

Metaphors for the Nation: Conceptualization of Its BODY and/or PERSON



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Abstract One of the key-complexes for conceptualizing national identity is that of the metaphor of the nation as a body or a person. Such nation-embodiment and -personalization have a long conceptual history in English-speaking cultures and still figure in present-day political discourse. However, do metaphor users from different cultures understand such metaphors in the same way as English-L1-speakers? Empirical evidence from an intercultural metaphor interpretation survey conducted in English-as-lingua franca provides evidence of variation in Nation-embodiment and -personalization on the reception-side. Five scenarios of interpretive conceptualization can be identified, which are variably distributed across different national/linguistic cohorts: NATION AS BODY, AS GEOBODY, AS PART OF A LARGER BODY, AS PART OF EGO'S BODY AND AS A PERSON. This chapter focuses on comparing such scenarios across the English-L1 and Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese)-L1 cohorts. The results show differences in scenario distribution, as well as in the use of irony and humor and of topical references to socio-economic and political developments or national stereotypes. In conclusion, we discuss how these differences are related to culture-specific discourse traditions.

Keywords Embodiment · English-L1 · English as lingua franca · Metaphor · National identity · Scenario · Survey

1 Introduction

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the metaphors NATION-AS-BODY and NATION-AS-PERSON are grounded in the immediate body-experience (Gibbs, 2005; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Ziemke et al., 2007)—after all, what could be more familiar to us than our own bodies and personalities? However, the familiarity of the BODY as a source domain is not necessarily a sufficient reason to

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assume an experiential universality of these metaphors beyond a very general level. After all, BODY and PERSON concepts are themselves cultural concepts (Maalej & Yu, 2011; Sharifian et al., 2008; Yu, 2003, 2008). Hence, different cultural traditions may still vary substantially in highlighting specific body and personality aspects as sources for nation conceptualizations. The present chapter aims to find out if empirical evidence can be found for such variation and what it means for the concept of “culture” in cognitive metaphor theory.

2 Cultural Influences on Metaphor Interpretation

Traditionally, arguments about cultural specificity of conceptual metaphors concern their production-side (Kövecses, 1995, 2005, 2017; Musolff et al., 2014; Yu, 2003, 2008), but more recently their learning by English as L2-speakers and their reception by hearers or readers has also become the focus of research (Littlemore & Low, 2006; Littlemore et al., 2011; MacArthur & Littlemore, 2011; Nacey 2013; Philip, 2010; Piquer-Piriz, 2010; Wang & Dowker, 2010). Metaphors of public discourse, however, may conceivably be understood uniformly across various languages and cultures, due to their high conventionality. The lexicalized English metaphors *body politic*, *head of state*, *head of government*, for instance, are nowadays learnt as part of English political vocabulary and, if unclear or not known, can easily be looked up in a dictionary (*Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 1999, p. 149; Deignan, 1995, p. 2; *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002, p. 258). Nevertheless, there is still the possibility that learners of English or other recipients with a different L1 than English may all *identify* these metaphors correctly but work out meanings that they think are the correct ones but which are different from those intended by the speakers.

This assumption is not as far-fetched as it may sound. When teaching on a course for international MA students with good English L2 competence at the University of East Anglia in 2011, I ran a class test to make sure that the recently mentioned term *body politic* had been correctly understood by the students. 50% of them were Chinese; the rest was made up of British, US-American, European, Kurdish and Arab students. All of them were asked to explain the meaning of *body politic* with reference to their own nations. Here follow eight exemplary responses from the class exercise:

(1) Student A: “The head of the body represents the Queen of England, as she is in charge of the whole country and she is royalty. The features of the head (eyes, nose, mouth and ears) represent the different official people, such as politicians, the Prime Minister, the Government”.

(2) Student B: “If one organ or part of the national body suffers, the whole body would suffer from fever. In other words, having a healthy body requires healthy parts. As a nation, a problem in one area of a country should attract the attention of the whole people in that country”.

(3) Student C: “2 Heads: Head of state is the king?—Not sure anymore! Head of government are [Prime Minister] Rajoy and the big banks’ presidents”.

(4) Student D: “The face: president and government; the brain: oligarchs, members of parliament (make all decisions in essence); the hands: official and unofficial local authorities (including mafia groups); the mouth: the media—controlled by the oligarchs/MPs (dictate political ideology)”.

(5) Student E: “Beijing: Heart and Brain, Shanghai: Face (economic center); Hong Kong and Taiwan: Feet; Tianjin: Hands (=army close to Beijing); Shenzhen: Eyes (=the first place open to the world)”.

(6) Student F: “Beijing is the heart of China. [...] The railway is the throat of China. Shanghai is the economic backbone of China. Tsingtao is the skeleton of Shandong province. Shenzhen is the liver of China; Tiananmen is the eye of Beijing. Nanjing is the face of Jiangsu; Szechuan is the hair of China; Xiangyang is the heel of China”.

(7) Student G: “Beijing: brain (government); Shanghai: hug/arm (welcome to foreign people); Guangzhou: feet (keep China going); Hong Kong: face (familiar to everyone, representative); Taiwan: hair (we can live without hair but it is necessary for beauty)”.

(8) Student H: “[...] Taiwan: potential disease (maybe one time we have to fight against it and occupy it); Tibet: stomach (sometimes you feel uncomfortable); The head of the government: hair (if one goes down, always some other one will grow up)”.

Example (1) was produced by a British student, examples (2)–(4) by a Saudi Arabian, a Spanish and a Ukrainian student, respectively, and students E, F, G, and H were Chinese. Whilst all answers are correct in the sense that they fulfilled the task, the responses fall into two distinct groups. The first four responses describe a nation’s political system in terms of a body’s anatomy, physiology and health. Responses (5)–(8), on the other hand, identify geographical places in China, including the politically separate state of Taiwan, and link them to parts of the human anatomy on the basis of functional correspondences between them and political institutions or activities in the respective cities/provinces and give further descriptive or evaluative explanations. These explanations often also serve to personalize the characterizations in the sense that they present the Chinese nation as presenting a *face* to the outside world, *hugging* those who are friendly towards it, or actively *fighting* diseases.

