



COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PAKISTANI PUNJABI AND CHINESE HAN ETHNIC WEDDING PRACTICES

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Abstract

The Asian high-context marriage is not actually a private deal, but an embedded cultural institution that fortifies a social hierarchy, blood line, and identity. Despite the different religious and language differences, a comparative ethnographic study of wedding rituals of two different ethnic groups of Pakistan (Pakistani Punjabi Muslim and Chinese Han) has been presented and the structural homologies have been discussed in this research paper. The paper applies a comparative, qualitative approach in analyzing three specific ritualistic stages, use of the professional intermediary (Vichola vs. Meiren), practice of rites of obstruction (Joota Chupai vs. Chuangmen/ Door Games) and performative grieving of the bridal departure (Rukhsati vs. Kujia/ Chuge). It has been found that through these rituals the two cultures deal with the sociopsychological anxieties of transition. The middle man is a necessary intermediary, to preserve the 'family honor' (izzat/mianzi); the bargaining games are legally sanctioned negotiations of the value of the bride, and a test of the patience of the groom; the ritualized weeping is a verification of the 'filial piety' of the bride, also a rite of final transition to patrilocality. Furthermore, the paper's authors refer to the symbolic beauty of red and gold, a symbol of life and wealth in both cultures. Lastly, this paper will argue that the wedding rituals of Pakistani and Chinese people, though seemingly distinct on the surface, have the same syntax of collectivism, which prioritizes the collective of the family over the individual's agency. The study augments the body of knowledge of the cross-cultural sociology in a context of the so called 'Iron Brotherhood' of Pakistan and China which extends beyond geopolitical to anthropological dimensions that keeps these two ancient civilisations together.

Keywords: *Cultural Homology, Door Games, Ethnography, Joota Chupai, Obstruction, Patrilocality, Vichola.*

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1. Introduction

Marriage is the classical total social fact of the anthropological analysis of human kinship, which is a complex phenomenon, involving legal, economic, religious, aesthetic and morphological dimensions. The institution of marriage is universal to all people, but the scripts and performances of marriage vary according to different civilizations, as determined by religious rules, historical development and geography. Punjabis are the major proxy ethnic group for South Asia in Pakistan, while Chinese Han is the major proxy ethnic group for East Asia. Though these civilizations are all interrelated through the geopolitical projects of their times such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), their spiritual and ideological thrusts seem entirely dissimilar at first sight. The Punjabi tradition is embedded in Islamic law and *Zat*, the southern Asian kinship system (also known as *Biraderi*), while the Han tradition is shaped by Confucian values and Taoist cosmology, and the pressures of secular modernity. Though these differences exist, the two cultures are both fundamentally high-context, collectivist, and patrilocal, in that marriage is a strategic alliance among the clans and extended family, rather than a union of two people.

The current literature on kinship systems in Pakistan and China has tended to treat the two countries' kinship systems separately rather than making in-depth comparisons between them, with the exception of a few works that focus on geopolitical "Iron Brotherhood" narratives. This research aims to fill this gap and adopts a comparative ethnographic approach to analyze the cultural responses to the sociopsychological fears associated with patrilocal transition in each of these cultures, with an eye to finding patterns across the cultures' ritual stages. Asian marriage reinforces the social hierarchy, bloodlines and identity. The structural homologies are what remain the same, despite the differences in religion and language, and can be seen through the lens of comparative ethnography. Indeed, these cultures tend to deal with the anxieties that lie within the passage of a female subject between lineages, in very codified, ritualistic stages. The middle man serves as an obligatory buffer between the family in order to preserve the family honour (*Izzat* in Pakistan, *Mianzi* in China). This intermediary works as a prophylactic, in that if a proposal is rejected outright, a social trauma will not occur if it has been mediated by this intermediary. With "Face" as the currency of power in society, families establish a "buffer" zone for the first test of compatibility to be withdrawn without the public avowal of failure. The *Vichla* in Punjab acts as a genealogical gatekeeper, working out the exact match of the caste and clan lines for the proper endogamic match and the Han *Meiren* ensures that the union follows the *men dang hu dui* or "matching of gates and doors".

