

**Very Rich Asians: How Does Acculturation Transform the Status
Consumption of Wealthy Immigrants?**

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Abstract

Very Rich Asians: How Does Acculturation Transform the Status Consumption of Wealthy Immigrants?

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Do wealthy consumers practice their status consumption differently after immigration? If yes, what's their motivation behind the transformation. Although previous consumer acculturation studies have investigated immigrants' consumption behavior, they have only focused on mass consumption, and few of them have discussed the role of social class. Besides, the existing status consumption theory does not account for immigrating consumers. This thesis investigates the transformation in wealthy upper-class Chinese consumers' post-immigration status consumption behavior in the process of consumer acculturation by using concepts from Bourdieu's field theory. Results show that Chinese immigrants' cultural, social, symbolic capital devalue after moving to the United States, which differently affects their status consumption behavior. Also, their social class, as well as their economic capital before and after immigration, mediate the transformation process. This thesis contributes to extend both consumer acculturation theory and status consumption theory by proposing a model of dynamic status consumption.

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Introduction

All weekends since Mrs. Li moved to the United States are alike. After sending her elder daughter to golf classes in the morning, she starts a two-hour French literature online course on her laptop. In the afternoon, she picks a Hermes bag out of her collection and drives to the mall to shop with her Chinese friends. After dinner, Chanel is replaced by Adidas, and she is ready for the yoga class with some American moms living in her same community. After her kids fall asleep, she watches her favorite movie, the Woody Allen classic *Blue Jasmine*, in her private home theater while sipping some red wine. Mrs. Li immigrated to the United States 5 years ago because she wanted her kids to go to an American high school. She never works and lives in a luxury mansion in Potomac, Maryland.

Although Mrs. Li's life cannot represent the five million Chinese who immigrated to the United States, she is a representation for a segment of them: the recent wave of wealthy Chinese immigrants who came the United States since the end of the 20th century (Misiuna, 2018). Historically, Chinese laborers moved to the US because of domestic economic hardship (Misiuna, 2018). Today, there is a growing trend of wealthy upper-class Chinese families who get United States citizenship through EB-5, the investment immigration program (Chishti & Hipsman, 2016). They are the type of consumers that have made luxury goods a thriving and rapidly growing market in China (Zhan & He, 2012). Despite many papers on acculturation and status consumption, no study has yet inquired about how wealthy consumers from a developing country transform their status consumption behavior after immigrating to a developed one. Will their status consumption pattern remain the same after immigration? If not, how does immigration affect their status consumption behavior? What are the mechanisms behind this transformation?

To answer these questions, I re-examine the fundamentals of consumer acculturation and status consumption theory. Consumer acculturation theory explains how changes in immigrants' consumption behavior after their immigration to a new country. For example, Peñaloza's (1994) seminal paper explores how Mexican immigrants in the United States transformed their consumption behaviors through movement, translation, and adaptation process. She proposed that the outcome of acculturation is not only assimilation but also maintenance, resistance, and segregation (Peñaloza, 1994). However, consumer acculturation studies barely touch

transformations in status consumption, nor did it concentrate on the consumption from a wealthier class of consumers.

My findings show that, after immigration, upper-class Chinese consumers do not necessarily have the same social status as in China, and the concept of “higher class” becomes ambiguous for them. Previous stationary model of status consumption is not accurate for Chinese immigrants who need to reposition themselves in US society via consumption.

My research takes one step forward and merges insights from Bourdieu’s field theory to previous research on consumer acculturation and status consumption, and more precisely the concepts of economic capital, social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. He described how these various capitals function in fields such as the arts and education. His work was adapted to consumption and marketing to explain different patterns of consumption behaviors (Holt, 1998). The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how upper-class Chinese immigrants’ status consumption change during the acculturation process and to explain their motivations by using a Bourdieusian approach to status consumption theory, and more specifically by how changes in the volume of the capital of consumers transform their consumption behavior. Transformations in the volume of capital, or what Bourdieu refers to as the “trajectory of capital” (Holt, 1998, p 22) is an essential yet widely neglected issue in status consumption study or acculturation theory. With this theoretical perspective in mind, I will investigate the transformation in different types of capitals and its influence on status consumption behaviour of wealthy Chinese consumers and propose a dynamic status consumption model informed by acculturation.

In the sections that follow, I first review relevant previous literature on consumer acculturation, status consumption, and Bourdieu’s field theory. I next explain the methodology and context, then discuss the findings. I conclude with a discussion of implications and contributions to theory and practice.

Literature Review

To study the status consumption of Chinese wealthy upper-class immigrants, I draw from and contributes to researches of three academic fields focusing on (a) consumer acculturation theory (b) status consumption and (c) Bourdieu's field theory.

Consumer acculturation

Consumer researchers have long been studying immigrants' consumption behavior in the United States as it is "a nation born of colonial expansion and mass migration" (Peñaloza, 1994, p 32). Researchers turned to the literature on acculturation to explain how consumers transform their consumption when they move to another country and adapt to their new cultural environment. Peñaloza defines consumer acculturation as "the general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country" (Peñaloza, 1994, p 33). Berry proposed the dominant acculturation model "level of acculturation" where he explored the differences in immigration' consumption choices compared to American consumers and what these differences represent in terms of immigrants' level of assimilation to a local cultural context (Berry, 1980). He proposed that migrants through acculturation "adopt either assimilation, integration, segregation, or marginalization strategies, depending on their attitudes towards original and new cultural contexts" (Luedicke M. K., 2011). Later on, the first wave of consumer acculturation research challenged this model by suggesting that instead of a pattern of progressive assimilation, consumer acculturation is a "multiple, simultaneous and less direct" process (O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber, 1986, p 579). For example, Wallendorf and Reilly's study (1983) showed that Mexican-Americans, carrying hope for a better life, "over-assimilate" to Anglo-American culture context (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983a), which reveals that immigrants' acculturation process does not always follow a linear pattern of progressive cultural assimilation as Berry assumed.

The post-assimilationism consumer acculturation research that followed these first approaches was marked by Peñaloza's revolutionary work in 1989. Her study on Mexican immigrants in the US focused on immigrant's consumer learning process and consumption practice following the acculturation process (Peñaloza, 1994) and identified four possible acculturation avenues: assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation (Peñaloza, 1994). This post-assimilationist view of consumer acculturation has focused on consumer identity formation and theorized that immigrants' consumption behavior is based on adapting to cultural conditions where the self is largely defined through consumption (Cross, 2000). Peñaloza's (1989) work suggests that Mexican immigrants mix four types of consumer practices to form identities (Peñaloza, 1994). Researchers have since then built unto Peñaloza efforts. Oswald (1999), for example, highlights how consumer

identities result from “the freewheeling dialogic interplay between the minority and dominant cultures” by proposing the notion of culture swapping (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 42). Askegaard et al.’s (2005) study of Greenlanders in Denmark found that migrants practice the Greenlander culture commodified in the dominant culture (Denmark) and use it as their identity resources (Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005). Üstüner and Holt (2007) contributed to work on immigrants’ consumer identity by specifying the “sociocultural structuring of consumer acculturation” (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 42).

According to Üstüner and Holt (2007), three main dimensions help define immigrants’ sociocultural structure, which are social class position, consumer culture, and ideology (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Studies before their work on immigrants’ identity projects have not used a “class lens” to inform their analysis, and thus conflicted on some essential conclusions (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 54). For example, In Oswald’s (1999) study, elite Haitian women seamlessly engage in culture swapping (Oswald, 1999), while in Askegaard et al.’s (2005) work, no culture swapping behavior was found (Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005). Üstüner and Holt (2007) argued that the lack of examination of the social class position of the participants in Oswald’s study resulted in a biased conclusion, whereas Oswald proposed that signs and symbols of ethnicity can transcend boundaries of class and that culture swapping is a “general feature of consumer acculturation rather than as a particular feat of an informant socialized to consume in this manner” (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 54).

Even though the importance of social class position has already been proposed by Üstüner and Holt (2007), my thesis and research questions are essential for two main reasons. First, there is a difference in the capacity of different social classes to consume following immigration (e.g., Üstüner and Holt [2007] vs. Thompson and Tambyah [1999]). Üstüner and Holt (2007) study on the construction of immigrants’ cultural and ethnical identity was focused on immigrants that did not possess the resources necessary to entirely consume the goods and services they wanted in order to signal their social status to others, which led immigrants to give up on “any sort of identity project at all” (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 52). Peñaloza (1994) investigated of immigrants’ consumption fields such as food, clothing, and automobile, through which they resisted the pulls of both Anglo and Mexican culture (Peñaloza, 1994). Although this is informative of identity construction, it falls short of informing status consumption. Metha and Belk (1991) compared

favorite possessions of Indians in India and Indians who immigrated to the United States (Mehta & Belk, 1991). They found that Indian immigrants purchase goods to have a sense of connection to their country. The objects represent India and bring back memories of youth in India provide “a sense of cultural identity and security that was taken for granted in India” (Mehta & Belk, 1991, p. 407). But this too fails to acknowledge how consumers practice status consumption.

My thesis aligns with the following: According to Luedicke (2011), the conflict between German and Turkish-German consumers over driving a BMW convertible car suggests the "central role of symbolic consumption practices and brand enthusiasm for representing and developing inter- and intra-cultural relations between migrants and locals" (Luedicke, 2011, p. 229). It calls for future research to examine the interactions between immigrants' status consumption behavior and their relationship with the locals in the immigration consumer acculturation process. In short, no previous study has yet to theoretically unpack how and why immigrants modify their status consumption to adapt to a new cultural environment.

Second, there is also a lack of research on a specific class of consumers: wealthy consumers. Previous research mostly ignored the possible interactions between social class position and status consumption for consumers who could afford luxury goods. Üstüner and Holt (2007) applied the “trickle-down” theory to explain how the daughters of Bahar migrants tried to perform the Baticı lifestyle (Ustuner & Holt, 2007). According to Üstüner and Holt (2007), the Baticı lifestyle is understood primarily “in terms of its idealized portrait of femininity—a set of tastes, goods, and practices associated with the most successful and admired upper-class Turkish women” (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 53). However, in their study, they selected poor Turkish migrants with little of economic, social, and cultural capital necessary to participate in consumer culture. In other words, the project of these consumers was doomed to fail as they did not possess the resources necessary to create this lifestyle, which is the opposite of my research context where I study wealthy upper-class Chinese immigrants who possess such resources.

Status consumption is not only a habit of the very wealthy (Trigg, 2001). Consumers tend to engage in status consumption regardless of their objective income or social class level (Eastman & Goldsmith, 2001). To make sure differences in social classes do not interfere with my theorizing, I bounded out consumers of certain classes. More specifically, I chose the upper class as a research subject. Not only do these individuals consume differently from lower capital individuals that have

been the focus of previous research (Holt, 1998; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner and Holt, 2007), but consumers with high cultural and economic capitals are also more attuned to American consumption dynamics (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). It is uncertain how this plays a role in the transformation of their consumption practices when they immigrate to the U.S. given that previous studies have not investigated immigrants within this specific class, and because there is a lack of research consumers with the economic power to engage in luxury consumption and with the higher echelons of status consumption in North America. Luedicke and Pichler (2010) give power to this argument when they stated that "this frustrating (acculturation) outcome results from experiencing modern (vs. postmodern) cultural conditions in which migrants without sufficient financial and social capital have no means to manifest their pre-migration imaginations of upward social mobility" (Luedicke & Pichler, 2010). In contrast, I will examine specifically this class of migrants who do have the financial capital to do so.

In summary, consumer acculturation has been mostly focused on immigrants' mass or everyday consumption or on immigrants that lacked resources to perform a certain imagined lifestyle. Till now, no theory can adequately explain transformations in the status consumption of wealthy immigrants because researchers have not fully explored such a group of consumers and their status consumption behavior before and after immigration. To conceptualize upper-class Chinese immigrants' consumer acculturation process, I use the literature on status consumption and Bourdieu's field theory to fill this gap and explain how upper-class Chinese immigrants transform their status consumption.

Status consumption

"The desire for status motives much of consumer behavior" (Eastman & Goldsmith, 1999, p. 41). Some goods and services have symbolic power, and the purchase, use, display of them is a mean of positioning oneself in a status hierarchy. This type of consumption and its meanings have received much attention from scholars. Veblen (1899) first conceptualized the idea of "conspicuous consumption" as the practice of using products to signal social status aspirations to other consumers. (Veblen, 1899). In his book *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Veblen developed an evolutionary framework in which consumers consumption behaviors are associated with hierarchical social differences derived from income levels and occupation types, i.e., social

classes (Veblen, 1899). He argued that individuals in the lower social class emulate the consumption patterns of other individuals situated at higher (Veblen, 1899), which was later developed by Simmel (1904) as the theory of trickle-down status imitation (Simmel, 1904).

