they tend to only occupy a small section of researches and books about Hong Kong films. If no studies have been on influence of Triad movies on the perception of Triads many studies reports how movies and media can influence the audience.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

The idea that movies and media have an impact on the audience is not new and many scholars researched the truth behind this claim and how one could be influenced by what he sees on television or in cinema. Several theories briefly mentioned in this chapter explain how media and movies can change a viewer`s perception. Among those, the Social Learning Theory explains the best how youngsters could change their views after watching a Triad movie, it is therefore described here. Based on the Social Learning Theory and the supporting theories, a tentative model explaining the possible effects of Triad movies on the audience have been developed.

Theories on the Influence of Media on the Audience

Social Learning Theory

Al Bandura`s social Learning theory states that cognitive, vicarious ,self-reflective and self-regulative processes all influence one another and also influence people. According to Bandura`s vicarious experiment, not only do people learn from their own experiences but they also observe and interpret the consequences of other people`s actions. They tend to reproduce actions that they`ve seen being reinforced and avoid actions that provoke punishment. Modeling allows people to learn faster by differentiating models that work from those who do not, they then gain more information to make their own judgment and eventually change their behavior. Media allow people to get exposed to much more situations than real life; it can therefore be a very important source for vicarious experiment (Bandura, 1996). Applied to Triad movies, social learning theory would imply that movies depicting Triad members being rewarded because of their affiliation with the Triad, in terms of status, money or relationship would influence viewers to view Triads positively while movies showing Triad members getting punished, by being killed or arrested, because of their affiliation would give viewers a negative image of the Triads.

Priming Theory

Priming theory states that once a subject sees an encoding behavior on TV he will relate it to his preexisting thoughts about the behavior which will make it fresher in

the subject's memory and therefore will make him more likely to make judgments about this behavior (Hansen & Hansen, 1990). For Triad movies it would mean that watching Triad movies will make people think more about their preexisting Triad related experience and would let them make judgment upon it.

Cultivation Theory

Developed by Georges Gerbner, this theory states that heavy TV watchers might be influenced by the content of what they see and might take the TV world as a reliable source for information, especially if what they see on TV has common elements with their real life. (Escobar-Chaves, Tortolero, Markham, Low, Eitel, & Thickstun, 2005). By applying this theory to Triad movies it would mean that people watching a lot of Triad movies on TV would tend to believe that real world Triad members are the same as in the movies.

Media Practice Model

The media practice model posits that the type of media adolescents choose to watch is based on who they are and who they want to be (Brown, Steele, and Walsh-Childers, 2002). This would mean that young people who usually watch Triad movies want to be or identify themselves with either Triads members or police officers.

Super Peer Theory

The Super peer theory (Strasburger, 2006) states that media can give adolescents a view of what normative behavior is and can also have more influence on them than their regular peers. Media give the adolescents an ideal view of what is normative through the characters portrayed in programs. When Characters as well as actors are appealing, teenagers might want to act like them in order to be like them. By using characters few years older than the intended viewers, media production targeting young audience would give them images of who they might be rather than who they are. This would mean that Triad movies with young and fashionable characters being in the Triad would make younger audience think that being in Triads is a suitable way for them as they would consider the characters valid role models.

Application to Triad Movies

The mentioned theories can all explain how watching a media can influence perception, especially for young viewers, but they all have distinctive features. The media practice model and the Cultivation theory are long term effects and have more impact on people watching a lot of media. The effects of the priming theory and the super peer model might not be long term processes but they still rely on the subject watching media for a long time. For Triad movies to impact on people through these effects, people have to watch a lot of them.

According to the cultivation theory, if one watches many triad movies on TV, he will believe that the Triad world is as depicted on TV. Some limitations to this theory when applied to Triad movies are the fact that it might be difficult to relate older Triad movies to the present days. In addition, as all Triad movies do not present Triads the same way, it might be difficult to extract a “Triad world” from them but where depictions of Triad behavior and elements are consistent in movies, it is possible for some viewers to take them as real. Following the media practice model, it would appear that young people interested in Triads and in possibly joining them would watch more Triad movies and that these Triad movies would influence their view of the Triads, potentially making Triads appealing to them. For this process to have effect, one has to choose to watch many movies about Triads and find them appealing in a way. As Triad movies often portray rich and powerful Triad members, it is possible that some youngsters see them as models. Those who rarely watch Triad movies and those who, due to their age or sex would have no way of emulating the successful Triad characters, are not likely to be influenced by the effect of the media practice model.

As the priming theory relies on memory and how media bring to attention previous thoughts and experiences, if one watches triad movies he will think about his previous Triad related experiences. When people have no recollection of Triad related events they might make a judgment based on what they see on movies. Those who watch many Triad movies might reconsider their previous judgments or make new judgments more favorable to Triads. People whose previous Triad related experiences are negative or those who watch very few Triad movies are less likely to be sensible to the effect of the priming process.

The super peer theory states that adolescents might take the media world for

normative and want to emulate the appealing characters. When young people watch many Triad movies and do not have real life references, it is possible that they believe the Triad world depicted in movies is similar to the real life Triad world. It is also possible that they might want to imitate the beautiful characters. It appears that youngsters will be more likely to think of the Triad world they see in movies as real if this world is realistic and set in recent times. Movies made in the 1990`s and in the 2000`s, even if depicting society accurately, do not have much in common with life in 2012 which makes it difficult to take them as real.

The media practice model, cultivation theory, super peer theory, the priming theory, and the social learning theory all explain how one can be influenced by media but each of them have limitations and are more effective in particular conditions. The social learning theory is the theory with the fewer limitations and the most adaptable to various factors. Not every youngster often watches Triad movies and the social learning theory is the most convincing theory when explaining why those who watch few triad movies can be influenced by them

The Social Learning Theory

Many theories deal with the influence of media on the audience, all seem to conclude that watching a movie can definitely influence someone but views differ when it comes to the factors responsible for this influence and its extent. This research will be based on Bandura`s social learning theory as it can effectively be used to explain how watching a Triad movie might influence viewer`s perception on Triads.

Developed by Bandura in 1977, the Social Learning Theory is an explanation of the origin of people`s behavior which describes how people learn partly through social interaction. It is a complex theory which includes many different concepts and as this study is about the modification of perception through movie watching, we will focus here on the vicarious or observational learning part of the Social Learning Theory as it is the most related to this study. Vicarious learning is a process in which one individual learn through watching others perform an act.

Following Bandura`s findings, learning comes mainly through direct experience or through watching others. For people to make sense of the world, personal experience is not sufficient as one`s personal experience would not provide enough data. People naturally cope with the shortage of personal experimentation by watching others.

There are many conditions regarding which kind of behavior one learns from, but people tend to learn from a behavior that has been rewarded and reject one that has been sanctioned. Through observational learning people can understand better their surrounding especially to learn rules, informal rules are often understood with the help of vicarious feedback. Also with observational learning people can confront the validity of their opinions.

Observational learning goes through the attention process and the retention process. The attention process is the phase in which a subject will select which model to observe. It is conditioned by many factors including who the observer is with and the appeal of the model. By watching others, people can learn what is appropriate and what is not, yet many factors can conditioned the effect of the observed behavior. Amongst them is the degree of understanding of the observed behavior. As for vicarious experimentation to have an effect, one has to understand which act is performed and if it is rewarded or punished, one cannot learn from something he does not understand. Moreover the situation as well as the models have to be familiar to the one who observed, he has to be able to relate them to his own life, if not he might dismiss the observed behavior.

When observing others one`s own previous experience has to be taken into account since we tend to use the past to understand new situation. The features of the observer play a role in the impact of the observed action since he need to understand the behavior first and then think about how it could applied to him. The observer needs to believe that the consequences of the observed act will be reproduced each time the behavior is done. For an observer to take informative clues from a model he has to be able to relate to the model.

The retention process is the phase in which the observer code the observed action in order to remember it. An observed action will be coded as symbols or images which can serve as guide for the subject. But the factors leading to which information is retained are many; they may include previous experiences as well as preconceptions. Replaying the observed action in one`s mind will increase the effect of this action. Vicarious learning works best under certain conditions. People tend to endorse behavior leading to a reward but just seeing a forbidden action unpunished can lead the observer to consider that the action has been rewarded. Also subjects observing

others performing an action without being punished for it might have the feeling that if they were to perform this action they wouldn't be punished either.

Moral judgments can change when confronted to different views; they can lose their intensity or be reinforced. It has to be noted that some moral judgments are more difficult to change than others. Inhibitions and fear can be acquired or lost through vicarious learning but people lose inhibitions more easily than they acquire them. Observational learning can also allow a subject to be less affected by an object he dislikes onto the point to even liking it. If a model self criticizes his own behavior even if he does not get punished an observer is not likely to adhere to the said action. One of the aim of the social learning theory is to explain people's behavior and it can be interesting to note that if seeing a forbidden act being punished can deter a subject from reproducing it, a subject can also learn the forbidden behavior from the model if he didn't know it before. The factors involved when one reproduces an observed behavior are: the stimulus inducement, the personal gain expected from the action, the benefits gained by the model, experienced functional value, the possible risks as well as the self-derivative evaluative and the social barriers.

The model is important as people can have a great number of models to observe; people usually want to reproduce the actions of successful people especially if the observer is with low self-esteem. Nonetheless rewards and punishments can positively or negatively change the status of the model. According to Vicarious expectancy learning, when people witness emotional distress in others they can feel the same mental effects as those who actually experienced the action. But for this phenomena to attain its maximum effect the stimulus cannot be too weak or too extreme. According to Bandura, media are especially important for observational learning in several aspects. As media present a vast array of people and situations they are a source of choice for vicarious learning. Moreover as people choose to watch they usually pay attention to what is being showed even more if one actually pays to watch a movie. For observed actions have a greater impact on the mind when people pay attention than when they do not. Finally, people's perception towards elements absent from their lives will have more chances to be influenced by the media.

A Tentative Model for Triad Movies Influence

Many theories deal with the influence of movie watching on the audience, all seem to conclude that watching a movie can definitely influence someone but views differ when it comes to the factors responsible for this influence and its extent. Following the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) it seems that the vicarious experiment plays a role in people's thoughts and actions. People will tend to reproduce or see as favorable, actions that are rewarded while they'll be deterred from or will have a negative view of actions resulting in a punishment. It is of use to consider what the definition of reward and punishment is since many actions are not directly rewarded or sanctioned in a clear way. Receiving a large sum of money or being beaten would be valid examples of reward and punishment but life's actions are not always sanctioned as simply besides the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction brought differs depending on people's values. If in real life we do not always see the outcome of others' actions in movies it is easier to understand the consequences of acts as by the end of a movie it is easy to see if a character's actions has brought him suffering or joy the difficulty might lie in the fact that at times and especially in Triad movies both are intertwined.

In many Triad movies the characters would be either rewarded by wealth and success or punished by death or jail time. As many movies mix those different elements it is useful to pay attention to whom receives what, when the good guys end up rich and happy and the bad guys end up dead or in jail the audience might be incline to think that the actions of the protagonists were right but when they end up suffering then they might think that their actions or the circumstances leading to them were not right.

People might want to reproduce or view favorably an action they have seen such as joining the Triads if this action does not go against their morale codes or beliefs. In effect if someone believes that doing something is wrong, seeing this action rewarded in a movie would not make him or her think that it is a good thing to do. In the same way people would rarely adopt a conduct that is against their deep beliefs, sex, status, and social role. A police officer seeing a thief enjoying the money he stole would probably not consider that breaking the law is a good thing. The identity and education of a viewer will be important in the way he interprets a movie. Girls

and boys for example might see the same event but interpret it in a different way. When it comes to Triad movies it is interesting to note that protagonists are often males from lower background. Females hardly play a part outside being the hero's romantic interest.

The way the message of a movie is delivered can also be an indicator as to how one will perceive it. Watching a movie with one's parents can be significantly different than watching it with one's friends. Parents might often tend to comment more on the reprehensive actions they see while peers might be more inclined to praise the "cool" elements they watch. The movie watching environment can therefore play an enticing or deterring role regarding the delivery of the message of the movie.

With their commercial goal, movies tend to employ eye catching elements such as beautiful casts and luxury items. Viewers especially youngsters might want to become like the characters and possess what they have and they might get to the conclusion that the best way to achieve this end is to act like them. This phenomena often has a light consequence that is that the public would copy some parts of the movie such the character's style or hairdo but it can also spread to actions. Also, people who share some common points with the protagonists might recognize themselves in them, hence seeing them in a sympathetic light.

Watching many times the same type of media can add a sense of desensitization, this phenomenon as often been observed regarding violence but it could also take effect with Triads. Triads are viewed by society as a negative thing but not necessarily in the movies as many characters are supposed to be good and to them being part of the Triads is not such a bad thing so it is understandable that after seeing many Triad movies the Triads might not be seen as such a bad thing.

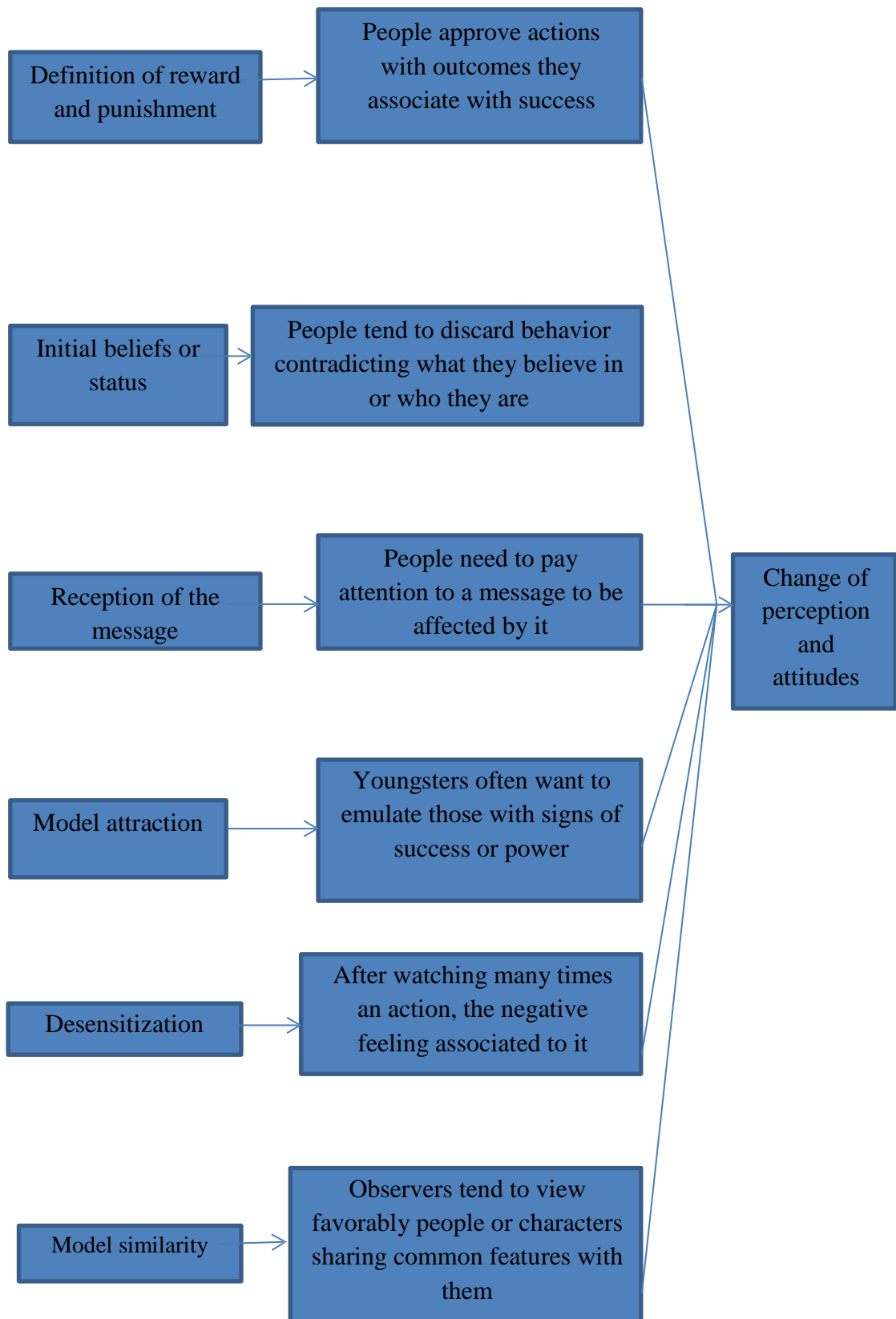
Triads are illegal in Hong Kong and yet many movies would portray them or at least some of their members as kind hearted and chivalrous so people who are not well accepted by society or who are unhappy with their situation might side with the Triads they see in movie hence having more respect for real life Triads.

Many factors can influence the extent of which a movie will influence its audience. With their stories of young men reaching to the top by joining the Triads or meeting their demise, Triad movies surely appeal more to some people than to others. Even if

Triad movies are often very different one from the other they all tend to have for protagonists young men from relatively poor background. Women rarely have an active role and they quite often act the parts of prostitutes or bar hostesses and they frequently get raped or encounter trouble but they rarely enjoy the same wealth and success as the men so it is natural to think that Triad movies might not have the same influence they have on males. Most of the Triad members in movies come from poor upbringing so even if they become, people from upper classes, while they might still enjoy those types of movies might find it difficult to relate to the characters if they do not really share the same culture.

It seems that one will change his views about Triad movies or view them differently if he is familiar with some elements of the Triad world as depicted by movies. Watching Triad movies in a certain environment such as at the movie theatre with friends would also facilitate the movie message and adherence to it. Finally, personal taste will always influence how one perceives a movie.

1.2 The Influence of Movies on Perception and Attitude



Chapter Four

Research Design

Methodology

This study is in two parts. The first part consisting of analyzing movies to find which messages about the Triads they send to the audience, content analysis has been chosen. Content analysis can be done in many ways. When analyzing movies, the question of the unit of analysis is essential. While counting the occurrences of words of behavior could have been used it has been discarded here as it would put too much restraint of the data collection. As the research question involves the portrayal of Triad members it made sense to base the content analysis on the characters and code their behaviors. Triad movies being a “genre“, the same codes can be found in all the movies therefore there might not be much meaning in analyzing occurrences of words or actions. The sampled movies are the 10 most successful Triad movies at the Hong Kong box office. A coding scheme has been made and modified after a pre-test done with a second coder has been done.