The first four responses differ in the national target referents but share the conceptualization of the nation state and its institutions through functionally motivated analogies to the human body. The analogies are not particularly precise but they are sufficient to indicate two main organizing principles, i.e., that of a hierarchical ordering (*head/brain* = superior to rest of body) and that of the interdependence of all parts of the body. These two notions can be related to the *body politic* metaphor tradition in European/Western culture. The view of monarchs or other state leaders as *heads* of nations, of institutions as *organs*, and of the whole state as suffering if one part suffers illness or injury, which these answers articulate, is compatible with formulations of the NATION-AS-BODY concept by Western thinkers and poets since the Middle Ages, which have been reconstructed as a continuous tradition by historians of ideas (Charbonnel, 2010; Harvey, 2007; Kantorowicz, 1997; Musolf, 2010). This tradition need not be consciously known by present-day users but its

sedimented terminological traces, such as *head of state*, *head of government*, *long arm (of the law)*, *organ (of a party)*, *heart (of the nation)*, and prominent uses by present-day politicians and media provide evidence for its continuity to this day. It thus seems not unreasonable to conclude that the British student's answers as well as the Arab, Spanish, and Ukrainian students' responses (all of whom had majored in English language and literature in their first degrees) stand in a loose but still tangible connection to that tradition.

In the Chinese students' responses, by contrast, a basic metonymy PLACE-FOR-POLITICAL INSTITUTION/FUNCTION (e.g., *Beijing—seat of government*, *Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong—economic centers*, *Taiwan—politically separate island state*, *Tibet—province with outlawed independence movement*) is used to motivate the metaphor GEOGRAPHICAL SHAPE OF A NATION AS ANATOMY OF A HUMAN BODY, which in turn leads to analogical sub-mappings, e.g., *brain* or *heart* as controlling the rest of the body; *face*, *eyes*, *arms* as oriented to the outside world; *hair* as a variable physical property. These second-order analogies are loaded with specific evaluative interpretations, e.g., in the depictions of Taiwan as one of China's *feet* (i.e., as an essential part of the nation's body), or as *hair* (beautiful but not necessary for survival), or as *disease* (to be combated) in examples (5), (7), and (8), respectively.

The Chinese students' interpretations cannot be linked to the Western conceptual tradition in the same way as the non-Chinese responses but of course that does not mean that they are without history. One possible link to historical traditions and collective experience may be the role of China's publicly imagined "geobody" as part of its national identity. The political scientist W. A. Callahan contends that visualizations of China's borders in maps are characteristic of a "Cartography of National Humiliation" (Callahan, 2009). Based on the historical experience of having been a victim of colonialist attacks by foreign powers up until the mid-twentieth century, Chinese cartography has served to articulate fears of future territorial "dismemberment", e.g., in a map from 1999 that purports to show an "international conspiracy to divide up the PRC [People's Republic of China] into a clutch of independent states" (Callahan, 2009, p. 143). More recently, however, the goal of geopolitical maps in China is "no longer primarily to recover lost territory" but to achieve "symbolic recognition, acceptance and respect" (2009, p. 171). If geographical contours and locations are of such prominence in the public sphere of China, the grounding of conceptualizations of its *state organs* and *body parts* in geo-political metonymies, which we observed in the Chinese students' answers, makes good sense.

3 Scenarios of Metaphor Interpretation

The two metaphor versions—NATION AS (ANATOMICAL/ORGANIC) BODY and NATION AS GEOBODY—are based on the same source domain but are conceptually different and include more than just propositional content—their conceptual material is selected so as to form specific argumentative and narrative wholes, i.e., they suggest certain evaluative conclusions, e.g., that in a healthy body all organs

must ‘work together’ or that an ‘illness’ needs to be ‘treated’ and eradicated. Such a selection of source-domain elements is what has been referred to as a “scenario” (Deignan, 2010, pp. 360–362; Musolff, 2006, 2016b; Sinding, 2015). The narrative and argumentative perspectives of scenarios make them highly attractive for drawing strong pragmatic, evaluative inferences and thus, for use in political discourse.

When used metaphorically, scenarios suggest an evaluative perspective on the target topic by suggesting inferences about it and hiding others. Their ‘dramatic’ story lines and default outcomes, as well as ethical evaluations are connected to social attitudes and emotional stances prevalent in the respective discourse communities. Hence, preference for one scenario over another in a discourse community may be indicative of attitudinal and ideological tendencies.

However, it clearly needs a larger database than eight answers in a class test to gauge culturally ‘characteristic’ scenario preferences in interpretive conceptualizations of one’s NATION. To widen the empirical evidence, the students and I devised a questionnaire-based survey that asked informants to describe their “home nation in terms of a human body” and in addition elicited information on first language, nationality, age and gender (Musolff, 2016a). With the generous help of colleagues and students in language/linguistics departments this survey was administered in other UEA seminars and in further Higher Education institutions in 23 different countries and yielded more than 1200 returned questionnaires, which are still being analyzed (Musolff, 2016a, 2016b, 2020 forthcoming). The survey was not set up as a statistically valid psycholinguistic experiment; instead, it aimed at a qualitative pilot-study of conceptual variation in metaphor interpretation.

In addition to the above-mentioned two scenarios of NATION AS BODY and NATION AS GEOBODY, which appeared in the first cohort’s responses, the survey revealed three further scenarios. The first two of these are still BODY-focused. One of them viewed the nation as part/organ of a larger body:

(9) England is like an appendix, not very significant anymore but can still cause trouble and make you realise its [*sic*] there if it wants to.

An alternative ‘nation-as-part-of X’ scenario is that of the NATION AS PART OF ONE’S OWN (=EGO’S) BODY, which is often sourced from the notions of HEART and BLOOD as the center/medium of the speaker’s identity:

(10) Motherland likes [*sic*, probably intended: ‘is like’] my blood. Blood is a part of my body so that I can’t live without blood, and I also can’t live if I lost my motherland. What’s more, motherland likes my blood [*sic*], because I feel its warmth and at the same time it provides me the ‘oxygen’ and ‘nutrition’.