Based on previous research, Eastman and Goldsmith (1999) defined status consumption as "the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for individual and surrounding significant others" (Eastman & Goldsmith, 1999, p. 42). This definition highlights that the point of reference for symbolic status is the consumer and the group in which one evolves. Therefore, if the groups of people in which an individual evolves change, such as when a consumer immigrate to a new country, consumers' status consumption behavior may change along with it.

Status consumption has long been the center of fruitful theoretical debate, but it has limitations on explaining certain contexts. According to Üstüner and Holt (2010), empirical studies in this research stream have only focused on consumption behaviors in developed areas such as Europe and the United States (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). To address this gap, they developed a framework that explains how the middle class in less industrialized countries (LICs) practice status consumption. However, their theory still cannot fully answer my research question as it does not deal with how the status consumption of individuals outside of the U.S. changes when they move to North America, such as in the case of upper-class Chinese consumers moving the US. For this, we need to take into account acculturation dynamics. It is unlikely that a stationary model of status consumption is adequate for consumers in movement, so neither Veblen's "trickle-down" theory nor Üstüner and Holt's status consumption theory within the LICs can fully explain the new phenomenon. My research project is thus rooted in modern acculturation and status consumption theory to explain the dynamics in status consumption transformation during emigration to industrialized Western nations.

Bourdieu's field theory and post-immigration status consumption transformation

The "post assimilationist" view in consumer acculturation research supports that "migrants' identity projects and outcomes significantly depend on their economic, social, and cultural capital"

(Askegaard, Arnould, & Kjeldgaard, 2005). The three concepts, economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital emerged from French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. According to Bourdieu, these three types of capitals interlink to shape how people distinguish themselves in social fields, what he refers to a "network or configuration of objective relations between [social] positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 99). This has consequently been theorized to shape how consumers consume (Holt, 1998; Üstüner & Holt, 2010). I first briefly review Bourdieu's key concepts on capital and then discuss how I borrow insights from his theory to explain upper-class Chinese immigrants' status consumption behavior.

Holt (1998) made an accurate summary of Bourdieu's field theory:

Bourdieu argues that social life can be conceived as a multidimensional status game in which people draw on three different types of resources (what he terms economic, cultural, and social capital) to compete for status (what he terms "symbolic capital"). (Holt, 1998, p. 3)

According to Bourdieu, society consists of a plurality of social fields where people use different types of capitals to define their social position (Bourdieu, 1986). The three main capitals are economic, cultural, and social capital. Economic capital consists of economic possessions that can be "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). In my study, participants have high economic capital and enough purchasing power once they migrated to continue pursuing their consumption project as they did back in China. Therefore, we would expect changes in status consumption to be related to the difference in the volume of the other two capitals.

Cultural capital consists of "a set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices" and is embedded in three primary forms: (1) "in the embodied state, i.e., in the form long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47); (2) "in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.)" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47); and (3) "in the institutionalized state", in the forms of official degrees and diplomas that certify the existence of the embodied form (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47).

Social capital refers to "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition"

(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51). Thus, social capital has two components: first, resources related to social networks and group membership: "the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent ... depends on the size of the network of connections that he can effectively mobilize" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51). Bigger and better social network gives one a better chance to mobilize members that can lead to certain benefits. Second, social capital is based on mutual cognition and recognition, which leads to another essential capital in Bourdieu's theory: symbolic capital.

Symbolic capital shows "when specific forms of economic, social, or cultural capital are recognized as legitimate bases for claiming prestige, respect, and/or authority within a given field" (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 797). In other words, for economic, social and cultural capital to become effective, objective differences between groups or classes must be transformed into symbolic differences and classifications that make possible symbolic recognition and distinction in front of others. Even though a reputable job can make one perceived as a high social class, status consumption is more visible as an instrumental form to signal symbolic capital. Contemporary marketing research identified the symbolic role of possessions in consumers' lives (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959), and how people make inferences about others based on their possessions (Belk, Bahn & Mayer, 1982). Consumers consume goods and services with symbolic power to engage in the "collectively understood status games" whose game rules are modified by their social environment (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 797).

The question that the combination of Bourdieu's field theory and research on acculturation raises is: how would the immigration of upper-class Chinese consumers to the US, and their new consumer culture affect the volume and composition of their social, cultural, economic capital and their resulting symbolic capital? And since their economic capital volume remains high, would potential transformations of these forms of capital affect their status consumption behavior?

Bourdieu et al. (1973, 1978) developed the idea of "strategies of reconversions" to refer to "practices by which every social position is defined by converting different forms of capital" (Bourdieu, Boltanski, & de Saint Martin, 1973; Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1978). One of the most critical concepts in this theory is social space, which is constituted by three dimensions: "the volume of capital, composition of capital and the change in these two properties over time, manifested by past and penitential trajectory in the social life" (Bourdieu P., 1979/1986). Holt (1998) mentioned that his research had only focused on the influence of cultural capital on

American consumption, neglecting an essential issue in Bourdieu's theory: the trajectory of capital, the last dimension of social space, which refers to "the increases and declines in capital volume through one's lifetime and intergenerational transfer of capital" (Holt, 1998, p. 22). He suggested that "it is important to consider how consumption patterns are shaped by trajectory" (Holt, 1998, p. 22). This study responds to this call for future research and focuses on studying the last dimension of social space. Another future research avenue he mentioned is to consider the complex interpenetration of social categories (e.g., race, gender, social class). My research responds to this by exploring how class and race interact (i.e., upper-class Chinese practice status consumption).

I situate my work within these calls for additional research on immigrant status consumption. I leverage insights from modern consumer acculturation studies, status consumption theory, and Bourdieu's field theory to explain transformations in upper-class Chinese immigrants' status consumption after moving to the US. This literature review helped frame the research questions, gave a rationale for my data collection, and positioned my analysis. My main research question is: how do upper-class Chinese immigrants transform their status consumption following consumer acculturation? Three sub-questions around it are (1) How do changes in cultural capital affect status consumption? (2) How do changes in social capital affect status consumption? (3) How do changes in symbolic capital affect status consumption? By answering these questions, my study constitutes a first step toward building a dynamic theory of status consumption for immigrating consumers. Although it is contextually developed around the immigration of upper-class Chinese immigrants to the U.S., it can be more generally applied to high social status individuals in LICs who move to developed countries.

Context: wealthy upper-class Chinese in the U.S.

In my study, I chose upper-class Chinese immigrants who arrived in the U.S. after 1995 for two reasons. Firstly, China has a long history of immigration to the U.S., and Chinese immigrants account for a large portion of the U.S. foreign-born population. In 2010, 35.5% of immigrants arriving in the U.S. were from Asia, which for the first time, its annual figure outnumbered Hispanic immigration and created a reversal of historical trends (Radford, 2019). Among the U.S. immigration population, Chinese immigrants are the third-largest foreign-born group in the United

States, after Mexicans and Indians (Zong & Batalova, 2017). The United States is the top destination for Chinese immigrants, representing 22 percent of the almost 11 million Chinese living abroad (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Chinese immigration to the United States was comprised of two waves. The first influx of Chinese resulted from the 1849 California Gold Rush (Misiuna, 2018). Transcontinental Railroad project continued the demand for cheap labor from China. By the year 1930, the U.S. saw 74,954 Chinese immigrants (Misiuna, 2018). The second influx of immigrants, which includes my participants, occurred from 1978 because the Chinese government decided to lift migration restrictions and open its economy to worldwide markets (the so-called Reforming and Opening) (Misiuna, 2018).

Compared to Mexican immigrants, the largest immigration group in the U.S., Chinese immigrants have a different acculturation process. Similarities and differences are the fundamental research questions during the study of immigrant consumer behavior (Peñaloza, 1994). Although the Chinese diaspora in the U.S. is the "nation's other" or "foreigner" just as Mexican immigrants, they are very different on the degree of similarity to the U.S. consumer culture (Peñaloza, 1994). Peñaloza discussed the factors that set Mexican migration apart from other migratory movements. Following her approach, I propose that Chinese immigrants differ from Mexican immigrants in geographical proximity, migration history, and language usage. Mexico shared a 3,145 km border with the US and once owned part of the southwestern U.S., and its immigrants share more similarities with the U.S. mainstream population after years of immigration acculturation (Peñaloza, 1994). However, what Chinese immigrants must cross is not only the border but the utterly different occidental cultural context and social norms barriers. Chinese immigrants thus should experience different acculturation outcomes, which is important when studying their status consumption.

Secondly, my participants are an excellent example of wealthy consumers that are part of the higher echelons of society in their home country. The massive influx of Chinese diasporas is a recent phenomenon. According to the data collected in the 2012 United States Census, the Chinese population in the U.S. is estimated at 5.025 million in 2017. The figure is 42% higher than it had been in 2010 and almost doubled within 20 years (Misiuna, 2018). For the sake of comparison, only 39% of the total US immigrants arrived in 2000 or later (Hooper & Batalova, 2015). It was during the last two decades that Chinese immigrants, especially high social status wealthy ones,

entered the U.S. and transformed the composition of Chinese immigrants' groups. After the mid-90s, there has been an increased and significant presence of wealthy Chinese in the U.S. thanks to the rapid development of China's economy. Especially after 2008, when the Chinese property market warmed up and the stock market soared, some wealthy Chinese began to emigrate to the U.S. through the EB-5 investor visa program (Tian, 2017). At the same time, to attract external funds, European and American countries that experienced heavy financial crises have once relaxed the investment immigration quota to attract wealthy foreign investors such as Chinese ones. Chinese nationals are overrepresented in applications for the EB-5 investor visa program, accounting for 90 percent of applicants in the fiscal year 2015 (Tian, 2017).

In this sense, my participants are distinct from the ones in previous studies as they are upper-class elites who have sufficient purchase power to participate in status consumption after having migrated, in a way that would not be different from what they did in their home country. The reasons for their immigration do not include searching for higher economic capital (i.e., job opportunities) as it is the case for Mexican immigrants in Peñaloza's study. Moreover, whereas Mexican immigrants have long been characterized as working-class, my participants' professional lives are mostly status-related or hobbies, i.e., they do not work for the prospect of achieving a better (economic) life.

In addition to high economic capital, my participants also have high cultural capital. Compared to the overall foreign-born populations in the United States, Chinese immigrants, on average, are significantly better educated. According to Misiuna (2018), Chinese immigrants are enrolled in college and graduate school at a rate more than twice that of immigrants overall (15 percent, compared to 7 percent) (Misiuna, 2018). The high enrollment of higher education suggests as well that their previous education level is not below the average. My participants were selected based on their high cultural capital. Their minimal education level in China is a bachelor's degree, and the highest is a doctoral degree. I later discuss in detail the characteristics of my participants.

In sum, the context of wealthy upper-class Chinese immigrants is ideal to understand the dynamics of consumer acculturation process during immigration and its influence on their status consumption. Besides, their high social status and high cultural status characteristics facilitate further discussion of the transformation of capital.

Data Collection and Sample Description

To collect interview data, I used purposive sampling to recruit informants with three criteria matching the context. First, they needed to be immigrants who were born in China and arrived in the US after 1995. A questionnaire was designed to collect my participants' socio-demographic information (APPENDIX A). Second, they need to be categorized as upper-class in China with high economic capital even after the required investment for immigration. I ensured that my participants have high economic capital before and after moving to the U.S. by using the median income of their postal code in both China and the United States. Third, to have a group of high cultural capital consumers, I borrowed the cultural capital scale devised by Holt (2010) (APPENDIX B) and used this scale to rate each informant for their cultural capital.

Ten in-depth interviews were conducted through WeChat video call (a Chinese app similar to Skype). Participants answered questions in Chinese. Before the interviews, participants were asked to complete the socio-demographic questionnaire, which included questions about their demographic information, immigration period and reason, educational background, professional background, and family information. The interview questions covered the participants' immigration process and consumption comparison between China and the United States. The first part aimed at understanding my participants' background and their vision of the changes that happened in their lives following their immigration. The second part allowed them to talk about their favorite consumption fields and variations of consumption behaviors after immigration. I followed these questions with prompts related to their real-life immigration stories to reveal practices of status consumption. Each interview lasted from 60 to 120 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated, resulting in 176 single-spaced pages of interview data.

