The practical application of psychobiological theory of the four humors in the Jesuit colleges of the Modern Age: a model of guidance for allocating government positions

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Abstract

The Jesuits of the so-called Old Company (1540-1767) were excellent compilers of the old humoral theories of Hippocrates and Galen; it connects with the medieval tradition of Renaissance humanism. As is known, this theory proposed the existence of four types of liquids or humors in the organism (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) from which derived their corresponding psychological temperaments: sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. Soon the Jesuits moved the practical level of knowledge about the moods applying to the field of psychological guidance. His most notable contribution is related to organizational and performance aspects of the colleges and more specifically to government positions. Psychosomatic variables such as intelligence, common sense, prudence, experience or physique is systematically collected in the so-called secret catalogs. Each school must to send Rome on a periodically (every three years), the list of Jesuits and psychosomatic characters who lived there. These profiles psychosomatic will be the basis for making decisions on the allocation of government positions. In this sense, the Jesuits designed an innovative model of counseling based on the ancient humoral theory and in practice allowed the identification of individuals most suitable for the positions of government colleges and of the own Order.

Keywords: Theory of humours, Jesuit colleges, counseling, government positions

1. Introduction

The Society of Jesus in the psychological approached the practical application of theoretical knowledge about the humors, going back to Hippocratic-Galenic tradition, medieval and Renaissance (Cárceles, 1993). At the Renaissance it was very importance the writings on the talent of Luis Vives (Roca, 1992). Foundations of this old theory established a correspondence among the four elements of composition of the Cosmos (fire, air, land and water, given by the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles of Agrigento in the V century a. C.), the four primary physical qualities of the nature (warmth, dryness, humidity and cold), and the four fluids or humours of every living organism: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile (Massimi, 2000).

This conception postulates a recurring four constitutive principles of nature are also present in the microcosm that is the man (Fresco, 1991). The combination of these elements will result a typology physical, psychological, characterological, and particularly dominant in each person, resulting in a specific psychophysiological temperament...
(phlegmatic, melancholic, sanguine or choleric), with a specific intellectual and personal qualities (Klibansky, Panofsky & Saxl, 1983).

Theoretical basis of these assumptions Hippocratic-Galenic, the Jesuits established psychodiagnostic practice well established in all their colleges, as was the production of catalogs with psychological and somatic data most relevant to their residents (Iriarte, 1948). Characterological and physical data on variables such as complexion, prudence, common sense, or the talent and constituted the so-called secret catalog due to restricted information content.

All Jesuit colleges of each province were sent periodically to the General House in Rome. At the beginning the frequency of the emails was four months but later would become triennial. The main purpose of this diagnostic tool, among others, was to facilitate the election of the Jesuits more apt to perform the different positions of government (president, provincial, general, superior, assistant, etc.), based in decision psychobiological decision-old theory of humors. The application of this model of counseling was a clever innovative experience in a religious context often labeled as rigid and immobilist.

2. The practical dimension of the humoral theory

An inescapable dimension of all scientific knowledge is its practical application. The Jesuits echoing throughout the medical and philosophical tradition rush into practical terms the application of psychological theory humoral. Humoral theory obeyed to a long tradition. Thus, physicians, physiologists and philosophers of authorized prestige belonging to different periods, such as Hippocrates (460a.C.-370a.C.), Plato (428a.C.-347a.C), Aristotle (384a.C.-322a.C), Cicero (160a.C.-43a.C.), Galen of Pergamum (130-200), Vincent de Beauvais (1190-1264), Constantine the African (1020 - 1087), Albertus Magnus (1193-1206) Luis Vives (1492-1540), Juan Huarte de San Juan (1529-1588), The Brocense (1522-1600), Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546), and other distinguished authors were occupied this question.

The psychological approach to the humoral theory gave a high explanatory power to environmental factors and physical. The principle of seeking the balance of the organism was a constant concern in ancient medicine. The greater or lesser presence of humors or bodily fluids (blood, phlegm, black bile or yellow bile) in the human physical constitution will lead to determined imbalances of organic order and temperamental (Massimi, 2001).