In the Punjabi socio-cultural framework, the individual person is considered to be an extension of the clan and the wedding is an important occasion when the *Izzat* of the clan is presented, challenged and solidified. The Punjabi wedding is a mixture of religious Islamic ritual of *Nikah* which is a formal, logocentric contract where a man asks for a woman's hand in marriage and she accepts, and pre-Islamic ceremonies like *Mayun*, *Mehndi* and *Baraat*. On the other hand, the Han marriage follows the rules of *Xiao* (filial piety) and *He* (harmony),

which are Confucian values. The Bazi (Eight Characters), or a person's character, is paramount to a harmonious and continuous union after the couple is married. In the Han tradition, the most important act of performance is the Tea Ceremony, which is a corporeal manifestation of social hierarchy and reverence for one's ancestors in which the couple exhibits submission to one another. Spatial performance in these rituals can be analyzed using the 3 stages of Separation, Transition and Incorporation. Rituals of separation include the Mayun in Punjab or Hair Combing Ceremony in China, during which the person is physically set apart to lose his or her past identity. Symbolically, to protect the couple from some spiritual dangers, transition is seen during the processional phases, including the Baraat and the Ying Qin. Lastly, Incorporation takes place through ceremonies such as the Walima or Huimen that brings the couple back together with society in their new state.

Marriage is a transfer of symbolic and material capital. The Jahez (dowry) in Punjab and the Caili (bride price) in China illustrates how traditional values interact with contemporary market mechanisms to shape power dynamics in the union. The inherent trauma of patrilocalities is highlighted by the Rukhsati and the Kuge (crying marriage) which are processes of bargaining agency in systems that perceive women as 'moving' things, negotiating between static male lineages. These are the institutionalized modes of departure, laments that are organized and are a demonstration of filial piety. These traditions have survived the rapid modernization in Pakistan through the influence of the media and rapid urbanization of China; this suggests their fundamentality. These defensive architectures are meant to control the intense fears and anxieties associated with transferring wealth, fertility and honor across clan lines. The Punjabi marriage is a chain of solidarity (Biraderi) and the Han marriage is a chain of continuity (Kaana).

The methodology of the present research is based on triangulated anthropology, anthropological drawing, as developed by Arnold van Gennep (1909), Marcel Mauss (1925) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977) in order to offer a "thick description" of these practices. This study combines the traditional findings of Zekiya Eglar (1960) with the recent sociological observations about China's Caili crunch (Chen & Pan 2023) to go beyond surface-level aesthetics and discover a common "grammar of Asian alliance". The principles have not been weakened, but rather reinforced by modernity in today's day and age. The technology has given them new "stages" to enact their rituals – a lavish motorcade is one, while a video drone has helped capture the grandeur of the Baraat and stream it online for everyone to see. This "Digital Izzat" or "Online Mianzi" enables families to project symbolic capital to the world. In one documentary, a certain ritual (Joota Chupai or hiding of shoes) was broken and re-performed several times for the camera to make sure that the "ransom" is captured from a camera angle that is conducive to viralization and thus, imparted a new, choreographed dimension to an otherwise spontaneous family negotiation. It is a reminder of the "digital gaze" as a second 'Reviewer' of family honour and a necessity to reconcile ancient rites with the requirements of the digital economy.

The main aim of this research is to contest the concept of isolationist kinship between the Pakistani Punjabis and Chinese Han, and demonstrate that the wedding ceremonies of these two groups have a common socio-cultural core. This study suggests that both cultures rely on ritual to legitimate transfers of female fertility and wealth and to buffer the structural hazards to the patrilineage through the "Vetting Architecture" of intermediaries, "Apotropaic Sensory Warfare" of noise and color, and "Institutionalized Lamentation" of departure. Islamic logocentrism vs. Confucian somaticism are finally differences in function, with the same collective goal, the survival and prestige of the family unit.

2. Literature Review

The anthropological study has long been used to place marriage at the heart of the political structure of traditional societies, beyond any consideration of consensual household. In the particular context of Asian civilizations, the marital rite serves as a complex system of social capital transfer, an acquisition of lineage and a performative enactment of gender roles in the Islamic South Asian world and in the Confucian East Asian world. Kinship systems in Pakistan and China are often portrayed as unique systems without providing comparison in the literature, which creates a huge lacuna. This review explores that gap by bringing together the literature on Punjabi and Han marriage, and using the theoretical lens of the Ritual Process, Exchange Theory and Patrilocality, it seeks to highlight the underlying structural homologies.

