

New Routes from Old Roots

A deep dive into key Similarities, Differences, Myths & Realities prevailing in the Indian & Chinese middle class.

Summary:

While a lot has been written and debated about the rise of China & the *'strange' rise of India, there exists limited knowledge about a comparative & qualitative assessment of consumers in these two markets. Yet, for most marketers, these are the gold mines that must be tapped in the 21st century. This research delves deep into the contemporary middle class in India & China and tries to identify the key influences determining the consumption habits of unarguably the two largest clusters of consumers in the world. The study achieves this by taking a candid look at household units that are experiencing maximum change in these two societies.

The study builds differential influence models for both the societies and tries to indicate possible implications for marketers and marketing communications in these two countries.

While this paper builds the '*Conceptual Framework*' for the Research, Analysis and implications of the study, the enclosed DVDs constitute the *Illustrative & Emotive* part.

Note: Please view the enclosed DVDs just before entering the 'Discovery' section of this paper.

Introduction:

When we think of India and China, here are some popular perceptions & realities that cross our minds -

India:

**Global & Medieval – India's Schizophrenic economy;*

**Battles of the Righteous – The rise of India's lower castes*

**New India, Old India – The many layered character of Indian Modernity*

China:

***The China Price*

***The pirate nation*

***The Revolution against Communist revolution*

****A Startup & a Turnaround*

These are real chapter titles from some of the recent and more popular books on India & China. While both media & business have focused their attention towards the way these two economies have grown and would grow in the

future, there is limited ready & usable information about the social impact of these economic developments. Manufacturers who set up factories in India talk of hedging their bets. Should brands do likewise? Are there lessons in marketing to huge populations that can be shared between the two developing Asian economies?

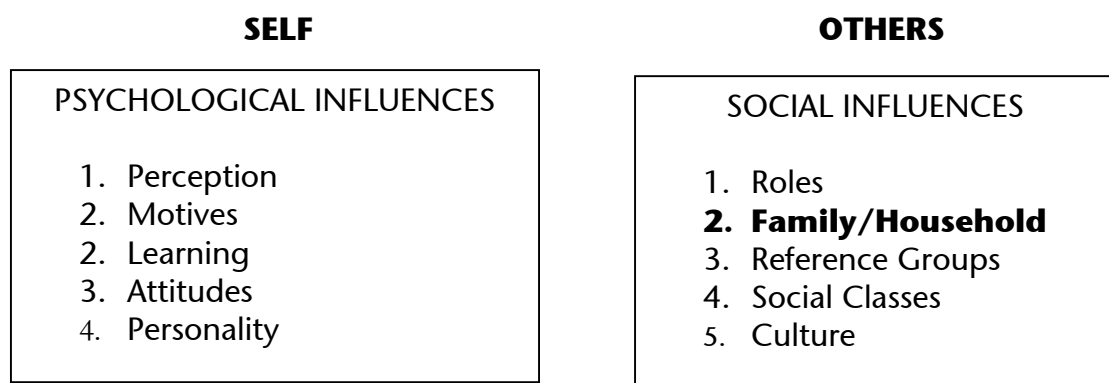
Project Blood is the first step as a part of a pioneering initiative of Ogilvy & Mather Asia Pacific to understand the social impact of these economic developments.

As a part of this initiative we have focused on the Household as a unit & looked at Household Influences in these two societies.

The connections & contrasts between the way households live in these two societies throws up insights about them. This research paper tries to crystallize these insights and shortlists the set of key internal & external influences that determine buying decisions.

The reason for choosing household-unit as a lens, instead of the individual, is to do with the collective nature of the two societies. Globalization & other foreign influences notwithstanding, both societies have traditionally demonstrated a more household & family centric social structure. Household & Family as an entity is seen to be more important than the individual, society or even the country.

This difference is important because it contrasts these two societies from many western societies where the individual precedes household, the family & the rest.



Our study focusses on the 'real' middle class in India & China. Thus the research is based on learnings from households living away from the major commercial cities and metros like Shanghai & Mumbai.

