Chinese glocalization – a study of intergenerational residence in urban China

Shengdong Lin
Journalism and Communication School, Xiamen University, Xiamen, P.R. China, and

Xue Ke
School of Business, Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, P.R. China

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the way in which Chinese consumers integrate both global culture and local culture through the change of intergenerational residence in urban China.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected by semi-structured interviews of 15 families from three cities in south China. All interview tapes were transcribed. A hermeneutic process is used to analyze the verbal context.

Findings – There is a new trend of intergenerational residence in urban China, living apart but close. Living apart is a result of equalization between generations in socio-political power, whereas living close is a way for traditional value adapting to global environments. Further analysis suggests that the assimilation of socio-political values rooted in individualistic cultures, unexpectedly, is for the purpose of collective goodness, and the performance of traditional moral values is shifting from the compulsory rule based on traditional social norms to the spontaneous rule based on human demand.

Research limitations/implications – These findings capture the richness of Chinese dialectical way of "glocalization," which retains basic (often positive) elements of opposing perspectives by seeking a middle way. Such findings would be valuable for global marketers trying to enter the Chinese market.

Originality/value – This paper answers the question of how Chinese consumers accept the competitive advantages of global culture and at the same time keep the positive distinctiveness of the heritage culture.

Keywords Globalization, Localization, Political sociology, Family, Consumers, China

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Local culture is increasingly contaminated and penetrated by elements of global culture. Western nations are economically advanced and often perceived to be the representatives of global culture. The spread of global brands, like McDonald, and their global advertising campaign, have led to the fear of a coming "Mcworld". Some scholars even further predicts that local cultures will be inevitably colonized by international corporate brands (Daniels, 2003; Parameswaran, 2002; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). However, many studies support that some aspects of the local culture will survive the erosive effects of globalization (e.g. Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Lal, 2000; Santana, 2003). Since cultures are often classified in a dichotomous way (like individualistic/collectivistic, independent/interdependent), it results in cultural pluralism and hybridization in appearance when global culture enters the local and usually collectivistic cultures. Though it makes the study of local cultures more difficult, it is becoming more important to study it because of its pervasive influence on consumer behavior (Craig and Douglas, 2006). Glocalization, which combines the word globalization with localization, emphasizes that the globalization of a product/service is more

likely to succeed when the product/service is adapted specifically to each locality or culture it is marketed in.

How do local consumers integrate both global culture and their own local culture? Some studies (e.g. Fu and Chiu, 2007) find that beliefs pertinent to making a living in global culture gain popularity, but beliefs pertinent to social relationship and morality in local cultures are relatively resistant to change. Local consumers tend to accept the status dimension of global culture, including such competence-related attributes as successful, competent, and intelligent, which is positively related to socio-political power, and at the same time keep the solidarity dimension of the heritage culture, including social, moral attributes such as trustworthy, friendly, kind, and benevolent, which is positively related to traditional moral values. But those findings still cannot answer the question of "how" local consumers integrate both seemingly contradictory sides in specific consumption contexts. Western competence-related attributes are interwoven with their moral values as a whole. For local consumers, the maintenance of traditional value and the assimilation of global attributes are not so simple like the replacement of parts of a machine. Different cultural groups may use different ways to integrate. In regard of globalization and culture exchange, a large number of advertisements in China adopt the strategy of accommodating Chinese traditional family values as well as independent demands of westernized life. The present research makes use of advertisements on housing plans for old parents and adult children in Urban China as an impetus to study the way in which Chinese consumers integrate both global culture and local culture.

Methodology

This study arose from our notice of an advertisement of real estate in Guangzhou, an urban city in south China. The advertisement claimed a new concept of house consumption – mother and son's houses plan. The plan provided two generations – old parents and adult child with two independent but close houses. When checking this new concept online, we found similar concept in Beijing (Huayue International Co, 2006). Huayue promoted the "1 + 1" house couple with an idea that two generations lived apart but not separately. A recent survey based on more than 4,500 citizens in Shanghai also show that nearly 60 percent of old parents hoped neither to co-reside with their adult child nor to reside far from their child's house, and only 12 percent still wanted to co-reside with their child (Xu, 2007). China, as a developing country, is affected by western cultures heavily after the enforcement of reform and open policy in 1980s. Urban cities especially confront the influence of globalization. Mother and son's houses plan is the co-product of globalization and localization. As the advertisement said, it preserved the traditional family value, and at the same time satisfied the independent demand of modern life. This paper takes the residing arrangement of two generations in urban China as a specific consumption context, digging into the way Chinese consumers integrate global culture and local culture.