Table 1 - Socio-demographic Information

Name	Sex	Age	Father's education	Father's occupation	Education	Occupation	Cultural capital rate	Chinese residence	Arrival Date	English proficiency
Mrs. Yu	Female	53	Middle school 1	Military 4	College 2	Homemaker 3	7.5	Urban	2016	Well
Bella	Female	27	Bachelor 3	Business owner 4	Master 4	Student 3	10.5	Urban	2010	Very well
Mrs. Shang	Female	40	College 2	Professor 5	Bachelor 3	Homemaker 3	9.5	Urban	2013	Well
Mrs. Cong	Female	47	Bachelor 3	Professor 5	Bachelor 3	Homemaker 3	10	Urban	2015	Business level
Mrs. Tian	Female	59	Bachelor 3	Professor 5	Doctor 5	Homemaker 3	12	Urban	1995	Academic level
Tina	Female	26	College 2	Government officer 4	Bachelor 3	student 3	9	Urban	2010	Academic level
Mrs. Liu	Male	46	College 2	Engineer 4	Doctor 5	Pharmacist 3	11	Urban	1995	Academic level
Mr. Hu	Male	25	College 2	Government officer 4	Master 4	Student 3	10	Urban	2017	Very well
Mrs. Tai	Female	36	High school 1	Business owner 4	Bachelor 3	Homemaker 3	8.5	Urban	2015	Very well
Mrs. Jie	Female	50	High school 2	Government officer 4	Master 4	Homemaker 3	10	Urban	2017	Very well
Average		40.9					9.8			

The socio-demographic information of my participants is included in the Table 1. The average age of my participants is 40.9 years old, and my sample is composed of two males and eight females. This gender discrepancy can partly be explained by the pattern of immigration of wealthy Chinese individuals that I found while analyzing the data, where the wife and children will immigrate to the U.S. while the husband will stay in China for professional reasons. The earliest arrival time in the United States was in 1995, and the most recent one arrived in 2017. The English level of my participants, in addition to having 2 choices of "well," others have chosen the level of "very well," among which five participants believe that their English has reached the level of academic or working language. One participant is working full time, and one is working part-time while eight others are students or housewives. The average value of their cultural capital scores is 9.8. Compared to the average rating of Üstüner and Holt (2010) low cultural capital group (8.5) and the high cultural capital group (12.5) (Üstüner and Holt, 2010). Although one could argue that this score could not signify that my participants are high cultural capital, it is dragged down by first, the fact that most participants are homemakers due to the gender discrepancy that I discussed, and it mirrors the score of high cultural capital consumers who are also homemakers in Üstüner and Holt (2010) (average = 12.5) (Üstüner and Holt, 2010). Second, one can argue that Üstüner and Holt (2010)'s original scale has its limitation because it only considers an individual's father's education level and professional background. To address this issue, I also collected data from my participants' mother's side in the pre-interview questionnaire. I added individual's mother's education level and professional score and changing the formula of cultural capital rating to upbringing (father's education + occupation + mother's education + occupation)/2 + education + occupation. Results showed that adding the information of participants' mother did not change the individual cultural capital score. This result can be partly explained by the patriarchy existing in the Chinese society (Roberts, 2018). Therefore, I kept the original cultural capital scales from Üstüner and Holt (2010). Lastly, I notice that my participants' father's education scores are low, resulting in an overall lower score than expected. I argue that it is due to the Cultural Revolution that happened in China from 1966 to 1970 when China experienced a severe political environment. The university entrance examination (Gaokao) was once cancelled and the state "send-down" policy forced a 17 million urban youth to stop studying and live and work in rural areas (Zhou & Hou, 1999). Several participants mentioned that their parents experienced a mandatory drop-off

from universities. This explains why many my participants' fathers only have high school or college diplomas.

Lastly, to evaluate their economic capital in China, I compared the average housing price of their Chinese neighborhood and the average housing price of the city in 2010. Not all my participants provided their Chinese addresses. The three addresses provided are from Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. The average house price of their neighborhood is: ¥ 71,994 CNY/m² (10,448USD/m²), ¥ 85,323 CNY/m² (12,382USD/m²), ¥ 58,190 CNY/m² (8,445USD/m²), which were higher than the average price of these three cities in 2010, ¥63,776CNY/m² (9,255USD/m²), ¥52,130 CNY/m² (7,565USD/m²), ¥25,406 CNY/m² (3,687USD/m²) respectively (data from creprice.cn/ranklist, 2010). To evaluate their economic capital after immigration, I first examined the median house income by entering their zip code on United States Census Bureau website and compared them with the state's median household income (data from factfinder.census.gov) (Table 2). 8 out of 10 participants provided their zip code in the United States and results show that compared to the state median household income, that of my participants are higher. It is worth noting that the eight participants that provide zip code are female students or housewives in the United States and do not work full time. The data shows that they can afford the house in the rich area in the U.S. because of their high economic capital in China and after immigration. To verify this, I looked up for the median house price using the zip code and compare them to the national media (data from: realtytrac.com). The data gives the same result. The lowest median price among them is 1.87 times of national median house price. One may argue that the data of my participants is not so impressive. I argue that the tabular data is meant to illustrate the economic capital of my participants after immigration is still enough to make them participate in status consumption effectively. In fact, the per capita GDP of the United States in 2017 was 59,531.66 USD, while China only 8,286.99 USD (World Bank, 2018).

Although my participants in China belong to the affluent class, they may not be the richest class in the United States since they moved to a country whose GDP per capita is 2.7 times that of their own country. Therefore, after immigration, my participants are still high on economic capital. However, they cannot be categorized to the upper class in the United States. The concept of social class is a controversial issue. Üstüner and Holt (2010) recruited their participants based on their economic class, which depends on their income level (Üstüner and Holt, 2010). Following the

same methodology, I use Chinese immigrants' household income in the US predicted by their zip code to evaluate their social class. According to Mckinsey Quarterly Report (2013), in China household with income over 229,000 renminbi (\$34,000) belong to the affluent class (Barton, Chen, & Jin, 2013). Based on this standard, my participants with household income from 86,940 USD to 190,009 USD belong to the upper class in China. Based on Thompson and Hickey's (2005) academic class model, 1% of the American population with household incomes exceeding \$525,000 belongs to the upper class (Thompson & Hickey, 2005). Therefore, my participants do not belong to the upper class in the US.

Table 2 - Median Household Income & House Price

Name	Median Household Income	Median Household Income of the State	Median House Price	National House Price Median
Mrs. Yu	\$120,149 USD	\$78,916 USD	\$589,000 USD	\$275,000 USD
Bella	\$86,940 USD	\$67,169 USD	\$988,000 USD	
Mrs. Shang	\$100,625 USD	\$78,916 USD	\$515,000 USD	
Mrs. Cong	\$177,853 USD	\$68,766 USD	\$967,000 USD	
Mrs. Tian	\$128,642 USD	\$52,182 USD	\$439,000 USD	
Tina	\$100,625 USD	\$78,916 USD	\$515,000 USD	
Mrs. Liu	N/A	\$57,051 USD	N/A	
Mr. Hu	N/A	\$57,051 USD	N/A	
Mrs. Tai	\$190,009 USD	\$68,766 USD	\$1,349,000 USD	
Mrs. Jie	\$164,955 USD	\$68,766 USD	\$826,844 USD	

Analysis

Here in this section, I interpret my data to answer my research questions. Throughout the findings, I illuminate separately how cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital get devalued during the process of immigration and how Chinese consumer change their status consumption behaviors to address these changes and reposition themselves in a new society.

How do changes in cultural capital affect status consumption?

My analysis suggests that the cultural capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants depreciated after they immigrated to the United States. This depreciation is explicitly shown in two major ways. The first is that they experienced a loss of objectified capital in education, where their education is not recognized in their new cultural environment. The second is that the current status consumption of Chinese immigrants is stigmatized by American audiences. For example, their fashion consumption is associated with the wealthy Chinese image who heavily and impulsively consume luxuries and flaunt their wealth. These two sets of findings will be discussed in turn in the following sections.

As noted earlier, differences in cultural capital structures one's status consumption patterns (Holt, 1998). Therefore, if one experiences a decrease in the volume or composition of capital during the process of immigration, it is possible that their practice of status consumption will adjust along with this trajectory. I now show how the devaluation of the cultural capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants changed their status consumption. Changes are characterized by a greater focus on consumption that can be recognized and agreed by people in the new cultural environment, aiming at addressing the devaluation their cultural capital.

Since the two sources of cultural capital depreciation I have identified related to a loss of status associated with education and the stigmatization of Chinese status consumption, we would expect that upper-class Chinese immigrants' cultural consumption behavior change to address these devaluing sources. Findings show how consumers get involved in continuous education to better fit into the American cultural context and transform their status consumption to escape the stigma that they confront in the United States.

I now first highlight how the cultural capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants depreciated when they moved to the United States. I do so by first showing a depreciation in objectified cultural capital, associated with their Chinese degrees and education level. I then turn my attention to the stigma faced with how Chinese immigrants consumed status goods when they moved to the U.S.

Loss of objectified capital in education As mentioned above, one of the major domains where Chinese immigrants lost value for their cultural capital is their education. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital can exist in an institutionalized state, which can be objectified in terms of certificates and degrees (Bourdieu, 1986).

During the interviews, one issue that was often talked about by my participants was that their previous education level that was well-regarded in China, based on degrees conferred by Chinese institutions, but that these did not have the equivalent power after immigrating to the United States. As a result, they could not work in a similar position or field in the U.S., i.e., their objectified cultural capital did not confer the same benefits it once did in China. For example, an interviewee mentioned a case:

This woman is a piano professor at the Central Conservatory of Music in China. Here in the U.S., she is making dumplings with her husband! She is not a single case, and there are more people like her. I Joined a lot of WeChat groups selling chili sauce, chicken feet, dumplings. Ask what the owners did in China! All of them had a decent diploma or even were professors at universities. Here they are doing the worst job. Why? Because your education in China is not enough to continue to be a professor in the United States. If you want to have in the United States the same job as you had in China, you may have to go back to school. (Mrs. Cong)

All interviewee received a bachelor's degree or above from well-recognized Chinese universities and worked as company executives, senior government officials, university teachers or other equivalent positions. After moving to the US, most of them stopped working, partly because they could not meet the American employers' standards on education and work experience. A female interviewee who had eight years of experience in the marketing department in China said that after immigrating to the United States, she could not find management or market-related job.

What can I do? I used to do marketing, and there is no way to do it here because marketing requires local expertise, knowledge, I do not have it. (Mrs. Jie)

Based on the data, my participants' educational and professional experience acquired before immigration cannot be fully recognized in the United States. Therefore, the benefit resulted from having high educational credentials in daily life or when look for a job is not equivalent to when they were in China. In other words, their cultural capital has been devalued.

Stigmatization of existing status consumption in fashion The second domain I identified is that Chinese immigrants' status consumption is often stigmatized after immigration. In terms of fashion styles, the Chinese upper class is used to signal their wealth and social status through luxury designer brands: "All of my clothes in China are from designer brands," one of my interviewees said, "In China, I buy very pricy clothes. I want them to have a logo. I do not want my outfit clashed with others. If Chanel has a leather jacket that there are only three in China, I will buy it!" (Mrs. Tai)

However, in American, Chinese wealthy luxury consumers are routinely mocked by the media. The media has shaped the public's real impression of Chinese status consumption around the idea of Chinese "nouveau riche," a class portrayed as "uncultured." Take for example this article from the business news coverage CNBC (2013):

How do you say "nouveau riche" in China? Tuhao. Tuhao roughly translates as "crass rich," since "tu" means uncultured and "hao" means bold or bullying. It joins "nouveau riche," "parvenu," and "bling" and other terms for the newly rich who have more money than taste. And while it has quickly gone viral in China, where flashy new wealth is sparking growing resentment, it is also gaining global traction as the luxury-hungry Chinese rich are venturing around the world. (Robert, 2013)

Mostly being part of this class of consumers who acquired wealth with the transition of China to a capitalist economy in the 1990s (Misiuna, 2018), wealthy Chinese immigrants are aware of this bitter stigma, which is especially true of my high cultural capital interviewees. After immigrating and spending some time in the United States, they found that how they dressed daily back home was regarded as too luxurious, too formal, or too flashy, and therefore as a typical look

that is tied to their origins and social class, and which represents the afore-mentioned stigma. A fashionable young mom said during the interview:

I bought Chanel at the age of 19 and Hermes at the age of 20, but now I dress casually in the United States. In China, I feel that there is an environment. For example, if you go out for afternoon tea, you can carry a Hermes, right? Everyone is like that, you do not feel that you are very strange, but here, I do not use these things very much, because I think that looks Chinese, very Chinese, too Chinese. As the Romans do. For example, everyone in the United States wears leggings. Then you do not have to go to afternoon tea with a Birkin. It looks stupid. (Mrs. Tai)

Chinese luxury lovers can also feel that the American public does not understand their consumption habits, and sometimes even with ridicule:

San Francisco people are still relatively casual unless they are in a formal occasion. They do not care too much about whether you are wearing a famous brand. Sometimes, if I wear a Gucci T-shirt to go to class, American classmates may ask why you spend so much money on a T-shirt. However, this is not the case in China. (Bella)

In summary, my participants acknowledge a need to transform their status consumption. As time passes as new immigrants, this becomes an inevitable event because it has an essential role in escaping the stigma and addressing cultural capital for Chinese immigrants and adapt to their new cultural context. Previous status consumption pattern faced with the Tuhao stigma depreciates the value of cultural capital previously acquired in the field of fashion. Chinese luxury consumers need to learn how to dress differently to distance themselves from the stigma that exists around the skills and knowledge they developed in the field of fashion.