This idea will be incorporated by the Society of Jesus preeminent form’s, having a direct impact on the organizational dynamics of their colleges. Efforts will be made in the college community do not predominate determined humors and temperaments (Garcia, E., and Miguel A., 2005). For example, the "blood humor" was classified as unsuitable for religious and ascetic life. In general, the Jesuits with a “sanguine temperament” and other qualities specific psychosomatic referring to talent, prudence, and the experience, engaged in various domestic tasks (cook, porter, farmer, gardener, etc.). This trend can be verifid in the catalog secrets of many colleges (Sanchez Barea, 2011). For example in Pamplona and Tudela colleges, belonging to the Province of Castilla, is clearly observed the predominance of the “sanguine temperament” in office and domestic chores (ARSI, Rome).

Continuing with the analogy, just as the body as a living organism, is healthy and balanced representation of different humors, and the colleges and the entire Society of Jesus (Massimi, 2001). This was the desire of Ignatius of Loyola, who conceived the Society as a living organism that should aspire to maximum harmony among its members, in order to carry out its broad educational mission as effectively as possible.

The humoral imbalance in the composition of the members of the Order, supposed to generate dysfunctions of different depth, which ultimately hinder the good functioning of the colleges. So noxious to this good performance was an excess of subjects as choleric or melancholic as phlegmatic or blood. It is looked for a community college with a reasonable temperamental balance.

Usually for the positions of government was desirable a temperamental type very focused on the complexion choleric if we observed the catalogs secrets. At the same Ignatius Loyola attributed, according to the traditional
theory of humors, a choleric temperament, melancholic type. Those were two "types temperamental" characteristics of persons with high leadership on the one hand, and large doses of spirituality on the other (Massimi, 2000).

This same common sense will permeate the focus on the figure of the confessor. The good exercise of this "Ministry" was essential for a healthy functioning college. In the writings of Ignatius Loyola looms the concern about this office. It recommends that the spiritual director who attend the retreat, learn in depth the "temperament" of them and accommodate the predominant type of humor.

Likewise, the parallel among medicine body and “soul” appears as a recurring in the Jesuit psychology. Thus Ignatius of Loyola is directed to the PP. Broët and Salmeron in 1541 in relation to how to negotiate and discuss:

“Para conversar y venir en amor de algunos grandes o mayores en mayor servicio de Dios nuestro Señor, mirar primero de que condición sea y haceros de ella, es a saber: si es colérico y habla de presto y regocijado, tener alguna manera en conversación su modo en bienas y santas cosas, y no mostrarse grave, flemático o melancólico. Que a natura son recatados, tardos en hablar, graves y pesados en sus conversaciones, tomar el modo dellos con ellos, porque aquello es lo que les agrada: <<Me he hecho todo a todos>> Es de advertir que si uno es de complección colérica y conversa con otro colérico, si no son todo de un mismo espíritu, hay grandísimo peligro que no desconcierten en sus conversaciones sus pláticas; por tanto si uno conosce ser de compleción colérica, debe de ir, aun en todos los particulares cerca conversar con otros, si es posible, mucho armado con examen o con otro acuerdo de sufrir y no se alterar con el otro, máxime si lo conoce el enfermo. Si conversare con flemático o melancólico, no hay tanto peligro de desconcertar por vía de palabras precipitadas" (Iparraguirre, & De Dalmases &Ruiz Jurado, 1997).

A practical realistic criteria show also that Ignatius of Loyola points to the admission of new members to the Company. Thus, the most favorable condition for receiving a Jesuit is aspiring to have as soon as possible experience of temporal things. These things temporal reference to the performance of determined professions in secular life. Thus, recommended that ministerial functions should be distributed to faculty members of the Society in accordance with the inclinations of each, and according to their Baggage or life experience (Massimi, 2000). It's in the Ignatian thought special attention to psychosomatic profile of the candidates, for whose knowledge is necessary to develop methods and tools.

Also from an eminently practical, Jesuit of first-rate as P. General Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615), systematized a whole host of psychological guidance practices to the PP. Superiors of the Society of Jesus. In his work Industriae ad curandos animi morbos exposes possible illnesses and diseases of the soul and the remedies for them (Garcia & Miguel, 2005).