Sample, Location & Methodology:

Household & family influences are a function of their **composition** (networks within a household unit) & **location** (network with the immediate environment). In order to arrive at a balanced portrayal of the household influences, we decided to segment the households on the basis of their size & location.

For both the countries we cherry picked the household life cycle segments that are witnessing maximum change. These household/family groups, we believe, represent change in the two civilizations at this point in history.

Thus while the Chinese respondent households are yet to be nests Indian households are full nests.

In case of India, this prioritization helped us arrive at three kinds of household/family units for research viz.

1. **Native Nuclear:** Nuclear Families that have lived in the present location/city for the past at least one generation
2. **Native Extended:** Extended Families that lived in the present location/city for the past at least one generation
3. **Migrant Nuclear:** Nuclear Families that lived in the present location

Migrant Extended is not a representative household type in India thus it not a part of the research.

For China we picked up households units that are demonstrating a revolutionary spending pattern & hitherto unconventional social habits like live-in relationships etc. These are households that comprise young men & women who are entering their first jobs. Three of them are natives & one is a migrant household. One young man lived with his girlfriend; another one lived alone (but had a girlfriend, with conservative parents), while the young women respondents lived with their parents.

Research locations had to be chosen, while being conscious of stereotypes viz. "Shanghai is China" & "Bangalore is India". It is true that these two cities represent a huge shift in the way a section of people live in these two countries but they do not represent the larger middle class, which is spread across the country.

In order to strike a balance between tradition & modernity we looked at cities that were very old and yet were embracing the new wave of economic and social activity – the *real* India and the *real* China, so to speak.

In order to capture the essence of the evolving Indian & Chinese society & yet not lose the flavour of tradition we chose *****Nanjing in China &

*****Pune in India. Both these cities are much older than their larger metro neighbours viz. Shanghai & Mumbai respectively.

Both Pune & Nanjing are at the cusp of tradition and modernity. None of these two cities is out-and-out a commercial center and yet both demonstrate the coexistence of modernity & traditional local culture. Pune also, happens to be a major center of higher education and thus offers a rich mix of cultural leanings from different parts of India. Nanjing was the capital of China during the early Ming dynasty.

Capturing influences that drive family/household decisions seems logical and logistically doable but it actually is a bigger challenge than that. This is because many of these influences impact family/household decisions subliminally or subconsciously.

In order to capture these influences and nuances better, we decided to do away with conventional direct interrogation. Instead we took to ****Video Ethnography, which we found a relatively less obtrusive technique and yet insightful.

We spent two days prior to the shoot with the respondent families. This on one hand was to make the families feel comfortable about the camera's presence & on the other hand it was aimed at priming ourselves with their way of living.

As we went into the research we modified the classic Video Ethnography to serve the research requirements better. Instead of leaving the camera as a passive recording device in the household we brought in interactivity at the end of the second day of shooting the family. We did this by discussing the key observations from the footage with different family members. This was done to double-check our observations & hypotheses and clarify any unexplained activities that we found relevant.

Families were filmed over a weekend & a weekday (Saturday to Monday). This was aimed at ensuring that we get an account of the household routine across both a working day & a holiday.

The field research took about 10 weeks to complete while the final film edits and collation of key insights and the analysis of footage took about 8 weeks for completion.

Discovery:

(**Note:** Please view the enclosed DVDs at this stage)

A direct comparison between the sets of families in China and India would be unfair because both of them are at different stages of their lifecycle.

Also, social change in China did not just begin earlier but has been more dramatic. It is dramatic because for 50 years, people were bottled up in their thinking & their exposure. Thus their need to try and explore is much more pronounced than that for Indians.

For example Indians have used MNC brands for ages - some of them such as Cadbury's, Lux, Surf, Horlicks - have almost lost their 'foreign' identities and are seen more as 'Indian' brands, whereas in China, when people drink Coke, or use Olay, they are acutely aware they are consuming a foreign brand. It is, in fact the primary reason for their consumption.

People in India have witnessed steadier change. Barring the emergency and accompanied political uncertainty of 1970s, Indian society has not witnessed social or political turmoil. This is most unlike China, which has had a tumultuous past.