For the second part of the study the influence of triad movies on young people`s perception of Triads has been analyzed. To do so, a survey method has been considered but abandoned due to the difficulty of assessing the change of perception by a survey. Instead, the uses of a survey combined with experimental method were used.

Coding Scheme

The unit of analysis is individual characters. All the characters having a significant impact on the plot and being part of a triad group have been analyzed. The characters analyzed are physically present in the movie and are either main or supporting roles. To be able to code a character, enough information regarding his identity and his values must be provided and only first and second roles fit these criteria.

The main characters are the ones on which the plots are based, Triad movies have usually a limited number of main characters but it can range from one to many, although, if too many characters are said to be “main” their importance will diminish.

The supporting characters are those who support or antagonize the main character(s), they are important regarding the plot yet it does not center on them. There are more minor characters than main or secondary roles but their influence on the plot is equally less important regarding the plot which is why they were not coded. Triad movies being quite Manichean, antagonists and allies of the main characters have also been differentiated as actions do not have the same impact whether they are perpetrated by the main protagonists or their antagonists.

As this study addresses the effect of Triad representation, only the characters easily identifiable by the audience were coded. All characters not belonging to a Triad group have been discarded. A Triad group, for this part of the study, is defined as a Chinese criminal organization in Hong Kong. Men are usually much more represented in Triad movies than women but women belonging to Triad organization are still found in movies. A distinction will be made between male and female characters.

The first part of the coding process consists in identifying which characters will be coded; this step is about identifying the important characters of the movies. Once this has been done, the sex and role in the plot (allies of the hero or antagonists) of the identified characters are defined. The final and main part of the coding process involves analyzing the characters` behaviors and values.

The research question of this part of the study is: What are the values of the Triad members in movies?

The coding will be done under three different themes, relationships, goals and way of life. The themes used to code the characters` behavior are all traditionally associated to Triads. From the literature review it appears that Triads are or have been associated with positive and negative terms. The positive references of the Triads come mainly from its mythological history but also from few facts while the negative image of the Triads comes from reports of their actions and the victims of their crimes. Films being fictions not claiming to be true knowing if the movies are portraying reality is not focus on this study so the supposed values associated with Triads real or false have been coded and for convenience`s sake classified into three different categories. Regarding Triad relationship not much can be said of how real triad members relate to each other`s as there are not many testimonies of real life

Triad members talking about their in group relationship but myths about the Triads constantly refer to friendship (and brotherhood) and unity or the feeling of being part of a same group. From the tales of the legendary founders of the Triads to the ceremonies of associations to enter a group, those two values are always mentioned which can explain why they are almost always present in Triad movies. This study assesses how far the characters of the movies live by them. The importance of family bonds rarely mentioned when talking about Triads but it has been included in this coding scheme as all the Triad movies include this theme some even making it a central element.

Scholars and law enforcement agents might be unsure of the origin of the Triads and their initial goals they all agree on the fact that money is the main concern of modern Triads with power over others being close second. Similarly to family stability is not known for being a trait of the Triads but many characters in Triad movies express a desire for keeping things in order, it has thus been included in this study. Few things are known about how Triad members live besides the fact that they have to be able to violent to not only do business but establish or maintain their reputation. Mythical accounts also describe them as placing loyalty above all, finally morality has been included as Triads members are Manichean characters either doing good or bad things, it seemed logical then to assess the morality of the characters.

I) Relationship Category

It codes how the character relates with others, it will include the following items, family, friendship and belonging to a group. These items will be rated using a Semantic aspect scale with 0 meaning that they are not taken as important in the life of a character while 6 will mean that they are extremely important.

Family

Refers to the importance of family relationship and family members. This item codes the prominence of filial piety, bonds with siblings and respect for family members. 0 would mean that the character would have no regards for his family and would show signs of hate towards its members while 6 would apply to a character placing his family above all and ready to do anything for its members

Friendship

Refers to bonds with friends and colleagues. This item concerns the interactions with non-blood related people who are close to the main character. It assesses if the character has such people around him, if he is close to them and how he treats them. 0 would be applied to a character hurting and betraying his friends repeatedly while 6 would apply to a character for which friends are everything

Belonging to a group

This item assesses how important is the group he belongs to for a character. It rates how much a character respects the group he belongs to. 0 would apply to a character who would not care or respect his group at all and 6 means that the character considers the group the most important thing in his life and would sacrifice everything for it.

II) Goals

It refers to what a character wants; it is divided into money, success and stability.

Money

This item refers to the desire for wealth. 0 indicates that the character does not care about money at all and 6 that obtaining money is his priority.

Success

Success is similar to Money, it means here reaching the top of the social ladder.

Stability

Accounts for the desire to avoid unplanned events. The Semantic aspect scale will also be used 0 meaning that the character does not desire the item while 6 means that it is a great source of motivation. 0 applies to a character who does not care if his actions brings chaos and 6 to a character who does everything he can to keep things the way they are.

III) Way of life

It contains items related to how a character leads his life and what he or she considers important. It is divided into violent behavior, loyalty and. All items will

be measured using The Semantic aspect scale with 0 meaning that character never act in this way while 6 will mean that he frequently does.

Violent behavior

Refers to how often a character commits an act of physical violence it includes actions such as fighting or killing. 6 is used for a character who frequently does violent actions such as killing, fighting, or assaulting.

Loyalty

It assesses how loyal is a character. It rates the devotion and respect of a character for his organization, colleagues, or friends. 0 applies to characters who constantly harm knowingly or betray those they to whom they have obligations while 6 apply to those who always put these obligations first no matter what is the price.

Morality

This items refers to which extend a character tries to do the right thing and how good are his values. A rating of 0 means that that character does not have any moral standard while 6 will mean that he is a good person who is true being true to his values.

Male characters are coded under M while female characters are coded under the letter F. Protagonists and characters helping them are coded under P and Antagonists under A.

Table 2.1 Importance of Relationships for a Character

| Character`s name | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|--|----------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Important characters appearing physically in the movie | M for male or F for female | P for protagonist and his allies or A for the antagonists | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of family for the character | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of friendship for the character | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of the group for the character |

Table 2.2 Character`s Goals

| Character`s name | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|--|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Important characters appearing physically in the movie | M for male or F for female | P for protagonist and his allies or A for the antagonists | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of money for the character | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of success for the character | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of stability for the character |

Table 2.3 Character`s Way of life

| Character`s name | Sex | Role | Violence | Loyalty | Morality |
|--|----------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Important characters appearing physically in the movie | M for male or F for female | P for protagonist and his allies or A for the antagonists | From 0 to 6 regarding how often the character use violence | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of loyalty for the character | From 0 to 6 regarding the importance of doing the right thing for the character |

Experimental study

In the second part of this study a pilot study has been conducted. After finding a secondary school using convenience sampling, 22 students joining on voluntary basis were divided into two groups (a control group and an experimental group) of 11 students, in a random way. Both groups were asked to take seats in two different classrooms of their school and then fill a questionnaire (appendix 1) assessing one`s perception of Triads. To assess if Triad movies change the way young viewers consider the Triads, a Triad movie containing the core values of Triad movies has been shown to the experimental group while the control group has been shown a comedy not involving Triads or Triad members. After having watched the movie, the students in both groups have been given a post questionnaire identical to the pre questionnaire. The control group has been shown a comedy with no Triad elements

Data Collection

Before showing the movie, a pre questionnaire has been given to the students; the same questionnaire has been given to the students after the movie. The same setting has been reproduce with a control group to whom a comedy not involving Triads has been shown. Convenience sampling has been used to find a school with a good social background so that the students participating wouldn`t have much exposure to the Triads in real life. The students, all older than 16 years old, have been recruited on voluntary basis and randomly divided into two groups of 11 students.

This questionnaire has been created by using the conclusions reached after analyzing the 10 most successful movies at the Hong Kong box office and by considering the general ideas considering the Triads. Some items present in all the movies have also been used. A Likert scales has been used as it is the best method to assess the perception of the students provided that open questions might make it difficult for them to express what they think. The questionnaire has been divided into 8 parts.

Reasons for joining the Triads, this part contain two items assessing if the respondents considers that Triad members chose to do so by their free will. Triad movies often seem to indicate that the main protagonist is forced to join the Triads or does not have much choice in the matter. The second part, importance of family for Triad members, and importance of friendship for Triad members are self-explanatory. Friendship is common in all the triad movies and is supposed to be a core value for Triad members. Family is not traditionally associated with Triads but it is a recurring theme in Triad movies and is important in most of the characters` life. Importance of money for Triads has been included as Money is always one of the main reasons for joining the Triad but movies indicate that it is not always the main reason and that some Triad members do not see it as a priority.

Triad member`s status regards how triad members in society. Some characters in the sampled movies are frustrated by their low status in society and their condition is changed by being in the Triads. Importance of loyalty is assessed as it is supposed to be the core value of Triads and it is present in all the triad movies. Triad members` lifestyle assesses what the respondent thinks the life of a Triad member is. The last section, perception of Triads assesses how much the respondent thinks Triads are similar to that in reality and to regular people.

This pilot study tries to assess the changes operated in a young audience `s view of the Triads. Based on the previously discussed theories (The media practice model, cultivation theory, super peer theory, the priming theory and the social learning theory), the results of the post questionnaire should differ from the pre questionnaire showing an improved view of the Triads. Assuming that the students have a neutral or negative view of the Triads, the priming effect should make them think about the Triads and if the movie shows actions or behaviors different from their Triad related thoughts, they should change their answers in the post questionnaire. Questions

challenging the traditional view of the Triads, if echoed by a positive illustration in the movie, might have a different answer in the post questionnaire. For example, statements such as “Triad members just try to make a living”, which differs from the commonly held view of Triads, might be answered differently after watching the movie. As the media practice model and the cultivation theory explain the influence of media on long term exposure and in large quantity, those processes might not have much effect after watching only one movie. The super peer effect, on the other hand, might be considered, as seeing charismatic actors in the movie might lead the students to see more positively their behaviors or at least view them in a less negative way. Students might also consider that these actors are similar to real life Triad members. This effect can affect the perception of any behaviors but it might be stronger when the movie shows handsome characters performing glorious actions or when these characters are depicted in a visually appealing way. Statements similar to “Loyalty is important for Triad members” or “Triad members lead a glamorous life” might see more approval after the Triad movie has been shown.

Following the social learning theory, any behavior or action can be perceived differently after being watched. It is difficult to predict which action will have more impact on the students as vicarious learning is subject to many conditions such as personal characteristics and how one understands a performed action. Nevertheless, students with no prior exposure to Triads and not knowing much about them might think that some elements of the movie are close to what happens in reality. Answers related to usually unknown aspect of the Triad life might be especially subjects to change. The lack of real life referent might make the movie an alternative for learning about these behaviors. In this view, “Triad members join the Triads because they are pressured to do so” or similar statements might see the students rating them differently after watching the Triad movie.

Unless they know many Triad members, it is unlikely that the students have reliable information about the Triads; it is then possible that they change some of their answers according to what they saw in the movie, possibly reflecting an improved perception of the Triads.

The movie shown to the experimental group is *Young and Dangerous IV*. In this movie The Bosses of the Hung Hing group go to Thailand to ask the brother of the late Mr. Chiang to become their new leader which he agrees to. At the same time the

Hung Hing leader in the new Territories is assassinated by a member of the Tung Sing group. A contest between Chicken and Barbarian another Hung Hing member is launched in order to select the new leader of the new Territories. Helped by the Tung Sing leader, Chicken will be bullied by Barbarian and will eventually see his friend Dai Ting Yee die as he was trying to help Chicken in his fight. After some tension arises between Ho Nam and Chicken because of this the guilty ones will finally be caught and punished while Chicken becomes leader of the area.

This movie has been chosen because even though it was less successful than the movies studied, it reprises most of the same elements present in the sampled movies, namely a good hero and bad antagonists with opposed qualities.

Chapter Five

Findings

The first part of this chapter presents the findings of the content analysis of the ten most successful Triad movies at the Hong Kong Box office while the second part introduces the findings of the experiment.

Triad members' portrayal in Hong Kong movies

D) A Better Tomorrow (英雄本色) 1986

“A Better Tomorrow” is the story of two good friends, Mark, and Ho, working for a Triad group dealing with fake money. They are famous in the underworld and they are quite successful. As his younger brother graduated from the police academy, Ho wants to retire from the Triad life. Before this happens, he goes to Taiwan to do a mission on request of his boss; he then leaves for Taiwan with Shing, a young recruit. Things do not go as planned as Ho and Shing fall into a trap and must flee from the police; Ho sacrifices himself and surrenders to the police so Shing can escape.

At the same time, Ho`s father is murdered on Shing`s order. Kit, Ho`s brother, being unable to save him sees him die. Mark decides to avenge Ho and kills the man responsible for his arrest but is shot in the knee in the process, leaving him a cripple. Few years later, Ho comes back to Hong Kong, after being released from jail. He discovers that Mark work as a lackey for Shing who took over the organization while Kit is determined to arrest him. Ho decides to lead an honest life and refuses to help Mark getting revenge on Shing and also refuses to join Shing`s organization. Despised by his brother, he tries to be a regular taxi driver without being involved, which he will eventually have to do.

Kit is injured while falling in a trap set by Shing and Shing severely beats up Mark who swears to have his revenge. Ho still refuses to react until Shing sends some men to destroy his workplace. Mark then steals a compromising tape from the printing factory and is finally joined by Ho. Shing, furious by this event, kills his boss and frames Ho for it. Ho asks Shing for 2 million dollars in exchange for the tape but it is actually a trap as Ho gave the evidence to Kit`s girlfriend for her to pass to the police. At the time of the exchange, Ho and Mark take Shing as hostage but before

they can escape, Ho decides to stay. Mark finally comes back and is killed by Shing while fighting alongside Kit, who joined the fight, and Ho. As the police arrive, Shing tries to surrender as he is confident he will not be prosecuted. To prevent this, Kit gives his gun to Ho who kills Shing. In the last scene, Kit forgives his brother who surrenders to him and cuffs himself.

Characters

Ho (宋子豪)

Ho is calm and cool headed; he is a successful triad figure but decides to retire so his brother can be a police officer. As he does his final job he is set up but surrenders to the police so his companion can flee. After coming back, he decides to lead a simple and honest life but the police are after him while Shing wants him to work for him. Mark wants him to get revenge on Shing and Kit wants to arrest him. Besides Mark, the only one to be on his side is his boss at the taxi company. He will finally get involved and help Mark going after Shing. At the end of the movie he kills Shing and goes back to jail.

Mark (李馬克)

Mark is Ho's best friend, stylish and successful, he lives a carefree life but everything changes when Ho is set up and goes to jail. He decides to get revenge for him but is crippled in the process and becomes an errand boy for Shing. When Ho comes back, he wants to get his revenge but Ho refuses a first time. After being severely injured by Shing, he decides to steal an important tape incriminating Shing. Joined by Ho, he will leave with the money alone following Ho's advice but will come back to help him and will be killed by Shing.

Shing (譚成)

Shing is a young recruit with ambition, at the beginning of the story, he is supposed to learn from Ho and Mark but instead use their demise to take over the organization. After reaching the top he will do his best to humiliate Mark. When Ho refuses to work for him, he beats up his brother and Mark and thrashes his working place. When scolded by his boss for underestimating Ho, he kills him. After killing Mark, he will surrender himself without worries of going to jail but Ho will finally kill him.

Table 3.1 Importance of Relationships in “A Better Tomorrow”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ho | M | p | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Marc | M | p | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| Shing | M | A | 3 | 0 | 4 |

Table 3.2 Characters` Goals in “A Better Tomorrow”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|-------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ho | M | p | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Marc | M | p | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Shing | M | A | 6 | 6 | 1 |

Table 3.3 Characters` Way of Life in “A Better Tomorrow”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|-------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ho | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Marc | M | p | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Shing | M | A | 6 | 0 | 0 |

II) Rich and Famous (江湖情) 1987

“Rich and Famous”, tells the tale of two brothers, Kwok and Yung, during the 1960`s. Kwok is in fact the adopted brother of Yung and his sister, Wai Chiu. They all try to help their father who is a coolie. Wai Chiu works as a hostess while Kwok and Yun try their best to make money. With the help of their cousin, Mak, they manage to steal the drugs of a local gang leader, Chu Lo Tai. Chu Lo Tai manages to capture Wai Chiu but Kwok sacrifices himself to save her and ends up hostage of Chu Lo Tai. Yun and Wai Chiu then decide to ask for the help of Li Ah Chai, a powerful Triad boss who is also a client of Wai Chiu. He decides to help them and manages to have Kwok released. Li Ah Chai then takes Kwok and Yun under his wing, they try to have Mak join them, but the plan fails as it turns out that he is not tough enough for the job.

Later on, Li Ah Chai lets Kwok and Yung take care of an important deal but the deal turns out to be a trap and Kwok is badly injured. Li Ah Chai praises Kwok but scolds Yun who didn`t do as he was told. Shortly after, Li Ah Chai is in a bad situation as he is hiding a good friend of his who is wanted by all the other local bosses. As Li Ah Chai tries to negotiate with the other bosses he is angered by Yun and demotes him. Yun then makes a deal with Chu Lo Tai and kills Li Ah Chai`s friend. Li ah Chai discovers the truth and wants to kill Yun but Kwok intercedes in his favor and Li Ah Chai, after shooting in Yun`s hand, decides to banish the two brothers.

Later on, Li Ah Chai gets engaged with a relative of Kwok and Yun who rejected Yun previously. Following this event, Yun and Kwok have a meeting with Chu Lo Tai during which Yun tries to make Kwok joins them. Kwok refuses and Chu Lo Tai tries to kill him. Kwok goes to hide at his cousin`s place but Yun also goes there to look for him. He cuts his cousin`s pinky but the cousin still refuses to give away Kwok`s hiding place. Li Ah Chai then announces his wedding and invites Kwok and his cousin. The day of the ceremony, Yung and Chu Lo Tai send killers to assassinate Li Ah Chai who manages to flee with his wounded bride. All the killers will be killed as well as Mak but Li Ah Chai, his wife and Kwok manage to stay alive while Yung is caught by the police. At the end, Kwok leaves for Malacca to

stay away from the criminal life, Yun goes to jail for 6 years, Chu Lo Tai leaves Hong Kong and Li Ah-chai tries to retire from the underworld.

Characters

Kwok (林定国)

Kwok is the adopted brother of Yung and Wai Chiu. Filial, righteous and efficient, Li Ah Chai sees him as a potential successor. He chooses to remain loyal to Li Ah Chai and defends him against his brother. At the end of the movies he decides to leave Hong Kong and its crime world.