Without exhausting the practical applications that the Jesuits implemented in the field of psychology, had a special significance from the organizational perspective of the colleges, the production of somatic profiles of their residents. The possession of a particular complexio and psychosomatic and intellectual profile (prudence, judgments, wit, experience of temporal things, training, etc.) reported on the natural bias and ease of performance of roles of government and other occupations.

This work will affect the potential psychodiagnostic-called "secret catalogs" for the assignment of government positions. Is a practical and theoretical model of career guidance is certainly innovative in the minds of the time and social context where they hatched (Massimi, 2001).

3. A psychometric instrument: the secret catalogs

The old Society of Jesus (1540-1767) established as practical rule for their college, the preparation of catalogs with psychosomatic attributes of the Jesuits. This procedure had been regulated by the Formula Scribendi (Gramatowski, 1992) of Society of Jesus. The aim was to standardize as far as possible the correspondence between the Provinces and the General House. This practice was justified by the original Ignatian principle of "look for
always the union in the dispersion" by exercising common correspondence between the various houses and the General House. We have a valuable tool to know the somatic features of the Jesuits who were living in the colleges: catalogs triennials. These documents were sending to Rome every three years, although this rule was not satisfied with the thoroughness required. It contained three types of information collected in three distinct catalogs: the *primus*, *secundus* and *tertius*.

The *primus* or "public", collected the most significant biographical details of the Jesuits and are classified into nine categories: name, surname, place of birth or "homeland", date of birth (age), health (forces or *vires*), time bearing on the Company, training in letters, ministries, professions and occupations performed and the grade was given (according to the votes that had been promised). The *tertius* in turn esplanade economic data from colleges, collecting in detail the income or revenues, costs or expenses, debts and other economic variables. The *secundus* or "secret " type data relating to psychosomatic variables such as intelligence or talent, experience, prudence, experience in determined professions, use the "letters" and progress in studies, physical appearance (*complexio*) and if had a special talent for the performance of certain trades, as some government position.

These data "secrets" had a personal and confidential character. The procedure used to identify the owners of these characters psychosomatic anonymity, was very simple and no less effective. It was assigned to each Jesuit a number of internal orders, but not appeared the name of the Jesuit. This assignment number corresponded to the same number in the catalog *primus* where it appears that. When we compare the two catalogs could have a complete picture of the attributes and characteristics of the Jesuits psychosomatic colleges. The Secret catalog itself had no significance whatsoever, because it did not appear the names of the Jesuits.

It is from 1598, appears in the catalogs triennial very detailed characterization of the Jesuits, especially as it affects the variable psychosomatic complexio, understood in contemporary culture as a set of somatic and psychological traits of the person as traditional humoral theory.

The Secret catalog will be used in colleges as a psychodiagnostic instrument in practice will facilitate the distribution of office and professions Jesuit college among certain sections psychosomatic (Massimi, 2001). It is also true that for the Jesuits, the correspondence between the psychosomatic profile college fees was not direct and decisive. Secret catalogs were only a psychometric instrument for orientation facilitated the election of the Jesuits more apt to hold the offices of government. Prudent decision-making, based on this model psychodiagnosis was guaranteed.

4. Government positions and temperaments

Secret catalogs resorted to a variety of adjectives to describe the psychosomatic profile and complexion of the Jesuits. The aim was to discriminate the preponderance of "concrete temperamental type" observed in each Jesuit. While it is true that many Jesuits could be ascribed to two temperamental categories simultaneously is always emphasized the increased presence of a particular humor. We must also bear in mind that the temperaments were not static, but showing some momentum changing throughout life.