Descriptions of intergenerational residence were obtained by semi-structured interviews of 15 families from three cities, all in south China. These families were introduced by acquaintances of undergraduate students. For each family, we interviewed old parents and adult child respectively so that they could express their ideas independently. Our sampling criterion required that at least one member (≥ 18 years) of each generation agreed to be interviewed for about 40 minutes. Our family samples are heterogeneous in family size, age, income, occupation and residing status, which may be more representative in Chinese urban families.

Since many of our interviewees spoke Cantonese, especially old parents, five native Cantonese-speaking interviewers were recruited and trained to help us collect data. Before the interview process, our assistants and we discussed the interview outline at length. They interviewed another three families in addition, to practice and also adapt the interview outline according to the actual feedback. We met all five assistants together after they practiced. Then, we discussed each difficulty and each problem in their interviews extensively before reaching a consensus, which gave us further insight into what should be asked at the follow-up interviews. After these preliminary works, we called to obtain the permissions to tape from all of the interviews and assured the interviewees of confidentiality. For few who rejected to be taped, we arranged a Cantonese undergraduate to record all the details in writing as possible. Given the full preparations, we were confident that we were collecting meaningful data.

While in China, do as the Chinese do. At the beginning of each interview, our assistants gave a gift (*jian mian li*) to the interviewer, and introduced a general topic – housing consumption of the interviewed family. Since we were introduced by their acquaintances, it did not cost much effort for them to accept us and open the sluices. We tried to cut in the talk of residing arrangement between old parents and adult child in a natural conversation context. Initially, assistants collected some demographic data, including family size and members, ages, incomes, occupations, native places, marriage status, educations. Income is so sensitive that people might not provide the answer. Substitute variables, like living space or condition, based on our participant observations, are used to estimate the possible effect of incomes in data analysis. It was natural to enter the topic of intergenerational residence when we inquired the information of their family members. Then we focused on this topic based on their residing status. If they resided together, we questioned them closely about their daily activities at home, the ideal residing arrangement between generations and the rationale embedded in it. If they resided apart, we pumped about the distance between two households, the communication between two generations, the ideal residing arrangement between generations and the causes behind it.

All interview tapes are transcribed into text. Participant observations and some info from intermediate acquaintances are also recorded. A hermeneutic process is used to analyze the verbal context, moving from a discussion of the part to the whole (Joy, 2001; Thompson *et al.*, 1989). The hermeneutic interpretation seeks to be open to all possibilities afforded by the text, rather than to project a predetermined system of meaning onto the textual data (Thompson and Tambyah, 1999). All five interviewers and we read the whole text and discuss together to capture the richness of verbal and nonverbal meanings without any theoretical frames. We also keep these discussion notes for data analysis in the next stage. Chinese people are often said to have a tendency to give a socially desirable impression (Joy, 2001). To find out their true inner feelings, we combine both generations' records with acquaintances' information, and also participant observations, to make judgments in the discussion. Finally, we try to explicate them with theoretical accounts of residing arrangement between generations.

Findings

Consistent with the previous findings (Logan *et al.*, 1998; Sheng and Settles, 2006), our study also finds high level of co-residence of old parents with adult children in urban China. Among 15 interviewed families, there are 13 families that old parents co-reside with one adult child. While co-residence continues to be the dominant relationships between parents and adult children, there is a new tendency to live apart, but close by and keeping frequent contacts between generations. Among 15 interviewed families, at least one generation of 11 families have a desire to live apart but close.

Below we introduce the social and historical context of Chinese intergenerational residence, which may help people understand those interviewees' words on the whole, then fall into three parts to illustrate our findings.