Despite the difference in the pace of change and the different stages in a household's evolution there still are some **key comparisons that can be drawn about the way middle class households lead their lives in these two societies.**

We have structured these learnings & comparisons into two groups viz. **Contrasts & Similarities** between the Chinese & Indian middle class.

Basis these, we have attempted to bust key myths about the two societies and build **social influence models** for these two societies.

Here are the key **contrasts** between the Chinese & Indian Middle classes

1. Gender Relationships:

Boy-Girl live-in relationships are common & socially acceptable in China. This is in sharp contrast to how Indian Middle class looks at premarital intimacy between the opposite sexes. This conservatism about premarital intimacy between the opposite sexes is evidenced in the fact that in India it is very difficult for a boy or girl to get rented residential accommodation in a new city if he/she is staying alone or with an unmarried partner. This is equally true for small towns as well as cosmopolitan metros. Much of the practice of romance among the young in China is simply a matter of copying a Western lifestyle. Premarital sex is okay, but having children before marriage is not. That limit is imposed socially.

2. Religion & Caste based social segmentation

Most Chinese families are not religious at all. The practice of religion is a recent phenomenon, and it's role is a social one. This is in sharp contrast to their Indian counterparts. Indians find relevance for religion & spiritualism in almost everything from politics, to commerce & even family & relationships. Majority of weddings do not happen without a matching horoscope. The first choice of a parent from among the Indian middle class is to get his son/ daughter married to someone from the same caste or community. This is an antithesis to a more caste neutral Chinese middle class.

3. Romance, Freedom & Sexuality:

Public Display of Affection is much more prevalent in China than India. Young boys and girls living-in together are much more expressive as they walk down the streets. This is in sharp contrast to a more conservative view of sexuality prevalent among the Indian middle class. This also shows a greater concern for society and people around among the Indian middle class than in the Chinese.

4. Eating Out:

Chinese are very comfortable in eating out. Even daily wage earners (or the low-income group) do not mind having food out of home. This is in sharp contrast to the majority of Indian middle class that prefers having food at home. Even the low-income group carries lunch box to work. Rarely can you see them eating out.

In middle class India a family meal out of home is infrequent but the younger ones eat out more often. For an Indian middle class family,

foreign food can at best be 'snacks'; it is yet to acquire the 'meal' status.

5. Media Exposure:

Younger urban households are typified by greater Internet penetration. The Chinese middle class is much more comfortable with new media than their Indian counterparts.

6. Acknowledgement of media influence:

Chinese do not feel embarrassed about acknowledging the role of advertising & media in their purchase decisions. But one would rarely get to hear this in any interaction with an Indian "We bought this brand because we liked the advertisement". Indians always prefer to point out the logical reasons for the purchase decision (even if emotional reasons are the drivers for purchase). For instance an Indian would always cite quality and price as the reason for his purchase decision. This is not an accurate statement of the reality.

7. Women & Physical Sports:

Young girls in India, after they come out of school, do not engage in any kind of physical or indoor sport. This holds true for games involving physical activity or even the videogames.

China on the other hand has had a rich sporting culture that keeps the girls active even after they are out of college. Also, proliferation of Internet makes videogames more accessible and enjoyable for girls in China than in India.

8. Self Expression:

While Karaoke nights are niche in India, they are a mainstream rage in China. This could one again be correlated to 'expression with a vengeance' among the 'recently liberated' Chinese middle class as compared to the traditionally more 'liberated', communicative and democratic India.

9. Brand preferences and generational divide:

The older generation in China prefers to go for classic symbols of luxury. Thus classic or well-known brands dominate the relatively older set of consumers in the Chinese middle class. The young Chinese on the other hand prefer to go with brands that are differentiated on design and form. This is especially true for fashion accessories and passenger car brands. In other words Chinese youth is more individualistic in their choice of brands among some of the categories.

Indian middle class consumers on the other hand are more comfortable with mainstream brands and prefer to acquire well-known symbols of luxury/exclusivity. This also indicates that the Indian middle

class consumer is less individualistic, less experimentative and more image conscious than his Chinese counterpart.