For example the melancholic humor ratings on the adjectives received as melancholy and sickly complexion, weak and smooth, altruistic, idealistic, etc. Blood humor received complexion adjectives such as: gentle and naive, placid, easy and inclined to ingenuity, smooth and soft and sociable, peaceful and gentle, and etc. The phlegmatic temperament attributed to him the following features: sallow, dark, mediocre, inconsistent, slow, austere, reluctant, shy, etc. Choleric temperament adjudicated will include the following qualifications: fiery and passionate, but tempered choleric, irascible, hard, strong, dominant, sullen, stubborn, arrogant, passionate, bold, rough and other qualifying characteristic of this temperament. Usually the adjectives used to characterize psychosomatic expressed in Latin. With different nuances it was noted what kind of humor and temperament evidenced by the Jesuits.
Generally it has stated the prevalence in the colleges of individuals with choleric temperament. This would be related to how the hierarchical structure of colleges and of the whole Order, which required individuals with leadership skills and ability of self-government, own of the choleric and choleric-melancholic temperament (Carvalho da Silva, 2006). This temperament is typical of a good talent dominated imaginative and relates to the ease of cultivating arts and disciplines such as poetry, eloquence, preaching, the government of the republic, the military art, etc. (García & Miguel, 2003).

The question arise at this point two questions: what were the criteria for developing these taxonomies temperamental? and more importantly, what relationship existed among the temperaments and the exercise of government positions?

The first question can be answered by referring to the psychological conception of the person of Hippocratic-Galenic base. The Society of Jesus departed from basic galenic premises and later huartianas as biological determinism and the conception of understanding as organic power (Altuna, 1945), but will keep a quaternary conception of the cosmos and humors or bodily fluids (García & Miguel, 2003). Taxonomies of temperament developed by the Jesuits, refer adjectives belong to the four humors. Especially attend to the external manifestations of the complexion. Mainly it is that variable which is taken into account in preparing the catalog secrets.

Regarding the second question, at organizational level and pragmatic, the Jesuit Roman Curia, as the basis for the allocation of government positions the predominance of a certain temperament. For the performance of government positions desirability of combining two balanced temperaments: the choleric and melancholic. On one hand the choleric character was highly esteemed because of the momentum and leadership that presumably was at stake. In turn, the melancholy temperament had shown its suitability for the ascetic and religious life.

The aim was to facilitate the election of the Jesuits more qualified to perform government positions in colleges and the general organization of the Order, attending a psychosomatic diagnosis humoral basis. The practical goal of the catalog secrets was to facilitate the allocation of these offices. The design of this objective also underlies a prior estimate: the search for balance and proportionality good humoral. For a satisfactory development of the colleges and of the Company was good a balance between the different temperaments, as happened with the human organism, which humoral excess would lead to organ dysfunction.

5. Conclusions

- The Society of Jesus addressed in the psychological the practical application of theoretical knowledge about the humors, going back to the Hippocratic-Galenic tradition, medieval and Renaissance.
- Based on theoretical Hippocratic-Galenic, the Jesuits established psychodiagnostic practice well established in all their schools, as was the production of catalogs with psychological and somatic data most relevant to their residents.
- The main purpose of diagnostic tool, among others, was to facilitate the election of the Jesuits more apt to perform the various duties of government (president, provincial, general, superior, assistant, etc.), based on psychobiological making the ancient theory of humors.
- Efforts will be made in the college community do not predominate certain humors and temperaments which might lead to organizational dysfunction.
- Usually for the offices of government was desirable temperamental type very focused on the complexion choleric and melancholic
- The possession of a certain complexio and psychosomatic and intellectual profile (prudence, judgments, wit, experience of temporal things, etc.) reported on the natural predisposition and easy to carry out government positions and other occupations college.
- The old Society of Jesus established practice operating as a rule the production of catalogs college, with
personal traits of the Jesuits and other economic variables, which sought “to unite and integrate the Society of Jesus” by the frequent exchange of letters between provinces and General House.

- The Secret catalog will be used in colleges as a psychodiagnostic instrument in practice will facilitate the distribution of posts and offices among the Jesuit College with certain somatic profiles.

- The Secret catalogs resorted to a variety of adjectives to describe the psychosomatic profile and complexion of the Jesuits.

- The Society of Jesus departed from basic galenic premises and huartianas as biological determinism and the conception of understanding as organic power.

- For the proper functioning of the schools was desirable balanced representation of different temperaments, as happened with the organism human, where humoral excess would lead to organ dysfunction.

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