Status consumption transformation: addressing the value of cultural capital

I identify two major transformations in the status consumptions that upper-class Chinese immigrants undertake to address the depreciation of their cultural capital. These two transformations in upper-class Chinese consumers' status consumption behavior echo the two domains mentioned above in which their cultural capital depreciated. The first is that they engage

in continuous education. The second is that they try to dress differently than the "typical Chinese Tuhao look" (Mr. Hu) and cater to the tastes of Americans. This shows that having experienced a devaluation of cultural capital during immigration, this group of immigrants shifted the way they consume status goods or services.

Engage in continuous education The participants, upper-class Chinese who immigrated to the U.S. after the 90s, are indeed noteworthy for their high levels of achievement, in terms of education and income in China. The lowest education level they achieved is a bachelor's degree; the highest is Ph.D. Despite their education background, all interviewees state that they do not need to make money themselves to maintain a high quality of living like in China. A retired clinical research coordinator who finished her master's degree in the US recalled the days she just immigrated: "We went abroad in 1995, there was no financial problem at all, and because of that there was not anything particularly difficult so far" (Mrs. Tian).

With their educational background and financial situation, most of the participants talked about learning varied subjects in American educational institutions. An immigrant, having run a restaurant in the United States for a few years, decided to go back to university to study philosophy and pharmacy and got his Ph.D. at the age of 38:

I am interested in learning new things. When you are young, you do not like school. After you grow up, you realize that learning some things is necessary. I especially like philosophy, things I have not thought of before, I can get in touch now. You have to say that when you are 17 or years old, you are not willing to listen to the philosophy class. I am very interested now. The learning itself is spontaneous. (Mr. Liu)

It is worth mentioning that although some immigrants chose to take some courses which seem beneficial on their career path, others made choices based on their interests removed from professional motivations. A young mom of three kids took French literature college classes because she is interested in reading French novels.

The motivation for high cultural capital Chinese immigrants to engage in continuous education is not money-driven. Although this might not consciously be recognized by my interviewees, I propose that they do so for two reasons. The first is to become more legitimate within their

American context. By acquiring an American degree, my interviewees can partly revalue the objectified cultural capital associated with education. A second reason is that, without an American degree, they are closely associated with other Chinese immigrants surrounding them, who came under different immigration circumstances. With an American education, Chinese immigrants can differentiate themselves from two other groups of Chinese immigrants (e.g., Holt, 1998), as I now explain.

The first group consists of immigrants from lower social classes in China, who engage in low level technical/physical work to create a better economic life for themselves in the United States. They cannot compete with my interviewees in terms of the level of their economic capital. The second group consists of immigrants of a similar social class as my participants but who possess lower cultural capital. Historically, their over-consumption of luxury goods and services gave Chinese immigrants the noxious image. One of my participants exemplified this when she said that in her city, there are not many Chinese immigrants like her,

Most of the Chinese immigrants I met, such as those encountered in supermarkets, were immigrants who came to rejoin their relatives. Many people came from the American dream, and he did not have an easy life at home. Then he felt that the United States would give him a better life and living environment. Relatives immigration or those who come to work, or stay here after college, are the majority of immigrants. They work in the IT industry or for the bank or even do some basic physical work. There are very few immigrants like me. (Mrs. Tai)

To distinct from them with cultural capital is one of the motivations that my interviewees engage in continuous education. At the same time, escaping this stigma given by Western culture is a way to add value to their cultural capital. There is a mutual enhancement effect at play here. I now explain how my participants try to escape the Tuhao stigma.

Escape the stigma Upper-class Chinese immigrants, as mentioned above, do not lose the financial ability to live a luxurious life after immigration. However, their previous experience of luxury is not embraced by every one of them, because continuing their past status consumption leads them to align with the image of Tuhao (Chinese nouveau riche). Emotionally responding to the stigma

associated with Tuhao, many starts to feel ashamed of the superficial image their generation or peers (of themselves) might have created. Their status consumption pattern transforms to cater to the American tastes and address this stigma. Concretely, they change their style and start dressing more casually, adopting, for example, the American Athleisure trend (Cheng, 2018), instead of the formal and luxurious style that defined them in China, effectively transforming their status consumption. For, example, one of the interviewees talked about this personal style change:

Q: Have you changed your style since you moved?

A: Do as Romans do. In the United States, I am always in sportswear. Except for when I attend some parties, I will dress very formal. I usually am very casual. Wearing sportswear to jog, to do yoga at home, and to go shopping with friends, I always dress simple. Because I always feel that in this society, if you go to a supermarket during the day, dressing formally is very strange. (Mrs. Cong)

Another example,

I looked for a very delicate style in China. Every day, I must put a very fine eyeliner and cute lipstick. Manicure must be done, beautiful crystal nails. I must do it on my feet also. Then I wear appropriate clothes, which looks very expensive and fancy. Wearing high heels every day. In China, I am a small lady, a princess. Every day is exquisite. Now it is freer and easier. I will wear flats and sandals. I am tired of my old style. Now, you will care about your feelings. I like those who are comfortable to wear, such as cashmere, Loro Piana cashmere sweater, or can express your personality. Or very casual, you will buy some jeans, such as LV jeans. (Mrs. Shang)

Their style changing does not necessarily mean that they completely changed their taste in fashion. Instead, it is a temporary change on status consumption to escape the Tuhao stigma and to look fashionable when interacting in American society. An interviewee admitted that she would change back to the Chinese look when she goes back to China to match the environment.

After returning to China for a few days, I wear whatever is in trend in China. After returning to the United States for a few days, I liked things that are popular in the United States. (Bella)

This effort on changing personal style makes some changes in Chinese immigrants' lives. One of my interviewees mentioned that she used to wear a cocktail dress to grocery shopping. After receiving a few weird looks, she decided to wear more comfortable outfits, and nobody stares at her anymore. "Sometimes I even go to Marshalls, and I recently knew a brand called Fila, really nice and not expensive at all" (Mrs. Cong). Therefore, transforming status consumption can help Chinese immigrants fit in better their environment and get better accepted by Americans through their aesthetic. Even though this acceptance may not happen suddenly, we can expect that after the adjustment of their status consumption, Chinese consumers have a better chance to redress the depreciated value of their cultural capital associated with fashion.

How do changes in social capital affect status consumption?

Based on the analysis of the data, the value of the social capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants depreciates as does that of their cultural capital. The depreciation of the value of social capital shows when they look for jobs or when they deal with all kinds of issues in life. Chinese consumers detect this loss quickly after their immigration, and this impacts their status consumption.

Two factors explain the devaluation of the social capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants. The first is transformations in their social network. Chinese immigrants in the U.S. have a smaller social network with a different composition from the one in China, where they had a large social circle and social connections of all kinds. The second factor is relationship norms. Chinese immigrants discover a switch of norms in interpersonal relationships from Chinese style Guanxi to completely different American ones.

In the first part of the findings section, I explained how Chinese immigrants transform their status consumption to address their depreciated cultural capital. In this section, we will investigate the transformation in Chinese consumers' status consumption patterns because of the devaluation of social capital. In comparison to the way my participants changed their status consumption to address transformations in the value of their cultural capital, the transformations here are more passive. I found that my participants addressed transformations in their social capital in two ways, where they reduced their consumption of status goods or services. First, they reduced their

consumption because of a lack of access to status goods and services; and second, they reduced their consumption because of a decreased in situational opportunities, i.e., social opportunities where consuming goods or services is desired.

These two types of transformation are deeply related to the change of social network and relationship norms, the two factors affecting the value of social capital. Firstly, the decrease in the size of the social network of Chinese upper class and a transformation in social composition leads them to lose access to others with valuable consumption-related positions and a lack of access to status goods or services. Secondly, due to the disappearance of Guanxi, a form of interpersonal relationship in China, there are fewer gift exchanges and less formal social events, thus less motivation or occasions for Chinese consumers to engage in status consumption. Findings show how immigrants consume less status good and service and how this behavior is related to the social network and social norms changes, and further linked to the depreciation of social capital.

I now first discuss how the social capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants is devalued when they moved to the United States by offering two possible explanations. I then further explain how this depreciation causes the restriction of status consumption and present two types of transformation.

Changes in social network When talking about difficult moments after immigration, my participants always first recall the problems they had because they "know nobody here" (Mrs. Yu). Geographic distance and time zone difference have them separated from their old connections. Immigrants who are not comfortable speaking English claimed that the language barrier is the reason that they cannot make new connections with Americans and other immigrants. But the lack of common topics is another reason that has been mentioned more than the language barrier during the interview.

I found out that the content of your conversations with foreigners is limited. You do not know what the Democratic-Republican Party is all about. You cannot talk to them about politics. They talk about Jesus Christ, and I do not believe in Jesus Christ. They have their content to chat, and you can't be friends together without a common topic. (Mrs. Cong)

Another example,

Here, we rarely make close friends with Americans. The cultural differences always make the conversations not to the point. We generally know that they don't talk about relationships, wages. So, when you are with Americans, you won't feel as connected as with your Chinese friends. Always how is the weather? How are you? Never talk to the depths of the soul. (Mrs. Tian)

My participants were born and raised in a Chinese cultural environment where mass culture was entirely different from the American one. Therefore, during conversations with Americans, there are important limits to the types of topic that can be addressed. Faced with the difficulty of maintaining their existing social network while also facing challenges in acquiring new social connections, Chinese immigrants develop a social network different than the one that they had before immigration.

First, their social circle is smaller, and the majority of their new social connections are other Chinese immigrants. They have some American friends but do not connect deeply with them. When asked the question "Who do you hang out with in the U.S.?", all of them had the same answer: other Chinese people.

Now, in addition to colleagues in the company, there are people related to buying and selling houses. They are still in the Chinese circle, including my clients, they are all Chinese. (Mrs. Jie, part-time real estate agent)

Chinese moms. All of them come from China to study with their children. My friends are all within this range. (Mrs. Cong, housewife)

I usually work out and study on my own. There are other friends, but they come and go. My social circle is small, and they are all Chinese. (Mr. Hu, student)

Apart from the size of the social network, there are transformations in social composition. The group members in the social circle of my participants are mainly Chinese. Even though it might seem like their social network barely changed as they still have a social network composed of other Chinese individuals, their new relationships are not stable. An interviewee talked about her unstable social circle in the U.S. During the process of making new friends, if she does not feel the connection, she can "easily break with them without affecting life." Back home, "it is tough to break the contact" (Mrs. Shang). Besides, new friends in the US are perceived as not genuine.

My friends in China and from here are different. Friends back home are always the most honest and sincere to you. In the United States, because of loneliness, no social status, no work, moms are here to accompany the children to study alone, plus the husband is not here, they occasionally fly over to visit. Mothers to relieve this loneliness, often get together and socialize, they are not so sincere, so good to you, domestic friends are real, I feel very unreal here. (Mrs. Cong)

Another transformation is that back in China, their social connections give Chinese consumers access to status goods, and those connections do not exist anymore in the US. For example, an interviewee Mrs. Yu mentioned that she used to know the salesperson in the Chanel store in Hong Kong. Whenever there is a new product or a limited edition, the salesperson will contact Mrs. Yu, then Mrs. Yu will fly to Hong Kong to shop. Mrs. Yu knows many of these salespeople in many luxury stores in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Hong Kong, and other big cities. But in the United States, she said that she did not know any.

In summary, Chinese immigrants have a smaller social circle. The social groups, compared to the ones they had in China, are unstable, and members are often regarded as less genuine. Their social group members consist of mainly Chinese immigrants. They have some local Americans friends, but there is no deep connection with them. Because of these characteristics, my participants cannot benefit from their new social network as they did before. For example, one of the interviewees talked about his experience while looking for a job:

The industry I work in, pharmacy, almost saturated. If you want to find a job, in this circle, within three people you can find people you know. All my classmates, when they were looking for a job, had relatives or friends in this industry, like 90% of them have, but I only rely on luck. (Mr. Liu)

Although to have a wide circle of friends is not a sufficient condition of high social capital, it is often necessary. Having a variety of social connections can bring convenience to all aspects of immigrant life. From this perspective, upper-class Chinese immigrants have accumulated a considerable amount of sustainable social resources, thus possess high social capital before coming to the United States. In comparison, when they are in the United States, their social capital is devalued because of the changes in the social network.

Relationship norms differences The size of the social network is not the single factor that decides one's social capital. Another possible explanation for social value depreciation happened to Chinese immigrants is the change of relationship norms. In China, relationships are often conducted around a set of dynamics represented by the term Guanxi. Guanxi refers to a type of relationship where individuals are interlocked in a system of favors and gifts (Smart, 1993; Fan, 2002). Guanxi is processual, in that it "lies in the skillful mobilization of moral and cultural imperatives such as obligation and reciprocity in pursuit of both diffuse social ends and calculated instrumental ends" (Yang, 1989). In other words, ones who have more guanxi in the society can mobilize more effectively their social networks and gain more benefits out of it, and thus has higher social capital. Existing research shows that guanxi can be positively leveraged to find jobs or conclude business deals (Fan, 2002) and, in my case, accessing status goods and services.