10. Moonlighting:

A lot of young working Chinese men and women take up more than one job, at a time. This is reflective of their desire to improve their living standards through the extra income. In India on the other hand moonlighting is an exception.

Curiously only two kinds of people do moonlighting in India first are those who are at the bottom of the economic strata viz. un or semi skilled daily wage earners viz. carpenters, masons, or owners of petty businesses like ironing clothes, milk delivery, boys, fruit vendors etc. and the second are those at the top of the skill pyramid viz. consultants, architects and other professionals who render their services to multiple agencies at the same time.

The approach of the Indian middle class towards jobs and employment is much more linear and one-dimensional. Indian middle class aspires for the best of education for themselves because that is a ticket to a better life. And best education is a result of complete focus on academics. In among the Indian middle class, dabbling in many things at the same time is sometimes even viewed as a symbol of lack of focus or family's poor financial standing & inability to support child's education. Only a few communities who are traditionally trader communities are more experimentative in this regard. In other words it can be said that ***for the Indian education is opportunity where as for the Chinese opportunity is education.***

Thus in India moonlighting is not just an individual decision but has a social dimension to it too. While still on the significance of education and the discomfort with moonlighting, it is pertinent to mention that the Indian middle class does not mind an individual making extra money by teaching someone. In fact teaching has always been a very respectable profession in the Indian society and giving tuitions to students is viewed as a symbol of hard work and intelligence.

11. Doer Vs. Talkers/ Destiny over Deeds:

The Chinese middle class is a bunch of active and outdoorsy 'Doers'. Be it work or play viz. fishing, Barbeque, Rollerblading or Karaoke, they are always up to some or other kind of physical activity.

In contrast Indian middle class is happy sitting, talking or thinking. It is a more passive approach to work, life & leisure.

At a cultural level this divergent behaviour is rooted in the two distinct philosophies that these societies have grown up with. While the Chinese philosophy is Confucian where in the man is the doer and in

charge of his destiny, the Hindu philosophy is driven by Destiny more than Deeds. It is an old adage in India "*Waqt se pehle aur kismat se zyada kuch nahi milta*" (one cannot ever get more than what is written in one's destiny or get it before the time for it has come). This summarizes the collective mental programming of the larger Indian middle class.

While the research brought forward many differences among the Indian & Chinese middle class there also are many **similarities**. Some of these similarities have been outlined here:

1. Career & Aspirations:

Career is as much a high point of achievement for the young as it is for their parents. Parents in both the societies invest time and money towards their child's future. When the child achieves success, it is a shared joy for the entire family and not an individual's triumph.

After excelling in one job or one industry the young do not just want to stop and savour the spoils, instead they want to move on for better prospects. There also is a growing desire for the middle class in both the societies to travel abroad and see the world.

Both the societies are in a constant state of flux and success and achievement is not viewed as a destination but as a journey. The young are exploring diverse career options and do not want to stick to the same job or profile for the rest of their life. This is a function of an ever-growing economy and the multitude of opportunities that it is throwing open.

Many of the young working adults even realize that the long-term future is more secured if one adopted an entrepreneurial career profile. Thus many of them are even contemplating to start something of their own at a later stage in life, once they have sufficient savings to take the plunge.

The youth in both the societies want to leave smaller towns and move towards bigger cities for better education and superior career prospects. Parents seldom come in the way. They actually encourage children to go out and explore all that the world has to offer. Parents in both the societies are also realizing many of their own dreams through their children.

2. Role & influence of parents:

Parents help in starting career/buying home. Parents also guide and control choice of education and sometimes even the job, and investments. It is not surprising in India and China for a parent to buy a car or house for his adult, working or married child.

Children, even after attaining adulthood, are more strongly bonded to their parents. This holds true even if the children and parents are not living together.

In many ways parents are the starting point of a child's career and life (supporting education etc.) and also the only constant in their lives (always there as a bedrock of emotional support).