An in-depth discussion of these spectacles must be rooted in a grasp of the anthropology of ritual and especially the tripartite model proposed by Arnold van Gennep: separation, transition (liminality), incorporation. These transitions will be understood with the help of Victor Turner's conceptualization of liminality: "betwixt and between," a place in which norms are temporarily or completely nullified and the subject becomes ritually vulnerable. In Sinological studies, this model is used for the Ying Qin process, where the bridal sedan chair or the modern limousine is seen as a space in transit that enables the movement of the bride from her native home to the husband's control. This ritual analysis is complemented by Exchange Theory as proposed by Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss, which states that giving of gifts, by nature, creates social debt. This is very important for understanding the Chinese "hongbao" (red envelopes) and the Punjabi system of "reciprocity" in which gifts are not simply tokens of good will, but rather a means of "clearing" the social debts. Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach to marriage as a "trade in women" brings to the fore the patriarchal heart of both societies, which is further developed by Pierre Bourdieu's "symbolic capital". In modern weddings in Asia, it is thus a sensible pursuit of prestige which is described as Izzat in Punjab and Mianzi in China.

Izzat (honour) and Biraderi (kinship) are the predominant concepts in the ethnography of the Pakistani Punjabi village. As Zekiya Eglar writes, Vartan Bhanji is "a complex system of mutual exchange" that constitutes the foundation of social life and in which the central place of weddings is responsible for managing these social debts. Nowadays, these obligations are being extended and strengthened through the commercialization of weddings, where they

become a competitive display of wealth for status attainment in the Biraderi. Moreover, there is conflict between the legalistic Islamic contract, the Nikah and the traditional folk practices such as Mehndi and Baraat, which continue to be carried out in spite of the efforts of the reformist circles to strip away pre-Islamic elements from the practice. Feminist anthropologists describe the ethnography of the Rukhsati (the bride's departure) as a "codification of trauma". Other women, such as Katy Gardner, have discussed why the social imperative for the bride to cry is there; otherwise, a bride who does not cry is considered to be too shameless. This ritual helps the woman to break away from her father's family, so she can join her husband's family. This is further reinforced by Punjabi wedding songs such as Tappe, which portray the groom as the "robber" and the father as a person who is subservient to the need of patriarchy. The Han Chinese tradition, on the contrary, focuses on Confucian submission and harmony with nature and marriage elevates the ancestors above the marriage partners. In the context of the Tea Ceremony, the act of performing the ritual of submission is an act of speech, and the same time in which the people are kneeling is when they are bowing, and this kneeling and bowing act is an indication of the desire to please ancestors. The rediscovery of Caili as a bride price has also been noted recently in the literature. In the modern Han context, Caili is increasing because of gender gap due to the "missing women" phenomenon, while the Punjabi context bride's family is generally the one to pay the dowry (Jahez) to the bride. The contemporary Han bride is a tool for wealth transfer among the generations, and bargains for property such as apartments, which in turn serves as a way to unsettle the usual power balance, as Yan Yunxiang says.

Much of what these literatures share is structural homology, particularly in the "logic of obstruction". Both Punjabi Joota Chupai (shoe hiding) and Chinese Chuangmen (door games) are ritualized extortion by the bride's relatives. The anthropological function of such rituals is to "humanize" the groom as an "intruder" and to make him share the family by using jocularly to reduce the tension in the face of exogamy. The two are also linked by universal connotations of color: red is fire, joy and protection in the culture of Han, whereas blood is fertility and womanhood of a Suhaagan (married woman) in the culture of Punjab. In both societies the bride is therefore viewed as a very important means of reproduction. Lastly, the literature comes together in the "tragedy of patrilocality" in which the rituals are intended to sever the woman's natal connection. The Chinese idea of the "uterine family" is similar to the South Asian idea of Paraya Dhan (wealth of others), where the woman is outside her husband's house until she earns the right to power by her sons. This displacement is frequently dominated by music and noise and even by religious symbols. Although this is a wealth of individual data, there is no synoptic perspective. This study seeks to address that void by establishing an "alternative grammar of Asian alliance" where the theological disparity is overcome by their common sociological need to make female fertility "legitimate" and for them to participate in ritual performances, which is both highly similar in the two cultures and significantly different.

3. Methodology

In terms of methodology, it has been grounded in the interpretivism paradigm that emphasizes the subjective meaning that people give to social actions as opposed to statistical quantification. This approach enables an analysis of the symbolic messages given by the participants on a deeper level than can be achieved by mere observation. The methodology is based on the idea of "thick description" by Clifford Geertz in which the rules of culture are described that make up the meaning of a behavior. For example, bridal weeping is examined not only in terms of grief, but as a performative action of filial piety and patrilocal transition. It is a secondary ethnographic synthesis that builds upon the scholarship of Zekiya Eglar, Rubie Watson and others as well as a digital ethnography of 20 full-length wedding documentaries.