Yung (邓家勇)

Even though Yung treats Kwok like a blood brother he is really different. Ruthless and cunning, he cannot stand anything going against his will. He is sent off by Li Ah Chai and joins Chu Lai To. Having a personal hatred towards Li Ah Chai, he tries to have him killed but fails in his attempt and goes to jail for 6 years.

Li Ah-chai (李阿剂)

Li Ah-chai is one of the most powerful crime bosses in Hong Kong. Rich and well-connected, he is also wise and intelligent. He takes Yung and Kwok under his wing but is disappointed by Yung who does not live up to his expectations. He becomes at odds with the other Triad boss after he refuses to hand them a wanted friend of his. He falls in love with Yung`s relative and marries her after escaping the assassination commanded by Chu Lo Tai and Yung.

Table 4.1 Importance of Relationships in “Rich and Famous”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|------------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Kwok | M | p | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| Yung | M | A | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Li Ah-chai | M | P | 5 | 6 | 5 |

Table 4.2 Characters` Goals in “Rich and Famous”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Kwok | M | p | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Yung | M | A | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Li Ah-chai | M | P | 5 | 5 | 4 |

Table 4.3 Characters` Way of Life in “Rich and Famous”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|------------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Kwok | M | p | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Yung | M | A | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Li Ah-chai | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |

III) Tragic Hero (英雄好汉) 1987

“Tragic Hero”, is the sequel of rich and famous. Li Ah Chai ceased his criminal activities and is a happy father and husband, Yung is now Chu Lo Tai`s number two and is growing more arrogant and bolder every day. Chu Lo Tai made peace with Li Ah Chai while Kwok got married in Malacca and enjoys a peaceful life with the many children he adopted. Being restless, Yung kills Chu Lo Tai and vows to kill Li Ah Chai. Despite Yung`s provocations, Li Ah Chai tries to solve everything peacefully as he is now a father. His closest men, Number 6 and Big Eye, not bearing to stay inactive, plot to kill Yung themselves. At the same time, Kwok comes back to ask Yung to spare Li Ah Chai`s life. After giving him a hard time, Yung finally agrees to spare Li Ah Chai if the latter does not do anything to him.

Shortly after, Number 6 tries to kill Yung but he is instead killed by Yung`s men. Following this event, Li Ah Chai confronts Big Eye who in fact betrayed number 6. Big eye then explains that Li Ah Chai changed and cannot protect himself or his men anymore. Li Ah Chai just shoots him in the arm and lets him go but his driver kills Big Eye who was holding a knife.

Li Ah Chai then goes to a meeting with his old friends to tell them to be ready to fight but he discovers that it is a trap as Big Eye told them to bring their guns and warned the police. Li Ah Chai takes all the guns and surrenders. He is then taken to his mansion where the police is waiting for him. He is greeted by his old friend, the chief of police, who betrays him and tries to frame him but Li Ah Chai manages to escape. At the same time, Yung goes to bail out Li Ah Chai`s wife who Has been arrested and tries to seize this opportunity to rape her but he is unsuccessful. Li Ah Chai goes to find Kwok in Malacca with his wife and son. After recovering from his injuries he decides to go back to Hong Kong but is reluctant to take Kwok with him. Events forces themselves on them as Yung has Kwok`s house blown up. All of Li Ah Chai and Kwok`s families, except for Kwok`s father, are killed. Li Ah Chai, Kwok, and his father then go back to Hong Kong to take revenge on Yung. Follows a bloody battle opposing Kwok, his father and Li Ah Chai to Yung and his men. At the apex of the battle, Yung dies and Kwok`s father, Kwok and Yung are all arrested.

Characters

Yung (邓家勇)

After being released from jail, Yung has become the powerful second of Chu Lo Tai. He kills Chu Lo Tai and vows to kill Li Ah Chai. Driven by his ambition, he knows almost no boundaries and is even more ruthless than before. He accepts to spare Li Ah Chai after Kwok begs him to do so but changes his mind after Number 6 tries to kill him. He tries to have Li Ah Chai arrested by the police but when the attempt fails, he has both Kwok and Li ah Chai`s family killed. He still spares his father until his father tries to kill him. At the end, he dies when Li Ah Chai lets him fall to his death.

Li Ah Chai (李阿剂))

Li Ah Chai has drastically changed since the first movie, he is now a family man and puts his wife and son`s safety above all. Having befriended Chu Lo Tai, he thinks he can bargain a truce with Yung and avoid a bloodbath. Driven to a corner by Yung, he loses his family in an explosion commanded by Yung and comes back to Hong Kong to kill Yung which he will manage to do.

Table 5.1 Importance of Relationships in “Tragic Hero”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|------------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Yung | M | A | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Li Ah Chai | M | p | 6 | 6 | 4 |

Table 5.2 Characters` Goals in “Tragic Hero”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Yung | M | p | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Li Ah Chai | M | p | 4 | 4 | 6 |

Table 5.3 Characters` Way of Life in “Tragic Hero”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|------------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Yung | M | p | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| LI Ah Chai | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |

IV) To be Number One (跛豪) 1991

“To be Number One” is the story of Ho, an immigrant from Mainland China. He arrives in Hong Kong in the 1960`s and has to work under very difficult conditions to earn very little money, he is harassed by his boss as well as the police. With his friends he decides to quit his job and starts committing illegal activities. Having problems with the local Triads he finally joins them and becomes rapidly a rising star in a Triad group. The police working hand in hand with the Triads, Ho starts to collaborate with a police officer.

As he becomes richer and more successful he gets to antagonize his boss, Cool Kwan. This will lead both of them to start a feud which will see cool Kwan going to jail and Ho being crippled. Cool Kwan being away, Ho will replace him in a partnership with Lui, the chief of police. After cool Kwan has been released from jail, Lui, in a desire to maintain order will manage to make the different Triad bosses collaborate with each other for a time.

With the creation of the ICAC, Lui decides to migrate and urges the different powers in place to keep a low profile. Even though all his friends ask him to retire, Ho wants to cease the opportunity to wipe out his enemies during a meeting called by the chief of police. As the plan fails he loses much of his strength and is finally arrested by the police, mainly because of the testimony of his best friend.

Characters

Ho (吳國豪)

Ho is an immigrant from China who, unable, to have a decent life by using legal means will decide to embrace a criminal career. He will become extremely successful but also crippled. A good father and a good friend he is also hot tempered, arrogant and ruthless with his foes. Not willing to retire he will end up in jail.

Wu Ming (阿明)

Wu Ming is Ho`s best friend. He is a notorious womanizer which will cause his demise. After seducing cool Kwan`s mistress he will fall in love with her which will make Ho and cool Kwan being at odds with each other. He will start taking drugs and will even become an addict. At the end he collaborates with the ICAC to arrest Ho.

Wan (陳大文)

Wan is also a good friend of Ho. He is the most serious and reliable of the group and also the only one with a wife prior to the group`s arrival in Hong Kong. He always sides with Ho. At the end, he will choose to get arrested with Ho instead of migrating with his family.

Cool Kwan (肥波)

Cool Kwan is one of the most powerful Triad boss in Hong Kong. He takes Ho in and starts to antagonize him as success makes Ho more arrogant. He goes to jail because of Ho and will be at war with him until the end of the movie.

Table 6.1 Importance of Relationships in “To be Number One”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|-----------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ho | M | p | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Wu Ming | M | p | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Wan | M | p | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Cool Kwan | M | A | 3 | 4 | 3 |

Table 6.2 characters’ Goals in “To be Number One”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ho | M | p | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Wu Ming | M | p | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Wan | M | p | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Cool Kwan | M | A | 5 | 4 | 3 |

Table 6.3 Characters` Way of Life in “To be Number One”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|-----------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ho | M | p | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Wu Ming | M | p | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Wan | M | p | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| Cool Kwan | M | A | 5 | 3 | 3 |

V) Young and Dangerous (古惑仔之人在江湖) 1996

Young and Dangerous is the first of a series of movies dealing with a group of youngsters rising to the top in the Triad world. They are led by Chan Ho Nam and his best friend Chicken. In this first opus, Chan Ho Nam, Chicken and their friends make their first steps in the Hung Hing Society. Ho Nam is the best follower of Brother B, a prominent boss of Hung Hing and also a loyal lieutenant of the head of the society, the businessman Mr. Chiang. B's enemy is the Hung Hing lieutenant Ugly Kwan who unsuccessfully tries to convince Ho Nam to join his group. Mr. Chiang asks Ho Nam and his friends to take care of a problem involving the Society's casino in Macao but Ugly Kwan seizes the opportunity to frame Ho Nam. As a result, one of Ho Nam's close friend dies, Ho Nam is expelled from Hung Hing and Chicken leaves for Taiwan. Shortly after, Ugly Kwan stages a coup to take the head of the Hung Hing group. As Ho Nam lies low, taking care of a bar with his girlfriend and the remaining of his friends, Brother B and his family are cruelly murdered by Ugly Kwan. Ho Nam and his friends decide then to take their revenge and with the help of chicken who comes back from Taiwan with a lot of money and men they first manage to bribe back all the Hung Hing Lieutenants but also plan the downfall of Ugly Kwan who after managing to escape from Ho Nam and his friends is finally killed.

Characters

Chan Ho Nam (陳浩南)

Chan Ho Nam is the main character of the movie. He is the leader of his small group of friends who are all part of the Hung Hing Triad group. He is following Brother B who took him under his wing when he was still in secondary school. After being framed by a rival Triad member named "Ugly Kwan" he is expelled from Hung Hing and steps down until Brother B and his family are murdered. He then comes back to take his revenge on Ugly Kwan. He is very able and loyal.

Chicken (山雞)

Chicken is Chan Ho Nam's best friend and co-leader of their group of friends. He is a notorious womanizer. After learning that his girlfriend has been sleeping with

Chan Ho Nam (following a plot orchestrated by Ugly Kwan) he leaves for Taiwan to look for his cousin. He finally returns after the death of brother B, with a lot of money and men, to help Ho Nam avenging their former boss. He is efficient but playful and not serious.

Dai Tin-yee (大天二)

Dai Tin-Yee is a member of Ho Nam's group. He is serious and reliable. He always sides with Ho Nam no matter what is the issue.

Pau Pan (包皮)

Pau Pan is the least fierce of the group, with his chubby look he is a little bit withdrawn and tends to avoid the tasks requiring sheer strength. Deeply affected by the death of his brother he will blame Ho Nam for a short time after following him once again.

Chau Pan (巢皮)

Chau Pan is Pau pan's brother. Most of the time, he just merely follows the group with a cheerful smile but without having much decision making. He has a steady girlfriend he met in high school. He will perish in the Macao fiasco after sacrificing himself to allow his friends to escape. He is trustworthy and righteous.

Brother B (大佬 B)

Brother B is Chan Ho Nam's Boss. He is a senior Triad member in the Hung Hing organization. He has a wife and two kids for whom he would be ready to retire if he could. He is trusted by the head of the Hung Hing group, Mr. Chiang. He treats Ho Nam as his son. He and his whole family will be viciously executed by Ugly Kwan.

Ugly Kwan (靚坤)

Ugly Kwan is another senior member of Hung Hing. He is particularly cruel and successful as he deals drugs and produce pornographic movies. Acknowledging Ho Nam's worth he will try to recruit him but seeing his attempt ending in failure he will plot Ho Nam's demise. After scheming his way to the top of Hung Hing he murders

B and all his family which will prompt Ho Nam and his friends to react and get their revenge.

Mr. Chiang (蔣生)

Mr. Chiang is the acting head of the Hung Hing group. He has all the features of a rich business man. After being forced out of his position as head of the group he will calmly leave for Holland and after the death of Ugly Kwan it is said that he will resume his former duties.

Table 7.1 Importance of Relationships in “Young and Dangerous”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|-------------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Chau Pan | M | P | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| B | M | P | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Kwan | M | A | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 3 | 3 | 5 |

Table 7.2 Characters` Goals in “Young and Dangerous”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|-------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Chicken | M | p | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Chau Pan | M | P | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| B | M | P | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Kwan | M | A | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 4 | 5 | 4 |

Table 7.3 characters' Way of Life in "Young and Dangerous"

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|-------------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chau Pan | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| B | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Kwan | M | A | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 2 | 4 | 5 |

VI) Young and dangerous 2 (古惑仔 2 之猛龍過江) 1996

In the first part of the movie, Chicken tells Ho Nam what happened to him after he left Hong Kong for Taiwan after their trip to Macao. He explains that he went there to join his cousin who is a member of the San Luen gang, a powerful Triad group in Taiwan. He arrived from Hong Kong with no money but his cousin, a low ranking member of the Triad, introduced him to the Taiwan Triad way of life and also to his boss Lui Kung. Chicken started to be Lui Kung's driver until he killed an enemy of the Boss. He then started to rise in the organization as he became the protégé of Lui Kung. Meanwhile, he started to have an affair with Lui Kung's mistress Ting Siu-yiu. He successfully became a boss of the San Luen Gang before returning to Hong Kong to help Ho Nam avenging Brother B.

After Chicken's story, the movie depicts the fight between Ho Nam and Tai Fei, another member of Hun Hing. Both compete to take possession of Brother B's vacant seat as head of Causeway Bay. At the same time Mr. Chiang announces that

he obtained the rights of a casino in Macau while Chicken's Taiwanese boss, Lui Kung, arrives to Hong Kong. Lui Kung tries to force Mr. Chiang to share the rights of the Macau casino. Remaining loyal to Hung Hing, Chicken quit the San Luen gang. Shortly after doing so, his Taiwanese lover calls him back on behalf of Lui Kung and arranges a meeting. When Chicken and Ho Nam go to the meeting, Ting Siu-yiu kills Lui Kung and frames them. After this event, she takes the control of the San Luen gang with the help of the bodyguard of the boss. As she proceeds in taking control of the new Casino she is joined by Tai Fei who kills the bodyguard on her behalf. The opening of the Casino is ruined by Chicken and Ho Nam and Ting Siu-yiu loses the rights of the casino because of her Triad affiliation; she is then betrayed by Tai Fei who turns out to be an undercover for Hung Hing. The Hung Hing boys deliver her to the San Luen group with the bodyguard who had been in fact rescued by Tai Fei. As the San Luen group makes no secret that the woman will suffer a cruel fate, Chicken kills her in an act of love. Finally Ho Nam becomes the leader of Causeway Bay.

Characters

“Young and dangerous 2” features the same cast as “Young and Dangerous” with some small changes as some characters died and others appeared.

Ho Nam (陳浩南)

In this movie Ho Nam must compete for the position of leader of Causeway bay but things do not go smoothly as his girlfriend is being injured in a car accident and Chicken's Taiwanese gang bullies Hung Hing. Ho Nam will stay by Chicken's side and eventually order will prevail.

Chicken (山雞)

“Young and Dangerous 2” explains in its first part how Chicken went hiding in Taiwan after The Macao event in the first movie and how he reached a high position in the San Luen gang. As he tries to be the intermediary between his Taiwanese gang and the Hung Hing group, he realizes that he has to choose between the two. As he chooses to leave the San Luen group, his lover betrays him by framing him for

the murder of Lui Kung but his name will be cleared with the help of Taifei. At the end of the movie, he kills Siu-Yiu in order for her to avoid a cruel death.

Dai Tin-yee (大天二)

Dai Tin Yee starts a relationship with a friend of Smartie who helps him and Ho Nam recruiting hostesses for the bars they manage. Unaware that his girlfriend is the sister of Ho Nam`s rival, Tai Fei, he will deliver Ho Nam`s account book to him. After asking for forgiveness from Ho Nam he will be forgiven.

Pau Pan (包皮)

Besides following the group around, Pou Pan recruits a new fellow.

Mr. Chiang (蔣生)

Being back at the head of Hung Hing, Mr. Chiang takes Ho Nam under his wing. He keeps on trusting him even though Ho Nam is in a bad position. When threatened by the San Luen gang, Mr. Chiang refuses to give in.

Tai Fei (大飛)

Tai Fei is the Hung Hing leader of North Point. Seemingly unrefined and friendly he is in fact cunning but righteous. At the beginning of the movie he competes with Ho Nam for the leadership of Causeway Bay. He resorts to extreme means to prove that Ho Nam is stealing from the group but stops when he realizes it is not true. He will then pretend to help Ting Siu-Yiu in order to sabotage her plan. He pretends to kill the bodyguard but instead saves him so he can testify against Ting Siu-Yiu. At the end of the movie he leaves the position of leader of Causeway Bay to Ho Nam.

Lui Kung (雷震)

In the first part of the movie we can see this powerful triad boss trying to enter in politics in order not to be bullied by the government, he actually seems much more like a politician than a triad leader but he is in fact cunning and devious. He tries to use Chicken to take over the new casino of Hung Hing but fails and is murdered by his mistress.

Ting Siu-yiu (丁瑤)

The pretty mistress of both Lui Kung and Chicken is in fact a cruel and deviant murderer. Helped by Lui Kung`s bodyguard with whom she had an affair for a long time she kills Lui Kung and frames Chicken. She then tries to kill the bodyguard before taking the head of the San Luen gang and opening the new Macau casino. Her plan fails and she is killed by Chicken out of compassion.

Table 8.1 Importance of Relationships in “Young and Dangerous 2”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|--------------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Tai Fei | M | p | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Lui Kung | M | A | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Ting Siu-yiu | F | A | 3 | 2 | 2 |

Table 8.2 Characters' Goals in "Young and Dangerous2"

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|--------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Tai Fei | M | P | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Lui Kung | M | A | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Ting Siu-yiu | F | A | 6 | 6 | 0 |

Table 8.3 Characters' Way of Life in "Young and Dangerous2"

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|--------------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Dai Tin-yee | M | p | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Pau Pan | M | P | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Chau Pan | M | P | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Mr. Chiang | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Tai Fei | M | P | 6 | 0 | 5 |
| Lui Kung | M | A | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Ting Siu-yiu | M | A | 3 | 0 | 0 |

VII) Young and Dangerous 3 (古惑仔之隻手遮天) 1996

In the 3rd installment of the Young and dangerous saga, Ho Nam and his friends as well as Mr. Chiang and Tai Fei come back. This Opus follows the 2nd one as Smartie is still recovering from the injuries she suffered in Young and Dangerous 2. Ho Nam and his friends try to help her recover her memory. At a celebration in Yuen Long, Mr. Chiang introduces Camel, the boss of the Tung sing group to Ho Nam and his friends. During the ceremony, Mr. Chiang allows Chicken to officially come back to the Hung Hing group. The relationship between Hung Hing and Tung Sing becomes tense after two of Camel's followers, Crow and Tiger, without their boss knowing it, try to trick their way into Ho Nam's turf. Later on, Mr. Chiang asks Ho Nam to go with him and his girlfriend to Holland. During the Trip to Holland, while attending a meeting organized by Crow and Tiger, Mr. Chiang is murdered. Ho Nam is framed for the murder with the help of Mr. Chiang's girlfriend who is blackmailed by Crow and Tiger. The Hung Hing leaders conclude that Ho Nam is guilty and they ask Tai Fei to find and kill him. Meanwhile Crow kills his boss and try to frame Chicken for it before going to look for Ho Nam. He will fail in his attempt but manages to catch Smartie, Ho Nam's girlfriend. Crow tells Ho Nam to come alone if he wants to get Smartie back alive. Ho Nam witnesses Crow and Tiger killing Smartie before being rescued by Chicken. The final act happens during the funeral of Camel who has been killed by Crow and Tiger. Chicken's cousin come with some men of the San Luen gang, amongst whom Chicken, Ho Nam and Wasabi (Chicken's new girlfriend) are hidden. Wasabi plays a tape on which Tiger admits having killed the two bosses with Crow. A big brawl follows in which Tiger and Crow are killed.