Increasingly dynamic and sometimes intimidating business and professional environment has strengthened the bond between parents and children.

3. *Marriage & Boy-girl Relationships:*

Divorce is uncommon among both Indian & Chinese middle class homes. In fact divorce is not yet a socially acceptable phenomenon in both the societies. Having a partner before marriage on the other hand is not uncommon in both the societies. Only the degree of 'social intimacy' with the partner varies.

4. *Friends & Colleagues are the new Family & the new influence:*

Migration of population is taking people away from their classical support system (family and relatives). As they work in new environments they are striking new relationships. Colleagues and neighbours drive these new relationships; friends are the new social networks.

Both Indian & Chinese young working class expect and explore relationships with their colleagues that go beyond pure professional interaction. It is not uncommon to see a subordinate treating his or her superior as an elder brother or sister, something uncommon in other cultures. Looking for 'relationships' where only 'professionalism' is expected to exist is not a surprising trait between Indian and Chinese working professionals. This also reflects the familial hangover of these two cultures that goes beyond home and into the professional sphere.

Also, these new social networks are not replacing the old instead they are adding a new dimension to the existing social networks in the new location. While families decide career and education in both the societies, it is the new network of friends/colleagues and media that together influence choice of brands.

5. *Frugal on food; indulgent on luxury & lifestyle products/ services:*

Young boys and girls (especially girls) who are in their first job or in the first few years of their working life, love to indulge in 'miniature luxuries' such as expensive grooming products, eating joints over the weekend, exclusive alcohol brands, clothes, accessories etc.

Having said that it is important to note that these boys and girls are acutely aware of their limits to spending on everyday grocery etc. In many ways this is like a double life or double standard that they lead and maintain. *Things that they use a lot everyday are bargained for and things that they savour are indulged in.*

6. Brand Awareness & Consciousness:

Television commercial awareness or celebrity awareness is much higher than brand awareness and association. In both the societies, the younger generation recognizes & recalls brand promotions much more than the brand itself. This also is a function of media message over-supply.

Also, workingmen have busy lives and limited time for media consumption thus out of home media becomes more relevant choice of media for this consumer set.

7. Herd Mentality:

Both the societies demonstrate faith in collective intelligence rather than radical personal opinions. For as people begin making money in their jobs their brand preferences are driven primarily by the peer group. If everyone were having Chivas Regal, they would go for it too. The desire to stand out is not pronounced in both the communities.

8. Gender Relations:

In both the societies men expect their women to be good with housework and take care of the household after marriage. Women could do this while being employed with full time work or being a homemaker.

Together the similarities & contrasts bust some of the commonly held myths about the middle class in these two societies.

Key Myths & Realities:

Basis these contrasts & similarities we have tried to bust some of the commonly held myths about the middle class in these two societies.

Myth 1.

India and China are collective societies.

Reality

India and China are collective societies in contrasting ways

While the meaning of collectivism in Chinese middle class is more about the household or parents, collectivism in Indian middle class is more about the family or extended network of relationships viz. parents, uncles, aunts etc. In some ways, affection and responsibility in China is focused, while they are distributed in India.

Myth 2.

Democracy has made Indian middle class egalitarian.

Reality

Indian Middle Class is socially stratified

Even after over 60 years of freedom and independence Indian middle class still exhibits cast structure in multiple ways. This ranges from marriage preferences to 'reverse casteism' in the form of reservation of government jobs for people of backward communities

Myth 3.

China is not an expressive/ experimentative society

Reality

China is an even more expressive society than India

Years of controlled life in China have lead to a whole universe of bottled up feelings, emotions and thoughts. In the new era of economic boom brought about by the communist controlled capitalism has lead to a new wave of Chinese expression. It is almost like expression with a vengeance. The society is more experimentative and outgoing than India. Part of the Chinese change is attributable to the unleashing of the Chinese expression & the pent up sentiment.

Indian society, which has traditionally had much more opportunity to express it self is not feeling the liberation of expression that the Chinese are getting to now.