Other examples of this type conceptualize the nation as the speaker’s own *feet/legs* (for “standing up and going forward in the world”), *hands* (for “creating the people”) or *eyes* (for “noticing the democracy and equality enjoyed by general citizens as well as the corruptions and irresponsibility of some government parasites”).

Whilst this last group of interpretations use BODY aspects to give an EGO characterization of the nation, about a fifth of all responses use the PERSON concept as the source (in response to a task that only asked for “body”-conceptualization!). The

Chinese data include not only lexical references to the home nation as “motherland” (example 10) but also detailed depictions of “motherly” character/behavior (example 11), and we also found male-gendered examples, e.g., in the English-L1 cohorts (example 12):

(11) Our nation is like a mother, who covers her children under her protection.

(12) Britain is an easily likeable friend, [...] [He] is ancient but is experiencing revitalization [...].

Together, these five scenarios (NATION AS BODY, GEOBODY, PART OF LARGER BODY, PART OF EGO, PERSON) account for all responses; sometimes one response only includes one scenario, sometimes two or three; in rare cases four or even all five. In the following sections, we will provide an overview over the corpus data for the English and Chinese L1-cohorts, as part of an analysis-in-progress. (From here on, the examples include also information about nationality, age, gender, in abbreviated form.)

4 The English-L1 Cohort

The sample of responses from informants with English as First Language was collected at nine universities across Britain, USA and New Zealand and various European universities; it amounts to 120 scripts (49 British, 26 US, 42 New Zealand, 2 Australian and 1 Canadian). It would of course have been desirable to have more balanced national sub-samples but this has so far not been possible due to practical problems in the diverse national environments. Hence, the English-L1 responses are treated here as one unitary sample, except for a few outstanding cases that seem to be indicative of specific national tendencies in conceptualizing one’s own nation as a body.

The social make-up of this sample is characterized by a preponderance of 18–25 year old female informants (Table 1).

According to the scenario categorization outlined above, the sample generated 143 scenario instantiations, which show the following distribution (Table 2).

Table 1 Social Indicators: English-L1

Gender	Female	69	58%
	Male	51	42%
Age group	18–25	103	86%
	26–30	6	5%
	31–40	5	4%
	41+	6	5%

Table 2 Scenario distribution: English-L1

Scenarios	Body	Geobody	Body part	Part of ego	Person
Scenario tokens (total: 143)	68	29	14	2	32
Percentages (%)	48	20	9	1	22

4.1 *The Nation as Whole BODY*

The BODY-based scenario type clearly dominates the English L1 sample, with 43 distinct BODY and a further 9 HEALTH/ILLNESS-related sub-concepts underlying the 251 instances of relevant lexical items. They include the BODY-WHOLE as well as separate limbs and organs, taboo body areas (*anus, armpit, hard to see places*) and medical conditions and their treatment. The most frequent lexical fields are (in descending order) BODY-ORGANISM, BRAIN-HEAD, HEART, BLOOD-VEINS-ARTERIES, LIMBS-ORGANS, HANDS and FEET. The most prominent usage pattern, which is also evident in examples (1) and (2) above, is the ‘classic’ hierarchical top-down model of political anatomy that bears a striking resemblance to famous formulations in the history of English-language literature and philosophy:

(13) England is an organism. Its head is the Queen, its torso and limbs are the state and government. Its heart is culture and history, its brain is parliament. Its feet is [*sic*] the economy. (UK, 25, M)

(14) If New Zealand was a body, the Prime Minister would be the head in control and at the top. The Queen would be the hair, technically higher, but with no real power. The feet would be our farms, covered in mud but helps us [*sic*] trudge along, the main source of our momentum. The hands would be our vineyards, full of fruit ripe for the picking, useful and helpful. (NZ, 19, F)

(15) The United States of America is like a human body. In fact, we often refer to it as the body politic. The government of the U.S. is the head, or the brain. It is (supposed to be) in control of the country’s functions. The states are the various parts of the body, functioning independently, but under the control of the ‘brain’. (US, 48, F)

Whilst the target referents at the ‘top’ of the state/body hierarchy change for the simple reason that there are different government structures in the respective polities, the function of the HEAD/BRAIN source is always the same, i.e., that of control of the rest of the BODY. However, this control-function may be put in question, as indicated in the “(supposed to be)” hedge in example (15). More explicit criticism can be found in the US sample:

(16) It’s [*sic*] brain is bipolar and completely disjointed in the middle (US, 25, M)

(17) [...] like Frankenstein [*sic*; correctly: Frankenstein’s monster], we have an abnormal brain commanding the body, which is causing our country to act and react with more negativity and distastefulness (US, 48, F)

In the British and New Zealand samples, such criticism of the BRAIN is rare but in some cases the metaphorical dichotomy HEART versus BRAIN (reason versus emotion) is employed to signal a split PERSONALITY:

(18) The brain and heart don't always agree with one another, and this conflict is normal (UK, 22, F)

(19) New Zealand listens to its heart more than its brain. (NZ, 19, M)

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from the latter examples that the HEART concept is always or predominantly used in the conventionally metaphorical 'seat of emotions' meaning. The majority of target concepts of HEART in our corpus are either central political institutions (monarchy, parliament) or the people.

An alternative source for the 'people' concept is BLOOD, due to its ubiquity and continuous movement indicating liveliness/vitality. Other target concepts for BLOOD are the economy, public finances, business and public transport (often likened to the VEINS and ARTERIES). The concepts of ARMS, HANDS, LEGS, FEET as well as EYES are associated with various 'executive' parts and functions of state and society (military, police, secret service, middle class, economy, workers). One British informant mentioned that "the long arms are the reach of the empire" (UK, 21, M) but did not specify whether this was meant as a topical or historical description. Often, the extremities are summarized as LIMBS that are complementary to the central control part (HEAD-BRAIN/HEART), without further specification.