The social and historical context of Chinese intergenerational residence

The Confucian tradition of filial piety (*xiao*) provides the basis to culturally define the intergenerational relationships. It has been widely held as a prominent value in China and many other Asian cultures. According to the literal meaning, filial refers to pertaining to or befitting a son or daughter, and piety implies devotion to duty and devoutness (Ng *et al.*, 2002). *Xiao* is a Confucian concept which entails a range of expected behaviors of children to their parents, including respect, obedience, loyalty, material provision, and physical care

(Lam, 2006). Anyhow, filial piety emphasizes more on parents' need than children's need. Co-residence with adult children may be more convenient for the elderly parents to receive daily care. For thousands of years, the living arrangement for almost each Chinese family has been the multigenerational household (e.g. Ng *et al.*, 2002).

Traditional Chinese society is characterized as a kind of self-sufficient economy and patriarchal system. As heads of households, older parents own or control the productive resources on which the younger people depend. They have broader social connections with kinship supports. They are highly influential because most Chinese villages are relatively small, stable and isolated communities. They are seen as a link to the ancestors of the family, and after they die, they are believed to join these ancestors to be worshipped (Ikels, 1983). Practical economic considerations, supernatural sanctions and community pressure reinforce filial piety institutionally and structurally. It becomes a social norm instead of the true human demand.

Now industrialization and modernization are undermining this unique structure. Socialized productivity makes it possible for younger generations economically and financially independent. As for western experience, extended families will be replaced by independent, small families, who are more mobile and urban. Generations in the extended families will live in different cities, usually far away, and never co-reside together (Sheng and Settles, 2006). Inevitably, China is affected by this tendency during globalization. Will USA and Europe today be China tomorrow? Or else? The following interview data may tell.

Live apart as a result of equalization between generations in socio-political power

There are some conflicts inevitably when old parents and adult child reside together. Like one interviewee says, it is hard for bowl and dish to avoid collision. Those intergenerational conflicts include consumption views (old parents emphasize thrift and saving, but young couples spend a lot of money on buying famous brands), grandchildren education (old parents pay more attention to traditional values, but young couples use more western values), work and rest schedule (old parents rest and get up early, but young couples do both late), food (old parents prefer to the mild taste, but young couples seek strong taste), etc. Even some trivialities, like watching TV in living room or the closestool design in toilet room, may cause the tension or uneasiness between generations. If following the traditional way, young couples should obey their old parents absolutely and unconditionally. But socio-political power has shifted from the originally unequal pattern to a more equal distribution between old and young generations.

Old parents no longer take children's obedience for granted:

> We cannot blame young couples now. They have their own way of living. Sometimes you just keep silent if they go contrary to your wishes. The whole society is transforming . . . , hey! (sigh).

> Old parents nowadays are more open-minded. They won't importune co-residence with their adult children. They (children) have their own world, and we also have our own world. If co-residing importunately, no one will feel happy.

> Sometimes conflicts arise. It is natural that we have different views (from their children). I will express my opinion, but most of time I will not stick it out. If they are willing to accept, that is fine. If not, just ignore it (laugh).

To tell the truth, I am unaccustomed to live in urban city, which is very different from rural life. I am a cradle-to-grave peasant. I would rather go to the latrine at market place, than use the closet at home. I am used to the closestool designed for squatting down, but not sitting on. But I don't want to request my son to change it.

We do not find any words from old parents to their children that are authoritative and imperative. Two adult daughters in one family change their jobs from state-owned companies to transnational companies. In China, it means that you gives up the "iron bowl" (a good and stable job) and choose a highly risky and unstable one. Even their old parents worry about their children' futures and tries to persuade them not to resign in a family meeting, but daughters insist on. Finally, the old parents have no choices but let matters slide.

In China, "piety but not obedience" (*xiao er bu shun*), which means that adult children still show high respect to their parents, but whether or not obey their words will depend, is possibly the best description for current adult children's attitudes and behaviors to their parents. In our interview, one adult child knows that old parents do not like him to buy those famous brands. They will buy them but tell old parents a much cheaper price (white lie) or even not tell them anything about it.