Chinese express this liberation all the way from consumption of premium branded products and services to experimentation with their careers and all the way up to their sexuality. In fact ***the way Chinese middle class is consuming, makes it look like they were voting with their wallets!***

Myth 4.

Both Chinese & Indian taste buds are evolving and adopting international cuisines

Reality

Experimentation with tastes is only for snacking and not meals

Both Indian and Chinese middle class are exploring newer cuisines and eating out much more that ever but all of this is still for a change of taste from the regular eating habits and not a transition to new a taste. In fact both the societies still look at western or other international cuisines as snacks and not meals.

Myth 5.
Chinese are rational consumers while Indians are emotional

Reality

Both Chinese & Indian consumers are emotional

Both the societies are experimenting at different levels. Both the societies are exploring newer products, services & brands. The only difference is that the Chinese consumers acknowledge the role of media and marketing in their purchase decisions, while Indians shy away from admitting it.

Myth 6.
Both Chinese & Indian middle classes are upgrading & adopting luxury

Reality

Both Chinese & Indian middle class is experimenting with 'miniature luxury'

While middle class in both societies is experimenting with 'miniature luxuries' (personal premium products for special use or occasions) viz. Chivas Regal, Olay, Davidoff etc. and services viz. premium & super premium restaurants, salons etc., they are cutting back expenses on staple food, everyday grocery & toiletries. This amounts to a realignment of expenses and not an across the board upgradation to premium brands.

Myth 7.
Both Chinese & Indian middle class does not travel – they like the security of home.

Reality

Middle class in both the societies is beginning to explore the world

Riding on the wave of employment, education and now even leisure middle class households are traveling much more. This usually starts with moving out of the place of origin in search of better education avenues and leads to employment in new locations. The second stage of traveling happens as a part of the employment opportunity. More often than not this travel is driven initially by work and followed by leisure. The children in middle class families travel first and then help parents see the country or the world.

Myth 8.
Friends are replacing family

Reality

Friends are adding to the family

Friends are like a new family in a new location. This does not mean that friends replace linkages with the family of birth, parents or the extended

family. Instead this new network takes care of a new set of social and personal & professional needs in a new location.

Myth 9.

The young in both the societies are individualistic in their brand choice

Reality

Herd Mentality persists in both the societies

Both in India and China brand choice is a function of immediate friend circle. A lot of brands get picked up just because everyone in a group is buying the same. The difference is restricted to the designs & colour and even these are more similar than divergent.

Myth 10

In an increasingly competitive world, personal effort makes all the difference

Reality

Personal efforts are important, but social contacts make all the difference

Whether it is *guanxi* in China or *bhai bhateejavaad* ('favouring brothers / nephews') in India, a lot is accomplished by milking family and social relationships.

Myth 11.