Guanxi is not the norm that Americans follow in their interpersonal or business relationships. It reflects on differences in personal and corporative behaviors. Take for example this article from readwrite.com entitled "Why major American corporations have struggled in China: Uber" (2017):

Another example of Didi Chuxing's (Uber's biggest competitor in China) understanding of Chinese culture is that a user was able to purchase a specific ride for another user. No major technological feat. No flashy design to exploit a person's subconscious. Simply the ability to pay for another person's ride. It is much more common in China for someone other than the rider to pay for a ride, so of course, an application must be accommodating of this fact. This is what is meant by having a feature be the technological extension of an already existing habit instead of trying to impose a new one. Uber never developed this functionality for China. (Jacobs, 2017)

Failing to understand guanxi leads to the inability of American companies, which reflects the two different relationship norms deeply embedded in the mind of their people. An interviewee talked about the difference of her having a restaurant,

Everything in China is about guanxi. In the United States, if you are in a middle class or even lower if you are not the top rich, you don't need too complicated interpersonal relationships. Because now you don't need to build a relationship to solve problems, you

can go to the government to solve; if you want to open a restaurant, you have to pass an examination from the government, you can solve it through the legal process. Unlike in China, everything needs a "red envelope(money)." That never happened to me in the United States. (Tina)

This relationship conflict, just as the diminution of the size of their social network, does not help much in immigration life and decreases the benefits that these upper-class Chinese immigrants could have as in China, i.e., their social capital becomes devalued.

Even if you have a lot of social connects here, there is no one to help you. Because this environment is like this, they are doing these things themselves. Unless you are the big boss of big companies, you don't get assistance to help with these things. (Mrs. Jie)

In summary, the change in size and composition of social networks and relationship norms explains the devaluation of social capital., I now explain how this devaluation reshapes Chinese immigrants' status consumption.

Status consumption transformation: restriction on consuming status goods and services

Based on the analysis of the data, I identify two significant transformations that reveal the restricted status consumption behaviors that upper-class Chinese immigrants experience because of the depreciation of their social capital. The first is that they lose access to some status goods or services that were accessible in China because of their abundant social resources. The second is that the new relationship norms in the US do not require gift-giving and do not provide occasions of formal social events, which means that there are a fewer number of situations where status goods are needed for gifts or personal use. These two forms of transformation in upper-class Chinese consumers' status consumption behavior are closely related to the two factors affecting social capital value, showing how the depreciation of social capital during immigration reshapes the way Chinese immigrants consume status goods or services.

Restricted status consumption: lack of access My participants enjoyed a high level of material life in China. In addition to their high level of economic capital, their strong network of social

contacts played an important role. All interviewees mentioned the different levels of the benefits that they had because of their social network. An example from a housewife,

Living in China, the family means two people, and even more. There are others to help you. For example, after my son was born, I have always had his grandparents, a babysitter, my husband has a driver, a secretary, and there is never anything in life that I need to worry. Here, I have to play several roles. I'm a driver, a nanny, and a chef. My mind is overload. It's tiring to taking care of a family by yourself. (Mrs. Cong)

When asked about if they still have this privilege in the U.S., all of them admit reluctantly that they do not have access to these privileges anymore. Part of the reason why is that they lack the specific connections necessary to get access to some luxury or status-enhancing goods and services. Continuing with the example mentioned above and help at home, Mrs. Cong couldn't find a nanny during the early immigration period because she did not know where to hire one from, or who to ask for that information:

Q: Why not hire a nanny?

A: I learned later because there are some Chinese (WeChat) groups, but when I first came here, I knew nobody, and I didn't know where to find them. Where is the babysitter market or agent? How to find a nanny? totally no idea. (Mrs. Cong)

Another example to show how changes in one's social network limit their benefit in life.

Errands like the annual inspection of the car, I call someone to do it for me in China; or when I go to the medical examination, I call someone to help make an appointment, see a doctor, we rest in VIP Hall, don't have to line up. But here, you have to do it yourself. (Mrs. Jie)

Some status services like what they mentioned above are restricted to these groups of Chinese people because they do not have contacts to find the right person to hire. Some other status services are strictly exclusive to a small group in the United States. An example is invite-only private clubs that demand that one is vouched for by existing members. Therefore, not having this kind of social connections truly limits the availability of status consumption. An example from one of the interviewees,

I met an upper-class American recently. He told me that he finally brought his eldest daughter into the yacht club. In addition to the high membership fees, his eldest daughter has been waiting for 5 or 6 years. He said that the yacht club is a small and exclusive circle which I have no access to now even in the future. It is more like a heritage. (Tina)

Combined with what we discussed before, the size or the composition change of their social network can lead to diminishing the benefits associated with such networks. This devalued social capital affects their status consumption since it does not always allow Chinese immigrants to get access to status-enhancing goods and services.

Restricted status consumption: gift-giving and social events According to Smart (1993), gift exchange is an "art of guanxi" in China. However, based on what I discussed in the previous section, guanxi is not the usual form of relationship norms in the U.S. Therefore, it is not necessary for Chinese immigrants to purchase expensive status goods as gifts to maintain valuable social relationships within their new North American context. An immigrant compared her experience with gift exchange in the two countries.

I feel that giving gifts to China is too common. I gave expensive cigarettes or wine as a gift when asking someone to do something. But there is no such thing in the United States. The teacher of the school, if the child gives a small gift, like flowers, they are very happy. (Mrs. Yu)

The reduction of luxurious gifts consumption happens after immigration. When they go back to China, they will go back to their original status consumption habit. The same effect is found in the first section, when Chinese people change their style back to Chinese fashion when they return to China. When immigrants go back to visit family and friends in China, they still follow the rule of guanxi and purchase luxury gifts for them.

I went to the outlets before I returned home (China). I bought a lot of things at their Christmas sale. They are all gifts, a lot of Burberry classic plaid scarves, and Max Mara coats. (Bella)

After immigration, changes in social norms subtly influence on the Chinese consumer's gift-giving habits, they are no longer bound by Guanxi that needs to be maintained with expensive gifts. Although reciprocity is implicitly expected according to gift-giving norms in North America (Sahlins, 1972), failing to reciprocate is a pardonable offense, and consumers sometimes prefer to rely on the market to escape reciprocity (Marcoux, 2009). In the Chinese context, failing to reciprocate is an affront that cannot be pardoned, and commercial and personal relationships are intrinsically connected (Smart, 1993). Also, when Chinese immigrants purchase gifts in the US, they do not buy expensive ones since the giver does not expect favor with the same value (i.e., their perception of gift exchange changed as it is not based on exchange for Guangxi anymore). Therefore, Chinese consumers reduce their luxury purchase (and consequently, of status consumption).

A last way status consumption affected by transformations in the social norms underlying the creation and maintenance of relationships (i.e., guanxi) has to do with the social events that are organized by people in China and where social relationships are invited (as a 'gift') and celebrated, or what Smart (1993) refers to as 'banquets' (Smart, 1993, p. 399). Upper-class Chinese immigrants had opportunities to organize and go to many such formal social events. These social events also served as contexts of status consumption display. Because of the switch of relationship norms and the lack of access to the American upper class, they do not attend as many formal social events as they did in China.

In Beijing, I attended the Chanel show, they arranged us at the Lis Kelton Hotel, gave us makeup and visit the catwalk for free, very very good! In the United States, there is no such opportunity. I have not worn high heels for a long time. (Mrs. Yu)

Another example,

In China, you often go to fancy restaurants. But here, not much. It doesn't make much sense to go alone to eat. There were my friends in China, and business partners going together to eat and to talk about business. There is no such environment here. (Mrs. Jie)

In conclusion, lack of access to acquire status service, a decrease in social occasions to consume and present status goods, and changes in gift exchange behaviors all lead to a reduction of luxury

goods and services and transformations in status consumption. And it is the devaluation of social capital, no matter in which form it presents, that causes this change.

How do changes in symbolic capital affect status consumption?

Symbolic capital is constituted from stocks of economic, social, or cultural capital that are recognized as legitimate bases for claiming prestige, respect, and/or authority within a given field and can therefore be converted as such (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In previous sections, I discussed the devaluation of wealthy immigrants' cultural and social capital. Because of that, even though their economic capital remains high after immigration, their symbolic capital also depreciates, which translates in a loss of reputation and social status within their new American social hierarchy.

Immigration made Chinese immigrants lose their original social status because of the devaluation of social and cultural capital. Chinese consumers perceive difficulty to reach their previous position in the American social status system. They also experience negative feelings towards their loss of social status. They feel regretful, devalued, disconnected from society, and a need for recognition in their new environment.

The transformations in status consumption I now present are associated with my participants' loss of status, i.e., symbolic capital, rather than other forms of capital. To address their loss of status, my participants engaged in two significant transformations in status consumption that involve conversions from economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. The first is that affluent Chinese parents heavily invest in their children as a new and essential aspect of their status consumption. Because they see their loss of symbolic capital and previous position in the social hierarchy as difficult, perhaps impossible, to regain, they invest in parenting activities. Although this is often not portrayed as an active and conscious endeavor, findings show that they do so to have their children enter reputable American universities and merge into American mainstream society so to differentiate themselves from other immigrants and American parents and better their social status and that of their family. The second transformation I identify is that Chinese consumers participate in a daily life dual status game in the U.S., where they apply different status

consumption strategies in the American-dominated social environment vs. the Chinese immigrants' community.

In the following section, I will first investigate how the symbolic capital of upper-class Chinese immigrants depreciated when they moved to the United States. The loss of social status and their attitude will be discussed. I then move on to how Chinese consumers act in such a way to address their devaluated class positioning by changing their status consumption.

Devalued symbolic capital Symbolic capital is constituted when specific forms of economic, social, or cultural capital are recognized as legitimate bases for claiming prestige, respect, and/or authority within a given field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Immigration made Chinese immigrants lose their original social status because of the devaluation of social and cultural capital. In China, my participants belong to the upper-class and possess a high social standing because of their high economic, cultural, and social capital. After their immigration, most of them stopped working and couldn't reach their previous level of social success. Although they do not lose a lot of economic capital and still enjoy a high level of material life, their cultural and social capital are devalued, as previous findings sections showed. This depreciated cultural capital and social capital result in lower symbolic capital in their new American context. Their symbolic capital is significantly reduced compared to when it was in China, something that sometimes feels unbearable. An interviewee told a story that her celebrity friends couldn't stand the loss of social status in the U.S. and returned home,

Because in fact, people who are very rich or have a high status in China will not come to the United States, unless they are here to accompany their children. My friends in China, I think they can't stand it when they come to the United States. When I was in Shanghai, I had celebrity friends, they can't accept it when they come here. They came, and after half a year, they felt depressed here. Couldn't accept that they became nothing, no one here cares whether you have money or not, showing off is useless. Nobody comes to you or to be friends with you because you have money. All of them were lost. (Mrs. Tai)

While analyzing the data about immigration's attitude towards loss of social status, some of them showed an indifferent manner. However, compared with their actual status consumption

behaviors, I argue that some of the answers may be biased. Social desirability bias refers to that interviewees tend to answer they think are socially acceptable when asked about. Stening and Zhang (2007) also pointed out that Chinese interviewees tend to be reluctant to disclose their thoughts and opinions (Stening & Zhang, 2007). In this case, not many respondents would tell directly that they seek social status, instead, they express their emotions in the narratives of stories of themselves or other people. There is some evidence showing that they feel insecure about their devalued symbolic capital. For example, they are offended when they lack recognition from others. When Mrs. Shang was in China, she shopped a lot in Chanel in Hong Kong, so the sales clerks knew her very well. Whenever she went, she enjoyed a VIP service, a private fitting room, and access to new arrivals or limited-edition products, something that she recognized made her quite happy. After she immigrated to the US, she did not have the same service anymore. Mrs. Shang talked about her experience with a salesperson at an American Chanel.