Characters

Ho Nam (陳浩南))

In this movie, Ho Nam is leader of Causeway Bay and one of the most trusted lieutenant of Mr. Chiang, as he struggles to make Smartie remember who she is, he is framed in Holland and must hide. While trying to rescue Smartie he sees her being murder in front of him. He eventually gets his revenge on Crow and Tiger by killing them.

Chicken (山雞))

In this episode, Chicken is reinstated in the Hung Hing group in a low position. He saves Ho Nam from getting killed by Crow and helps him taking his revenge.

Mr. Chiang (蔣生)

As boss of Hung Hing, Mr. Chiang does not do much besides going to celebration and giving advice to Ho Nam. He is often seen with his girlfriend with whom he goes to Holland for a business deal with some local gangsters. He takes the opportunity to meet an old friend of his father and is killed for refusing to deal drugs.

Crow (烏鴉)

Crow is the second ranking member of Tung Sing, he is ruthless and cunning, almost crazy when he loses his temper. He respects almost nothing and no one except his friend Tiger whom he will use as a shield to save his own life. He will have Mr. Chiang Killed, will kill his boss, as well as Ho Nam`s girlfriend but will finally be killed by Ho Nam.

Tiger (笑面虎)

Tiger is the third ranking member of the Tung Sing group; he is as cunning and ruthless as his friend Crow but manages to hide his motives much better. He also seems to plan his actions better than crow. He will eventually be killed when Crow uses him to block an incoming knife.

Table 9.1 Importance of Relationships in “Young and Dangerous 3”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|---------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chiang | M | p | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Crow | M | A | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Tiger | M | A | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Table 9.2 Characters` Goals in “Young and Dangerous 3”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|---------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Chiang | M | p | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Crow | M | A | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Tiger | M | A | 6 | 6 | 0 |

Table 9.3 Characters` Way of Life in “Young and Dangerous 3”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|---------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ho Nam | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chicken | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Chiang | M | P | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Crow | M | A | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Tiger | M | A | 6 | 1 | 1 |

VIII) A True Mob Story (龍在江湖) 1998

“A True Mob Story” tells the rise and fall of Cheung Dee. Cheung Dee is an average level Triad member known to be the best fighter of his group. He is living an easy life surrounded by his two followers, Fai and Skinny, his wife, son and Ruby, his wife`s best friend. Everything will change when the son of the leader of Cheung Dee`s triad society is captured by a rival gangster, Crazy Ball. Unwilling to let him be taken, Cheung Dee rescues him but his wife, who wanted to help him, is run over by

Crazy Ball. Following this event, Cheung Dee becomes a widower but is promoted to be a boss in the organization.

Cheung Dee's promotion is far from being a happy event as he is actually mocked by the whole group for being a lackey and has to take care of his son who is most of the time being looked after by Ruby. Being the only parent of his son and not wanting to go to jail puts Cheung Dee in a difficult position. He feels he cannot do anything that would put him behind bars nor do anything that would put him at odds with his bosses. He hopes to gain money through the VCD Company he owns with Prince, the boss's son but never has money. Having to go through a trial for assault, Cheung Dee meets Sandy, a pretty lawyer. Cheung Dee's situation gets worse after fighting Prince who wanted to rape Ruby, his best friend. Cheung Dee prevents it and becomes romantically involved with Ruby.

At the same moment, Crazy Ball is released from jail and announces that he wishes to take revenge on Cheung Dee. Still supported by Skinny and Fai, Cheung Dee goes to the trial and is proven not guilty. As Crazy Ball tries to kill him, Cheung Dee asks for help from his group but is turned down under a fallacious excuse. Sandy then learns that Cheung Dee's VCD company is actually a cover for drug trafficking. Cheung Dee goes there and confirms the truth but has to flee as the police is raiding the company. The same night, Ruby is raped and his son has his eyes stabbed by Crazy Ball's gang. Cheung Dee then decides to take the matter into his own hand and frames Prince to have him kill by Crazy Ball. He then has the boss of the group arrested and finally kills Crazy Ball. Follows a trial in which Sandy is representing Cheung Dee, she lies to give Cheung Dee an alibi and declares that they are lovers. After the trial, Cheung Dee will manage to find Sandy in the street but she turns him down as she knows that if they were to be together it would only be for a short time and as she leaves without turning back, Cheung Dee is murdered in the streets by the same men who killed his followers earlier.

Characters

Cheung Dee (韦吉祥)

Cheung Dee is at the beginning of the movie a Triad member of medium rank with two loyal lieutenants, he is the fiercest fighter of his group. He lives a care free and

seemingly happy life with his wife and son. Everything will change when he rescues his boss from the hand of an angry gangster named crazy ball. As his wife gets killed, he becomes the only parent of his son but also a boss of his triad organization. Not wanting to do anything that might send him to jail, he is mocked by his Triad associates and is used by the son of the Boss who not only treats him like a lackey but also cheats him. He is targeted by the police who thinks he is involved in drug trafficking and also by Crazy Ball who wants revenge. After his lover is raped and his son becomes blind, he will take his revenge by framing his bosses and by killing crazy ball.

Prince (太子哥)

Prince is the son of the Triad group`s boss. He falls in the hands of crazy Ball when he refuses to pay him the money he owes. Rescued by Cheung Dee, he promotes him only to humiliate him and use him as a scapegoat. At the end, Crazy Ball kills him after torturing him.

Table 10.1 Importance of Relationships in “A True Mob Story”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|------------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Cheung Dee | M | p | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Prince | M | A | 4 | 2 | 5 |

Table 10.2 Characters` Goals in “A True Mob Story”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Cheung Dee | M | p | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| Prince | M | A | 6 | 6 | 2 |

Table 10.3 Characters` Way of Life in “A True Mob Story”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|------------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Cheung Dee | M | p | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Prince | M | A | 6 | 0 | 0 |

IX) Infernal Affairs (無間道) 2002

“Infernal Affairs” is an undercover as well as a Triad movie its plot is therefore quite different than that of traditional Triad movies. Infernal Affairs tells the intertwined fate of two undercovers, one from the Triads and one from the police. At the beginning of the movie, Sam the head of a Triad Group sends some young recruits to the police school in order for them to become undercovers. At the police school while Lau Kin-ming, one of the recruits sent by Sam, excels, Chan Wing-yan another youngster is asked to be an undercover for the police. The movie then jumps to few years later when Yan has become a tough Triad member while Andy has risen through the police ranks. As Yan tipped his officers than a drug transaction between Sam, for whom he works, and some Thai traffickers is going to happen the police gets ready to enter into action but as Lau tips Sam during the transaction it fails but without anyone of importance being caught nonetheless it becomes clear to both parties that both of them have undercovers in their ranks. While Lau is promoted to the ICAC and becomes in charge of his own case, Yan has more and more difficulties to cope with the pressure he is submitted to, he is only able to relax in his psychiatrist office. This results in the death of the handler of Yan as well as in the death of Sam, killed by Lau. Lau manages to retrieve Yan`s file and calls him in the police station but this gives Yan the opportunity to find out that Law is the Triad undercover. Yan manages to catch Lau but as he tries to get him back to the police station he is killed by one of Lau`s subordinate who is in fact another of Sam`s undercover. To cover his tracks Lau will also kill his subordinate. Finally, Lau`s fiancée, with whom he has just moved in, finds a tape made by Yan in which a conversation between Andy and Sam has been recorded and she leaves him.

Characters

It is difficult to classify the characters of “Infernal Affairs” as they are not always what they seem to be which is why only those who are viewed as Triads and live amongst them will be analyzed.

Sam (韓琛)

Sam is the boss of a Triad group investigated by Yan; even though he looks friendly he is actually ruthless. At the beginning of the movie he sends some recruits to be police officers as a mean for them to be undercover. He is rich and powerful and mainly deals with drugs. He threatens Lau into helping him when he refuses to do so. He will finally be killed by Lau.

Table 11.1 Importance of Relationships in “Infernal Affairs”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|-----|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Sam | M | A | 3 | 1 | 5 |

Table 11.2 Characters` Goals in “Infernal affairs”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|-----|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Sam | M | A | 6 | 6 | 0 |

Table 11.3 Characters` Way of Life in “Infernal Affairs”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|-----|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Sam | M | A | 6 | 2 | 1 |

X) Infernal Affairs II (無間道 II) 2003

“Infernal Affairs II” is in fact the prequel of the first opus. The movie starts in 1991 when Lau kills the powerful boss Ngai Kwun who is Sam`s boss as well as Yan`s father. At this time Lau was in fact a follower of Mary, Sam`s wife, on whose order he killed Ngai Kwun. It is around this time that he has been asked to become an undercover for the Triads.

After the death of Kwun, the 4 big bosses of TsimShaTsui want to take this opportunity to stop paying the Ngai family. The son of Kwun, helped by Sam, makes them change their mind. Meanwhile, Yan, who is a promising young officer, is expelled from the police ranks because of his family background. He is then asked by Superintendent Wong to become an undercover for the police. 4 years later, Yan became a low rank triad member who struggles to balance his professional and romantic life. He is then asked by Ngai to join his group since he is his half-brother, which he accepts.

Lau, helped by Sam is beginning to be quite successful in his police career. Ngai reveals to Sam that he wants to eliminate the four Triad bosses and put Sam in charge. In fact, Ngai also plans on killing Sam when he learns that Sam`s wife plotted the murder of his father. As Sam is leaving for Thailand, Ngai kills the four bosses and tries to have Mary killed but she is saved by Lau who helps her getting better. Lau then declares his love for her but she refuses him which leads him to inform Ngai of Mary`s location. His action leads to Mary`s murder. In Thailand, Sam escapes death and comes back to Hong Kong to be a witness in the case against Ngai led by Wong. Ngai tries to become a politician but his hopes are shattered by his arrest. He sends his siblings to Hawaii to protect them and has Sam`s new wife kidnapped. Sam then escapes the witness protection officer to confront Ngai. It is then revealed that this was a trap set by Sam who had the Ngai family members in his power. After learning the truth, Ngai draws his gun to Sam`s head only to be shot by Wong. At the end of the movie, Sam has Ngai`s family executed.

Characters

Sam (韓琛)

At the beginning of the movie, Sam is not the ruthless big boss of the first “Infernal affair” yet, he is one of the 5 bosses under Ngai Kwun to whom he is very loyal. He also loves his wife and is friend with Superintendent Wong who considers him a decent man. But after Ngai tries to kill him and kills his wife he turns against him and chooses to become ruthless to stay at the top. At the end of the movie he celebrates the 1997 handover at a party of which he is the star but in fact he grieves for the loss of his wife.

Ngai (倪永孝)

Ngai is the son of the deceased triad boss Kwun; he looks like a businessman but is in fact cold and without pity. He is the only one involved in the Triad business amongst his brothers and sisters (excepting Yan). He cares deeply for his family and wants revenge for the murder of his father. After his revenge has been fulfilled he tries to become a politician but his trial prevents him for doing so. He will be killed by Wong while trying to kill Sam.

Table 12.1 Importance of Relationships in “Infernal Affairs II”

| | Sex | Role | Family | Friendship | Belonging to a group |
|------|-----|------|--------|------------|----------------------|
| Ngai | M | A | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Sam | M | p | 5 | 4 | 5 |

Table 12.2 Characters` Goals in “Infernal Affairs II”

| | Sex | Role | Money | Success | Stability |
|------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Ngai | M | A | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Sam | M | p | 5 | 4 | 4 |

Table 12.3 Characters` Way of Life in “Infernal Affairs II”

| | Sex | Role | Violence | loyalty | Morality |
|------|-----|------|----------|---------|----------|
| Ngai | M | A | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Sam | M | p | 5 | 5 | 3 |

Background of the movies

“A Better Tomorrow”, “Young and Dangerous” and “Infernal Affairs” were the most successful Triad movies of their generation. “A better tomorrow“ was released in the mid 1980`s, a period where Hong Kong was developing its economy and where society was starting to get some stability after the troubled 1970`s. In this movie, the main activity of the Triads is the printing of counterfeit bills. The Triad members depicted in the movie use violence and do not respect the law but they are quite institutionalized. The main Triad group in the movie has offices and all its members wear suits, if not for their violent ways they are quite similar to businessmen. ‘Young and Dangerous’ set the trend for movies towards the end of the 1990`s. This period was marked in Hong Kong by the Handover of Hong Kong and the uncertainty surrounding it. Part of the population was questioning the intention of the Chinese Government towards Hong Kong while the question of the Hong Kong identity was becoming increasingly important. “Young and Dangerous “ and its followers presented Triad members who were young and trendy , portrayed by rising actors with a “cool” style. In those movies the survival of the Triad group and its members is the most important thing. The beginning of the years 2000`s showed Hong Kong recovering from the stressed provoked by the handover and the Asian financial crisis. People were still adapting to life under Chinese rule and Hong Kong was under political unrest. In 2002, came out “Infernal Affairs” which set Triad movies in a totally new way by renewing with the theme of the undercover. From informal chats with Hong Kong Triad movies directors, authenticity is not very important in the making of Triad movies. Directors consult Triad experts to make their movies but making a successful movie is their aim. To this effect, they do not

hesitate to include whatever elements they think will appeal to the audience.

Profile of characters

In seven of the movies analyzed, the protagonist has the qualities of a hero. In the “Young and Dangerous” series, Chan Ho Nam and his friends are virtuous and loyal. They might be Triad members but they are hardly seen doing criminal acts and when they do, it is most of the time justified. They never hurt innocents and always try to avoid rash actions. As good friends, they treat each other like brothers and rarely do anything bad to one another. When they do, they apologize and are quickly forgiven. Not only are they loyal to each other but also to their bosses and their group.

”A Better Tomorrow” also depicts model heroes. Ho and Marc, when at the peak of their criminal career would respect their boss and even help their juniors. Ho will even try to quit the criminal world in order not to hinder his brother`s career in the police. After going to jail, he will try not to do any bad deed in order to protect his brother. Marc, in order to avenge his dear friend does not hesitate to risk his life to kill the traitor and ends up a cripple.

There are the same protagonists in “Rich and Famous“ and “Tragic Hero”. Yun starts as a good guy but it is gradually revealed that he has a dark side that will eventually consume him but Li Ah Chai and Kwok are truly noble characters. Kwok always want to help his family and it is what gets him in trouble. Li Ah Chai, even though being a boss, is a fair and loyal person.

“A True Mob Story’ also presents us with a truly “good” main protagonist. Since the beginning of the movie, he is described more by his moral qualities than by anything else. He is a family man before anything else and also has a very good relationship with his two underlings. Cheung Dee`s responsibility as a father is the priority for him, it is more important than respect from others for him.

“To Be Number One” and “Infernal Affairs” present a different kind of protagonists who start as decent men who became ruthless. In “To Be Number One”, Ho joins the Triad because it is the only way for him to escape his lowly condition as an immigrant in the 1960`s in Hong Kong. At the beginning, even if he does not hesitate to rob or steal if needed by his job, he still has some qualities such as loyalty

for his friends but as success and power comes, his priorities change. Family and friendship, which used to be important for him, are no longer able to keep his ego and ambition in control which ultimately leads to his fall.

Sam presents two different faces in “Infernal Affairs” I and II. In “Infernal Affairs II” which is the prequel of “Infernal Affairs”, we can see how Sam used to be in the past. Before becoming a successful boss he was a loyal sergeant of the Ng family, truly devoted to his wife. He was friend with the Superintendent Wong and would follow his leader without questions. The death of his wife and his new dominant position will change him, to become a real leader he goes against his true nature and becomes totally ruthless. In “Infernal Affairs II” he is still ruthless and ego maniac. He views himself as the most important person and will stop at nothing to stay at the top.

Followers

Regular triad members without rank in the organization tend to be relatively neutral characters who usually follow the leaders or their interests. The bosses often focus the attention and it is rare that their men have an importance on the plot. Those working with the bosses usually only follow orders. If we consider the “Young and Dangerous” series, most of the Triad members are good people. Ho Nam`s friends are all doing their best for their friends and do not like to harm innocents or bring harm to people for no reasons. In “To be Number One”, Ho`s followers are his best friends and are loyal to him except for Wu Ming who fears for his life. They all try to have a good life while taking care of their loved ones. When they do bad deeds it is on Ho`s order and never against innocents. In “A True Mob Story”, Cheung Dee`s followers are tough but good people and they do their best to help him. On the contrary, the other Triad members in the movie are not “good” people as most of them help their bosses doing bad deeds. In “Rich and Famous”, Li Ah Chai`s followers are all good people who respect him a lot, they are all friendly with each other and try to help the group as much as they can, they only antagonize Chu Lo Tai`s followers because they are Li Ah Chai enemies. It is also the case in “Tragic Hero” at the exception of Big Eye. But all the others are totally loyal. “Infernal Affairs II” depicts Triad members who are ruthless but somehow human.