Even if both generations are all cautious, it does not mean that conflicts will not occur. Most Chinese families tend to eliminate attritions by mutual communications. Adult children know these conflicts cannott be solved all through compromises if co-residing with old parents for a long time. Unsurprisingly, they express the desire of living apart. But interestingly, they express it indirectly and attribute to their parents' willing or the objective reasons (e.g. the house is too small to accommodate):

> If two generations live together for a long time, it is very easy to bring contradictions . . . We need more tolerance and consideration . . . The new house is too small to accommodate two generations.

> That is a good idea (living apart). But it depends on my parents. If they say yes, then we can do it. If they say no, it is needless to think any more.

> Why should we live apart? The first reason is that the new house is too small, and the second, there are always conflicts between mother and daughter-in-law in all ages, especially after a baby is born . . . , my parents have said that they don't want to live together with me.

We find that the request of living apart is often brought forward directly by old parents in our interview:

> I don't want to live with them (adult children), because definitely there will be conflicts in the future . . .

> I really want to live alone with independent space, because I guess my son and daughter-in-law consider me as an intruder of their life, and also my son is afraid that they interfere with me.

Based on our discussion, we speculate that if adult children say it directly, it will leave the interviewer a negative impression that they plan to "abandon" their old parents in Chinese cultural contexts. From the words of intermediated acquaintances, we also find that even if adult children want to live apart, most of them will try not to put forward the idea first or express it indirectly to their parents. Usually, old parents find adult children work so hard in transition to modernization that they even have no time to take care of themselves. They do not want to bring trouble to their children, and would rather to live apart if there are any intergenerational conflicts. Some old parents, with economic security and good health, even begin to enjoy living apart (Sheng, 1991). One old woman indulges in breathing exercise

(*qi gong*) for health, and she says if living with young couples, her exercise schedule has to be reduced or canceled. An old man cites one message from a local newspaper, which tells a story that an old couple would rather live in the carport than live with their adult child in the large house. "It is not because they cannot live well together, but they are used to easy life," He says, "if there is a similar option, I would prefer to live in the carport too." It seems that not only adult children gain the socio-political power in living apart, but also some old parents achieve their freedom and serenity.

Live close as a way for traditional value adapting to new environments

Even Chinese society has changed greatly in recent decades, the traditional value of interdependence both between parents and adult children and among the masses as a whole has never been attacked (Sheng and Settles, 2006; Zhan, 2004). Among all 15 interviewed families, old parents are taking care of grandchildren more or less or wish to do so if their grandchildren are born. In fact, rather than considering grandparenting as an extra burden of daily life, most Chinese grandparents are more likely to think of it as a way to "enjoy family happiness" (*tian lun zhi le*) (Sheng, 1991; Silverstein *et al.*, 2006; Sheng and Settles, 2006):

> We have to reduce our time of exercising breathing. But…taking care of grandchildren, is bittersweet. It is hard, but also brings happiness to us (laugh).

> I will try my best to look after grandchildren. They (adult child) have their own job, and are too busy to take care of kids all day long. My help will relieve their burden.

Of course, some old parents may not "enjoy such kind of family happiness", and they do not want to do more for their offspring. One interviewee tells that his neighbor does not want to take care of grandchildren and feels vexed. She has to do it because the adult couple work hard and have no time to take care of their kids. But it may be an individual case since we do not find any literature supporting that it will be a tendency in China. Reversely, many studies show that old parents staying with their grandchildren is beneficial, and will improve their psychological well-being (Sheng, 2006; Silverstein *et al.*, 2006). Even some old parents want to free from doing housework for their adult child, they really enjoy the role of babysitter. Both the tradition of bringing up descendants and one-child policy drive the old parents to continue to devote to the only grandchild.

There is also a great demand of caring for children from adult offspring because of their hard work:

> When we foster child, we feel back-breaking and need the help of old parents. In the same way, if my child comes to my age, she will also need the help of me… whoever you employs, is definitely no better than your parents. You can trust your parents without any reservations.

