200th Anniversary of the Organon

Vargas R.O. Sociology of homeopathy. 65th LMHI Congress, 2010 USA
SOCIOLOGY OF HOMEOPATHY:
THE SOCIAL IDEA OF GROWTH IN HOMEOPATHY
& THE MACRO-STRUCTURED INFLUENCES
REPORT

RINALDO OCTAVIO VARGAS, sociologist B.A.
SOCIOMETRY OF HOMEOPATHY?
MY QUESTIONS
CONTEXT OF MY QUESTIONS
PEOPLE LACK EXPERIENCE ON LIMITS AND CLING TO THE MYTH OF GROWTH

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IN A CONTEXT IN WHICH EXPERTS EVINCE A DOCTORING DECLINE - ARE THINGS PRETTY DIFFERENT IN HOMEOPATHY?
Does homeopathy keep growing everywhere thanks to private schools carrying on some new provings and claiming clinical amazing effects?

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Homeopathy’s Dream

BELIEVE IN

POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CONTINUOUS GROWTH

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WITH SO MANY FORCES
OUTSIDE PEOPLE’S CONTROL
SHAPING PEOPLE’S PROJECTS

IS PEOPLE’S OPTIMISM
ABOUT THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL
SUSTAINABLE?

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Since it’s already come true kids are earning less than parents did.

And the downward mobility is already a social phenomenon.

Is the idea of continuous growth right or sustainable?
FORCES SHAPING

PEOPLE’S

PROJECTS FATE
FORCES UNDERMINING PEOPLE’S PROJECTS
ARE LARGELY OUTSIDE PEOPLE’S CONTROL
DECLINE OF
IDEA OF
GROWTH

MACRO-
STRUCTURED
INFLUENCES

DECLINE OF
DOCTORING

... and homeopathy, then?
– Could be about to face a severe test?
HAVE HOMEOPATHY’S STAKEHOLDERS A COMPREHENSIVE PERCEPTION OF THE FORCES SHAPING HOMEOPATHY’S NEAR FUTURE AS A SOCIAL REALITY, E.I. AS INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE & COMMODITY?
HOMEOPATHY’S FUTURE CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS ISOLATED FROM WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MEDICINE & SOCIETIES

KEYS REGARDING THE BROADER CONTEXT IN WHICH HOMEOPATHY LIVES IN
PERVERSIVE-MACRO-STRUCTURED-INFLUENCES

SHAPING ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

OF U.S. HEALTH CARE UNDER

CORPORATIZED CAPITALISM

DOCTORS’ UNION - DIVIDE AND CONQUER

WEAKENING OF MARKET POSITION THROUGH OVERSUPPLY

FROM RELATIONSHIP TO ENCOUNTER - THE EROSION OF PATIENTS’ TRUST

CHANGING NATURE OF THE STATE AND LOSS OF PARTISAN SUPPORT FOR DOCTORING

CORPORATIZATION OF DOCTORING

COMPETITIVE THREAT FROM OTHER HEALTH WORKERS

EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION AND CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

GLOBALIZATION AND INFORMATION REVOLUTION
PERVASIVE-MACRO-STRUCTURED-INFLUENCES

SHAPING

DOCTORING

UNDER CORPORATIZED HEALTH CARE

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THE IDEA OF GROWTH IN HOMEOPATHY
STOP MISTAKING SALES-GROWTH OF MARKETING-DENOMINATED "HOMEOPATHIC-PRODUCTS", INCLUDING HERBALIST-PRODUCT, MARKETED UNDER DENomination "HOMEOPATHIC",

FOR THE GROWTH OF THE CLASSICAL IDEA OF HEALING WITH A MORBIFIC ARTIFICIAL SIMILAR AND FOR ITS ACCREDITATION AS AN INSTITUTIONAL PARADIGM IN MEDICINE
THE FACT CLASSICAL HOMEOPATHY
PRACTISED BY PHYSICIANS IN SURGERY
PREMISES SEEMS TO BE DECLINING IN
EUROPE & USA, AFTER ITS REVIVAL
DURING
THE PROGRESSIVE-SEVENTIES,

