Distinction in China—
the rise of taste in cultural consumption

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Abstract

This research studies how cultural consumption draws cultural distinctions in the most developed megacities in China. This research examines the pattern of music consumption to examine distinction—which types of music are used, how they are used, who are using them, and what are the sources of those tastes. Although some theories, such as the cultural omnivore account, contend that the rise of contemporary pop culture implies a more open-minded pursuit of taste, this research argues that popular culture draws distinction in new ways. Based on a 1048 random-sample survey and 21 interviews on music in China, this research shows how the penetration of foreign music into China has allowed it to become a form of cultural capital—high-status cultural knowledge and dispositions that can be leveraged for social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). This research pioneers in cultural capital research the use of MIRT, a latent trait method from psychometrics, to reveal the pattern of music taste. Those with high levels of cultural capital had more exposure to certain types of music such as classical music and selective foreign pop music, which requires knowledge and research to consume, accumulating in "tastes" which they deploy to measure others. Those with low cultural capital tend to follow the mainstream or are uninterested in these music types. In turn, the meaning of cultural capital in China is examined to show how taste is influenced by not only current socioeconomic differences but also the past, most notably the privileged childhood of those growing up in advantaged families. The rise of taste in China is traced to rising inequality under Reform and Opening which led to a diverging upbringing in the newest generation of Chinese. This research updates Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, which has traditionally focused on elite highbrow culture, by demonstrating how the influx of global culture in a contemporary society has enabled the continuation of cultural distinction.

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Part I. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. Distinction, taste, and cultural capital

This thesis examines the distinction of cultural consumption in Chinese megacities, to analyze the hierarchy of music taste, how it is stratified, whether it is utilized for distinction, and what are the underlying causes that enable distinction in China. The research is informed by the debate between the theories of cultural capital and cultural omnivores. Bourdieu argued that differences in the level of cultural capital, which is cultural knowledge, preferences, and dispositions, as the reason for distinctions in cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984). However, with the decline of high culture and the rise of popular culture, his theory on cultural capital has been increasingly challenged by accounts that argue for cultural eclecticism and the openness of the privileged (Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996). The debate has been concentrated in cases from Western societies, with little research in China thus far.

This study argues that social distinction is observed in China. Taste is increasingly formed by differences that are rooted in intergenerational inequalities—in support of the theory of cultural capital. This study makes an empirical contribution to the pattern and extent of cultural stratification in China by comparing preferences toward different types of music amongst different people. Due to the lack of relevant data on this research topic, I conducted a purposely designed survey with a 1048 random sample followed by qualitative interviews. By analyzing the pattern of cultural distinction in urban cities in China, my research contributes to the understanding of how cultural capital functions under popular culture, as well as in non-Western settings. The unique formation of cultural capital in China has a different social context and development trajectory compared to Western countries. This study describes how cultural capital has developed in China since the 40 years of Reform and Opening, rooted in intergenerational inequalities in the Chinese context. This chapter introduces the main theories on cultural distinction in the West, to discuss how existing theories on cultural stratification in the West might or might not be relevant to China. Then I outline my research approach and the key points of my dissertation, before outlining the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Distinction and cultural consumption in China

Differences in cultural consumption between people have been researched in China (Goodman, 2008b; Lei, 2003; Miao, 2016: 24; Osburg, 2013: 11), but many of those researches have focused on observable and objectifiable differences between people, focusing on phenomena such as the conspicuous consumption of the rich and stigmatization of the underclasses. The underlying causes for the disparity in tastes are either deemphasized or assumed to be the material present—attributing it to current economic disparity, material ownership, and the lifestyles afforded. There is a lack of attention to the cultural aspects of the differences— how the individuals differ in their values and perceptions that led to differences in cultural consumption. There is a lack of inquiry on the root sources of distinction—how tastes are formed and influenced the life-trajectory of the individual.

Cultural aspects of distinction have a long history of research in sociology. Veblen argued that the wealthy signal their status through a taste for expensive luxuries (2007). Weber developed the concept of status culture, in which the elite groups adhere to their own cultural tastes and styles to reinforce their shared connections (2013). Herbert Gans distinguished culture into popular and high culture according to the patron's social position (1974). The angle on the mechanisms of distinction discussed in this research is Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and the surrounding debates, which offers a useful conceptual framework to understand the construction of social distinction.