Social Mobility

One of the features of the Triad members in movies is a relatively fast upward mobility. Even if the movies do not always emphasize it, most of them portray some poor youths struggling to make a living who, along the way, become powerful. Not all the characters, even when they become bosses, are depicted as rich but most of them are well off. Among the 10 movies analyzed, only 3, “A better Tomorrow”, “Infernal Affairs “ and “Tragic Hero” do not show a hero type Triad character going from low rank Triad member to powerful boss. Those 3 movies do not portray upward social mobility because their main Triad characters are already bosses. All the other movies describe a rise in the Triad ranks. Only “To be number one” focuses on the struggles to reach the top as it is the main motivation of Ho, the protagonist. In this movie, Ho starts as a young immigrant and becomes, few decades later, the most powerful Triad leader in Hong Kong. Other movies show the upward mobility of the protagonists but it is not the main point of the plot. In the “Young and Dangerous “ series for example, Ho Nam starts as a young recruit in the first movie and ends up being a powerful leader in the third movie. Ho Nam`s ascension is not smooth as each time he is promoted, it is because someone dies or because a terrible event makes room for a new leader. Sam, in “Infernal Affairs II” also becomes boss after his boss dies. In all those movies, if a character works hard and is willing to take risks he will reach a high position in the Triads but the fall can be extremely fast.

Triad leaders

The characters of the bosses in the movies analyzed show different characteristics. In the first “Young and Dangerous” most of the bosses are neither good nor bad and just follow the strongest. Mr. Chiang and Brother B are very good men while Ugly Kwan is despicable. Brother B, Ho Nam`s Boss embodies all the virtues of a great man as he is kind and generous and tries to uphold justice and loyalty. Mr. Chiang is also a good person. The other bosses are neither good nor bad but pragmatic. Kwan is in the other hand, truly evil but he seems to be an exception in the Young and Dangerous Triad world as he is too extreme to be taken seriously. The Second movie introduces Lui Kung who acts like a decent man but in fact only sees his own interests and tries to manipulate everybody. In the same movie we are also

introduced to Tai Fei who, under his rough outside is a good person. In “Young and Dangerous III” appears a leader of the Tung Sing group, the rival society of Hung Hing. This leader is also a decent man who tries to be friend with Mr. Chiang and scolds his subordinates when they try to bother the Hung Hing group.

In “To Be Number One”, the boss rival of Ho is Cool Kwan, who can hardly be referred to as a “good” person but is not cruel either. At first, he helps Ho rising in his ranks and even though Ho grows more and more arrogant, Cool Kwan tries to remain on friendly terms with him. Ho’s attitude and defiant actions will make Cool Kwan become his enemy. It has to be observed though that Cool Kwan’s attitude with his mistress is quite abusive, hinting that he does not respect women.

“Infernal affairs “ and “Infernal affairs II” show us mainly two bosses, Sam and Ngai. If Sam was a quite decent boss in the past he changed drastically to become the ruthless character he is in the first movie. Ng is really different because he does not come from a Triad background; he is a business man who takes over his father’s business in order to avenge him. He carries his task and will not let anything stand in his way but after it is done he tries to move away from the Triads. Even though he shows no mercy to his enemies he is not a totally evil character.

Bosses in “A True Mob Story “are all mean people. Starting by Prince, who keeps on acting despicably and never shows remorse. His father, the head of their Triad society is also without regards for his subordinates and only cares for his son and his own interest. He does not help Cheung Dee when he needs help from the troubles he got into after saving Prince, his son.

Chu Lo Tai, Li Ah Chai and Yung are the main three bosses seen in “Rich and famous” and “Tragic Hero”. If Li Ah Chai is the perfect embodiment of a virtuous boss and Yung the opposite, Chu Lo Tai is more difficult to read. In the first movie, he is a mean drug dealer who hates Li Ah Chai and design cunning plots with Yung to eliminate his arch enemy. In the second movie, Chu Lo Tai becomes surprisingly more like a business man and enjoys family life.

Female characters

Very few female characters are found in the analyzed Triad movies. Most of them play an insignificant role and have very little impact on the story. Nevertheless, four

female characters with more exposure can be found in the used sample. Among them, only two female characters truly have some power at one point of their respective movies. Ting Siu-yiu in “Young and Dangerous II” and Mary in “Infernal Affairs II”. Siu-yiu is the mistress of Lui Kung at the beginning of the movie, she plots the assassination of Lui Kung and use Chicken, her other lover, as a scapegoat. She is defined by her sex-appeal and her ruthlessness. She manipulates men because she needs them in order to have power. At first, she is with Lui Kung then, she is involved with Chicken and the bodyguard of Lui Kung. She will finally side with Tai Fei before being betrayed by him. Even though she is an expert in controlling others, she cannot have real power as real power is held by men. The other strong female character found is Mary, Sam`s wife. She is smart, does not hesitate to take decisions, and even has a follower. She loves her husband very much and does everything for him. Even though Sam has a higher position than her, she is smarter and understands the Triad politics better than him. She plots the murder of the boss of the organization which will lead to her death. She does not have much power and needs to act in the shadows. Even though her ways are similar to those of Siu-Yiu, her character is the opposite. She is deeply in love with her husband and would do everything for him. Her death, decided by Ngai, will change Sam forever.

Two other female characters have a limited impact on the stories of their respective movies, Smartie from a “Young and Dangerous” and Ruby from “A True Mob Story”. Contrary to Siu-yiu and Mary, these two characters have no power in the Triads. Smarty is the girlfriend of Chan Ho Nam. Even though she is a member of a Triad group controlled by her brother, she has no rank or followers. Her only activity seems to be stealing cars. As she stammers, people tend to look down on her. Despite her name, she is not very smart and she often gets in trouble, forcing Ho Nam to come to her rescue. Ho Nam will not be able to prevent her death which will deeply affect him. Ruby, in “A true Mob Story”, is more intelligent than Smarty but is quite similar to her. She has no power, is in love with the main character, and keeps on having troubles from which the main character tries to save her. Both characters do not really exist on their own; they are associated with the main character and are rarely seen without him on the frame.

Important female characters in Triad movies are extremely rare. In the analyzed movies they are always girlfriends or wives of the main characters and their main

function is to make the main characters react. In truth, they are defined by their relationships with the main characters. Ting Siu-yiu is the only female character who can be said to exist outside the influence of the main character but she always needs the protection of a male character. This shows that in the filmic Triad world, women hold no power. The Triad world in the movies analyzed are a man`s world and to exist in it, a woman needs a man by her side.

The way women are treated depends of who they are with. Main protagonists and their friends all respect women and deeply love their wives or girlfriend. They often go through many dangers to save them. On the other hand, antagonists do not care for women except when it comes to have their pleasure. In the rare cases when they love a woman, they treat her as an object to possess. Often, when an antagonist is rejected by a woman he tries to rape her. Many women in Triad movies are subjects of rape or are threatened of being raped. Antagonists tend to target the spouses of the main characters when they cannot attain their enemies. It has to be noted that almost all the main protagonists analyzed have a wife or a girlfriend who they love. Main protagonists do not really confide or ask advice from their girlfriends but they always try to rescue them and when they fail to do so they are deeply hurt. Not all the girlfriends of the protagonists are part of the Triads. Female characters in the analyzed sample have two main functions, defining the main characters and prompting them to act. They allow the main characters to display feelings such as love and tenderness (showing the audience the human side of those characters) and provide them with opportunities to confront the antagonists. Some characters having decided to avoid confrontation only step into action when their significant other is in danger.

Family

Family is a theme presents in almost all the movies sampled and most of the protagonists rate high in this category. Strangely, the main protagonists are not those who rate the highest and many antagonists seem to care deeply about family bonds. In “Young and Dangerous“, nonetheless the fact that the emphasis is put on the friendship between Ho Nam and his allies, family is still present in the movie. The initial group of friends surrounding Ho Nam comprises two brothers, Chau Pan and Pau Pan and the death of Pau Pan will deeply affect Pau pan. Ho Nam himself only

has a grandmother whom he often visits and Chicken is close to his cousin who welcomes him and helps him to make his way in the Taiwanese Triads. Both are very close to their girlfriends, especially Ho Nam who will have a very hard time getting over the death of Smartie. In the first “Young and Dangerous”, Ugly Kwan, who apparently respects no one, nothing and follows only his whims, care for his mother; he listens to her, spares no efforts to please her and it seems that he takes good care of her.

“A Better Tomorrow” is as much a story of friendship as it is of family. Ho is ready to not only change his ways to avoid any troubles to his brother but also endure humiliations and putting himself at risk. At the end of the movie he voluntarily goes to jail for his brother`s sake. His attitude is all the more noble that it is only at the end that his brother understands his intentions, all the time before he was resenting him because of their father`s death which was caused by Ho`s connection with the Triads.

Family is also a central Theme of “Infernal Affairs II”. Sam is deeply in love with his wife. He is trying to ensure her happiness and is listening to her advice. Her loss will drive him to become heartless. Ng thinks only about his family, he takes over the organization to avenge his father and cares about nothing else. He is very close to his siblings, which is why he asks Yan, his illegitimate brother, to work for him. When he understands that his situation is precarious, he sends his family away in order to protect them. “A True Mob Story” is another movie in which family is important. Cheung Dee loves his wife and son deeply and when he becomes a single father, he does his best to take care of his son but it is impossible to do. Being a triad member, he is bound to do illegal deeds which he does not dare to do as he fears going to jail and thus losing his son. Constantly humiliated by others, he struggles to make a living and does not have time to take care of his son. He tries to bear all those hardships because he believes it is the best for his son. The head of the society also cares about his own son and covers him no matter what he does, seeing him dead will infuriate him. We can also note that Prince also has a son for whom he throws a party where all the bosses` children are invited.

Even though “To Be Number One” is more a movie about friendship than family, most of the protagonists are family men. Ho falls in love with the cousin of one of

his men, as she already has children, he takes care of them. He takes care of his children and values his wife's opinion. He also tries to provide for his children and raise them well. All his friends also care for their families, when they start to become successful they all have them join them in Hong Kong. Even Wu Ming, despite his infatuation for his mistress tries to please his mother.

“Rich and Famous“ and “Tragic Hero” show some complicated family bonds. The two protagonists, Yun and Kwok are brothers. Even though Kwok has been adopted by Yun's father, both of them are really close at the beginning of the first movie. They are also close to their cousin whom they help when they can but Kwok treats him better than Yun. Yun and Kwok love their father and that is why they start to get in trouble as they try to raise money to help the family. If at the beginning the two brothers' love for their family is obvious, it becomes more difficult to assess later on as they have to choose between their career, loyalty and family. After being sent off by Li Ah Chai, Yun asks Kwok to join him and Chu Lai To against Li Ah Chai. Even though Kwok would do everything for Yun, he is not ready to betray Li Ah Chai. Following this refusal, Yun will try to kill Kwok. To find him, he will go as far as torturing his cousin. Showing that if he cares for his family, those bonds are only superficial and do not stand in front of his ambition. Kwok, on the other hand, loves and respects his family but he is not ready to do things he considers wrong. At the end of the movie, Kwok becomes really close to his cousin who helps him as much as he can.

In “Tragic Hero” family is still an important theme. Yun has become a powerful Triad Boss and listens to no one. When Kwok comes to ask him to spare Li Ah Chai, he first humiliates him by making him beg and then seems to agree to his request. Despite his psychotic nature, Yun still has some shreds of humanity left. Even though he is totally ruthless, he still has some feelings and respect towards his family which makes him hesitate before trying to kill them, which he will try to do eventually. In the second movie, Li Ah Chai is a changed man; he is happily married and has a son. That is why he tries to stop his illegal activities in order to become a lawful businessman. To attain this goal, he will suffer much humiliation and it is only when he sees that war with Yun is the only way that he decides to fight. After his wife and son die in a bombing commanded by Yun, he will only live to see him dead.

Friendship

Friendship is an element present in many Triad movies and it is found in most of the movies analyzed. It appears that all the protagonists have high scores in this category while the antagonists have extremely low scores. The whole “Young and Dangerous” series is built around the theme of friendship as Chan Ho Nam and his friends would all gladly risk their lives for each other. The five friends grew up together and they want to rise together. They all follow Ho Nam, no matter what happens. In the group, Chicken and Ho Nam have a special relationship as they are best friends.

“To Be Number One” has some common points with “Young and Dangerous” as it is also about a group of friends starting together with nothing and hoping to reach the top together. They also follow their leaders almost without questions. The difference being that in “To Be Number One” Ho gets corrupted by power while his best friend, Wu Ming indulges in women and drugs which will lead to an unhappy ending. The Hak brothers always follow Ho`s orders without question while Wan tries to reason with him when needs be. When it becomes clear to him that they are not safe in Hong Kong anymore, Wan tries to persuade Ho to leave, seeing than he can`t convince his friend, he will stay and be arrested with him instead of migrating with his family. During most of the Movie, Wu Ming keeps on making errors that Ho covers because they are friends but at the end, Wu Ming thinks that Ho will kill him and he becomes a witness for the ICAC provoking Ho`s arrest.

“A Better Tomorrow” is a movie about friendship as from the beginning Ho and Marc are close friends who always protect one another. Marc especially, only has Ho as he has no family or other friends. When Ho is framed, Marc goes to avenge him ending injured and when Ho comes back, Marc does his best to have Ho join him but Ho is not willing to. At the end of the movie, they join for a suicide mission against their enemy.

In “A True Mob Story“, Cheung Dee is rather isolated in his Group as most of the other bosses use him and humiliate him. He can, nonetheless always count on his two underlings who stand by him until the end. They stay loyal even though they are shocked to see that Cheung Dee ceased to be the dashing daredevil he used to be. They still stay by his side and help him which will lead them to get murdered by the

boss of the society. In “Rich and Famous”, Kwok and Li Ah Chai become true friends. Li Ah Chai sees Kwok as his successor at first and later on, Kwok stop working for Li Ah Chai but they remain friends. At the end, Li Ah Chai invites Kwok to his wedding where Kwok protects him from the killers sent by Yun.

Belonging to a group

In all triad movies, Triads are structured in groups and the structure and cohesion of the groups portrayed diverge. Many Triad members in films consider their group as important. “Young and Dangerous” introduces the Hung Hing group which gathers several bosses under one main leader, Mr. Chiang. For Ho Nam and his group, it is important to be a member of the Hung Hing and they respect the rules of the society. Ho Nam and his friends always accept their punishments even though they are framed because they want to abide by the rules. When Ugly Kwan becomes the new leader; B and Ho Nam accept it even though they are strongly against it. Ho Nam and his friends are proud of being from Hung Hing and never fail to remind those who might have forgotten it. In the second opus, Chicken becomes a leader of the San Luen group in Taiwan but he still has strong bonds with the Hung Hing society. When his Taiwanese boss asks him to do harm to Hung Hing, he chooses to quit the San Luen Group. In the 3rd movie, he will ask Mr. Chiang to have him reinstated as a Hung Hing member. For Ho Nam`s friends, The Hung Hing society is part of who they are.

In “To Be Number One”, the group is merely instrumental. Ho and his friends are glad to join Cool Kwan`s group at the beginning because it is the only way for them to become important but they quickly stop paying attention to Cool Kwan as they become important and they eventually leave cool Kwan to have their own group. In “A Better Tomorrow”, the group is not very important but Marc and Ho do care about the other members as they try to help the young Shing.

In “A True Mob Story”, Cheung Dee`s society seems to be well organized but as it is corrupted, the members are not really close. In “Rich and Famous” and “Tragic Hero”, Yung and Kwok dream, at the beginning, of following Li Ah Chai. At first they are very happy about this opportunity and even try to have their cousin joining them. Kwok thrives under such a leadership while Yung grows frustrated. The Protagonists are more loyal to the Boss than to a group.

Money and success

All the Triad members want to be rich and famous but it is the most important thing for the antagonists. They rate extremely high in this item indicating that they would stop at nothing to have it while the protagonists and their allies are more moderate. In “Young and Dangerous”, most of the characters want to achieve success but they do not have the same way to attain it. Ho Nam and his friends decide to join Brother B after being bullied by Kwan. When Ho Nam asks B to be his follower B does not take him seriously and tell him to work at school. It appears that Ho Nam and his friends were not forced to join the Triads but did so in order not to be bullied and have the power to resist. Later on, when forced out of the Triad world by Kwan, they consider staying working on their bar. For them, success is an important drive but the most important is to be together. B and Mr. Chiang are different. B mentions that he would like to migrate but cannot do so because of his background. He would like to take care of his family more but cannot, hinting that he cannot change his life. Mr. Chiang is more a businessman than a Triad member; he has a personal trainer, a beautiful girlfriend and a big house. He is without contest a successful man. When he is forced out of Hung Hing, it is not a disaster for him as he has some other business to take care of. Kwan only cares for money and power and eventually becomes rich and powerful but when things stop going in his way no one stands for him.

In the second movie, Lui Kung, Siu-yiu and Tai Fei are introduced and even though they all want power, their ways are totally different. Lui Kung tries to be a politician because he does not want to be the tool of the government anymore; he wants to control his own fate. He is also greedy that is why he tries to take control of the Macao casino. Siu-yiu is also greedy as she wants money and power and does not hesitate to cheat, lie and kill to obtain what she wants. She does not care of the consequences as long as she gets what she wants. Tai Fei also wants money and power that is why he enters the “competition” to take the seat of “leader of Causeway Bay”, he also does not really play by the rules but he remains a fair man loyal to Hung Hing whose interest he has in mind. He even becomes an undercover for Hung Hing. In “Young and Dangerous”, all the characters want to be rich and powerful but the protagonist and his friends are not ready to sacrifice everything else for it, they still respect other things such as honor and loyalty. Moreover, they try to avoid

chaos. The older and more successful bosses such as Mr. Chiang and B seem to have reached a kind of wisdom. They not merely only look for profit, they try to stop or diminish their criminal activities and want to enjoy life. Ho Nam also does not want to rush things and jeopardize his situation for quick gains.

In "To Be Number One", almost all the characters want to be rich and powerful. Ho's group enters the Triads because they want to be rich and respected but once they achieve this goal, their objectives start to change. Ho now wants to be the number one, hence the title, which is why he refuses to retire and tries to crush his rivals instead. Wu Ming, since the beginning, is more interested by enjoying life than anything else. He follows his best friend, Ho, but does not have much will by himself. He quickly becomes a liability for his friends and he eventually stops enjoying life for just trying to survive. Wan also follows Ho but it appears that what he truly wants is a stable life. Stability is what he brings to the group for he is the most reliable and cool headed. At the end, he advises Ho to leave Hong Kong as he achieved everything he wanted. Cool Kwan, at the beginning of the movie, is already rich and famous. He just wants to keep his leadership and huge earnings, even when Ho becomes successful and arrogant, he tries to preserve the status quo and avoid a war. After Ho has him sent to jail, he will want to get his revenge but will respect the truce imposed by the chief of police.