The collective category ORGANS fulfils much the same function in our texts:

(20) New Zealand works as a collective body in that there are a number of different sectors of society that work like the different organs of a body in order to function as a whole. (NZ, 20, F)

(21) [...] a person can only survive if their heart/lungs/brain organs are functioning, [...] A nation—like Britain—can only function well if all its parts, the government, the monarchy, and its inhabitants—work together. (UK, 21, F)

ILLNESS/DISEASE and MEDICAL TREATMENT concepts are rare in this sample, amounting as they do to altogether just 6%. Both the summary references (SICK, AILMENT, SCARS, PAIN) and specific notions such as CANCER, INFECTION and TRANSPLANT are only represented in single figures. They are used to express criticism of parts of the respective nation state. Another vehicle for criticism is that of taboo or ugly BODY PARTS, which also straddles various scenarios. In the organological and physiological hierarchy there are a few instances:

(22) The queen sits at the face of the nation, with the flabby, saggy Tory government, as the aged, wrinkled décolletage. (UK, 19, F)

(23) [...] the anus would be the actual workers. While the brain thinks it controls the anus, the most it can do is ask or demand things to be done (NZ, M, 18)

(24) The head is the white guys in charge. They also double as the asshole. (NZ, 18, F)

Such drastic and offensive examples are few in number but they show the potential of BODY PART conceptualization to support strongly evaluative arguments and even insults. Whilst the target referents are more or less arbitrarily chosen, the sources appear to be derived from a 'stock' of low-prestige BODY concepts that are entrenched in the everyday discourse, idioms and taboo subjects of the respective discourse community.

4.2 *The Nation as a BODY PART*

To view one's own nation as a BODY PART, e.g., a LIMB or an ORGAN is a perspective taken in 10% of scenarios in the English L1-sample. It is conceptually close to the previous scenario but differs from it insofar as its referent is either seen as part of a larger body (e.g., continent or world), or as a body part that is typical for a particular socio-political function or status of the nation in question. Its applications are less schematic or descriptive than those that view the nation as a whole body and they almost always carry an explicit or an implicit (ironical) evaluation. The positive evaluations highlight useful limbs/organs, such as EYES, HANDS, and HEART (the latter with its 'seat of emotions/passions' symbolism):

(25) At the heart of the modern world, GB represents the eyes of development [...]. (UK, 21, F)

(26) America is like the hands of a human body; they are used for work, get dirty often, and when backed in a corner, are used to fight. (US, 20, M)

(27) Our nation is like a beating heart, where pride and passion flow as blood (NZ, 20, M)

In more critical responses, the BODY PART chosen to represent the nation is typically low in the body hierarchy in terms of (lack of) importance for survival, e.g., APPENDIX (see example 9 above), BELLY BUTTON and TOE:

(28) Britain to me is the belly button. A part of previous high value involved in changing the lives of many. Now an aesthetic part with a lesser importance than the rest of the body (UK, 22, M)

(29) New Zealand can be seen as the Middle toe of the world, while one may not acknowledge or care for it when removed the balance of the body will simply be off (NZ, 19, M)

One US student highlighted his nation's double-sided role in the world by describing it as the LOWER BACK, which he judged from his own body experience indispensable although it could be painful:

(30) Lower back. You really need it and it is a very key part. It also gives a lot of people pain. Some people feel different ways about it. You really can't ignore it and most things are connected to it (like your legs to the belly) (US, 20, M)

This group of critical BODY PART-applications also contains one of the rare cases where the depiction of one's own nation in BODY terms is followed by a matching' characterization of another country, with an ironical slant:

(31) The first thing that came to mind for the United States was the head. The US is the sole remaining superpower state (although its influence is declining) making it arguably the most important nation to the rest of the world. [...] back home we call Canada "America's hat", where does a hat go but on the head? (US, 20, M)

Such a linkage between a BODY PART conceptualization and a dress item is unique in the corpus and is most probably a spur-of-the-moment invention by the writer. It underlines the high potential for BODY PART concepts to be exploited for humorous and/or judgmental purposes.

4.3 *The National Territory as a GEOBODY*

When the nation is viewed as a territorial or geographical BODY whole, the BODY PART concept lends itself to being applied to particular places. In the English L1-sample, this is not the dominant scenario but still accounts for 20% of all scenario uses. Its referents are to some extent predictable: the capital is seen as HEAD, BRAIN, or HEART due to its status as the seat of government/power and its concomitant control function for the rest of the national BODY. Hence, London, Washington, DC, or Wellington are placed in these ‘top’ locations, often with another city (e.g., Birmingham, New York, Auckland) as the complementary central organ; i.e., BRAIN and HEART. Rural regions (e.g., Yorkshire in the UK, the Midwest in the US) are associated with HANDS and FEET on account of agricultural activity. Some respondents also feel encouraged to declare their allegiance to—or aversion against—specific places and regions:

(32) I was born and bred in the north-east of England, so that’s where I picture as the heart of my home nation. Of course, the head of state is situated in the south east of England, so that it seems the heart is above the head—geographically speaking. (UK, 27, F)

(33) [...] perhaps London is the brain as it seems to be where people go to work after study. The real brain is Cambridge, the best university the country has to offer. Don’t talk about Oxford, that is the fungal nail infection, which we haven’t got round to treating yet (UK, 24, M)

(34) Washington DC is the brain/head/mouth. The legs are the producing states (It keeps the economy going/moving). Nebraska is the heart. LA is the cancer killing the nation/body. Florida is the wrinkles and parting lines. New York is the adrenaline. (US, 42, M)

(35) The brain is Auckland. The heart is Wellington. The liver is Dunedin. NZ needs a liver transplant (NZ, 20, M)

In many cases, the multiple ORGAN-assignments to national places show that no ‘exact’ anatomical analogy is attempted. But in the case of the LIVER conceptualization of Dunedin, NZ, in example (35) a specific explanation has been proposed by Professor Takashi Shogimen (personal communication): “Dunedin used to be a major economic center in the 19th century [...] from the early 20th century Dunedin witnessed economic decline and transformed itself as a campus city. The city of Dunedin is currently planning to reinvent itself over the next 10–20 years [...] the last two lines [may be] motivated by the historical understanding of Dunedin’s place and function in NZ and also the knowledge of its possible renewal in the years to come”.