Data analysis is carried out in three stages, namely open coding for labeling the ritual actions, axial coding for the classification of actions in the theoretical frame of reference (Van Gennep's Rites of Passage), and a comparative synthesis in a matrix that will facilitate the determination of the similarity of the structure of the action. This example illustrates that forms differ as the "extortion" of a groom's shoes in Punjab and the blocking of a doorway in China, but that their social function of relieving the tension of a groom's "invasion" is the same. The researcher strives for cultural relativism and reflexivity that prevents exoticization and westernization of practices such as Jahez and Caili.

4. Theoretical Framework

This investigation builds on descriptive ethnography via the operation of a triangulated web of concepts which are conceived of as a "Total Social Fact". In this paradigm, weddings are seen as concurrent, complex processes of legal, economic and aesthetic change. Taking into account Ritual Process Theory, Exchange Theory, and Structuralist Feminism, the study uncovers the homologies underlying the diverse theological layers of these two societies. The temporal structure of the ceremony is the conventional one adopted by Arnold van Gennep, who divided it into three phases. The first stage, pre-liminal Separation, is experienced when the child's role is "socially dead" and physical isolation takes place in the case of the Punjabi Mayun, the bride is physically separated and oiled; in the case of Han Shang Tou, the Hair Combing Ceremony, the separation of the natal ties becomes somatic. These acts are ritualized actions that help to prepare the person for a new lineage.

The third stage is the liminal, or "betwixt and between" phase when the bride is open to the spirit. Incorporation rituals such as Walima and Huimen mark this phase, and the consumption of food among the community merges the couple into the patriline. Economic negotiations are understood in the context of Marcel Mauss' concept that there is no such thing as a free gift. Punjabi Vartan Bhanji and Chinese Hongbao are advanced forms of reciprocity; a way of settling social debts rather than a gesture of generosity. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of Symbolic Capital offers the justification for the extravagant spending; in the presence of public Jahez or Caili, it is a rational investment in Izzat (Honor) or Mianzi (Face). These rituals are a way of converting material resources into social power. Lastly, a structuralist feminist approach is used to analyse gender relations, with the emphasis on the bride as the centre of a "traffic of

women" in which reproductive power is handed over from father to husband. The rituals of obstruction (Joota Chupai and Han Door Games) are restagings of ritualized resistances: performative breaks in the patriarchal exchange that were short-lived and rectified through the payment offered by the groom. The trauma of displacement is formalised in the Rukhsati and Kujia with the ritual of obligatory weeping embodying filial piety and submission to the collective over the individual.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The concept of the marriage in the conceptual scheme of Pakistani Punjabi society as well as of Chinese Han society is based on the notion that marriage is not an individual contract but a "Total Social Fact" (Marcel Mauss). The first ritual ceremonies are not a signal for the start of matrimonial preparations; they are rather a complex formation negotiation, with a high degree of socialistic and economic involvement. In the pre-liminal stage there is what can be called a 'vetting architecture' in the sense of structural barriers and filters that act to reduce social risk and at the same time increase symbolic capital. The intermediary Vichla or Vichlan (in Punjabi) and Meiren (in Han) is a surprising structural similarity in these high-context cultures. This intermediary is a safeguard; if in a society where 'Face' (Izzat in Pakistan or Mianzi in China) is the token of power, the direct rejection of a proposal could be an irreparable social calamity. According to Erving Goffman's theory of "Face-work" such social assets are delicate and must be maintained constantly. Families use a third party as a 'buffer zone' that the first check on compatibility can be rescinded without openly admitting the marriage is a failure, thus maintaining the family's honor even if their marriage is rejected.

The Vichla of Punjab is a genealogical gatekeeper, which Zekiya Eglar has carefully documented. The Vichla find not only a match, but they determine an exact match of the borders of Zat (caste) and Biraderi (clan) to ensure a legitimate endogamic marriage. A way of social protection. Hamza Alavi thinks that the Biraderi is the basic building block for rural power in Punjab, a corporate group of landlords and political mobilization. By cosmological validation this inoculation against the stigma of potential failure is achieved. Han Application of Bazi (Eight Characters) is a deterministic photo of the couple that is developed in relation to the year, month, day and hour of their birth. These calculations are fatalistic, argues Maurice Freedman, and they situate the human dyad in a larger, uncontrollable cosmological structure. If the elements Fire, Water, Wood, Metal and Earth are not considered to be compatible, the match is not played. This is not considered human failing, but rather a "decree of Heaven". This structural "exit strategy" is reflected in the practice of Istikhara (Punjabi) which is a prayer for God's guidance. Theologically different, the Han were adherents of Taoist/Confucian philosophy and the Punjabi of Islamic revelation, but their sociological role was the same. As Pnina Werbner points out, such rituals sanctify the "danger" of exchanging women, and make a perilous human act a divinely ordained act. The "intent" is firmed by human vetting and divine approval which are indicated by the symbol of fertility such as dried dates and lotus