Sam changes in "Infernal Affairs". In "Infernal Affair II" which shows him before his wife dies, he is the loyal lieutenant of the Ngai. He tries to preserve the status Quo and is perfectly happy with how things are. He relies a lot on his wife but after she dies his only aim is to be to be rich and powerful. To reach this goal, he has to leave behind all other emotions which he does when he orders the execution of the Ngai family. Ngai Already has money and power and tries to become a politician in order to have even more power.

If in "A Better Tomorrow", all the characters desire money and power at one point, things change. At the beginning of the movie, Ho and Mark are already rich and powerful. Marc wants to go on but Ho wishes to retire for his brother. After Ho goes to jail, Marc becomes a cripple and wants revenge. Ho, on the other hand just wants a simple life without troubles. Marc wants money to start anew but he also wants to leave. Shing from the beginning wants money and power and does

everything he can to get more. In fact, there is no stop for his greed for power and money.

In “A True Mob Story” Cheung Dee and his friends are perfectly happy with their fate at the beginning, they do not have a very high rank but it suits them. When Cheung Dee becomes boss, he only wants to make enough money to take care of his son; he does not have much ambition and just wants to stay out of jail. Prince, on the other hand, never has enough, as he is already a powerful boss; he just wants to make more money. He sells drugs and frames Cheung Dee to avoid going to jail. Also, him and his father are totally unwilling to risk getting in any trouble to help Cheung Dee.

In “Rich and Famous”, Kwok wants money to help out his family and when Li Ah Chai hires him, he works hard for him. His goal is to have enough money to insure a decent life for his family; he is not obsessed by money or power. Contrary to Yung, who, from the beginning tries to earn lots of money in an easy way. After starting to work for Li Ah Chai, Yung always tries to do more than is required in order to rise faster. As he is scolded instead of being praised, he becomes frustrated which leads him to betray Li Ah Chai for money and power.

Li Ah Chai already has money and power and even though he is doing illegal activities to earn money he does not seem to be desperate to gain more money. In “tragic hero”, only Yung still truly wants money and power as Kwok has retired and Li Ah-chai is trying to do the same for his family`s sake. His desire is to maintain stability that is why he does not retaliate against Yung until it`s too late. Chu Lo Tai, his rival, has also changed his ways to cooperate with Li Ah-chai. Yung is ready to sacrifice everything just to satisfy his hatred towards Li Ah-chai. After losing his family in a bombing instigated by Yung, Li Ah Chai will only think about revenge.

Stability

Main characters and their allies tend to score quite high in this category as many of them are satisfied by the way things are. They are not ready to wreak havoc to reach their goals while antagonists seem to thrive in chaos.

In the “Young and Dangerous“ series, characters such as Ho Nam, Brother B or Mr. Chiang want to keep things as they are and try to keep a balance. They are not ready

to jeopardize what they have to gain more. They tend to only act when the situation requires it, mostly to correct a wrongdoing. They all try to do things in a pacific way and try not to hurt people if they can avoid it. When they act, they try to limit casualties to the minimum. Antagonists are not satisfied with the way things are and are set on bringing a change which usually involves destroying the current order; none of them care about order or stability as long as they obtain what they want.

In “To Be Number One”, Wan also wants to preserve the status quo, in fact his desire for things to be peaceful makes it difficult for him to be a Triad member, his true desire is to live a peaceful life with his family. His friends, especially Ho, care for their families but are willing to risk everything to reach their goals.

Ho in “A Better Tomorrow” is another character who wants to avoid creating disturbances. From the beginning, he wants to quit the Triad world and his desire is even stronger after he comes back from jail, he does his best not to get involved in the Triad life but cannot escape it.

Ho is in fact similar to Cheung Dee from “A True Mob Story” and Li Ah Chai from “Tragic Hero”. The antagonists force them into action while all they want is to remain peaceful. Cheung Dee only wants to make enough money to be able to take care of his son without going to jail. His associates first want him to use his fighting skills and kill some people, and then Crazy Ball targets those who are close to him, thus forcing him to retaliate. Li Ah Chai in “Rich and Famous” always tries to solve his problems in a peaceful way without directly confronting his opponents or using sheer strength. In “Tragic hero”, he even refuses to retaliate when being challenged. Similarly to Li Ah Chai, Kwok also seeks peace rather than confrontation which is why he decides to leave the Triad.

Violence

In “Young and Dangerous“ Ho Nam and his friends rarely use violence if they have another way and when they do it is often to right a wrong. They are not violent in their everyday life and those they kill deserve it. Brother B and Mr. Chiang are never depicted using violence, even when provoked they keep their calm and reason first which is the total opposite of Kwan who thrives in violence. He is extremely violent in his everyday life and uses violence as soon as he is angered. When he kills

his enemies, he does it in the most vicious and cruel way. In the second movie, we see Chicken killing an opponent of Lui Kung, it is rarely seen in the series as we do not have any indications saying that the man is mean. At the end, Chicken kills his lover but only to spare her more suffering. Ho Nam does not use much violence. Mr. Chiang never has violent behaviors either. Lui Kung and Siu-yiu do not act violently but they order their men to use violent means.

In the 3rd movie, Ho Nam only fights to save his and his girlfriend's life. At the end, the friends engage the Tung Sing group in a big brawl only to stop Crow and Tiger who are extremely violent and destructive. In the "Young and Dangerous" world, Ho Nam and his friends sometimes have to do violent act but they rarely initiate it. They are not violent people but violence chases them. In the series, the Triad world is violent only because of some dysfunctional elements. But the regular Triad members often seek peace as war is detrimental to prosperity and benefits. The bosses almost never fight as only the low rank members do the fighting.

In "To Be Number One", Ho and his friends often use violence but only when they feel it is needed in their work. At the beginning, they all participate in the missions and they all use violent means. Later on, Ho becomes more powerful and only the Hak brothers use their strength but they are not violent men either. In his group of friends, Ho is the one with the worst temper and when things do not go his way, he is quick to get angry. Wan is not violent as he rather use his intellect while Wan prefers enjoying life and taking things easy. Cool Kwan, when angry, can be violent but as a boss he rarely has to do the work himself and he prefers avoiding war. In the movie, Violence is inherent to the position of a Triad member but as one becomes powerful he needs less to act violently. As Cool Kwan and Ho are certainly the fiercest and the most powerful characters, it appears to be a quality to make it in the Triads in this movie.

In "Infernal Affairs", Sam has a violent temper but in "Infernal Affairs II", he is less violent. Ngai rarely uses violence himself and seems quite calm and well-mannered; he lets his men handle the violence. Violence in both movies is part of a job but it is not what defines the characters. "A Better Tomorrow" really describes a world of violence. Ho and Marc constantly need to fight and kill in order to survive or protect others. Both are different in the way they use violence. Ho only wants to get away

from the Triad life and lead a peaceful life but his enemies will not let him. Despite his pacifist ways, he has to constantly defend himself or protect others. Marc, on the other hand, is not only a victim of violence. He often tries to use violence to rectify injustice and punish those who deserve it. Only at the end, when he joins with Marc, does Ho initiate violence by setting a trap for Shing. After Ho gets framed, Marc goes to kill the one responsible and kills many people in the process. At the end of the movie, with Ho and his brother, he also defeats Shin`s men. Like Ho, he is also a victim of violence since he gets severely beaten by Shin`s men and at the end of the movie he is killed by Shin. Ho and Marc are not violent people and they only use violence when they have no other choice but they can`t escape violence as it surrounds them. Shin is different because even though he rises in the society and wears fancy clothes, he uses violence to assert his power. Being a boss, he does not have to be violent and often sends his men do the tasks but he does not hesitate to kill or fight if it is required.

“A True Mob Story” presents us with a main character who does all he can to avoid to be violent. He manages to do so with great difficulty which brings him much humiliation by his colleagues. Not being able to be violent makes Cheung Dee different from all the others in his group as Triad members must be able to use violence. His two men have the same temperament as him but when it is needed they know how to act. It is only after he realized that he has no other choices that Cheung Dee will use violence to eliminate his enemies but he will only kill Crazy Ball. At the end of the movie, Cheung Dee will be assassinated. Crazy Ball and Prince are the opposite of Cheung Dee as they are extremely violent. Crazy Ball uses violence to get what he wants; he is often assisted by his men and does not hesitate to kill to obtain what he desires. He only wants to kill Cheung Dee and is on a destructive path. He does not care about the consequences because destruction is his sole intent. His name being Crazy ball, he does not fit in the Triad world similarly to Cheung Dee. But where Cheung Dee is looked down upon because of his inability to be violent, Crazy Ball is respected because his violence is unrivalled. Prince is violent by nature and gets violent each time he does not get what he wants or when he becomes angry. He often hits people and tries to rape Cheung Dee`s girlfriend after she refuses him one too many times. “A true mob story” presents a Triad world where the potential for violence is necessary to survive.

In “Rich and Famous”, violence is essentially instrumental and most of the characters only use it for special tasks. Kwok is not a violent character and almost only defends himself or others in the movie. Li Ah Chai does not usually use violence as he is the boss and can just send his men do the work but when the situation dictates it he knows how to use violence. Chu Lai To and Yung are those who use violence the most. There is a difference between them as Chu Lo Tai does not hesitate to use violence but does it to achieve his goals (like Li Ah Chai, he tends to send his men do the job and does not do it himself). Yung at the beginning is not particularly violent but after killing Li Ah Chai`s friend and as he becomes more resentful, he will use violence each time something upsets him.

In “tragic hero”, all the characters become peaceful at the exception of Yung who grows more violent. Li Ah Chai wants to quit the Triad world and refuses violence; he does not fight until he has no other choice. In the final showdown, he will kill many of Yung`s men. He does not kill Yung directly; he chooses to let him drop to his death.

Kwok has retired and Chu Lo Tai has made peace with Li Ah Chai (he will nonetheless try to kill Yung seeing that he has no other choices). Yung becomes a very violent man whose violent nature shows constantly. Not only does he beat people constantly and threatens them but he also tries to rape Li Ah Chai`s wife. He also sends his men bomb Kwok`s house. During the final battle, he goes as far as killing one of his men for no reason. Violence defines Yung as it is part of which he is and allows him to assert his power. Eventually, Yung is consumed by violence but he is the odd one in the movie as the Triad world is rather stable. For all the other bosses, stability is good as it brings profit.

Loyalty

Loyalty is another core theme of Triad movies. Most of the protagonists score very high to this item while antagonists score extremely low. In “Young and Dangerous”, Ho Nam`s group is always loyal. This is one of the reasons why they are so appreciated by their peers. In the first movie, they are loyal to Brother B, the man who introduced them to the triad. When B is murdered, Ho Nam is willing to give his life to avenge him. The first “Young and Dangerous” opposes Chan Ho Nam to Ugly Kwan. Chan Ho Nam is the embodiment of loyalty, he lives by a code of honor

that he always follows and always reminds others to be loyal. He is revered by everybody for his loyalty. Ugly Kwan has no loyalty and only follows his own rules, which is why the virtuous characters such as B or Ho Nam do not like him. When all the bosses vote to elect the new boss between Mr. Chiang and Kwan, the fairness and good character of Mr. Chiang are brought up yet Kwan is elected on the basis that he is a good earner and make others gaining money. This shows than even though loyalty and respect are appreciated by Triads, making money seems to be more important.

In the second movie, Chicken has to face a choice, following the San Luen group and obeying Lui Kung or leaving the group. It is difficult for him as he feels indebted towards Lui King who took him into his gang and gave him some responsibilities as well as money and men. He cannot bear to do harm to the Hung Hing group so he decides to leave the San Luen group. It is of importance to note that taking this decision is facilitated by the fact that Lui Kung is not being righteous with Hung Hing. The second movie sees an opposition between Chicken and the woman he loves, Ting Siu-yiu. It is an opposition between a profoundly loyal character, Chicken, and one that is absolutely not, Siu-yiu. Siu-yiu is in fact quite similar to Kwan from the first movie. She betrays everybody and only cares for herself; she doesn't hesitate to sacrifice everybody and everything to fulfill her ambition. Chicken on the other hand rather gives away money, power and the woman he loves to stay true to his friends and be loyal to Hung Hing.

The third movie starts with a gathering of Triad members in front of a statue of Kwan that is traditionally worshipped by Triads and symbolized loyalty. A man is then brought in front of the leader and accuses the leader of not being loyal. The leader, before killing him breaks the statue and tells him that loyalty is out dated. In this movie, Ho Nam must face Crow and Tiger, two despicable members of the Tung Sing group who constantly lie and cheat. More than an opposition between Ho Nam and Crow and his friend, it is an opposition between those who believe in loyalty and those who think it is a concept from the past which has no legitimacy nowadays. After kidnapping Ho Nam`s girlfriend, Crow tells Ho Nam that it is not possible to live being loyal. Eventually, Ho Nam and his righteous side prevail but the price to pay for it is high as both Mr. Chiang and Smartie die. As in all the “Young and

Dangerous” movies, the antagonists are absolutely not loyal where everyone else is and loyalty is generally praised.

In “To Be Number One”, friendship is more important than loyalty and the only loyalty is the one towards friends. Ho and his friends leave Cool Kwan as soon as they make a name for themselves. Ho would rather protect his friend even though he took Cool Kwan`s girlfriend rather than sanctioning him. The Hak brothers and Wan remain loyal to the end to Ho despite the errors of his ways. The Hak brothers always listen to Ho as he is their boss. In a way, he is the brain and they are the muscles, that is why they never question him. Wan might be considered even more loyal because he is intelligent and realizes that Ho is making mistakes. At the end of the movie, he will leave his family to get arrested with Ho even though Ho refused to listen to him.

In “A Better Tomorrow”, loyalty and friendship are the same for Marc and Ho but they are the exception as the others do not have any loyalty. Their Boss does not care about what happens to them as long as he is fine. Shing, their enemy, betrayed them as they were looking out for him and trying to help him make his way into the organization. At the end, Shing will kill his own boss in order to frame Ho. In “A Better Tomorrow”, Ho and Marc are men living by honor in a Triad world where loyalty has become obsolete.

“Infernal Affairs“ and “Infernal Affairs II” are rather different regarding loyalty. In the first movie, Sam`s men, at the exception of Yan and Lau, would die for him. In the second movie, Sam is the only loyal Triad member. Mary had Ngai, her boss, killed, Lau gives Mary`s location to Ngai when she refuses him, The four Bosses try to take advantage of the death of Ngai to stop paying the Ngai family and Ngai tries to kill all the Bosses including Sam. Sam`s loyalty makes him lose his wife and almost being killed proving that loyalty is a fatal flaw in the Triad world.

In a “True Mob Story”, only Cheung Dee and his friends are loyal, all the others do not hesitate to take advantage of him. At the beginning, it is because of his loyalty for his boss that Cheung Dee rescues him even though the odds are totally against him. After being promoted, he truly believes that Prince is trying to help him when all he does is exploiting him. It is only after he realizes that Prince and his father tried to frame him that he decides to take action against them. All the other bosses of

the group consider him unimportant at best and the others use him as a scapegoat. In this Triad World, being loyal is the exception and it is rewarded by the rape of Cheung Dee's girlfriend, His son becoming blind and finally his death as well as the one his friends.

In "Rich and Famous", the two brothers, Yung and Kwok, are totally different as Yung is not loyal while Kwok is. Frustrated by the lack of autonomy under Li Ah Chai, Yung schemes with Chu Lo Tai and betrays Li Ah Chai forgetting that Li Ah Chai saved his family and gave him a job. Kwok, on the other hand, always listens to Li Ah Chai and refuses to join Chu Lai To with his brother when Li Ah Chai expels him. The others all follow their leaders showing that loyalty is still an important value in this movie. In "Tragic heroes", there are still more loyal characters than the opposite. Yung still shows no loyalty as he kills his boss and even some of his men. As Li Ah Chai stops being the fierce boss he used to be, one of his closest follower decides to betray him while the others remain loyal. In this movie, there is an opposition between the characters who are loyal and those who choose power.

Morality

In "Young and Dangerous", most of the Triad characters try to do what they think is good. Ho Nam is the main character and is always praised for being virtuous and loyal. Even though he entered the Triad by choice and to be successful, the main reason for his choice was his admiration for Brother B who treated him nicely. In all the movies, Ho Nam is mostly interested in people. We never hear anything relating to Ho Nam or the other's parents. The only family they all seem to have is Ho Nam's grandmother. We might infer from this that for them The Triads is a kind of family. Brother B is arguably a father figure and they all view each other as brothers. Hung Hing is also certainly an extended family since they really respect every member even when they are being wronged. As said previously, Ho Nam and his friends never hurt innocents. When they do wrong (which rarely happens) they always feel very bad about it and try to make amend.

In the first movie, the main antagonist, Kwan, has no moral and even his subordinates reprove his attitude. He only does what he wants and uses everybody and everything to get what he wants. He still has some people who like him because

he helps them getting money that is why he is elected boss of Hung Hing. On the other hand, his opponent for the election, Mr. Chiang is a man of honor who respects family and tradition and though everybody recognizes these qualities in him they nonetheless choose Kwan. When Chicken comes back from Taiwan to avenge B he will give money to the bosses first to make sure they do not interfere and will accept the return of Mr. Chiang as head of Hung Hing. Here we can see that for those Triad members, honor and respect are important but money and power are more important.

In the second movie, Chicken has to choose between his loyalty for Hung Hing and his loyalty for Lui Kung but the decision is easy to make as Lui Kung is dishonest and tries to force Chicken's decision. He also has to go against his loved one but it is not a difficult decision to make either, as she is a dangerous betrayer. Ho Nam just tries to support his friends and Hung Hing. As for Tai Fei, he sacrifices his own ambition to help Hung Hing. Lui Kung and his mistress are the ones who will do everything to satisfy their greed.

In the third installment, all the Triad members except Tiger and Crow are people who respect honor and loyalty and try to cooperate with each other. Tiger and Crow try to exploit those beliefs which they consider weaknesses as for them, only profit is interesting and everything that stands in their way must be eradicated. They keep on scheming and are constantly dishonest. In this movie, we see two different kinds of Triad, one kind which respects the old traditions and values and another one which despises them and only consider profit. At the end, the righteous side wins but suffers greatly. In this movie, Tiger and Crow are clearly those who do not belong as even their boss and their followers criticize their actions.