As with the BODY PART symbolism of the whole nation (see previous section), BODY PART conceptualizations of places or regions can imply notions of a hierarchy among the body parts or organs, as well as of their respective state of health and aesthetic value, which are exploited for humorous or polemical effects. This leads to characterizations of regions as ILLNESSES (CANCER, NAIL INFECTION as in examples 33, 34) or as ‘lower’/taboo BODY PARTS: APPENDIX, GUTS, ARMPIT, and TOE.

4.4 *The Nation as a PERSON*

The one scenario that invites the most strongly evaluative metaphorical conceptualizations of the NATION AS A (HUMAN) BODY is, unsurprisingly, the personification of the nation. In spite of the fact that the questionnaire task did not explicitly mention or ask for this variant, slightly more than one fifth of scenarios in the English L1-sample consisted of conceptualizations of the nation as a PERSON, sometimes as the only characterization, i.e., without any further BODY/BODY PART-related explanations.

Across the national subgroups of the English-L1 sample, there seem to be no discernible trends or highly emotionally charged conceptualizations. AGE and GENDER indications are generally rare: altogether they amount to 3 OLD (=all for UK), 2 YOUNG (=US, NZ) characterizations, as well as 3 MALE and 5 FEMALE characterizations (one mention of MOTHER status in the NZ sample). Depictions of character traits are judgmental but not drastic: *headstrong, mouthy, messy, easy going, friendly measly, pessimistic*. One New Zealand respondent (19, F) alleged, “The North hates the south” but conceded that “Both [are] working for & against each other”; so, the ‘hatred’ cannot be that strong, one would assume. ‘National character’ stereotypes are exploited mainly for the UK, i.e., as a person obsessed with TEA-DRINKING, FOOTBALL and QUEUING. In a few cases, the characterization is extended into a mini-narrative that ‘explains’ the origins of the PERSON-quality in question, e.g., AGEING (36), OBESITY (37), WISHING TO IMPRESS OTHERS (38), combined with an ironical criticism.

(36) England is an ageing person, one that has been going for a long time. A small frame with big potential. England used to have many other clothes (colonies) to dress itself in. However, it has since given away all of it's [*sic*] clothes. (UK, 18, F)

(37) My nation is fat. Lying supine, its head is in the center, as well as its feet [*sic*]. Its limbs branch like a star. Its fat is a combination of future pregnancy, a bloated [*sic*] past and an uncontrollable metabolism. (US, 25, M)

(38) New Zealand is like a little brother chasing after the nations of the world and clamouring for attention. (NZ, 18, F)

Overall, the nation conceptualizations produced by English-L1 informants show that the BODY scenario is the dominant one. Its hierarchical presuppositions (top-down orientation, functional hierarchy of life-essential versus non-essential organs/limbs) show a high degree of congruity with classical Western ‘Nation-as-Body’ conceptualizations (e.g., head-to-toe hierarchy, ‘fable of the belly’). The BODY-PART scenario also fits this overall pattern but includes extra taboo organ concepts that have little to do with classical literary or philosophical models and instead allow the authors to comment on aspects of the *body politic* they want to ridicule. This judgmental stance is also characteristic for the territorial GEOBODY-scenario, in which the respective capitals are assigned top status (HEAD, BRAIN or HEART) whilst specific places or regions are relegated to the lower regions, and the PERSON scenario, which is characterized by ironical references of national stereotypes.

5 The Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) Cohort

The Chinese sample, which has more than twice the amount of scripts ($N = 306$) than those from English-L1 informants, was collected from nine Higher Education institutions: four universities in the People's Republic of China (PRC), which make up the bulk of the sample ($N = 248$), one university in Hong Kong ($N = 24$), plus three smaller samples from British Universities (Aston, Birmingham, UEA) and a German university, i.e., Heidelberg. There were no informants from Taiwan but the politically independent island still features in the responses, as we have already seen in examples (5), (7) and (8).

In the Social Indicator questions, the entries for both the “L1” and the “nationality” questions were mostly (91%) “Chinese” in the PRC and Hong Kong samples; only a few informants specified “Mandarin” or “Cantonese”. As the systemic differences between Mandarin and Cantonese were not a parameter of our investigation, this aspect was largely disregarded and all L1-entries counted as “Chinese”. Nevertheless, we must take into account that nearly 10% of the Chinese responses were produced by students in or from Hong Kong, where most respondents' L1 is Cantonese and where the political culture is different from that of the People's Republic. This aspect will be highlighted in the discussion of the GEOBODY and PERSON scenarios, which are most often used for comments on the relationship between the PRC and Hong Kong (In these cases, nationality indications for the authors of specific examples from the Chinese cohort (“C”) will be amended to “C [HK]” in order to identify the Hong Kong sub-group. All other “C” indications refer to the PRC).

The age distribution was concentrated almost exclusively in the 18–25 age bracket, and the preponderance of female informants was even more pronounced than in the English L1-sample (see Table 3 above).

In terms of scenario categorization, the Chinese sample has 341 scenario instantiations, which include 601 tokens of physical BODY/HEALTH concepts and 289 tokens of PERSON concepts, totaling 890 tokens altogether.

The scenario distribution contrasts strongly with the English-L1 sample: the two most frequent scenario variants here are PERSON and GEOBODY, with BODY only in third place. Conceptualizations of the Nation as BODY PART of a larger whole or as part of the writer's own body (PART OF EGO) each make up about 10% of the total (Table 4).