Parents here are considered as "insiders" (*zi ji ren*), and those professional or non-professional nurses are considered as "outsiders" (*wai ren*). Confucian "kin" (*qing qing*) principle, especially the linear kindred, still works well in modern China. This principle are often taken for granted by the interviewees and embedded impliedly in conversational contexts:

> At the beginning we couple lived together. Later I was pregnant, my parents came here to take care of me. They worried that I could not care myself well because of work.

Many old parents will further help their adult children do housework, including buying food, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, etc. The older generation tends to be considered by their children as important resources for daily help (Sheng, 1991; Hu and Ye, 1991). Sheng (1991) argues that help from parents will strengthen intergenerational relationships through improving mutual communication and understanding, enhancing closer emotional ties, and increasing the opportunities of interdependence between the generations. All these contribute to a Confucian idea of home (*jia*):

> I feel the days past blandly. All in all, mother helps me a lot here, which set my heart at rest during work. When my mom stays here, each time I open the door after work, I can feel the home filled with sweet atmosphere (*ren qi*). Mother have already cooked the rice and soup, so I just need to fry some dishes. Then all members have a dinner in one table, which is the sense of home, warm and happy. Sometimes my mom stayed out for a period of time, I opened the house door, and touched the cover of pans. It is cold, like my heart, deserted and cheerless.

As the parent-child relationships are more egalitarian, intergenerational reciprocity remains functional in Chinese families. When the old parents fall ill and need intensive care or lose the ability to take care of themselves, it is often assumed that their adult children will commit the duty. Ng *et al.* (2002) explain it with social exchange theory. One interviewee tells us one time her mother fell ill badly, she had to run round between the work place and the hospital. Those are hard days and she feels very tired. "If you enjoy the taste of salted fish (a favorite food of Cantonese), you should also bear the sense of thirsty," one interviewee uses a dialectal idiom to illustrate the reciprocity between generations. "The proper care is given when he is in need. That is ok. He gets what he wants. When he is sick, you should come. Giving money is useless at that time, because an old sick man won't go shopping." Another interviewee says.

The modern conception of filial piety shares some important attributes with classical filial piety in both emphasizing respect and provision of proper care to older parents. Accordingly, cultural value and public voice still encourage adult children to perform the duty. If not, old parents will be considered pitiful and miserable:

> One of my schoolmates grows a girl. Her daughter immigrated to USA after graduation and settled down there. But her parents were not accustomed to life there and went back to China. Now her mother lives alone in Guangzhou. She is more than 70 years old and no one take care of her. What a pity! An old woman lives lonely in an apartment. Last year she told me that if she was incapable the only and last way is to send her to the rest home…

Chinese hope to live apart for more independence and self-determination, but they also aspire after the goodness of interdependence and reciprocity. When older persons need assistance or support, those who live with their relatives, or close by, have been found to be by far the most likely to receive family help (Joseph, 1998). Indeed, geographical proximity clearly affects the provision and receipt of informal support. In this instance, it is no wonder that more and more Chinese families would like to choose "live close by but not necessarily together" (Hu and Ye, 1991; Whyte, 2004).

A commonly held ideal in China for the distance between parents and children is metaphorically referred to as a "distance that keeps soup warm." That will be a few blocks away where they can easily deliver food without getting soap cold. The soup will be too "hot" if the two generations live together, but too "cold" if they live far apart:

> My son has asked me: Mother, if we make enough money aftertime, do you like us to purchase a big house and live together? I say no because I think sooner or later conflicts will come. It is better to see them often than co-reside with them…I feel the best solution is that I purchase a second-handed

house close to their new house. I live in the second-handed house. There is a soup distance between his and my house, which facilitates mutual reliance.

"Distance makes heart fonder." Another interviewee says. Logan *et al.* (1998)'s study in *Shanghai* and *Tianjin* has already found that among non-co-resident families, 9 percent live in the same neighborhood (three minutes' walk away), and 48 percent live within the same district (20 minutes' walk away). At the same time, about 25 percent of parents have at least daily contact with their children, most parents (80 percent) see their children at least every week. As Unger argues, Chinese 'parents who live apart from their married children still tend to maintain very close mutual contact, more than would be the norm in most Western societies' (Sheng and Settles, 2006). In our sample, if old parents have two or more adult children, they will prefer to live with each in a period of time. They emphasize the balance among children. Each adult child will reciprocate with old parents, and before the intergenerational relation become too hot, they will move to another child's home, and move in cycles that relations are always kept in an appropriate temperature. It is a time concept of "distance".

