



PolyU Design

# PhD

THESIS SERIES

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Transnational Consumer Culture and Middle  
Class Professionals: an Ethnographic Account of  
Consumption and Identity in Post-Reform China

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# PhD

1999–2020 THESIS SHOWCASE

Many young professionals aspire to link themselves with a transnational consumer culture, as they believe that it invokes a certain social status and sophistication. The thesis investigates the relationship between consumption and urban middle-class identity formation in mainland China, which examines the consumption practices and class in post-reform China. The study argues that there are insufficient theories which explicate the interrelationship between consumption practices and sociology theories. Utilising the findings from an empirical study in Shenzhen, this research consists of three objectives. The first is to study the interconnections between consumption and the construction of urban middle-class identity. The second is to examine the movements of consumer goods and how the narratives of transnational capitalism are experienced at the local level. The third is to describe some of the key consumption practices associated with urban middle class life. This thesis provides an ethnographic account that examines the role of consumption practices and narratives of transnational capitalism in constructing urban middle-class identity.

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