seed, with the purpose of wishing for sons to be born, expressed through phonetic puns, by the time it comes to the Roka or Guo Da Li.

The first step into the "Liminality" starts once this period has ended and the wedding day has arrived. Victor Turner refers to this as a "betwixt and between" stage, in which one is "deprived of his old status, but not yet given the new one. This state is seen as "spiritually porous" and susceptible to the negative energies. As a result, both cultures use "Apotropaic Sensory Warfare" in order to shield the couple. In Punjab, the Baraat is a sound event while in China the Ying Qin is such an event. Both serve as markers of territory. Chinese firecrackers (Baozhu) are used to frighten Nian and the thunderous Dhol expels Jinn. There is a deeper anthropological meaning to this "acoustic violence" beyond the supernatural, to the extent that it marks the advent of the groom into the bride's heaven. Claude Lèvi-Strauss said that marriage is an exchange where the most valuable "gift" is the woman in between the groups. The sound created by the procession is the groom's "sonic flag," alerting the people that he has come as a conqueror that will take the bride's reproductive ability. In response to this intrusion, this "Ritual of Obstruction" is enacted, which helps to underscore the bride's worth. Joota chupai (hiding of the shoes) and Chinese chuangmen (door games) are "Joking Relationships" in the sense of the Radcliffe-Brown. These games can be used to vent frustration between the givers of wives and the takers of wives. When the groom is obliged to pay the bride's family money, whether it be Nek or Hongbao, the bride's family claim the last bit of power before the groom is swallowed up. Emily Ahern says these obstacles are more than just games, they're a public test of the bride's value. The greater the struggle or cost the groom has to endure or incur, the greater the "price" and value of the woman being transferred, so that she is not perceived as an unwanted burden which is being "offloaded".

It is seen that the actual legitimation of the union shows a gap between "Logocentrism" and "Somatic Ritual". Punjabi Nikah is a ceremony of the "Word". It is based on a legal contract (Nikah Nama) and Ijab-o-Qubool. This is a reflection of the Islamic focus on the contractual freedom of the person and clarity of legalism, despite the fact that this may be limited socially. According to Lawrence Rosen, in Islamic law, "reality is contractual," meaning that as soon as the words are spoken and the document signed, the marriage is in the eyes of God and the State. The Han wedding, on the other hand, is "Somatic" with its main focus on the Tea Ceremony and the practice of "Bowing" (Bai Tang). This is where the body's posture of kneeling and bowing makes the reality. According to James Watson, the practice of 'kowtow' before the ancestral tablets is a physical bowing to the lineage. The Nikah faces the Divine and the Tea Ceremony faces the Ancestors. Both, however, deal with the transfer of "Rights of Person". The Nikah bestows Wilayah (guardianship) on the husband and the Tea Ceremony transfers the bride's "Filial Piety" from her own parents to her in-laws.

These symbolic capitals are embodied in economic goods. In the Punjab Jahez or dowry is considered as "pre-mortem inheritance" in the light of Jack Goody. Historically, daughters were not entitled to inherit land, so they were given a dowry that enabled them to have some

movable wealth. It also is used in a reverse situation of "Hypergamy", where a family pays a lot to have a daughter marry into a higher status clan, thereby improving their Izzat. The current Chinese Caili (bride price) is a central issue in demographic politics today. Due to the "missing women" phenomenon a result of decades of the One-Child Policy and son preference the Caili has skyrocketed. It is a "custodial transfer" of wealth from the husband's family to the wife's nuclear family. The principle of reciprocity of Marcel Mauss is evident in the Punjabi Bahi and Chinese Hongbao records. The last dramatization of the woman's translocation is the "Politics of Tears". Lamentations are institutionalised in Punjab (Rukhsati) and in China (Kujia or Crying Marriage). The bride's tears are "performative speech acts" that substantiate her chastity. Not to cry if she does not leave would reflect that she had no Xiao (filial piety) or was too eager to join her husband in sexual union, both of which would bring shame to her home. Protection is transferred in the Rukhsati shadow of the Quran and the red umbrella of the Han bride. She is no longer in the care of her father (to protect her physically), but in the care of God or the Ancestors (to protect her spiritually). Throwing the rice back over her head in Punjabi tradition means that she is bidding goodbye to "abundance" and this is a way to assure that her parents are not deprived of it in her absence.