The causes behind living together

In our interview data, we also find some still prefer to co-reside together in the future. There are several factors that facilitate the co-residence preference.

The first is economic condition. Poor family income provides the elderly with opportunities to contribute to household income while at the same time making it impossible for them to go alone. This factor is also often used to explain the high level of co-residence in rural China (Ikels, 1983; Sheng and Settles, 2006). In four families that both generations prefer to live together, half are of low income. The retirement pension of old parents in poor families is an important source of total family income.

The second is health status of old parents. If the old parent becomes a widow/widower, or gets older, adult child will co-reside with them again. In one family, even the old father has his own apartment after old mother passed away, the son will not let him alone in that "old man is afraid of loneliness" and "it is much easier and faster to provide help if the old father fall in an emergency by any possibility".

The third is native place of old parents. During urbanization and industrialization, more and more young people immigrate from place to place. If old parents come from other areas, especially those far away or rural, adult child will prefer to co-reside together because their parents are strangers in the new city and do not have existing relations (*guan xi*) with other citizens except their child. It is also unnatural and emotionless for adult child to assign their parents to an independent but close house considering they come to a strange world mostly to help you. Hence, it is easier for native families to adopt the live-apart-but-close plan since their parents have established relations with other citizens beside their child and even without the help of their child they have their own social activities.

The fourth, possibly not the final, is intergenerational relations, which always work together, but not solely, with at least one of the above factors. The good intergenerational relations act as an additionally subjective drive for them to co-reside together, compared to the first three external factors.

Discussion

For China, Modernization isn't Westernization. Westernization includes a full copy of western value system going with the fading of local cultures. The new residence tendency indicates that the basic value to define personhood and human relations stands well in the waves of globalization. In China, if an adult child does not care for old parents, he/she will not be called a "human". Compared to the traditional practices of filial piety, high respects, emotional ties and economic care still exist. For example, one interviewed adult child often instructs her daughter to respect grandmother. Even if the grandmother often repeats her old story, the granddaughter will listen to her patiently. It is a polite way to eldership in China. On holidays like spring festival or mother's day, the adult child and granddaughter will give the grandmother red envelopes (*hongbao*, the money inside) to acknowledge her daily help. The emotional tie is enhanced by parents' help, which also make proper care of parents in an appropriate time more fair and reasonable. As a way for traditional value to adapt itself to global environments, Chinese families maintain interdependence and obligation through mostly symbolic occasions, when there is not a specific need for care.

Even if some interviewees still prefer the traditional co-residence way of living, it does not mean that they are not affected by global culture to a certainty. For the health status of old parents, Lam (2006) already finds the pattern of living arrangement seems to be periodic in China. When adult children marry, they will move out. Later, widow-hood, illness, or poverty may lead to a resumption of co-residence. Cultural value and public voice encourage adult children to perform the duty when old parents really need. For the native place of old parents, co-residence is also periodic. Old parents often go back to their hometown, and stay in their old house for a period and visit old friends. For intergenerational relation, it only works as a potential accessory to the above three factors according to our interview data. Among these four factors, the bad health requires more physical care, and leaving hometown needs more emotional support, especially from their own child, based on Confucian kin principle. Both occasions are specific needs for the function of traditional morality. It seems that the performance of *xiao* turns from the compulsion rule based on traditional social norm (adult child should provide it even if old parents do not really need) to the spontaneous rule based on human demand (adult child provide it if old parents really need).