In "To Be Number One", Ho starts as a man who is looking out for his friends and tries to improve his life. As the opportunities are scarce for immigrants, he sees no other way than joining the Triads. At this point, he is still a decent man trying to do what is best for him and his friends but as he becomes powerful, he starts to change and becomes obsessed with profit and power. He nevertheless does not hurt innocent people and still looks up for his friends until he becomes a cripple and a big boss, at this stage, he has not much in common with who he was. He cares for nothing but himself and sees everyone who does not do what he wants an enemy. Wu Ming also changed and went from a carefree playboy to a drug addict who betrays his best

friend. At first, success allowed him to indulge into leisure but as he had a weak nature, he couldn't refrain himself and got consumed by his desires. Wan Always follows Ho but tries to be a good man and a good head of family at the same time. He is always a good adviser to Ho but at the end he chooses loyalty to Ho over his family's wellbeing. He was the least likely to be a triad member and a little bit like Wu Ming, joined the Triads only to be with his friends.

Cool Kwan is a Triad boss so he is tough but not a totally mean person. He cares mostly about himself and does not respect women but seems to be good with his friends. He is not very cruel or mean unless he feels betrayed. He tries to kill Ho but is not especially vicious and respects the truce imposed by the chief of police. Most of the characters are neither good nor bad but they all have to act drastically because of Ho who goes from a rather regular man to a terrible one.

In "A Better Tomorrow", the two protagonists are very good men who always try to do the best for their loved ones. They always try to be just and can be described as selfless. In the first "Infernal Affairs", Sam is unscrupulous and does not care about anyone else but all those he goes against are part of the criminal world. In "Infernal Affairs II", although he acts outside his own interest and cares most of all for his wife, he chooses to kill a whole family at the end. Ngai has many people executed but does so in order to avenge his father, not to gain anything; he is ruthless but in his mind acts righteously.

In "Rich and Famous", Kwok and Li Ah Chai act according to a moral code. Kwok always tries to help and protect others and never hurt innocents. Li Ah Chai faces more complicated situations than Kwok but is also a man who has values and who places honor and friendship above all. Yung, in the other hand, starts the movie with few moral restrictions and ends it with none.

The opposition between Kwok and Li Ah Chai who have high moral standards and Yung who has none is even greater in "Tragic Hero". Kwok tries to live a peaceful life outside Hong Kong adopting many orphans and Li Ah Chai tries to also to retire from the crime world to take care of his family but Yung only cares about power and revenge.

Among the movie analyzed, "Young and Dangerous"(I,II and III), "A Better Tomorrow", "A True Mob Story", "Rich and Famous" and "Tragic heroes" have different plots but a common structure which can be found in most of the Triad movies. In those movies, one or several protagonists have all the qualities of true heroes. They care for their friends, their families and respect all those in their Triad group.

Even though they want money and power at the beginning of the movie, they are not ready to sacrifice everything to obtain them and they often prefer things to remain the way they are. They are Triad members and need to use violence but they are not violent in their everyday life. They only use violent means against those who deserve it and only when it is necessary. Those characters have a code of honor by which they try to live; they would rather suffer than betray their values. Among those values, the most important one is loyalty as they do their best to remain loyal to the end.

The antagonists are the exact opposite of the protagonists except for the fact that they often show some respect and sometimes love for their family members. Antagonists only want to satisfy their thirst for power and wealth. Even if some of them show some concern for their family members, they never let feelings or anything else stand between them and their goals. Antagonists are very extreme characters often having psychopathic tendencies; they usually disrespect all the values the protagonists stand for. "Infernal Affairs" I and II as well as "To Be Number One" do not follow the traditional plot for Triad movies as their protagonists are not the "hero" type. The Triad characters in those movies are essentially bad people or become bad.

The influence of Triad movies on Young People`s perception

As this part of the research is an exploratory study, the sample size is small. The results presented in this section are therefore indicative of the effects of a Triad movie on a young audience but a bigger sample size (50 students in each groups for example) might show more significant results.

Table 13.1 Findings for the Control Group

| Paired Sample statistics | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Questionnaire | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Reason | Pre | 2.5909 | 11 | 0.62523 | 0.18851 | 0.208 |
| | Post | 2.9091 | 11 | 1.06813 | 0.32205 | |
| Family | Pre | 3.0000 | 11 | .67082 | .20226 | 0.574 |
| | Post | 3.1364 | 11 | .59544 | .17953 | |
| Friendship | Pre | 3.3409 | 11 | .37952 | .11443 | 0.067 |
| | Post | 3.2386 | 11 | .34666 | .10452 | |
| Loyalty | Pre | 3.8182 | 11 | .60302 | .18182 | 0.067 |
| | Post | 3.7273 | 11 | .69331 | .20904 | |
| Money | Pre | 3.1136 | 11 | .58485 | .17634 | 0.397 |
| | Post | 3.0909 | 11 | .39167 | .11809 | |
| Status | Pre | 2.9697 | 11 | .58127 | .17526 | 0.566 |
| | Post | 3.1212 | 11 | .44778 | .13501 | |
| Lifestyle | Pre | 2.4659 | 11 | .50340 | .15178 | 1 |
| | Post | 2.9545 | 11 | .67840 | .20455 | |
| Perception | Pre | 3.1591 | 11 | .51566 | .15548 | 0.377 |
| | Post | 2.9545 | 11 | .67840 | .20455 | |

Table 13.2 Findings for the Experimental Group

| Paired Sample statistics | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Questionnaire | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Reason | Pre | 2.4545 | 11 | 0.90704 | 0.18851 | 0.852 |
| | Post | 2.4091 | 11 | 0.70065 | 0.32205 | |
| Family | Pre | 3.1818 | 11 | .64315 | .20226 | 0.137 |
| | Post | 3.6818 | 11 | .60302 | .17953 | |
| Friendship | Pre | 3.3409 | 11 | .52764 | .11443 | 0.827 |
| | Post | 3.2955 | 11 | .29724 | .10452 | |
| Loyalty | Pre | 3.6818 | 11 | .47554 | .18182 | 1 |
| | Post | 3.6818 | 11 | .53725 | .20904 | |
| Money | Pre | 2.7500 | 11 | .57009 | .17634 | 0.007 |
| | Post | 3.2727 | 11 | .51786 | .11809 | |
| Status | Pre | 2.8939 | 11 | .52848 | .17526 | 0.622 |
| | Post | 2.9848 | 11 | .42462 | .13501 | |
| Lifestyle | Pre | 2.3864 | 11 | .37689 | .15178 | 0.365 |
| | Post | 2.5114 | 11 | .51676 | .20455 | |
| Perception | Pre | 2.8636 | 11 | .59544 | .15548 | 0.445 |
| | Post | 3.0455 | 11 | .62067 | .20455 | |

Table 13.3 Descriptive Statistics

| | Section | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|------------|---------|--------|----------------|----|
| Reason | control | -.3182 | .78335 | 11 |
| | exp | .0455 | .78913 | 11 |
| | Total | -.1364 | .78954 | 22 |
| Family | control | -.1364 | .77753 | 11 |
| | exp | -.5000 | 1.02470 | 11 |
| | Total | -.3182 | .90692 | 22 |
| Friendship | control | .2727 | .43952 | 11 |
| | exp | .0455 | .67146 | 11 |
| | Total | .1591 | .56587 | 22 |
| Loyalty | control | .1818 | .68091 | 11 |
| | exp | .0000 | .43301 | 11 |
| | Total | .0909 | .56456 | 22 |
| Money | control | .1364 | .76128 | 11 |
| | exp | -.5227 | .51786 | 11 |
| | Total | -.1932 | .71934 | 22 |
| Status | control | -.0909 | .50752 | 11 |
| | exp | -.0909 | .59331 | 11 |
| | Total | -.0909 | .53878 | 22 |
| Lifestyle | control | .0000 | .31623 | 11 |
| | exp | -.1250 | .43661 | 11 |
| | Total | -.0625 | .37747 | 22 |
| Perception | control | .1818 | .65279 | 11 |
| | exp | -.1818 | .75904 | 11 |
| | Total | .0000 | .71548 | 22 |

Table 13.4 Variance between Control and Experimental Group

| Tests of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|---------------------|
| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
| Corrected Model | Reason | .727 ^a | 1 | .727 | 1.176 | .291 | .056 |
| | Family | .727 ^b | 1 | .727 | .879 | .360 | .042 |
| | Friendship | .284 ^c | 1 | .284 | .882 | .359 | .042 |
| | Loyalty | .182 ^d | 1 | .182 | .558 | .464 | .027 |
| | Money | 2.389 ^e | 1 | 2.389 | 5.637 | .028 | .220 |
| | Status | .000 ^f | 1 | .000 | .000 | 1.000 | .000 |
| | Lifestyle | .086 ^g | 1 | .086 | .591 | .451 | .029 |
| | Perception | .727 ^h | 1 | .727 | 1.451 | .242 | .068 |

Table 13.5 Summary of the Findings

| Paired Sample statistics | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | Questionnaire | Mean Control | Mean Experimental | Sig. Control | Sig. Expe | Partial Eta Squared |
| Reason | Pre | 2.5909 | 2.4545 | 0.208 | 0.852 | .056 |
| | Post | 2.5909 | 2.4091 | | | |
| Family | Pre | 3.0000 | 3.1818 | 0.574 | 0.137 | .042 |
| | Post | 3.1364 | 3.6818 | | | |
| Friendship | Pre | 3.3409 | 3.3409 | 0.067 | 0.827 | .042 |
| | Post | 3.2386 | 3.2955 | | | |
| Loyalty | Pre | 3.8182 | 3.6818 | 0.067 | 1 | .027 |
| | Post | 3.7273 | 3.6818 | | | |
| Money | Pre | 3.1136 | 2.7500 | 0.397 | 0.007 | .220 |
| | Post | 3.0909 | 3.2727 | | | |
| Status | Pre | 2.9697 | 2.8939 | 0.566 | 0.622 | .000 |
| | Post | 3.1212 | 2.9848 | | | |
| Lifestyle | Pre | 2.4659 | 2.3864 | 1 | 0.365 | .029 |
| | Post | 2.9545 | 2.5114 | | | |
| Perception | Pre | 3.1591 | 2.8636 | 0.377 | 0.445 | .068 |
| | Post | 2.9545 | 3.0455 | | | |

The results of the control group do not change significantly. The dimension containing questions related to why people join the Triads shows a greater level of significance for the post questionnaire than for the pre questionnaire. For the dimension containing questions related to the importance of the family, the post questionnaire shows a slightly greater score than the pre questionnaire. For the dimension on the importance of friendship, the score of the answers were lower for the post questionnaire than for the pre questionnaire. When asked questions about the importance of loyalty, the respondents also showed less identification during the post questionnaire than during the pre-questionnaire. Regarding the importance of money, the scores of the post questionnaire were less important than those of the pre

questionnaire. The scores of the questions about the status of Triads in society showed almost identical but nonetheless slightly higher score for the post questionnaire. For the questions on the lifestyle of the Triads, the scores remained the same for the pre and post questionnaire. To questions about how Triads are perceived, the scores were higher for the pre questionnaire than for the post questionnaire.

Three dimensions, those regarding the reasons for joining the Triads, the importance of family and the status of the Triads barely show greater score for the post questionnaire. The scores of the remaining dimensions either stay the same or are slightly less high for the post questionnaire. While most of the scores for the pre questionnaire and the post questionnaire are not equal, they change in a non-significant way. For the experimental group, out of 8 dimensions one change significantly. The dimension containing questions related to the reasons for joining the Triads shows a slightly higher score for the pre questionnaire. The standard deviation is lower for the post questionnaire while the variance between the control group and the experimental group is not significant. For the importance of family, the scores of the post questionnaire are higher than those of the pre questionnaire. The standard deviation is slightly lower for the post questionnaire and the variance between control and experimental group is not significant. Regarding the importance of friendship, the post questionnaire's scores are less important than those of the pre questionnaire. The standard deviation is lower while the variance between the control and the experimental group is not significant. The Pre questionnaire and the post questionnaire of the dimension containing questions related to the importance of loyalty have identical scores but a higher standard deviation. The variance between the two groups is not significant. The dimension with questions related to how important money is for Triads has higher scores and lower standard deviation for the post questionnaire as well as a significant variance between control and experimental group. For the dimension containing questions on the status of Triads, the post questionnaire showed higher scores than the pre questionnaire. The standard deviation is lower for the post questionnaire and there is no significant variance between the control and the experimental group. The questions regarding the lifestyle of the Triads show a higher score for the post questionnaire than for the pre questionnaire. The standard deviation is higher for the post questionnaire and the

variance between control and experimental group is not significant. The questions related to how Triads are perceived show a higher score for the post questionnaire than for the pre questionnaire as well as a higher standard deviation and a non-significant variance between control and experimental group. The dimensions concerning the reasons why Triad members join the Triads and the importance of Friendship show slightly higher scores for the pre questionnaire compared to the post questionnaire. The dimension showing the importance of loyalty for Triads stays the same for the pre questionnaire and the post questionnaire. All the other dimensions show higher score for the post questionnaire but only the dimensions reflecting the importance of money for Triads does so significantly.

When comparing the control group and the experimental group, only the money dimension has a significant variance.

In the experimental group, the dimensions concerning reason, family, friendship, money and status all have a lower standard deviation for the post questionnaire while loyalty, lifestyle, and perception gained a higher standard deviation after watching the movie. This shows that even to a small extent, the students tended to perceive some events in the movie in a similar way while others were perceived differently.

As the control group results of the pre questionnaire and post questionnaire did not change significantly, it appears that the movie shown did not modify how the control group perceived the Triads. For the experimental group, although the results of the pre questionnaire and post questionnaire changed slightly, they are not significant except for the questions related to how important money is for the Triads. The findings show that the Triad movie shown only had a small impact on how the experimental group perceives the Triad.

Chapter Six

Discussion

In the following chapter, the findings presented in the previous chapter are discussed and analyzed in order to give them a meaningful explanation.

Discussion on the portrayal of Triads in movies

Most of the Protagonists in the movies sampled use violence when it is required for a special mission or for self-defense but they usually do not act violently. Violence is often in those movies a mean of expression of the antagonists who use it to assert their power on others but also as a catharsis for their frustration. They also seem to truly enjoy violence showing in some cases some sadistic tendencies. Loyalty is a value mentioned in almost every Triad movies. In the sampled movies, all the Triad members publicly value it but not all are truly loyal, in fact, for many, loyalty is no more than a facade hiding their true character. Most of the protagonists are actually loyal. Ho Nam, Chicken and their friends, B, Mr. Chiang and Tai Fei in “Young and Dangerous” are all paragons of loyalty, the same goes for Ho and Marc in “A Better Tomorrow”, Cheung Dee in “A True Mob Story”, Kwok and Li Ah Chai in “Rich and Famous” (and “Tragic hero”). They all follow a code of loyalty that they are unwilling to break no matter the hardship they encounter. They are all exceptions as most of the other Triad members in those movies might say that being loyal is of the utmost importance for Triad members but they would rather be rich than loyal. That is the case of the antagonists who do not care the least about loyalty. Bust most of them put up an act pretending to care about it. Crow, in” Young and Dangerous“, goes as far as saying that it is an out dated concept that is laughable.

For some characters, doing the right thing is not easy because of contradictions between things they believe in. Chicken from “Young and Dangerous“ must choose between his loyalty to Hung Hing and his loyalty towards Lui Kung, Kwok in “Rich and famous” has to choose between his brotherly bond with Yung and his loyalty for Li Ah Chai but all those choices are made easy by the fact that others do not do what is right or do not play by the rules.

For the antagonists, the right thing is always what they want and they hardly ask themselves if their behavior or actions are proper.

Protagonists

The protagonists of the sampled movies are mostly brave and courageous men respecting honor and loyalty. They respect their bosses and their group. Even though they are triad members whose goal is to make money and gain power, they try not to harm others especially the innocents. When dealing with enemies, they try to be fair and avoid casualties. They are usually men of peace who kill as a last resort. Some of them do not fit in the Triad world which brings them many problems.

They all have in common a desire for money, power and a high status but they put family, friendship, and loyalty first. They rarely attain their goal and even when they do they pay a very high price for it. By trying to avoid violent or rash actions, some of the protagonists become at odds with other Triad members. When this happens, they have no other choice than fighting but it is often too late. Most of the protagonists of the sampled films do not really belong to the Triad world or do not belong anymore. They would rather be doing something else but it is not easy to quit the Triad world as most of those who try fail since others will not let them go. In all the movies sampled, the protagonists end up worse than when they started, almost none of them are satisfied and most of them lose what they held dear. The only exception might be “Young and Dangerous” in which Ho Nam and Chicken always seem to be satisfied in a way but the cost is always extremely high. Each movie sees them losing loved ones but they also get richer and more powerful each time. For all the other protagonists, not only do they all lose people they were close to but in almost every case they end up in jail or dead. The protagonists may be criminals, few of them are described as bad people; actually they are in most of those movies “tragic heroes” who try to follow ideals or right wrongs despite the hardships. It is often unclear why they join the Triads but some of them do so because they do not have many other choices. Many struggle to exist in a world that is the only one they know as the regular world does not have a place for them yet they often do not belong to the Triad world either.

Antagonists

Antagonists are reflections of the protagonists, where the protagonists of Triad movies often have all the attributes of heroes, the antagonists have the opposite flaws. Most of the antagonists in the sample movies are violent, cunning and care about

nothing besides themselves. Some put up the appearance of respectability and manage to fool others while others do not even pretend and as they manage to gain enough power, they do not even pretend to be nice people. As said before, the protagonists of Triad movies are often at odds with the Triad world because they follow values that are no longer valid or lack the drive to thrive in such a world. It appears that the antagonists achieve the same effects for the opposite reasons; their ruthlessness and lack of morality make it impossible for them to go on in the Triad world or rather in the world. Not all the antagonists are estranged from the Triad world but many of them go so far that they lose their support. In such cases, the other Triad members help in their demise or refuse to help them. In some cases, people outside the Triad world, often the police, help stopping them. If some of the protagonists seem to be regular people lost in an irregular world, some antagonists show some signs of sadism or even sociopathic tendencies that puts them aside from the other Triad members. Nonetheless, antagonists are often regarded more positively in the Triad world than protagonist as it appears that being too brutal is better than being too weak. This can be seen by the fact that most of the antagonists are bosses or become bosses. Similarly to the protagonists, the antagonists all end up in a worse state than at the beginning of the movie. But some differences can be seen, to the exception of Cool Kwan in “To Be Number One”, they are all killed and also (possibly as a result) they all seem to die with less regrets than the protagonists. The antagonists all have better lives than the protagonists. As most of them barely have a conscience, they rarely regret their choices and since they are rarely seen with loved ones they almost never lose any. At the moment of their death, which is often brutal and do not allow them to reflect on their past mistakes, their last emotion is often anger or frustration but not sadness as it is the case for protagonists. Nevertheless, their violent demise often seems to equal their ill gained rise and therefore a feeling of justice can derive from their death.