The salesperson's enthusiasm is very fake. For example, I saw a pair of shoes from Chanel and got a 25% discount. I bought it, but because the snakeskin is not easy to handle, I wanted to return it because it is hard to take care. The skin will peel, for 1000 dollars, I don't want it. The saleswoman said, how long do you want to wear it for? It was just 1000 dollars. Oh my gosh! she judges me. She has no right to judge me! (Mrs. Shang)

Previous research suggests that researchers while interpreting the qualitative data of Chinese participants need to understand that China is a very high-context culture in which people's meaning is often deeply embedded in what they are saying (Hall, 1976). In Chinese social context, face is a fundamental principle and life goal (Hu, 1944) and research suggests that collectivistic Eastern culture people are more concerned about others' perception of themselves than Western people (Hall, 1976). Sun et al. (2017) proposes to researchers of Chinese-related topics to consider the matter of face when explaining Chinese social behavior (Sun, Chen, & Li, 2017). In my case, my participants do not always directly address the cost in status associated with their transition from China to America. They might do so to hide their frustrations about losing status and also to save their face. However, issues associated with their loss of status can be discerned when they talk about other people. The next quote, which exemplifies the loss in status that my participants lived when immigrating to the U.S., provides a typical example of this, where the situation of an informant is told through their view of somebody else:

My cousin studied at Peking University Health Science Center, a seven-year undergraduate. You have to know that now seven years you get a master and a Ph.D. degree together already. Since she moved to the United States, she has always been a housewife. But her classmate became the director of Zhongnanhai Hospital. Another one is the vice president of Beijing Tongren Hospital, don't mention doctors, but my cousin has never worked, and has two children. The two children are well educated though, a Stanford, a Harvard. But how can a person have no ambition? At that time, my cousin learned very well in the class. But you see the house where she lives in the United States, the neighborhood where she lives, does she regret it? I am sure that she regrets it very much because if she stayed in China, continued to develop in China, she must be the dean of the hospital. Her life must be at least ten times better than this one in the United States. (Mrs. Cong)

Sometimes, though, participants reflectively and directly addressed the issues faced with their devaluation of status, which in this case verged on social isolation:

I am especially lonely. Every day is around children. At home, cooking, grocery. It has never been like this in China, and sometimes I feel out of touch with society and that I lost my value. In fact, at that time, I was thinking that I need to save myself because if I do nothing, I'm going to have depression. I felt very wrong. I was reading, looking for books that take me out of depression. I must do something to connect myself with society and feel my value again. (Mrs. Jie)

During the interview, they euphemistically expressed their regret for coming to the United States. They believe that they have lost the value of self-realization in the United States and are out of touch with society. They do not accept this loss as peacefully as they said; in fact, they still need recognition from the new environment. The devaluation of symbolic capital and their attitude towards it together affect their status consumption behavior.

Status consumption transformation

I identify two significant transformations in the status consumption of upper-class Chinese consumers to address their loss in social status. To be clear, I am not stating that these

transformations in their consumption of status goods and services are consciously directed towards regaining their loss in reputation and downward social trajectory. But as I will show, both transformations help address the struggles I have previously introduced and, when successful, address their loss of status. The first is that they invest in children, rather than themselves, to ensure a positive social trajectory in the U.S. for their children. The second is that they engage in a dual status game. By that, I meant that because immigration has led to transformations in social and cultural capital, and consequently to a loss of status for affluent Chinese consumers, their status consumption behavior is adjusted to compete in two independent status games in American society.

Parenting as an important form of status consumption Access to high-quality education in the US is the main reason that my participants stated for their immigration during the interviews. According to Forbes.com (2019), the largest percentage of international students at US colleges and universities are Chinese (30%, followed by 19% from India) (Rim, 2019). In the past, lots of Chinese laborers came to the US to make money in the hopes of a better life. My participants, however, came for their children to gain admission to the nation's most elite universities. They took part in the EB-5 program, the investment immigration program, to become US permanent resident to send their children to elite U.S. universities. The reason for this strategy, rather than sending their students as international students, is because it is much harder to get accepted as an international student (Spencer, 2013). According to forbes.com (2019), Chinese enrollment in US high schools grew 48% from 2013 to 2016, with the majority coming from wealthy and middle-class families (Rim, 2019). This is a new American dream for wealthy Chinese parents. Mrs. Cong explained that only her son and herself are enrolled in the immigration program. Her husband is working in China to sponsor their life in the US.

Q: Why did you choose to immigrate to the United States?

A: My husband likes American education very much. He thinks it is good for children. My husband did not immigrate, and my son and I did it. Most of my husband's business is in China, and he only comes here occasionally. Most of the mothers here are the same as my situation. The dad must make money at home, and the mom takes care of the child here. When my son goes to college, I want to go back to China. (Mrs. Cong)

Previous research tends to show the transformation or loss of, or failure to acquire capitals as having negative consequences for consumers (e.g., Üstüner and Holt, 2007; Üstüner and Thompson, 2012). For my participants, it seems that the loss of their cultural, social, and symbolic capital is offset by this new type of status consumption. Whether sending their children to prestigious universities was initially their sole motivation, it became an important one to either justify or maybe redress their loss of social positioning. After moving, my participants started to extensively invest in the life of their children, especially their education. Benton and Gomez (2014) argued that Chinese families value education in a different way than American families because “the Chinese approach ... views education the only effective path to upward social mobility for the family as a whole rather than for individual children and children’s success in school and later in life is not a matter of individual status attainment, but rather a family obligation tied to a filial piety and face-saving” (Benton & Gomez, 2014, p18).

For example, my participants started to help their children make friends with other American kids, a sharp contrast with their own, often failed, social endeavors. Mrs. Jie said that she was keen on volunteering in her son’s school and arranging playdates with his American classmates to help her son have American friends.

I helped him to fit in American kids circle. Especially when he was younger, I was very keen on doing this. When I first started, he didn't have friends. I often went to school to do volunteers and invited other children to come to our house. I arrange playdates, so he slowly started to have some friends. (Mrs. Jie)

Making friends with American children is the first step. Unlike Chinese universities, in the U.S., college admissions are not merely based on their GPA. As mentioned in the example below, my participants arrange extra curriculum activities for their children so that they have a better curriculum vitae when they apply to the top American universities. These activities are mainly those that reflect what they view as necessary to access American elite: expensive club sports training such as fencing and golf and music classes such as trumpet class or piano class.

As a Chinese tradition, nothing is more important than to study. Therefore, Chinese parents naturally want their children to take a good university. Many parents have "climb the Ivy" as a target (get accepted by Ivy League). Ivy League wants all-round development of children, student association activities, competitions, GPA, extracurricular activities. So

Chinese parents here are talking about this. Sports competitions, math competitions, and then participate in an excellent orchestra, Washington Orchestra, to be the first spot trumpeter. Mothers are not only talking but also acting. (Mrs. Jie)

Mrs. Cong quitted her job in Mandarin School so that she had more time to schedule her son's fencing class.

Q: Are you working in the US?

A: I used to teach in a Chinese school. Later, I quitted. My child needs to go to fencing classes. On weekends, he needs to go to other states to compete. I must ask for a leave frequently, so I resigned. I reply to emails from my child's school and take him to participate in extracurricular activities. For example, in February, my son went to another state to participate in a fencing competition. I planned the trip, booked the hotel and the flight.

Another example,

I feel that my character is introverted, but there is a change in me for my children ... Because here is the world for winners, you have to be strong, we will discuss between our mothers, our children's extracurricular activities are full, we will participate in baseball, youth club, and club sports. (Mrs. Tai)

In their new American context, my participants' investment in their children's' future has become an essential, new, type of status consumption. When asked about the question "What's good to be rich here?", a participant answered: "People won't make friends with me because I'm rich. But If you are a high-income person, you can get better educational resources. The tuition is really expensive here." Indeed, the average undergraduate tuition & fees of Ivy League Colleges for American students is \$54,414 in the academic year 2018-2019 and even higher for international students (College Tuition Compare, 2019). In this sense, elite education is a luxury in the U.S. that not everybody has access to and wealthy Chinese parents are consuming this luxury as the biggest status item after they moved. To have their children get accepted in US elite universities is a "class act" for Chinese parents (Demick, 2010). In this article, they showcased how a Chinese girl and her parents suddenly became celebrities in their community after she got accepted by Harvard. Ivy League schools enjoy a high reputation all over China, and it is highly regarded for a family to

have one of their children accepted. This is especially true given struggles experienced by my participants after their immigration, such as a loss in social status:

We have given up such a pleasant environment in China, such a high social status, we made so much sacrifice as parents. If the child doesn't get accepted (by Ivy League), it feels too bad. (Mrs. Jie)

In conclusion, a first way status consumption is transformed is through a movement away from leveraging cultural and social capital for themselves to investing in their children. Having their children accepted in an elite American university is a new type of luxury that could help alleviate the loss in social status experienced by my participants. However, this has a price, whether economical, such as high investments required for the immigration program and expensive extra curriculum activities, as well as a loss of status and value for their capitals. Or, put differently, the cost associated with the transformation of status for their children is their status loss.

Dual status game All participants reported interactions with two central social circles, in which their status consumption behavior varied. One is composed of Chinese individuals, and the other one, of Americans and other immigrants.

Within the American dominated groups, on the one hand, my participants admitted that they could not bond with group members due to the language barrier and cultural difference as discussed before. On the other hand, they are willing to spend time with them because they see a need to socialize and integrate into mainstream society. Mrs. Cong explained that she was determined to socialize with Americans to “live a different life”. Same as their attitude towards this community, my participants also reported a mix feeling towards the Chinese dominated groups, composed of other Chinese immigrants. Some indicated a clear preference for close contact because they feel more at ease communicating with whom they share the same language, culture, and mentality. Mrs. Shang admitted that it feels more relaxed to talk with Chinese even it is the first time they meet, and unlike with Americans, she knows what to say”. Other participants reported less interaction with this community due to their disgust of the way people interact inside. Mrs. Cong explained the reason that she tried to avoid interacting with other Chinese because she does not like “Chinese people get together and gossip all the time, especially, Chinese mothers’

circle.” Despite different feelings towards this group, all my participants reported that the interaction is unavoidable.

Whether they prefer one group to the other, all participants tended to adjust their status consumption differently in the two communities, which I refer to “dual status game”. Bourdieu’s idea about social games refers to how social fields are structured by “field-specific rules, norms, and scripts”, which leads social actors to be placed into relations of “dominance and subordination based in large part on relative distributions of capital that influence how effectively they play the prevailing status games” (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 799). Those “who have less favorable distributions of capital, mobilize to reshape or subvert the rules of the game in ways that are more favorable to their relative positions” (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 799). In my case, I propose that since these two communities differ from each other on rules and norms, Chinese immigrants mobilize their capitals different and consequently practice status consumption differently in each status game. In the American-dominated community, as noted before, to escape the rich Chinese stigma, they change their style to cater to American tastes. My participants with better social connections were able to join exclusive sports clubs, while others planned road trips, and took part in marathons, activities that are not popular in China.

I joined a golf club here. This is the Washington country golf club here. Three American friends recommended me. They wrote me a recommendation letter. It seems difficult to join, you need to pay some membership fees. I went to participate in one of their activities. (Mrs. Tai)

She admitted that some Chinese immigrants do exercise to imitate American’s lifestyle. They want to show that they have plenty of free time and money to take care of themselves. Playing by the rules of this new American status game allow them to position themselves within America society:

I am going to run a marathon. And my goal is to complete a triathlon, and I found like-minded American moms. The Chinese are not so much in love with sports. They are taking selfies in the gym. Nowadays, many people are still imitating the lifestyle of Americans and living the same way as their upper class. They need to emulate the lifestyles of the higher class. They use what they wear and what they buy to feel that their lives are not too bad here. They are not passionate about sports. (Mrs. Tai)

Chinese consumers are willing to fit into American communities and rebuild their social network. Some of them try to keep a distance from the Chinese community. However, not all of them can separate themselves from Chinese communities, where their cultural capital and social capital can be more easily transformed into symbolic capital. Therefore, when they are engaged in Chinese communities, they signal their social status in a way that Chinese people can recognize. In terms of fashion style, they still purchase luxury goods, although sometimes they are under peer pressure from others in the community.

(Bag) In addition to the world's top brands, there is nothing to buy. BV, LV, Chanel, this is for sure. Those things can show that you have money. My girlfriends, everyone is using this high-grade brand; you cannot be lower than this brand, very vain. Now it is the same. Buying Hermès now, because it is a must-have. I don't really like it, but I still bought it. This is consumer psychology. I purchased the Hermès bag, not because of its style, but because of its rarity, not everyone can get it. To be honest, no matter how free I want to be and how much I want to follow my heart, but I still have a vanity side. I 'haven't used the bag that much since I bought it. No occasions. I use it when I shop with Chinese friends.
(Mrs. Shang)

Despite luxury goods consumption, they also keep a distance from completely cater to American taste because it is not classy for Chinese aesthetic.

Americans are grandma style, rarely dress well. Or those sweet, blond girls, almost naked, tube top, tight miniskirts, and they are not even fit — styles of girls in Playboy. I don't allow myself to be this lazy. Maybe I want to wear casual, but all my clothes are suitable. I cannot find clothes that are too broken and too out of style. (Mrs. Shang)

In summary, Chinese consumers deploy two very different status strategies to adapt to two groups of people because of the field-specific nature of social, cultural, and conversely symbolic capital. In Chinese communities, this group of Chinese immigrants consume luxury goods recognizable by their Chinese peers and keep a distance from American aesthetic to enhance their social status. In the American communities, they reduce their luxury purchase to escape the Tuhao stigma and imitate American's lifestyle to foster their status there.