IS A CLEAR INDICATOR THAT
GROWTH-IN-SALES OF PRODUCTS
DENOMINATED
"HOMEOPATHIC"
DOES NOT MEAN, AUTOMATICALLY,
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION
OF THE CLASSICAL MORBIFIC ARTIFICIAL
SIMILAR PARADIGM
HOMEOPATHY AS COMMODITY
IS NOT THE SAME THAT
HOMEOPATHY
AS PRINCIPLE & PRACTICE
SEEKING ASYLUM INTO ALTERNATIVE-AND-TRADITIONAL MEDICINES FOR MINOR-AILMENTS DOES ACTUALLY MEAN THE DELUDED-CITIZENS REALLY TRUST, ENDURABLY, IN HOMEOPATHY?
CONSISTENT WITH HEALTH-CARE-POLICIES AND CULTURAL-PATTERNS,
WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH-MATTER-OF-CONSEQUENCES, MOST PEOPLE GET BACK INTO CONVENTIONAL-BIOMEDICAL-TREATMENTS
WHAT SORT OF CONCEPTION OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS
DO PEOPLE ATTENDING HOMEOPATHS’ CONSULTING ROOMS HAVE?

SCIENTIFIC-INCLINED?
NEW-AGE-FASHIONS FOLLOWERS?
TRADITIONAL-MEDICINE-ORIENTED?
VITAL BALANCE/IMBALANCE-ORIENTED?

TO INVESTIGATE BELIEFS, VALUES & MEANINGS PATIENTS
ATTRIBUTE TO HOMEOPATHY TO FORECAST SHAPE HOMEOPATHY TAKES

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Like any social construction, meanings & practices of homeopathy fluctuate along with contexts.

It's necessary to discern which concept of homeopathy is growing and, in which cultural or anthropological context, differently, it is declining.
LOSS OF TRUST IN MEDICAL-DOCTOR’S ROLE & IN MEDICINE AS INSTITUTION

FROM 1960 TO 2002 AMERICAN-CONFIDENCE IN MEDICAL-INSTITUTION HAS FALLEN FROM 73% TO 29%
In 1949, medical doctors topped the Gallup list of well-known and trusted professions.

By 2000, physicians had fallen to fourth, placing themselves behind nurses, pharmacists & veterinarians.

Loss of trust in medical-doctor's role & in medicine as institution.
HEALTH-CARE-CORPORATIZATION UNDER ADVANCED-CAPITALISM HAS TRANSFORMED U.S. HEALTH CARE FROM MOSTLY FEE-FOR-SERVICE-SYSTEM CONTROLLED BY PROFESSIONALISM TO A CORPORATIZED-SYSTEM DOMINATED BY CONCENTRATED & GLOBALIZED FINANCIAL & INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS
CHANGING NATURE OF THE STATE & LOSS OF PARTISAN SUPPORT FOR DOCTORING

RISE & DECLINE OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM IS RELATED TO THE SHIFTING ALLEGIANCE OF THE STATE

STATE SHIFTED ITS PRIMARY ALLEGIANCE FROM PROTECTING MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS TO ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF THE FINANCIAL- & INDUSTRIAL OWNERS OF A CORPORATIZED U.S. HEALTH-CARE-SYSTEM
IN SUCH A CONTEXT,
WHAT SORT OF
COMPLIMENTARY
HOMEOPATHY
COULD
BE PRACTICED?
CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF PHYSICIAN EMPLOYMENT

FROM 1983 TO 1997: PROPORTION OF PHYSICIANS WORKING AS SALARIED EMPLOYEES

(WITH NO-OWNERSHIP-INTEREST IN THEIR PRACTICE)

ROSE FROM 24 TO 43%

CORPORATIZATION OF DOCTORING
- DOCTORING HAS LOST MANY OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS
- CHALLENGES IN NATURE & TERMS OF MEDICAL-WORK TAKE
  THE FORM OF DE-PROFESSIONALIZATION
- DOCTORS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING SUBJECT TO EXTERNAL
  FORMS OF REGULATION
  LOSING CONTROL OVER THE CONTENT OF THEIR WORK

CORPORATIZATION OF DOCTORING

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CORPORATIZED
MEDICINE
MEANS LOSS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE,
ECONOMIC & CLINICAL
AUTONOMY

- HOW PHYSICIANS
SHOULD PRACTICE,
THE TECHNICAL
CONTENT OF CARE
CORPORATIZED MEDICINE

IN SUCH A CONTEXT, WHAT SORT OF COMPLIMENTARY HOMEOPATHY COULD BE PRACTICED?