Today, the principles of descent and appearance that were so fundamental to the prehistory are not undermined by modernity, but are reinforced by it. These old rituals have new "stages" in modernity. The sedan chair or horse has been replaced by luxury motorcades and videos of the size of a Baraat are now broadcast on social media. This "Digital Izzat" or "Online Mianzi" enables the families to share their symbolic capital with the world. Despite the introduction of digital algorithms and matrimonial websites, the filters for the Vichla and Meiren remain unchanged: income, caste, property and lineage. Still, at their heart, these are defensive systems that cope with the anxieties of movement that accompany high stakes in the transfer of wealth, fertility, and honour across clan lines. The difference between the two societies is that one has a goal or telos, and the other doesn't.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this comparative ethnographic study is to examine the different ways in which the universal institution of marriage is regulated in two different civilizations, Islamic South Asia and Confucian East Asia. Both cultures use the wedding as a "Total Social Fact" to help deal with the anxieties of patrilocal transitions. The Vichla (Punjab) and Meiren (Han) made use of a middleman or means to make the choice; they also asked for guidance from metaphysical experts such as Istikhara or Bazi. This change of agency helps to validate the alliance and shield the family unit from social dangers or the shame linked with marital failure. One of the major conclusions of this research is about the parallelism between the rites of obstruction, performed in Punjabi culture as Joota Chupai, and the Han Chuangmen (Door Games) in the Chinese culture. These are described as a form of ritualised extortion which prevent for a while the groom from accessing the bride and, in effect, validate her high social status and humanise negotiated ransom payments. Although the tension between the wife-

givers and wife-takers can be alleviated in the process, this performative resistance is effective in doing so. In addition, the performative forms of departure, as symbolized by the Rukhsati and the Kujia (Crying Marriage), reinforce this homology by institutionalizing lamentation. These are scripted expressions of grief that are highly visible demonstrations of filial respect and follow culturally acceptable codes of grieving in the passage from one family to another for a daughter. In an economic sense, the research shows that dowry (Jahez) and bride price (Caili) represent investment in symbolic capital, not just monetary transfers. No matter whether it is displayed in a Punjabi marriage hall or shared with members of a family in a Chinese home, families attempt to maintain a certain level of social prestige, Izzat or Mianzi. This monetary rationality is being extended to a highly reciprocated form of cash gifts: Salami (Varna) and Hongbao which turn into social debts and create a chain of obligations among the community. What is important here is that the gift is rigidly recorded, and that the wedding is a way to establish a system of credit in which the family's honour is preserved by fulfilling the duties. The study finds that the main point of discontinuity between the two traditions is the "axis of legitimation. Punjabi tradition has a logocentric approach, based on verbal and written contract of Nikah sanctioned by Divine. The Han ritual is somatic, focusing on physical actions such as the kowtow and tea ceremony approved by ancestors, in contrast. The differences in theology do not affect the sociological results, which are the same: that of the modern individual being swallowed up by the collective identity of the clan. The "I" is given to the "We", in order to reinforce the patrilineage and secure the perpetuation of the family line.

7. Recommendations for Future Research

Future work could explore the changing relationship between ritual and technology, to enhance the scholarly contribution of the work. For instance, the question of family negotiations during the Joota Chupai or Chuangmen, where privacy is usually at risk, can be investigated in relation to the viral aspects of TikTok or WeChat livestreaming. Also, a comparative approach could be used for diasporic communities in western contexts in future studies. The study of how these collectivist rituals are negotiated by Punjabi families and Han families in London or Vancouver would be interesting to see how these are resilient in the face of external cultures that are individualistic. Last, a longitudinal analysis of the effect of the changing sex ratio (the presence or absence of the women) specifically on the economic returns of the bride as a source of intergenerational wealth in China, and perhaps other South Asian countries, would probably shed more light on the changing economic value of the bride as a source of intergenerational wealth. These intricate rituals continue to be practiced today in the twenty first century, suggesting a universal psychological and social function. While the grammar of the ritual may not change, modern technology may enhance the visual show. The individual transition is magnified into a public event and the family unit and traditions prevail.

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