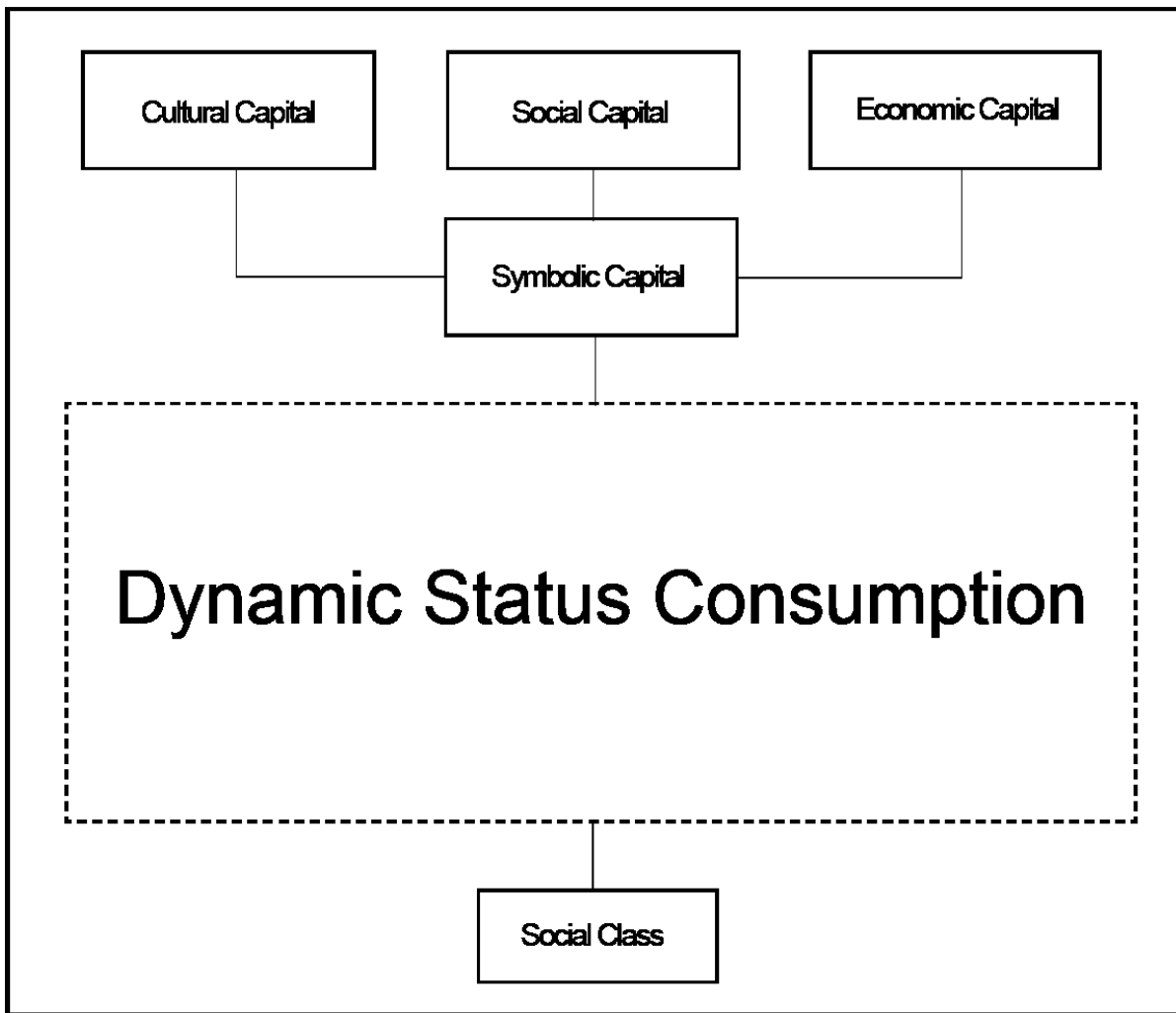
Dynamic status consumption theory: the trajectory of capital structuring status consumption

My analysis of how wealthy Chinese consumers' cultural, social capital and consequently symbolic capital get devalued after their immigration to the U.S. is used to explain how their status consumption accordingly transformed. By doing so, I resolve two gaps in consumer acculturation and status consumption literature. First, no research had demonstrated how high economic capital and high social class immigrants engaged in status consumption following acculturation. Second, no theory catered to the status consumption behavior of consumers after geographic movement (i.e., immigration). To address these two unanswered questions, we must recognize the potential links behind these two research streams, i.e., acculturation and status consumption. These two questions seem to come from two different fields, but they have the possibility of informing one another. My research on the status consumption of wealthy Chinese immigrants contributes to finding in such ways.

First, the population I studied, the wealthy upper-class Chinese consumers, is ideal to address the lack of research in previous literature which did not investigate the category of high economic capital and high social class and extends the theories of consumer acculturation by “attending to the sociocultural structuring of acculturation” (Üstüner and Holt, 2007, p43). Üstüner and Holt (2007) put forward that conceptual myopia exists in the acculturation literature: “none of the studies specify the sociocultural structuring of consumer acculturation” (Üstüner and Holt, 2007, p. 42). They noted that even though previous work all noticed the importance of testing the robustness consumer acculturation theory in different contexts, investigating the “key differences in social and cultural structures that lead to differing patterns of consumer acculturation” is the central quest of consumer acculturation research (Üstüner and Holt, 2007, p. 42). They also pointed out that “contexts matter when they harbor underlying structures that differentially affect consumer acculturation” (Üstüner and Holt, 2007, p. 43). In Üstüner and Holt's (2007) study, they selected poor Turkish migrants who moved from an Eastern village into a large modern city “with little economic, social, and cultural capital necessary to participate in consumer culture” (Üstüner and Holt, 2007, p. 44). In contrast, I selected wealthy upper-class Chinese as they belong to the sociocultural category characterized as high economic capital and high social class. This study

extends previous theoretical accounts by examining a new immigrant sociocultural category, which provides a unique context that varies substantially from previous literature.

Figure 1 - Dynamic Status Consumption Model



Second, because I focused on their status consumption after their immigration, this creates a suitable environment to establish a dynamic status consumption theory informed by geographical movement. As discussed before, previous studies did not provide a full explanation of how consumers practice status consumption following geographical movement. Rooted in my context

and based on the analysis of the findings, I created a model of dynamic status consumption (Figure 1). A key contribution of my study is to use Bourdieu's field theory, to be specific, the idea of the trajectory of capital, to explain the dynamics of status consumption after immigration. This was an ideal enabling theory for two reasons: (1) Bourdieu's approach has been studied to varying degrees in both the field of consumer acculturation and status consumption (2) the concept of "trajectory of capital" mentioned by Bourdieu involves changes in time and space. It is also a dynamic process like acculturation and dynamic status consumption. Therefore, to build the model, I first include changes in immigrants' cultural, social, and economic capital, three main concepts of Bourdieu's field theory. This addresses Bourdieu's claim (2000, 19) that "people find that their expectations and ways of living are suddenly out of step with the new social position they find themselves in. This is what consumers in my context experienced after immigration, and it resulted in different levels of devaluation in the volume of cultural, social, and their symbolic capital. Evidence shows that consumers change their status consumption behavior, either consciously or not, to address these devaluations and reposition themselves in American society. The model, though, has its limitation on generalizability considering the particularity of my context in the sociocultural category (i.e., consumers with high economic capital and high social class). I, therefore, added economic capital and social class factors for my model to be generalized to individuals in other sociocultural categories as I next explain. I now discuss in detail the key factors in the model and contrasting the main findings with existing studies.

Economic capital as a moderator

According to demographic data, my participants still enjoyed a high level of material life after immigration. Based on their place of living as well as their home in the U.S., their financial situation was not a difficulty in their lives as immigrants, in comparison to previous studies (e.g. Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the importance of economic capital in the dynamic status consumption model because economic capital is a precondition that enables immigrants' status consumption to evolve after their immigration to foster a new social status. In Üstüner and Holt's (2007) study, the daughter of poor Migrant Women from remote villages moving to Turkish squatter first practice their consumption to pursue the *Batıcı* myth associated with the most successful and admired upper-middle-class Turkish

women (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). However, five years later, due to the lack of economic capital, they could not realize this way of consumption anymore. They were forced to tolerate the unwanted squatter identity that their mom pursues (Üstüner & Holt, 2007).

In contrast, my participants, upper-class Chinese immigrants, to address issues associated with the devaluation of their cultural capital, can afford to engage in various types of status consumption behavior. For example, they participated in continuous education after immigration. This new consumption practice required two preconditions that other immigrants without enough economic capital cannot achieve. First, they did not have to work to support their families, thus had enough time to attend classes; Second, they could afford the expensive tuition fees typical in the United States. This cost and other sunk costs require enough economic capital. My participants also heavily invested in their children's education to address issues associated with devalued symbolic capital. Similar to the case of education for themselves, the club sports, music classes and other extra curriculum activities required both time and money investments. According to Bourdieu (1986), "the different types of capital can be derived from economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 53). In cases where types of capitals have different degrees of devaluation, they can be converted into other capitals for consumers to regain or retain their social positioning (e.g., economic capital is converted into cultural capital in the case of continuous education), offering avenues to successfully transform their status consumption. Hence, transformations in the value of economic capital after geographic movement acts as a moderator in how consumers' status consumption might change following immigration.

Social class as a moderator

Üstüner and Holt's (2007) study addresses the issue of class position. Turkish villagers, after migrating to squatter communities, practice their consumption with respect to *Baticı* lifestyle, however, from the bottom of the class hierarchy (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). The authors describe their situation as "squatter women have little money to pursue this lifestyle (economic capital), they have virtually no social ties that allow them to participate easily (social capital), and they have not been socialized in the tastes and practices required to find enjoyment in this way of living (cultural capital)" (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 47). My work differs here because my participants had a high social class in China but changed social classes after their immigration to the US. They

did not belong anymore to the top echelon of the social hierarchy. This represents a type of social mobility. Social mobility is defined as the downward or upward direction movement within or between layers or tiers in an open system of social stratification (Lopreato & Hazerlrigg, 1970); "social mobility is any change in social position" (Heckman & Mosso, 2014). Social mobility is highly dependent on the overall structure of social statuses and occupations in a given society (Grusky & Hauser, 1984). In my case, upper-class Chinese immigrants experienced downward social mobility, from the elite of the nation with reputable jobs to residents in the US who can hardly be qualified as upper class. After immigration, most of them did not have a professional life, let alone a reputable one, and achievements in other fields did not allow them to retain their position in the social hierarchy compared to before their immigration. The social status that my participants had in China broke down in the US because of the devaluation of their cultural and social capital, and conversely of their symbolic capital. However, they can strive to regain their previously class position (e.g., by interacting with the American community or look for a job) or as mentioned before, use their high economic capital to transform into other forms of capital. Therefore, part of the transformation of their status consumption behavior focused on addressing the loss of class-based resources which I will discuss in detail in the following sections. These actions can not be completed by immigrants who come from a lower social class as in the example of Turkish villagers. The current study argues that consumers' social class positions before and after immigration mediates the transformation process of their status consumption behavior, whereas status consumption behavior will be different from individuals who are from lower social class or experience other types of social mobility.

Cultural capital

The first cultural capital devaluation that happened to Chinese immigrants was linked to the discounting of their education credentials. Essentially, this problem has to do with the immigrants' educational experience acquired outside the U.S., which is not being fully recognized by local employers or Americans more generally speaking. Especially in my case, immigrants are from a country that does not have a good reputation for education quality. According to Universities World Reputation Rankings 2018 given by Times Higher Education, only 9 Top100 universities are from China (3 of them are in Hongkong) (Times Higher Education, 2018). Compared to 25

American universities and 32 European ones, China is not well-perceived regarding the quality of its education level. Therefore, most of American people and companies are not familiar with Chinese immigrants' education background. Li's (2001) study on the market worth of immigrants' education credentials revealed that a foreign degree discounts visible-minority immigrant on their occupational status and employment income compared to locals (Li, 2001). My study extends this and relates the discount of education credentials to the devaluation of one's cultural capital volume and examine it affects status consumption. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital has its institutionalized state in terms of degrees and certificates (Bourdieu, 1986). Upper-class Chinese immigrants who had high cultural capital before immigration experience a discount on their educational credentials in the U.S., therefore experiencing a devaluation of their cultural capital.

Education is a central consumption domain in North America. It is consumers' primary source of debt (McCarthy, 2018) and also one of the main legitimizing consumption objects, contributing to social progression and status (Spiel, et al., 2018). As a result, the depreciation of the value of their degree and education hinders Chinese consumers' social status after their move to the U.S. Findings show that after immigration, all my participants engage to different extend in continuous education in various subjects and that they did so without a financial objective in mind, i.e., they did so not to fulfill some professional project. Hence, I propose that Chinese consumers do so at least partly (and perhaps unconsciously) to address this issue of cultural capital devaluation and to regain social positioning that they used to have associated with their high cultural capital. Getting educated in American educational system and acquiring the skills to work in the United States (although this does not mean they would work) on the one hand revalues the objectified cultural capital associated with education in front of American audience (e.g. American employers or American friends); on the other hand, supports their distinction from other Chinese immigrants surrounding them (e.g. lower-class Chinese immigrants). The field of education takes a significant position in immigrant status consumption, which I will discuss later.