Table 3 Social indicators:
Chinese sample

Gender	Female	192	62%
	Male	115	38%
Age group	18–25	302	98%
	26–30	1	0.5%
	31–40	3	1%
	41+	1	0.5%

Table 4 Scenario distribution: Chinese sample

Scenarios	Body	Geobody	Body part	Part of ego	Person
Scenario tokens (total: 341)	65	91	33	34	118
Percentages (%)	19	27	9	10	35

In order to facilitate the comparison with the English L1 sample, we will discuss the scenarios in the same order (BODY, BODY PART, PART OF EGO, GEOBODY, PERSON). This ordering has the advantage of ending on the most frequent scenario, PERSON, which allows us to highlight the main characteristics of the Chinese data as well as Hong Kong-specific findings.

5.1 The Nation as a (Whole) BODY

Except for the very first cohort of respondents who did the exercise in 2011 and answered exclusively by way of the GEOBODY scenario (see above), the BODY scenario was employed by Chinese informants across all sub-cohorts in almost one fifth of all scenario instantiations. Its most frequent sub-concepts were HEART (12%), BRAIN (10%), BLOOD (6%), and HAND(S) (6%). Some uses of the BODY scenario come close to the ones we encountered in the English L1-corpus:

(39) As for my home nation China, I think the central government is like the brain of a body, which can use the energy to make some important decisions. And the working class, including the business and factories [*sic*] are like the muscles which can provide the energy for the moving of the whole body. Besides, the transportation system is like the blood vascular system. (C, 19, M)

(40) Our country is like a whole human body. Many ingredients make up of it [*sic*]. The government is the head and brain with all sorts of sectors just like the five sense organs on it. The people from all trades and professions make up the hands and feet that make the country working. Also the citizens are like the blood which all [*sic*] cover the body. The environment is like the skin, we live in it, meanwhile, it protects us. With all of these can the country (body) be complete. (C, 19, F)

Most uses of the BODY scenario, however, are unspecific about individual organs and their functions. Unlike in the English L1-sample, such general conceptualizations do not highlight the inter-dependency of the whole body and all of its parts or organs very often—the respective percentages are marginal: 3% for BODY-WHOLE and 2% for PARTS/ORGANS in the Chinese sample vis-à-vis 16% (BODY) and 6% (PARTS/ORGANS) in the English L1-sample. Instead, the most recurrent scenario theme is the “control” that the BRAIN (as referring to the Chinese government, the ruling Party or the “People’s Congress”) has over the rest of the BODY. BRAIN is used much more often than HEAD (10%:3%), which again differs from the English L1-sample where they show roughly equal and higher percentages (21%:20%).

The HEART concept is employed mostly refer to the people, its culture and long history; in the latter cases, the BODY scenario often combines with the PERSON scenario (examples 41–43):

(41) The people, as a whole, is like the heart. (C, 19, M)

(42) Culture is the heart of a nation. Well goes an old saying: “If you want to kill a country, you should kill his [*sic*] culture at first”. (C, 18, M)

(43) And history can serve as heart, because it forms the whole country’s behavioural concept, or spirit. (C, 19, M)

In addition to the HEART, the following source concepts target the people as a whole in the BODY scenario: WHOLE BODY (“China is like a whole human body of a normal person”), BLOOD (“the citizens are like the blood which all cover the body”), HANDS and FEET (“people from all trades and professions make up the hands and feet that make the country working”), CELLS (“our ordinary people are cells”). A distinct sub-theme, is the role of police and army as the nation’s IMMUNE SYSTEM (less frequent variants: ARMS, HANDS, FISTS, BONES):

(44) The police officers are our immune system. (C, 18, M)

(45) Army is the skin and immune system, keep the body in fit. (C, 19, M)

(46) Our army is like immune system that keep [*sic*] us away from incursion. (C, 19, M)

ILLNESS-DISEASE and MEDICAL TREATMENT sub-themes of the BODY-scenario amount to just 5% of sub-concepts. Half of these are vague references to BAD STATE OF HEALTH, ILLNESS, or PATIENT-status; specific concepts (CANCER, OBESITY, WEAKNESS, BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS) all remain in single figures. One example, however, stands out on account of its apparently radical stance against “parasites”:

(47) Our body is a fat, powerful man with a lot of minor illnesses. He can be rude and self-conceit [*sic*] sometimes, but he is a kind person in most cases. Now he is taking pills to wipe out the parasites in his body. I believe one day he will get recovered and be strong and healthy again. (C, 19, M)

This example is unique in several ways: it combines BODY and PERSON scenarios in an individualizing way (‘occasionally rude but essentially kind, beset by illnesses, against which he takes pills’) and focuses on the NATION-PERSON’S need to take medication against PARASITES. The target-referent of this PARASITE-concept is not specified but the alleged necessity to *wipe out* the agents of illness fits in with the more ‘radical’, biologized version of the BODY V. PARASITE scenario that has been used historically to justify persecution of so-called ‘enemies from within’ (Musolff, 2010). Such a use of the PARASITE concept is not repeated across the Chinese sample; it may be informed by a narrative from another source.

5.2 *The Nation as a BODY PART*

The Chinese conceptualizations of the nation as a BODY PART, LIMB or ORGAN differ markedly from those in the English-L1 cohort in that most of them express a strongly positive, proud assessment of one's own national importance rather than being used for belittlement or criticism. They do not feature 'superfluous', unimportant or taboo organs (e.g., APPENDIX, ANUS, ARMPIT) but instead highlight the indispensability of the nation for the survival of the world, seen as the respective larger BODY-whole:

(48) China resembles the feet of human body. It stands erect at the east of world just like the feet on the ground. (C, 22, F)

(49) China is like vein [*sic*] because it connects with many countries. (C, 21, M)

(50) China is the heart of the body made up by all countries. [...] Just like the heart, China delivers blood to the body of world. (C, 18, M)

(51) Nation is like hair. It is soft and beautiful. (C, 19, F)

These conceptualizations articulate positive assessments of China's pre-eminent political (*feet standing erect*), and economic role (*vein connecting countries, delivers blood*) and appearance (*beautiful hair*). They can, however, also be employed to revisit the national defense theme:

(52) I'd like to think my home nation [*sic*] as the hands. From a long history, Chinese people are never lack [*sic*] of creation and production. And as for the international affairs, China has the power to act as a counterweight to some so-called superpower. It is just like a hand to both assault and defend. (C, 19, M)

Overall, the main evaluative function of BODY PART conceptualizations in the sample is to praise the Chinese nation as a powerful, important and necessary BODY PART of the world.