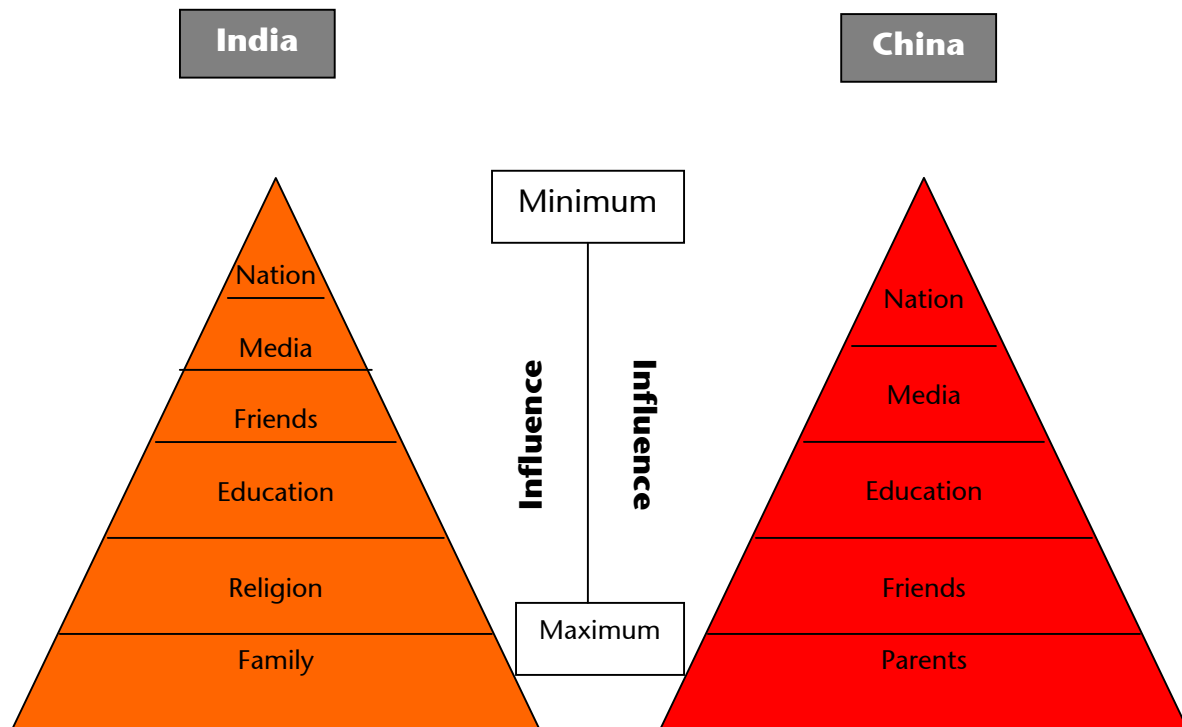
Women are earning, independent & outgoing.

Reality

Men earn for money, women earn for pocket money

Despite better education and equal opportunity, middle class women in both the societies play the supporting role. While men are the chief wage earners, women either take care of the household or supplant family income with a low-pressure job. These jobs are more for the woman's self image or to add to the family's monthly earnings and not as much career defining in nature.

Basis the Similarities, Contrasts, Myths & Realities prevalent in the two societies we now try and step back to look at the key emergent **Social Influence Models** that can be developed for India & China.



The above two triangles illustrate the relative importance of the key social influences on an individual in the two societies.

In terms of similarities there are ample

- For most of the product categories the key influences are **Family & Friends**
- For life decisions **parents & partners** play a bigger role than friends or media
- Media (Internet, TV and magazines) play a bigger role for other categories viz. **grooming** (cosmetics/fashion) and **gadgets**
- **Food habits and preferences** are driven by **personal preferences formed over a period of time** and based on the place of origin, familial leanings and household habits

The contrast appears when we look at the meaning of family in the two societies. In India family as a unit is more about the household and its interconnections with the extended family viz. uncles, aunts and even cousins. Thus in India a household defines society & 'people' in general by extended their family. No wonder there is this perennial concern among the Indian middle class when they are embarking on anything new – *"What will people say!"*

In China on the other hand family as a unit is more about the Household and people living together. Thus the only set of people that a Chinese middle class individual is primarily concerned about is his parents. The meaning of society in China is more about parents.

This differential meaning of family or household manifests itself in the meaning of society & social obligation. While decisions such as education and occupation have equal parental involvement in both the societies, in China marriage is more of a personal decision than a family decision. This is sharply different from the way it is in India, where marriage is not considered to be just coming together of two people but a union of two families.

Implications:

One of the key implications is that in China, MNC brands need not localize their appeal (except maybe food brands) since Chinese consumers are looking westwards, Korea-wards, the appeal of those brands lies in just that.

Contrast this with India where the marketing & communication often has to be rooted in local idiom.

Approval and recognition from the social influencers is key to building brands in both nations; also many people do not buy things that they use themselves - girlfriend buys cosmetics, food for boyfriend, wife buys for husband. This does not necessarily mean that these are not gifts - it is just that some **relationship units** viz.

- Mother-child;
- Husband-wife;
- Dating couple;
- Brother-sister

Are so close that one happily passes on the responsibility of choice to another. This is something that would rarely be seen in western societies, which exhibit a more individualistic consumer mindset.

India & China thus offer an opportunity to build brand and marketing propositions that are more rooted in the relationships & rituals than individual identities.