From the eyes of Western cultures, independence/interdependence tends to be considered as a bipolar dimension. But interestingly, Chinese don't look them in a contradictory way. Our interview data show that during modernization Chinese adult children gain the economic independence and then seek more socio-political power in extended families. Some old parents may regret the loss of power, but they know it is good for the whole family in the new era. For example, one interviewed parent often buys cheap clothes for her son and considers it "thrift" (a traditional value). She is against her daughter-in-law's buying expensive clothes for her son because it is wasteful from her traditional way of thinking. But she knows decent clothes do work in social setting and facilitates her son to develop personal relations and make more money. So she decides to turn blind eyes to it. As a result of equalization

between generations in socio-political power, both generations live apart to avoid frictions and strive for competence of the whole family (*da jia*). As if by magic, living apart as a product of globalization is also an outcome of collectivistic thinking.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper explores the way in which Chinese consumers integrate both global culture and local culture through the change of intergenerational residence in Urban China. We find that Chinese consumers tend to maintain their traditional moral values and assimilate socio-political values from global culture. More importantly, the assimilation of socio-political values rooted in Western individualistic cultures is for the purpose of local collective goodness, and the performance of traditional moral values is shifting from the compulsory rule based on traditional social norms to the spontaneous rule based on human demand.

Chinese ways of dealing with seeming contradiction in a dialectical approach, which retains basic (often positive) elements of opposing perspectives by seeking a middle way, may help us to understand it. Chinese principle holds that reality is a process. Everything is not static but dynamic and constantly changing. Because change is constant, any seemingly contradictions, like old and new, good and bad, strong and weak, can coexist in everything. They are two kinds of "intangible energy" (*qi*, not tangible identity), which are actually non-contradictory from the process view (Peng and Nisbett, 1999).

Even if we gain some insights from the study of intergenerational residence in Urban China, there are still some limits in this study, all of which have implications for future research. First, our findings are only based on few interviewed families, all located in south China. Those families with poor intergenerational relations may not like to accept our interviews. Future studies should interview more families in other parts of China and those families that old parents and adult child live far apart should also be included. Second, this study focuses on intergenerational residence and housing consumption. It is worthwhile to test our findings in other consumption contexts and improve its generalizability. Finally, our emphasis on Chinese way of glocalization does not allow us to assess other ways of glocalization. It will be interesting to study the integration way of other local cultures.

Managerial implications

Understanding the way in which Chinese consumers integrate global culture and local culture is very important for global marketers. It may be not a smart way to introduce rest home model in Western societies into China. *FangYuan*, a Chinese house agent, provides a new model of elder caring, which combine globalization with localization into "glocalization." They build rest home in the community and provide semi-elder caring services, which reinforce intergenerational interdependence, also release adult child from physical care and afford professional services when there is a specific need (Huang, 2007). Advertising in China also works more efficiently if advertisers have a more accurate understanding about Chinese "glocalization". Tide insists on its globally rational appeals in China. In 1990s, its market share in detergent market had reached 23 percent. After 2002, one

Chinese domestic brand, *Diaopai*, won 34 percent of this market via its locally moral appeal (filial piety) and low price strategy, according to P&G China (He, 2006). Market share of Tide shrank sharply to 3 percent at that time. *Diaopai*'s advertisement tells a story of a woman losing her job and how her young daughter helps her mother to wash clothes with *Diaopai* when her mother looks for a new job. Her last word "Mom, I can help you do some housework now" deeply touches the heart of Chinese consumers at that time. Some scholars may jump into a conclusion that Chinese are more emotional than Western consumers. But it cannot explain why Tide makes big success with the same rational appeal before the emergence of *Diaopai*. Chinese consumers are affected by both global appeal (comparative ads of Tide, related to competence of products) and local appeal (filial piety, related to traditional morality). But when does local appeal work better? In 2002, many workers in state-owned companies lost their jobs and lived a difficult life. The spontaneous rule based on human demand indicates that something was in dire need to help them pass the hardship, not only materially, but also mentally.

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About the authors

Shengdong Lin is Associate Professor of Advertising at Xiamen University, and was previously Assistant Professor of Marketing at Sun Yat-Sen University. His research interests are cross-cultural consumer behavior and brand extension.

Xue Ke is Assistant Professor of Marketing at Sun Yat-Sen University. He received his PhD from Psychology Department of Hong Kong University. Xue Ke is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: kexue9@hotmail.com