5.3 *The Nation as Part of EGO*

A similarly appreciative evaluation is derived from conceptualizations that depict the nation as part of the writer's own body/person. Here, the positive evaluation is, if anything, even stronger, because the writer identifies with it directly and personally, thus intensifying the alleged praiseworthiness. Typical examples of PART OF EGO conceptualizations are:

(53) My nation China is like my heart. It supports me to live and study. Without it, I will be homeless and lose my passion for life. I love my nation and cherish it. I look it [*sic*] as my heart which makes me alive. (C, 18, F)

(54) I'd like to compare my nation as [*sic*] my hands. It gives me chances to do something I like. (C, 19, M)

(55) From my perspective, our motherland is just like the blood of our body. As blood is the red liquid, I think motherland is also red, which represents the energy and passion of our nation. (C, 21, F)

(56) China is so important to all the Chinese as eyes are important to human's body. People will not die if they lose their eye. But they see clearly who they are once they possess the eyes. (C, 21, F)

HEART, BLOOD, EYES and HANDS are the most frequently used BODY PART concepts for the nation that are 'incorporated' by Chinese informants into their own physiology and anatomy. As examples (53)–(56) show, the BODY PART conceptualization can be attributed to the speaker as an individual or as a member of the nation-BODY. In the latter case, the scenario PART OF EGO could be seen as overlapping with that of the nation as a BODY/BODY PART or as a PERSON. The difference lies in the focus on the nation as part of the writer's identity, in contradistinction to its perception as the 'other'. This scenario's significant presence (10%) in the Chinese corpus contrasts with its minimal occurrence in the English-L1 corpus. It may be linked to culture-specific attitudinal preferences that have been highlighted, for instance, in research on Anglo-based "individualism" vis-à-vis Chinese "collectivism" (Hofstede, 2001): the latter preference evidently favors EGO-nation identification.

5.4 *The Nation as a GEOBODY*

The GEOBODY scenario stood out as the main (and seemingly exclusive) scenario for the Nation-as-body metaphor complex used by Chinese students in the first class exercise but it turns out to account for 'only' 27% in the wider Chinese-L1 sample, which makes it the second most-frequent scenario behind PERSON. Still, it is more frequent than in the English-L1 cohort (20%). More significantly, it has a wider conceptual range. Besides the two most frequent source concepts, BRAIN and HEART, which are applied in the great majority (but not exclusively) to Beijing and Shanghai (see examples 5-8 above), the BODY-source concepts applied to geographical places, i.e., cities, provinces, landscapes, rivers and landmarks include: ARTERY, BACK, BACK-BONE, BONE, BLOOD, CHEST, FACE, EYES, FOOT/FEET, EAR(S), HAIR, HANDS, KIDNEY, LEG(S), LUNG(S), MOUTH, STOMACH, SHOULDER, SKIN, THROAT, and WOMB. The most recurrent of these are FACE and EYES, HANDS and ARMS, MOUTH and THROAT, which are applied to border or harbor cities and provinces, such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macao, Wenzhou, Guangdong and Guangzhou; these are accompanied by explanatory motivation notes such as *looking outward*, *embracing* and *connecting with* and *receiving* or *providing nutrition from/to* the outside world.

Overall, the vast majority of instantiations are of neutral or positive polarity. Even contested or 'exceptional' regions such as Taiwan, Tibet or Hong Kong are emphatically asserted to be essential, valuable and well-functioning BODY-PARTS of the nation:

(57) Tibet is just like the eye of China. Because it is the highest place in China. (C, 19, F)

(58) Taiwan and Hong Kong just like two foot of our China. As we all know, Taiwan and Hong Kong are inalienable parts of our China. [...] As economically developed regions, both of them can drive the economic development of mainland China. In that way, China can keep striding ahead to the world. (C, 20, F)

Explicit references highlighting a contested status of a region/place in the GEOBODY scenario are limited to Taiwan and Hong Kong. When authored by mainland Chinese (PRC) informants, they are used to emphasize those places' indispensability for China's integrity (examples 59 and 60 below) or their exposed position and vulnerability (61). Some Hong Kong informants, however, highlight their city's relative independence (62):

(59) Taiwan is China's hair which can be long or short but still is part of body. (C, 19, F)

(60) China, a cripple at present staggers to the future for the lack of Taiwan. China waits for Taiwan to come back. (C, 21, F)

(61) Tai Wan [*sic*] is the elbow, it can hit others and get harm [*sic*] easily. (C, 21, M)

(62) Nation to me seems more of a dislocated limb (Hong Kong) and the body (the rest of China), [...] Hong Kong plays the first role in stepping/reaching out to the western civilization—pretty similar to how one walks out of a door and/or stretches arm out in search of new things [C[HK], 20, M]

The last example is the only one in addition to those from the first cohort that hints at a special political status of a specific region in China by way of the GEOBODY scenario; the majority of critical and/or ironical conceptualizations are part of the PERSON scenario (see below). These findings fit in with the hypotheses formulated above, i.e., that the GEOBODY-scenario may be evidence of a heightened concern among Chinese informants for their nation's geo-political integrity, but they should not be over-generalized, as GEOBODY only forms the second-largest scenario for the Chinese cohort in terms of the overall scenario distribution.