While we have completed this research initiative, we would like to acknowledge that both these societies are in constant state of flux. The pace of change among Chinese consumers specifically moves us. We believe that this understanding is at best a starting point for making an attempt to make sense of this flux and the ever-increasing pace of change.

It would be interesting to observe how these societies and economies evolve, how much of their past moves with them and how much of it gets left behind, only to be replaced by a new set of formative values & new influences.

Acknowledgements/Glossary

Production Team

Anuj Singh, Raju Shah, Ami Jhaveri (Pune Films)

Baibai Yang, Tony Chen (Nanjing Films)

* From 'In spite of the Gods' by Edward Luce. Little Brown Book Group

** From 'China Inc.' by Ted C. Fishman. Scribner

*** From 'One Billion Customers' by James McGregor. Wall Street Journal Books

**** **Video Ethnography:** In order to study social practices, you need to go to the places where people naturally engage in those practices and observe them in action. Video ethnography combines classic ethnographic methods with digital video technology.

Methods for Data Collection

There are 3 basic methods of data collection in video ethnography:

Direct observation—observe people engaging in the practice and take field-notes.

Video recording—videotape people engaging in the practice and then view it over and over again and show it to others.

Participant observation—participate directly in the practice and observe yourself doing it.

These 3 data collection methods complement each other. *Direct observation* enables the researcher to see how social practices occur naturally and to understand the ecology of the setting. However, direct observation has some drawbacks. Because social activity happens so quickly, the observer often misses things the first time. Also, the observed phenomenon can only be shared with other researchers through the observer's field-notes, which cannot preserve the rich detail of the actual event. This is where *video recording* is useful. Through video recording, the observer can capture much more of the detail of the actual event than one can do with field-notes. In addition, video data can be played over and over again, to discover the fine detail of social activities, and can be played for other researchers, to enable the checking of analyses. But not everything can be captured on video. Cameras cannot be placed everywhere, and some practices are not easily captured on video at all. Thus, video recording cannot replace direct observation, but can enable the observer to capture selected events.

Yet another methodological problem remains even when direct observation and video recording are combined. The researcher may have an excellent

record of a social practice, but still may not understand it. This is where *participant observation* is useful. In many cases, the practices studied are strange to the observer. The best way to gain an understanding of the practices is to learn to participate in them, if possible. A practitioner's understanding is invaluable when doing analysis. When participation is not possible, asking the practitioners questions about their work can also facilitate understanding of the practice.

*******Nanjing** is the capital of China's Jiangsu Province and a city with a prominent place in Chinese history and culture. Nanjing has served as the capital of China during several historical periods, and is listed as one of the Four Great Ancient Capitals of China. Nanjing is also one of the fifteen sub-provincial cities in China's administrative structure, enjoying jurisdictional and economic autonomy only slightly less than that of a province. In addition, the Republic of China, which controls Taiwan and neighbouring islands, claims it as its de jure capital. Located in the downstream Yangtse River drainage basin and Yangtse River Delta economic zone, Nanjing has always been one of China's most important cities. Apart from having been the capital of China for six dynasties and of the Republic of China, Nanjing has also served as a national hub of education, research, transportation and tourism throughout history. It is also the second largest commercial center in the East China region, behind onl Shanghai.

*******Pune** is a city located in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. It is the capital of Pune District in which it is located. It is the 7th largest city in India with a population of 4.5 million, and the second largest in the state of Maharashtra. It is located roughly 120 kilometres east of Mumbai at an altitude of 560 metres above sea level. It is situated at the eastern edge of the Western ghats on the Deccan plateau.

Pune has a reputation for its several esteemed colleges and educational institutions -- the reason why it is called the 'Oxford of the East' (or 'Oxford of India'). It has a very strong presence in the automobile sector and is on its way to consolidate its position as the 'Detroit of India' too. It is also home to many software and IT companies. Pune is widely considered the cultural capital of Marathi-speaking Maharashtrians. Although Marathi is the main language of Pune, its cosmopolitan population speaks several other languages like English and Hindi.