The second factor is the stigmatization of pre-existing status consumption behaviors. Wealthy Chinese immigrants are stigmatized by Western culture for their extremely luxurious lifestyle and consumption-related practices that are seen as "showing off." In terms of fashion styles, their conspicuous brand consumption is not appreciated by American audiences, which also leads to a devaluation of their cultural capital. Arsel and Thompson (2011) investigated the situation where

"consumers experience a market myth as a threat to the value of their identity investments in a field of consumption" (Arsel & Thompson, 2011, p. 792). Similar to Arsel and Thompson's (2011) hipster case, after moving to the U.S., wealthy Chinese consumers are faced with a devaluing marketplace myth: "Tuhao," or what the BBC referred to as "Chinese bling" (BBC, 2013). Thus, their status consumption patterns become influenced by this marketplace myth. This marketplace myth is also fueled by movies and media, which show affluent Chinese consumers as brand-hungry "nouveaux riches" who do not know how to dress properly (e.g., *Rich Crazy Asians*). Aware of this devaluing myth, upper-class high cultural capital Chinese consumers reduce their consumption of luxury brands and change their style to a more casual and informal look to cater to American tastes. By doing so, they escape the stigma by distinguishing themselves from those Chinese immigrants who earn the name of "Tuhao (uneducated crass rich)" and add value to their cultural capital. These findings extend that of Arsel and Thompson's work, which revealed how consumers "use demythologizing practices to protect their identity investments from devaluation and to distance and distinguish their field of consumption, and corresponding consumer identities, from undesirable associations" (Arsel & Thompson, 2010, p. 792). It does so by showing another context where consumers work against devaluing marketplace myths and propose a new strategy, transforming consumer behavior, to address the devaluing myth.

Social capital

The changes in the volume of social capital is an essential factor in a dynamic theory of status consumption because changes in social network and relationship norms can lead to changes in availability and necessity of status good and service. Confucianism profoundly influences Chinese society with rules and standards considerably different from Western society (Björkman & Kock, 1995). As noted before, in Chinese culture, social capital has another name: Guanxi, which is a distinct construct of Chinese society and represents a collectivist culture (Hwang, 1987). Guanxi is based on social connections built on "pre-existing relationships of classmates, people from the same native-place, relatives, superior and subordinate in the same workplace, and so forth" (Yang, 1988, p. 411). Chinese people utilize Guanxi to mobilize their social networks and gain benefits, mainly through gift exchange and hosting social events.

Most of the literature tends to investigate how foreign companies adapt to Chinese relationship norms (Guanxi) when they expand in the Chinese market. For example, Smart's (1993) studied the case of Mr. Goh and Mr. Dang who set up a shoe factory in China and had to build up Guanxi with a local high official to facilitate their business for instance by providing him extravagant banquets (i.e. social event) and trips to Hongkong (gift) (Smart, 1993). However, my work differs from the previous studies in two ways: first, I investigated the opposite moving direction, from China to the United States. I try to understand how Chinese immigrants in the U.S. change their consumption practice to adapt to American relationship norms. Second, I catered to interpersonal dynamics in a consumer context.

Findings showed that Chinese immigrants in the US experience the Western relationship norm that differs from Guanxi thus change their consumption behavior. In terms of gift exchange, as discussed in the finding section, due to the devaluation of their social capital, Chinese consumers reduced their purchase of luxury gifts. Besides, evidence shows that upper-class Chinese immigrants lose opportunities to organize or attend formal social events, another form through which Guanxi was build, after moving to the U.S. Because this consumption practice in favor of Guanxi once served as contexts for social capital, economic capital and social status display for Chinese consumers and in exchange for Guanxi. The reduction of those in the U.S, for Chinese consumers, accordingly limits the potential to consume status goods and services.

Symbolic capital

Lastly, it is important to discuss changes in the volume of symbolic capital, as its transformations leads to specific transformations in status consumption that cannot solely be explained by the devaluation of other types of capital. My study demonstrates how immigrants' symbolic devalued after immigration. Symbolic capital includes prestige, recognition, social status, or honor. It derives from economic, cultural, and social capital. Due to the devaluation of their social and cultural capital, my participants lost their previous social status and the prestige that came along with it. It is hard for them to be distinct from others in their new environment. They experience a negative feeling towards this loss of status. Huot's (2017) study on immigrants' occupational engagement suggests that immigrants reported a similar frustration associated with a loss of status, where they felt they needed to "regain forms of symbolic capital that were no longer

recognized or valued” (Huot, 2017, p.42). Hence, they engage in a range of occupations to regain forms of devalued symbolic capital. In contrast, the current study proposes that finding a job is not the only option for immigrants who came from high social status to address the loss. In my case, upper-class wealthy Chinese consumers practice various status consumption to foster their new status. Two changes in their status consumption behaviors are identified that relate to the loss of symbolic capital. I now relate this to existing work.

Previous literature on consumer acculturation highlights the importance of studying immigrants’ parenting behaviors and generational differences in acceptance or rejection of new consumer culture. In Üstüner and Holt’s (2007) study, they showed that the poor Turkish mothers, having moved to the squatter, maintained their previous taste and rituals and tried to pass on this ideology to their daughter through daily interactions (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Huot’s (2017) study on immigrants’ symbolic capital illuminates that parenting behavior can justify the loss for the symbolic capital of immigrants (Huot, 2017). She found that immigrants, when they experience the symbolic violence, regard themselves as “part of a ‘sacrificed generation’ who had lost everything, but did [so] in hopes that their migration would provide a better future for [their] children” (Huot, 2017, p. 42). Extending previous studies, my finding shows that upper-class Chinese immigrants heavily invested in their children not only as a compensation for their losses but also as a significant status consumption domain to purchase and display to others for creating new distinctions. They spent time helping their children to make American friends and paid for expensive extra curriculum activities for their children to have a better chance of being accepted by American elite universities that enjoy a high reputation in China. By doing so, they distinguish themselves with their peers back home and other parents in the U.S. (including American parents) whose children are not as successful as theirs in academic performance.

Another finding on status consumption related to the devaluation of symbolic capital is that Chinese consumers are personally engaging in a dual status game. My participants concomitantly interacted with two main groups of people: Americans and other Chinese immigrants. They had to juggle between properly displaying status in either group. In the American-dominated community, the Chinese immigrants under the study appeared to change their previous status consumption behavior to escape from the rich Chinese stigma and imitate American lifestyle. However, in the Chinese-dominated community, they kept their distance from American taste and maintained some

of their previous consumption behaviors. I argue that changes in their consumption behavior are done in accordance to the people they interact with and in relation to their desire to re-foster their social status. Symbolic capital is constituted through collectively understood status games whose legitimating criteria are formally and informally codified (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012). This leads Chinese consumers to adjust their status consumption behavior to match two systems with different legitimating criteria. These switches of consumption behavior are documented in the literature and conceptualized as “culture swap.” Oswald (1999) defined culture swap as “ethnic consumers using goods to move between one cultural identity and another as they negotiate relations between home and host cultures” (Oswald, 1999, p. 303). In Oswald’s (1999) paper, a Haitian immigrant in the US serves creme brulée at the Thanksgiving feast. The authors suggest that by doing so, the participant switched from consumption influenced by American culture to consumption that displays her ethnicity tied to French colonial experience in Haiti (Oswald, 1999). However, my study differs from Oswald’s (1999) paper by investigating immigrants’ desire for social status, rather than for unique ethnical identity, behind their cultural swapping behavior. Wealthy Chinese consumers use status consumption to navigate themselves between Chinese culture and American mainstream culture as their relationships with both communities are fluid and complexed. They consume goods and services as people from a high social position in these two communities do. When the symbolic meaning of their status consumption in one context is not recognizable or not admirable in another context, they switch their behavior to join the new status game.

Managerial Recommendation

Peñaloza (1994) reveals the critically important role of marketers and their impact on Mexican immigrants’ consumer acculturation process via segmentation strategies (Peñaloza, 1994). Chinese consumers have long been studied and targeted by luxury brand marketers. Website Business of Fashion reveals one of the biggest secrets of Hypebeast’s success is to “understand the value of China” (BOF, 2019). As luxury goods and services are a significant part of wealthy Chinese immigrants’ status consumption, international luxury brand marketers also need to pay attention to the switches of Chinese consumers’ purchase behaviors after immigration. As discussed before, purchase and use of luxury goods, especially those with recognizable brand logos, have brought a negative image for wealthy Chinese consumers who are overseas. This is a stigma

that high cultural capital and high social status Chinese immigrants are eager to distance themselves from. From this point of view, luxury brands may need to brand their products less visibly to attract at least some Chinese consumers or practice their branding differently in China or abroad when targeting Chinese consumers. Han et al. (2010) proposed a taxonomy that assigns consumers to four categories according to their wealth and need for status (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). Wealthy consumers low in need for status want to pay a premium for inconspicuously branded luxury goods to associate to people of their kind; wealthy consumers high in need for status, instead, use loud products to signal their status to less affluent people (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). However, this assumes that consumers always have the same level of need for status, and the signaling code is unified everywhere, which may not be the case in the current study. The reasons are as follow: First, wealthy Chinese after immigration lose their previous social status, and they may try to use status consumption to regain some symbolic power. Second, when Chinese immigrants navigate their social status in two different groups of people, the signaling codes in terms of fashion styles are different. Therefore, marketers need to admit that the social motivation behind luxury purchase behavior is fluid and complicated and depends on the context in which consumers are.

I suggest that, to target upper-class wealthy Chinese in the U.S., brands need to create a code, associated with their symbolic value, that can be recognized in different contexts, such as the two distinct groups of people my participants evolve in. Brand collaboration could serve this purpose. One of my participants mentioned the collaboration made by Uniqlo with Lemaire. She explained to me that designer Christophe Lemaire is the former designer for Hermes and that she knew about it because she followed fashion news on the Internet. Anyone can buy a 300-euro T-shirt from Lemaire if they can afford it, but only the ones with taste and knowledge of fashion will know about collaborations and get it on time.

Another example can be limited editions. Yeezy sneakers, another brand that my participants mentioned, for example, is not desired because it commands premium price but for its exclusivity and scarcity on the quantity that not money but sometimes your social connections (e.g., shoe resellers; staff working for retailers) can get access to. In a word, conspicuousness should be created not only based on economic capital: if luxury brands can figure out a way to make their products conspicuous, not only based on economic capital, but also cultural capital (e.g., taste and

knowledge of fashion) and social capital (e.g., social contacts), it might help attract wealthy Chinese immigrants of all types.

Limitation and Future Research

A dynamic theory of status consumption is important to study, given that it potentially reveals the consumption behavior of consumers who have experienced or are experiencing social mobility, including most immigrants. The investigation of wealthy upper-class Chinese immigrants in the U.S. provides a context where high capital consumers experienced downward social mobility, providing the first try at the creation of such a theory. Future research, among other migrants in other countries or different types of social mobility, could better specify this context and help in furthering this theory. For example, it would be necessary to study other kinds of social mobility of consumers with less capital.

Another limitation of the current study is that ethnic and religious factors are neglected in the dynamic status consumption model. Unlike mainstream studies on consumer acculturation, the original intention of my research was not to investigate the ethnical identity formation of immigrants. However, future research should consider ethnical factors in the model as well as religious factors so that the model can be generalized to other contexts.

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APPENDIX A – Pre-interview Questionnaire

1. What's your Chinese name? English name?
2. How old are you?
3. What's your gender?
4. Why did you immigrate to the U.S.?
5. What type of visa do you hold now?
6. What's your immigration status now?
7. How long have you been in the U.S.?
8. What's your occupation in China?
9. What's your occupation in the U.S.?
10. What's your education level?
 - a. High school or less
 - b. College or equivalent
 - c. BA
 - d. Master
 - e. PhD
11. Have you perused any level of education after immigration? If Yes, please elaborate.
12. What's your English level?
 - a. Not at all (I don't speak any English)
 - b. Not well (I know basic words and sentences but can't have conversations)
 - c. Well (I can have simple conversations)
 - d. Very well (I'm quite fluent)
 - e. Academic or business level
13. What's your father's education level?
 - a. High school or less
 - b. College or equivalent
 - c. BA
 - d. Master
 - e. PhD
14. What's your father's occupation?
15. What's your mother's education level?

- f. High school or less
- g. College or equivalent
- h. BA
- i. Master
- j. PhD

16. What's your mother's occupation?

17. Where did you live in China? Please provide postal code if possible.

18. Where are you living in the U.S.? Please provide postal code if possible.

19. Which school do your children go?

APPENDIX B – Üstüner and Holt's (2010) Cultural Capital Scale

Cultural capital rating = upbringing (father's education + occupation)/2 + education + occupation.

Education ratings:

1 = high school or less;

2 = some college (AA);

3 = BA;

4 = master's/ some graduate school;

5 = PhD or elite BA (i.e., from a prestigious, selective college or university).

Occupation ratings:

1 = unskilled or skilled manual labor;

2 = unskilled or skilled service/clerk;

3 = sales, low-level technical, low-level managerial;

4 = high-level technical, high-level managerial, and low cultural (e.g., primary/secondary teachers);

5 = cultural producers.

Homemakers are rated at the average of all working women.