5.5 *The Nation as a PERSON*

The most frequently invoked scenario in the Chinese sample is that of the NATION-AS-PERSON, with just over one third (35%, i.e., 289 tokens) of all conceptualizations. Its most salient aspect are explicit GENDER assignments, with male ones accounting for 10%, female ones for 21%. Among the latter, MOTHER assignments alone account for 11% of the total (This count only includes attributive and predicative uses of the term *mother*, i.e., not routine references to *motherland*). Typical examples are:

(63) China provides her people lands, food and protection, just like a selfless mother. (C, 19, F)

(64) China is like a mother, always kind to others, turning fierce when its children are bullied [*sic*]. (C, 19, F)

MOTHER assignments are followed up by stereotypical female-gendered character traits, such as *selflessness and protectiveness for her children, warm-heartedness, kindness, generosity, tolerance*. These characterizations are in line with patriotic songs that are promoted in the PRC's media and party-led youth organizations, such as the "Ode to the Motherland" or the "Song of the Seven Sons" (Xinhua, 2007; Yiduo, 2013). Their appearance in our sample may thus reflect educational training.

Apart from the MOTHER stereotype, we find also that of the CHARMING YOUNG LADY, complete with beautiful CLOTHES and of GODDESS-like status:

(65) My mother country is a beautiful lady who shows her unique charm every day. (C, 20, F)

(66) China wears a beautiful dress to show her elegance to the whole world. (C, 21, F)

(67) In the east of the world, there stands a goddess wearing shining clothes. (C, 19, F)

By comparison, FATHER assignments are very rare: there are just two in the Chinese sample, plus one GRANDFATHER assignment. Instead, the majority of male-gendered conceptualizations focus on professional roles, such as SOLDIER-WARRIOR, DOCTOR, CAPTAIN, LAWYER, TEACHER, BUSINESS LEADER, GUARDIAN, ENGINEER, with 'fitting' attributes such as *pride, steel-like spirit, responsibility, dignity*. Overall, MOTHER and LADY conceptualizations, and with them FEMALE-gendered stereotypes, are clearly dominant in the Chinese sample, which marks a contrast to the English L1-sample, as the latter had far fewer and, in gender terms, more evenly distributed PERSON conceptualizations.

This finding may be linked to the other prominent difference between the Chinese and English-L1 samples: a dearth of critical, humorous and/or ironical conceptualizations in the former. Whereas the English-L1 sample had 56 instantiations, the Chinese one, which is more than twice as large, has only 22. One third of these come from the Hong Kong sub-cohort, plus another third from Chinese students (including seven from Hong Kong) at British and German universities. Most of these critical conceptualizations are found in the PERSON scenario:

(68) My home nation is a little kid. It is growing just like the development of the nation. But its growth is hindered by adult [*sic*], such as Beijing. (C[HK], 20, F)

(69) China sees nobody in her eyes. China is taking away freedom from Hong Kong. China gets whatever she wants. China is not afraid of harming its people. (C[HK], 21, F)

(70) My nation have [*sic*] a mad mind. It suppress [*sic*] the citizens when it wants. (C[HK], 21, M)

These examples range from benign criticism to drastic condemnation and appear nowhere else in the Chinese sample, whereas they form a discernible, if small, subgroup across the whole English L1-sample. Examples (68) and (69) articulate fears about Hong Kong's freedoms being curbed or cancelled by the PRC. In (70) it is left open what the home nation actually is, but arguably it is the PRC, which, after all, has had sovereignty over Hong Kong since 1997. This would imply a 'split conceptualization' of the Chinese nation as a PERSON by some Hong Kong

respondents: they accept the PRC as their official state identity but at the same time also identify with a distinct Hong Kong identity.

In addition to its main type of PERSON-based scenario, i.e., the positively slanted FEMALE-gendered conceptualizations, the Chinese sample (both PRC and Hong Kong) also has non-gendered conceptualizations, which are however, less frequent. The two main lexical elements manifesting it are SOUL (2%) and FACE (17%). The former has as its target referent China's culture, conceived as an inalienable national asset. The sub-concept of FACE (apart from cases referring to places/regions in the GEOBODY scenario, as mentioned above) focuses on the nation's imagined 'feelings' towards its own citizens or the world (e.g., *anger, friendliness, or steadfastness*).

6 Conclusions

The English-L1 and Chinese samples show significant contrasts, first of all in the scenario distribution, which in the Chinese case is dominated by the PERSON and GEOBODY scenarios (35% and 27%, respectively), whereas in the English L1-sample the BODY-scenario accounts for almost half of all instantiations (48%) and has a narrower conceptual range, most of which follows the traditional Western model of a top-down anatomical hierarchy.

In the Chinese sample, uses of the GEOBODY scenario regularly emphasize the need for territorial wholeness (leading to appeals for reunification with those BODY PARTS that are 'still missing') and the PART-OF-EGO scenario is predominantly employed to express identification with the nation as part of one's own physical and/or personal 'Self', which is very rare in the English-L1 sample. Such positive identification may be taken as corroboration of the high scores of Chinese cultural groups for "collectivism" and "power-distance" in Hofstede's analyses of "dimensions of national culture" (Hofstede, 2001). A strong alignment of the informants' EGO(s) with a positively valued unified NATION-BODY and/or PERSON WOULD seem to be in line with a cultural tradition that accepts established power relationships and stresses the need to fit into the collective.

Critical and ironical conceptualizations of the nation as a *dysfunctional, ill, ugly* or *grotesque* BODY (PART) or PERSON are a minority in both samples, but whilst they amount to 40% of the English-L1 sample's scenarios they account for just 6% in the Chinese sample, and in the latter they are rhetorically weaker and do not invoke taboo areas.

It is important to underline that the observed differences are not 'all-or-nothing' contrasts between one cultural group versus another group, instead, the contrasts lie in relative frequencies. We must therefore assume that the respondents have a range of interpretations perspectives to choose from. Some of them use non-typical versions, but the majority in each group use interpretation patterns that seem to link up to well-established discourse traditions in their community. In this way, cultural metaphor cognition complements the universal aspects of metaphor acquisition, production

and understanding and helps modelling their role in inter-cultural communication as a process of mutual adaptation and learning.

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