INTUITIVE CLINICAL JUDGEMENTS IS CONSIDERED AN OPAQUE INTERPRETATIVE PROCEDURES

CLINICAL ACTIONS SCRUTINIZED ON REGULAR BASIS TO ENSURE CONFORMITY WITH PRACTICE NORMS

TREATMENT REGIMEN FORMULATED BEFORE A LIVE CASE ACTUALLY PRESENTS FOR MEDICAL CARE

DECISIONS ABOUT DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS ARE BASED ON SYSTEMATIC APPLICATION OF LOGIC TO A GIVEN KNOWLEDGE BASE

PRIOR APPROVAL FROM NON-MEDICALLY QUALIFIED REVIEWER AT GEOGRAPHICALLY DISTANT CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS BEFORE DECISION CAN BE MADE

COMPUTERIZED EXPERTS SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR DIAGNOSIS PURPOSES

CHOICE OF TREATMENT DETERMINED BY WHAT IS ALLOWED BY PATIENTS’ HEALTH INSURANCE OR BY THE PHYSICIAN’S EMPLOYER

CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CODIFIED

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- Physicians had medical playing-field to themselves
- Arrival of non-physician-clinicians threatens the physician’s traditional position
- NPCs responsible for increasing amounts of primary medical care previously provided almost exclusively by physicians
- Shift of tasks related to epidemiologic transition & changes in public conception of body

Competitive threat from other health
GLOBALIZATION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- ALTER MEDICAL-DOCTORS’ SOCIAL-POSITION

- MODIFY EVERYDAY VALUE OF DOCTORING WORLDWIDE

- UNDERMINE KEY-ASPECTS OF PHYSICIAN-AUTHORITY
GLOBALIZATION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

WITH CORPORATIZATION IN PHYSICIAN EMPLOYMENT, MEDICAL-RECORDS
COMPUTERIZATION, ON-LINE-AVAILABILITY DATA ON COMPARATIVE-
PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES & PARTICULAR PRACTITIONERS,
EVERYDAY WORK-SITUATION OF DOCTORS CAN BE SCRUTINIZED

AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION TO ANYONE WITH INTERNET-
ACCESS INCREASES LEVELS OF PUBLIC’S MEDICAL-KNOWLEDGE,
CHANGING STRUCTURE & CONTENT OF THE DOCTOR-PATIENT
RELATIONSHIP
EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION & CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

CHANGES IN

• CONCEPT OF BODY

• PATTERNS OF DISEASE & DEATH

• ABILITY OF MEDICAL CARE PROVIDERS TO BENEFICALLY ALTER THE COURSE OF ILLNESS

CHARACTERIZE AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL TRANSITION
EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION AND CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

WITH THE RISE OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS & THE DECLINE IN CURABLE CONDITIONS
CURING IS BEING REPLACED BY CARING AND PALLIATIVE MEASURES

DOCTORING HAS SHIFTED TO MONITORING
OF PRESENTLY-INCURABLE-CONDITIONS & TO IMPROVING THE-QUALITY-OF-LIFE
EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION
AND CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

CURING IS COMMONLY THOUGHT
TO BE A MORE VALUED ACTIVITY THAN CARING
MORE APPROPRIATELY PERFORMED BY
OTHER PROVIDERS CONSIDERED PARTNERS WITH
PHYSICIANS ON THE HEALTH-CARE TEAM
EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION AND CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

- INCREASED PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEDICAL-KNOWLEDGE HAS RESULTED IN SOME DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE BODY

- THE UNDERSTANDING OF ILLNESS & DISEASE HAS MOVED FROM THE METAPHYSICALLY INEXPLICABLE & BEEN POSITIONED AT BIO-PHYSIOLOGIC-FUNCTIONS LEVEL
EPIDEMIOLOGIC TRANSITION AND CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE BODY

- COMPUTER-ASSISTED-DIAGNOSIS
- PRESCRIPTIONS-FILLING
- ARE NOW POSSIBLE VIA
- INTERNET, RENDERING A FACE-TO-FACE-ENCOUNTER WITH A
- DOCTOR UNNECESSARY
WITH THE GROWTH OF CORPORATIZED-MEDICAL-CARE PROFESSIONAL-DOMINANCE HAS BEEN SUPPLANTED BY CORPORATIZATION-DOMINANCE