Bosses

The sampled movies present different kinds of Triad bosses. In some movies, the Triad bosses are wise and very similar to businessmen; in others, they are surrounded by many men and are more involved in the Triad activities. Mainly two groups can be seen; those who are very active in the Triad group and those who want to be less involved in the triad business or even retire. Some movies show some good and

generous bosses while others depict cunning and vile bosses who betray their men. Some bosses rely on their men while others only see them as pawns. On the other hand most of the triad members in the movies obey their bosses and seem rather loyal to them. Good and bad bosses both have men caring for them who try to advise them when they think they are being wrong but bosses rarely listen. Some bosses think that they can do everything they want since they are powerful and very few people oppose them while others think that power give them extra responsibilities. Some characters start to change once they become bosses or rather some are changed by power and others realize that to be boss one has to be merciless. While some revels in this position, others do not really appreciate it.

One of the main qualifications to be a boss is to be tough; those who are not cannot be boss for long as they are immediately challenged. Being boss is the main objective of every triad members in the movies (as well as being rich, both often being linked) but not all the triad members are fit to the task. Some movies present the figure of a big boss who is sometimes the ultimate authority to whom other bosses refer to; this boss usually tries to preserve the harmony between groups. To stay at the top seems to be as difficult as arriving there and bosses seem to be in a lonelier position than their men since they can't be too close to them. Even in the movies depicting groups of friends, one has to be the leader as power cannot be shared. Some bosses choose to stay in the Triads while others try to become involved in regular business and in politics.

The Triad world

All those characters evolve in a Triad world which even if not exactly the same in all the movies present some common characteristics. No matter the movie, The Triad world or rather underworld is always a tough one where the strong ones dominate and the weak ones perish. Some movies show an underworld where everything goes as long as one has power while other movies show that even for the powerful there are limits. Whether genuinely present or fake, loyalty and brotherhood are the typical values celebrated in the underworld and they are much talked about.

Success

All the movies present some successful triad members and most of the characters antagonists or protagonists, at one point of the movie, have money, dress nicely and possess expensive items. Most of them also have at least some if not absolute power on other Triad members and even regular citizens. Triad ambition is always portrayed by the figure of the boss. It is difficult to draw a portrait of a common Triad member from sampled movies but most of them tend to show two different extremes. The very good and moral characters in one hand and the extremely wicked characters portrayed by the antagonists. Provided that both extremes cancel each other it can be said that the Triad world is tough but neither totally good nor bad as good and bad people can be found there. This can oppose the traditional view stating that Triads are only criminals using violence to exploit violence.

Discussion on the influence of Triad movies

As only one dimension sees a significant change before and after watching the movie it appears that the overall effect of this movie on the watcher is very mild. The results show nonetheless that the respondents showed a slightly improved view of the Triads after watching the Triad movie than when they have not. Even though the difference between the control group and the experimental group is not great, we can see that in the control group, most of the dimensions showed no change between the two questionnaires or a change indicating that they viewed the Triads in a less positive way during the second questionnaire. The experimental group shows the opposite tendency, most of the dimensions show a very slight change between the two questionnaires indicating an improvement of their view of the Triads during the second questionnaire. The differences between the two groups not being significant, they only amount to tendencies. They show that the students who watched the Triad movie showed a very mild improvement in their view of the Triads after having watched the Triad movie. The only dimension with higher score for the post questionnaire indicating an improvement in how the respondents view the Triads is the one containing questions regarding how important money is for Triad members and how far they would go to obtain it. After watching the movie, it appears that most of the students thought that after all, Triad members want money but are not willing to go to every extreme to obtain it. In the movie shown, most of the

characters do not act solely for the purpose of earning money. The antagonists' main goal might be money and power but most of the other characters are looking for something else. There is usually not much distinction in Triad movies between money and power as those who have power have money and vice versa. After witnessing a good friend die on his behalf, Chicken realizes that there are things much more important than status or money. Students watching the movie might have concluded from this particular moment in the movie that even though Triad members' goal is to be rich and powerful they value other things in life and still have limits they are not ready to cross.

As only one dimension significantly changes after the movie has been watched it appears that the influence of the movie was very limited. This can be explained in part by the fact that as people do not retain all the information they encounter, they go through a process of selection that sees them retaining or discarding certain information. Triad movies do not show a uniform message but rather an array of different messages and one might be more receptive to some of them. In those movies, the protagonist and his allies usually express qualities such as honor, friendship and loyalty while the antagonists are often depicted as amoral characters ready to do anything for money. It is not clear which message will have more effect on the audience as some might be interpreted in a different way. In the movie shown, "Young and Dangerous IV", Chicken wants to be leader and is disappointed by the lack of support of his friend who despite his disapproval stands by him all the way. Some might consider that this shows friendship as even if Chan Ho Nam does not agree with his friend and even argue with him at the end, he helps him fight back. Other people might consider that the initial lack of support from Ho Nam or Chicken's failure to follow his friend's advice shows a lack of friendship.

Also, if the protagonists' side clearly is the righteous one in the movie and the one of the antagonist (who kills and cheats his way out for money), the wrongful one, how one relates these sides to the real life Triads differs. Those who think that real life Triads might be similar to the protagonist's side in the movie might view real life triad in a better way. On the other hand, those thinking that the antagonist's side is more similar to the real life triad will not have an improved view of them after watching the movie. As both sides are quite extreme in their ways, the protagonists being extremely righteous and the antagonists totally evil, some viewers might

dismiss both as not relevant to the real life Triad. To have an improved view of the Triad after watching the movie, one has to retain all the good aspects of the Triads shown in the movie. As said previously, not everybody might interpret them as such and those who do might not recognize all of them. As the dimension concerning the importance of money had a higher score after watching the movie, the subjects changed their view to think that triad members did not only act for money but the other dimensions were not identified. For the students, either the hero or his allies were not reflecting real life Triads or if they thought they were, they did not consistently associated them with good qualities. The movie is quite straight forward concerning who are the good and bad guys, there are four main bad guys. One is a member of a rival organization who tries to ruin the Hung Hing group, another one is a member of Hung Hing who betrays Hung Hing for profit and the two others are brothers who collude with the two others by lack of wits more than anything else. Besides those four characters, all the others are righteous. It is very clear in the movie that the potential models or characters from whom one can learn are Chan Ho Nam and his allies as all the others meet a bad end and are punished for their actions. If the respondents did not have a significantly improved view of the Triads after watching the movie it is probably because they did not make a connection between the Triads in the movie with Triads in real life.

To learn from models, one has to be able to relate to them or understand their actions but if the Triads in the movie were too dissimilar from what the students knew of the Triads they then might have dismissed information coming from the movie and judged the movie as work of fiction only. As the score for friendship was slightly lower after watching the movie, the subjects might have considered that the movie did not display as much friendship as they thought Triads generally display. Even though the two protagonists of the movie are best friends, they have different opinions, get into an argument, and even fight but, even though all those things happen they still remain friends. If one thinks that friends should never get mad at each other and should always agree, he might have consider that the characters' behavior shows a lack of friendship.

The movie shown to the experimental group was a typical Triad movie with two protagonists having the qualities of heroes while the antagonists were treacherous and ruthless. After much suffering the main protagonists finally defeated their

opponents. Several reasons might explain why this movie did not significantly change the views of the experimental group. As the movie portrayed Triad members as very good and kind hearted people or despicable characters, the most plausible reason seems to be a failure to relate the staged events of the movie to real life situations or people. Moreover, as the movie includes many subplots they might have confused the students and make it difficult for them to filter the messages relayed by the movie.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This research was conducted to analyze the portrayal of Triads in Hong Kong movies and to assess if this portrayal could lead young viewers of Triad movies to change their perception of real life Triads. Triad movies might all be different, they often rely on a charismatic cast and a portrayal of Triad members as rich, successful and enjoying a wild life. The first aim of this thesis was to determine if because of the aforementioned elements, Triad movies were truly presenting Triads in a favorable way. The additional part of this study assessed the extent of the influence of a Triad movie on young viewers. Several theories support the idea that Triad movies can improve in a positive way the views of young people concerning the Triads. The Priming Theory, the Cultivation Theory, the Media Practice Model, as well as the Super Peer Theory all indicate that teenagers can turn to media to understand the real world. The Social Learning Theory states that vicarious learning is an important learning process. According to these theories, movies can influence the audience under certain conditions. The second part of this study investigated if those theories, especially the Social Learning Theory could apply to Triad movies and Teenagers in Hong Kong.

The findings of the content analysis showed that the glamorous aspect they have in movies does not necessarily mean that Triads are described positively. Triad movies tend to show Triads as either very good or very bad. There is often an opposition between the good heroes who are the embodiment of the ideal righteous Triad members and the worst kind of Triad members one can imagine. Triad movies thus send mixed signals to the audience as good elements as well as bad elements can give the feeling that Triads can be good or bad. Nonetheless, even if the bad Triad members are often punished at the end of the movies, the good Triad members always have to pay a very high price for their victory.

The second part of the study showed that watching a Triad movie did not significantly improve in a positive way the perception young people had of the Triads. Those findings do not necessarily contradict the theories supporting the influence of movies on people`s perception. As Triad movies send mixed messages about Triads it is understandable that most of the watchers do not have an improved

view of the Triads after watching a Triad movie. Moreover, according to the Social Learning Theory, for one to learn an observed behavior, he has to understand the behavior first. But those who are more receptive to the elements giving a good image of the Triads might not necessarily be influenced by them.

As Triad movies often differ in which trait of the hero is more showed to the audience, a different movie than “Young and Dangerous IV” might produce different results but those results would probably not be too different as the same themes are always present in Triad movies. A different movie might show main characters having even stronger bonds but less loyalty to the group which might result in slightly higher results for the friendship dimension and slightly lower score for the loyalty dimension but it probably would not make the results more significant at the end.

The lack of more significant results is concurrent with the media practice model and the cultivation theory as they are long term processes. The super peer theory, the priming theory, and the social learning theory can all apply in case of limited exposure. Those three theories state that under certain conditions one can be influenced by what he sees on media. If only one of the studied dimensions had a significant impact on the students, it is probably because not enough conditions were met for these effects to have more impact. The lack of authenticity of the movie might have prevented the students from considering its Triad world and Triad members as valid learning sources. The Super peer theory states that teenagers might consider media characters as peers and the media world as normative but what they watch has to seem realistic. The social learning theory states that one has to understand a behavior in order to learn from it but the conflicting behaviors and actions portrayed by the Triad movies might prevent this process from happening, especially if what is observed does not seem real. The priming theory states that by watching media one triggers related thoughts about what he sees and might make new judgments upon it. It is possible than by not being able to analyze clearly the elements seen in the movies the students were prevented from making judgments upon them.

Some critics of Triads movies state that Triad movies, by glamorizing Triads characters, make the real life Triads appealing to youngsters. While it cannot be

denied that it might be the case for some youngsters, it is more because of their misinterpretation or superficial understanding of the movie than because of the messages of the movies themselves. It is true that Triad members are rich and successful in Triad movies but very few retain their wealth or power as most of the main characters end up dead or in jail. Only seeing the cool appearance and signs of power and wealth in those movies would be leaving some important points made by the movies. If some Triad members are glorified in Triad movies only a few are and they are matched with Triad members who are vilified.

By making the main character a good person with the qualities of a hero, the movie makers often make him look like an outsider in the Triad world. Instead of sending the message that Triads are good people similar to the main character, they depict this main character as an oddity who cannot be considered as the norm in the Triad world. As the other characters not allied with the main character are either antagonists (often unscrupulous and ruthless) or neutral characters neither very good or very bad, what can be said is that the Triads in movies are not very good people. Not only the protagonists in Triad movies are exceptions in the Triad world but they cannot live in the regular world either. Their actions are always so selfless and they always are so heroic that it is difficult to believe anyone in real life would be similar, especially criminals.

As protagonists are portrayed as paragons it is difficult for the viewers to consider them more than characters of fictions. If the students did not change their answers significantly after watching the movie it is probably because they did not think that real life Triads were similar to the protagonists of the movie. The other characters being either, not important enough to make a strong impression on the viewer or antagonists, it is logical that they did not improve significantly the perception of Triads of the students.

The results of this study show that watching a Triad movie does not change a young viewer's perception significantly. After watching a Triad movie, a young viewer is unlikely to have a better or worse opinion of the Triads and if he does, the change would be barely noticeable.

As a movie enthusiast I often watch Triad movies and sincerely enjoy them but it is only by undertaking this research that I came to ask myself what was the meaning behind them. At first I had to deepen my knowledge of the Triads which led me to

learn more about Chinese history and Hong Kong society. Even though my knowledge about Triads remains shallow I have a deeper understanding of their activities and structure. I even surprise myself when I understand references to Triads in my everyday life.

To do this research I had to watch movies in a different way, instead of being a casual watcher I became an analyst which modified my way of understanding the Triad movies. For my content analysis I had to, not only analyze the stories of the movies but also all the clues given regarding the Triads. I came to realize that most of the movies I analyzed were in fact the retelling of a simple story where a hero goes against the odds. I now think that the Triad background of Triad movies is just a frame allowing directors to tell a story. It appears to me that most movies belonging to this genre just try to entertain the audience and do not try to redeem or accuse Triads. The Triad world seems to be good for story telling as it can provide many opportunities for action scenes as well as many different type of enemies.

Being an avid reader of Chinese martial arts novels, I see many similarities between them and the Triad movies as both portray the struggles of heroes at the margin of the law.

Triad movies raise the question of morality in movies as the protagonists of those movies are criminals. After studying those movies, I think that those movies depict statutory criminals who are in fact good people. If the protagonists of the Triad movies are surely not good role models for young people they are not either morally decadent characters.

Through this research I learned more about Hong Kong through the movies, as movies can give an idea of what society is like but also by going to a secondary school for my pilot study. Going to a secondary school as a researcher allowed me to meet some modern days Hong Kong secondary school students and their teachers. I am thankful for having the opportunity of doing this research as I believed I learned tremendously from it.

Limitations and directions for further studies

This study focuses on the messages sent by triad movies and their influence on young people. Triad movies may be the only type of movies using Triad members as a main theme, they are not the only ones with Triad characters. As many movies, some even more successful than Triad movies, portray Triads, it might be interesting

to study the messages sent by those portrayals as well as their effects. Similarly, other work of fictions use Triads as part of the story, some comics, and TV series even use Triads as main characters, studying them might provide deeper knowledge on Triad representation. The effects of fictions representing Triads do not have to be restrained to young people as people of all age watch or read them. This study only investigated the short term effect of Triad movies but the long term effect as well as the quantity of movies watched might have an impact on how one perceives Triads. It would be interesting to analyze how similar Triads in fiction and Triads in reality are but to do so would imply a deep knowledge of the Triad life that only people living with Triads can have.

The second part of this research is an exploratory study; it tested the impact of one Triad movie on a small sample of students. Other studies with different parameters might provide some interesting information regarding the impact of Triad movies on the audience. The cultivation theory states that after multiple exposures to media, one considers the media world as true and the super peer theory explains that teenagers can consider fiction characters model to learn from. Following those theories, it would be interesting to see the results of experiments testing the multiple exposures of Triad movies over a relatively long period. By repeatedly being exposed to Triad movies, the subjects might consider the Triad world depicted on movies as real. Some problems to consider might be the difficulty to gather a large sample of young people. Since Triads are illegal and regularly commit felonies and crimes, potentially improving young people`s perception of them might be seen as pervasive, resulting in difficulties to obtain approval.

Appendix I

First Name:

Triad movies and young people`s perceptions

Questionnaire

On a scale from 1 to 5 rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Reasons for joining The Triads

1. Triad members join the Triads because they are pressured to do so.
1 2 3 4 5
2. Triad members don`t have the choice to join the Triads.
1 2 3 4 5

Importance of family for Triad members

3. The wellbeing of their families is important to Triad members.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Triad members don`t have strong ties with their families.
1 2 3 4 5

Importance of friendship for Triad members

5. Friendship is important amongst Triad members.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Many Triad members are good friends with the other members of the group.
1 2 3 4 5
7. Triad members consider other members as brothers.
1 2 3 4 5
8. Triad members in a same group are more than coworkers.
1 2 3 4 5
9. It is not important for Triad members to care about each other.
1 2 3 4 5
10. The wellbeing of the group is not important for Triad members.
1 2 3 4 5
11. Triad members are not bound together by a sense of belonging to a group.
1 2 3 4 5
12. Triad bosses don't care for their men.
1 2 3 4 5

Importance of loyalty for Triad Members

13. Loyalty is important for Triad members.
1 2 3 4 5
14. Betrayal is one of the worst act for a Triad member
1 2 3 4 5
15. Triad members are not loyal to their group.
1 2 3 4 5

16. Triad members are not loyal to their bosses.

1 2 3 4 5

Importance of Money for Triad members

17. Triad members would do anything for money.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Triad members only care about money.

1 2 3 4 5

19. Triad members don't make more money than law abiding citizens.

1 2 3 4 5

20. For Triad members making money is not really important.

1 2 3 4 5

Triad members `status

21. Triad members are despised by others.

1 2 3 4 5

22. Most of the Triad members are respected and powerful.

1 2 3 4 5

23. Triad members lead a glamorous life.

1 2 3 4 5

24. Triad members are not respected.

1 2 3 4 5

25. Triad bosses are not successful.

1 2 3 4 5

26. It is not easy to become powerful in The Triads

1 2 3 4 5

Triad members` lifestyle

27. Many Triad members use the services of prostitutes.
1 2 3 4 5
28. Many Triad members gamble.
1 2 3 4 5
29. Many Triad members use drugs
1 2 3 4 5
30. Triad members often use violence.
1 2 3 4 5
31. Triad members don`t use violence without justification.
1 2 3 4 5
32. It is not necessary to use violence when being a Triad member.
1 2 3 4 5
33. Most of the Triad members don`t smoke.
1 2 3 4 5
34. Triad members don`t often drink alcohol.
1 2 3 4 5

Perception on Triads

35. Real life Triad members are similar to those in movies.
1 2 3 4 5
36. Triad members just try to make a living.
1 2 3 4 5
37. Triad members are not similar to law abiding citizens.
1 2 3 4 5

38. Triad members are not honest people.

1 2 3 4 5

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