WITH THE RESULTING APPEARANCE OF

▪ A CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR PHYSICIANS

&

▪ A TRANSFORMATION OF THE DOCTOR – PATIENT RELATIONSHIP INTO A PROVIDER – CLIENT ENCOUNTER

WITH THE EROSION OF PATIENTS’ TRUST
FROM RELATIONSHIP TO ENCOUNTER - THE EROSION OF PATIENTS’ TRUST

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WEAKENING OF MARKET POSITION THROUGH OVERSUPPLY

NATIONAL DATA ON PHYSICIAN SUPPLY AND DEMAND SUGGESTS SUPPLY MAY EXCEED DEMAND BY UP TO 62,000 PHYSICIANS (8%) THROUGH 2010

EROSION OF LABOR MARKET POSITION IS EXACERBATED BY TRENDS IN THE GROWTH OF OTHER HEALTH WORKERS
WEAKENING OF MARKET POSITION THROUGH OVERSUPPLY

- UNTIL RECENTLY A MEDICAL-DEGREE GUARANTEED FULL-EMPLOYMENT UPON GRADUATION FROM A REPUTABLE-MEDICAL-SCHOOL

- PHYSICIAN UNEMPLOYMENT IS STILL RARE, BUT UNDER-EMPLOYMENT APPEARS TO BE COMMON

- IT'S REPORTED ONE-QUARTER OF NEWLY TRAINED PHYSICIANS EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTY FINDING APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT
INCREASE IN MEDICAL-SPECIALIZATION HAS UNDERMINED PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS UNITY

WITH SEPARATE ASSOCIATIONS BEING ESTABLISHED FOR SURGEONS, GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, OBSTETRICIANS, ONCOLOGISTS AND SO ON

DOCTORS’ UNION - DIVIDE AND CONQUER
DOCTORS’ UNION - DIVIDE AND CONQUER

AMA
CURRENT MEMBERSHIP IS DECLINING AND AGING

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MEDICAL-CARE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED FROM A MAINLY FEE-FOR-SERVICE-SYSTEM CONTROLLED BY DOMINANT PROFESSIONALISM TO A CORPORATIZED-SYSTEM DOMINATED BY INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED AND GLOBALIZED FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS.
TO DEVELOP POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE ADVANCE OF HOMEOPATHY,
IT’S NECESSARY TO HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE PERCEPTION OF THE FORCES
SHAPING HOMEOPATHY’S FUTURE
I.E. OF THE PERVERSIVE-MACRO-STRUCTURED-INFLUENCES SHAPING
THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE MEDICINE
UNDER THE CORPORATIZED CAPITALISM.
HOMEOPATHY DOES NOT LIVE IN A VACUUM
BUT IN SOCIETY
CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH CARE ERODING PROFESSIONALISM AND TRANSFORMING THE NATURE OF DOCTORING HAVE NOT OCCURRED IN A VACUUM

THEY REFLECT BROADER TRANSFORMATION IN WIDER SOCIETY, WHICH ARE OFTEN CHARACTERIZED IN THE LITERATURE AS SHIFTS FROM MODERNITY TO POST-MODERNITY
WHILE RECOGNIZING DEEP CHANGES
COMING FROM OUTSIDE MEDICINE SURROUNDING & MACROECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES
IT’S ALSO NECESSARY TO KEEP LOOKING INSIDE MEDICINE ITSELF
TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPETING PARADIGMS & THE CHANGING STATUS OF DOCTORS & OF THE MEDICINE AS SOCIAL INSTITUTION
THE HEGEMONY OF THE MEDICAL-PROFESSION HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO DEEP CHANGES IN BOTH THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF CONVENTIONAL-HEALTH-CARE AND THE RISE OF COMPETING PARADIGMS OF HEALTH CARE. THESE CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS HAVE NOT OCCURRED IN A VACUUM. THEY REFLECT BROADER TRANSFORMATION IN WIDER SOCIETY OFTEN CHARACTERIZED IN SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE AS SHIFTS FROM MODERNITY TO POST-MODERNITY.
THERE IS A RANGE OF FUTURES OF GROWTH AND DECLINE FOR AN ARRAY OF HOMEOPATHIES

AS A MARKETING DENOMINATION STANDS A SIGNIFICANT CHANCE OF GROWING IN POST-MODERN SOCIETIES