Bourdieu's perspective is helpful in China in shifting the research focus from the discourses, narratives, and circumstances of material consumption and material distinction to understanding the deeper sources of taste. Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital sees distinction as more than just material differences on the surface, but as differences in dispositions residing in the *habitus*. The habitus is a concept that refers to subconscious dispositions internalized by their social environment, such as the taste for the necessity of the underprivileged (Bourdieu, 1984: 169–72). The habitus influences one's taste, behavior, and values, but is shaped by upbringing and childhood environment, which are hard to change later in life (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus, cultural inequality is deeply rooted in the inequalities of the past. Cultural inequality is even more appalling than wealth disparity because it implies an inequality beyond material differences, ingrained into internal differences that are difficult to change by personal ability or achievement. Taking the cultural approach allows us to move beyond examining observed incidences of distinction in China, to better understand the deeper causes and the formation of social exclusion. Next, I will more fully outline Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, later developments as well as the challenges to his theory. I will also analyze their relevance in the Chinese context.

The Bourdieusian perspective

Bourdieu's "Distinction," published in French in 1979 and translated to English in 1984, is recognized to be one of the ten most influential sociological work in the twentieth-century (ISA, 1997). His book offers one of the most influential accounts in contemporary sociology on taste and cultural capital. Based on a study of French society in the 1960s, he argued that people in society are stratified by not only economic capital but also by social and cultural capital. Cultural resources such as knowledge, preferences, and manners are considered cultural capital which draws social distinction, conferring advantages for the privileged while discriminating against the underprivileged. Cultural capital includes cultural resources such as education but also knowledge of culture which confers advantages in society—"institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 156). This is complemented by concepts such as fields, which are the arenas of conflict where actors struggle for positions (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's work affirms "the primacy of relations" over theories that favor structure or agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 15–19). His view that cultural divisions are more fundamental and more revealing of divisions in society has also led to the cultural conception of class, which is increasingly challenging the traditional occupational-centric notion of class (Atkinson, 2016; Crompton, 2008; Devine et al., 2005; Savage et al., 2013). Bourdieu's framework views cultural distinction not as a byproduct of other inequalities but as a core

part of the social hierarchy. Class, then, is not reducible to any measurement, but is realized through interactions mediated by culture. The different resources are not fixed positions but are enacted in social situations.

Bourdieu also differentiates cultural stratification between objectified forms to embodied forms, where objectified cultural capital is distinction based on *what* is consumed, and embodied cultural capital is *how* they are consumed (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural distinction is both a cause and effect of class formation, instead of an effect (Devine and Savage, 1999; Savage, 2000). Therefore, cultural capital is seen to be a mechanism of intergenerational inequality, as cultural habits residing in the habitus are hard to change later in life. The appearance of "natural" qualities reflects underlying social inequalities. Cultural habits formed earlier in life are acted out in social interactions. Groups assert themselves through hierarchical and relational differences (Bourdieu, 1998). In turn, the differences reproduce the structure of entitlement and reproduce social inequality (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 14–15). Bourdieu famously argued that the highbrow taste of the elites is symbolic violence used toward distinction and social reproduction of the social dominant. Taste is therefore in close *homology* with one's social position (Bourdieu, 1984).

Popular culture and the cultural omnivore challenge

Bourdieu's argument that cultural consumption is linked to social inequality and social stratification has been under challenge due to the rise of popular culture. His account is based on French society of the 1960s, where traditional highbrow culture was in a dominating position, therefore cultural capital and legitimate culture were interchangeable for Bourdieu (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 157). However, the cultural scene has changed significantly. Societies in France and elsewhere have since become post-industrial. With the rise of popular culture and erosion of high art, Bourdieu's account is looking dated. Popular culture has proliferated, along with the erosion of high art and increasing globalized media, raising a challenge to his account.

One of the most influential accounts under the proliferation of pop culture is the cultural omnivore thesis raised by Richard Peterson and his colleagues which described the change in the pattern of division in cultural consumption (Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). They discovered that traditional high culture is no longer as exclusive as before in the US. His research published in 1996 compared the change between 1982 and 1992 to show that cultural eclecticism has been on the rise. High-status persons were no longer marked by exclusive preference toward high culture, but by the breadth of cultural preferences compared to other social groups. Instead of a sharp cultural division between elitist "snobs" who solely preferred highbrow music and the "slobs" who abstain from "culture," those in the higher social strata were instead "omnivores" who like a variety of music versus the "univores" who were less culturally engaged. The tendency for elites to be happily consuming both highbrow and lowbrow culture was interpreted as the breakdown of cultural barriers, explained as the increased tolerance and openness of the elites. After this study, a series of publications has reaffirmed the cultural omnivore phenomenon in several other countries, making it a widely-observed account of taste in contemporary society (Chan, 2010; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007; DiMaggio and Mukhtar, 2004; Sintas and Alvarez, 2002; Van Eijck and Knulst, 2005).

The debate between Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and the challenges from the culture omnivores account is ongoing in cultural sociology (see Hanquinet and Savage, 2015). This debate is the theoretical focus of this thesis, which will be more thoroughly discussed in the later chapters. Furthermore, this thesis extends the debate which has primarily centered around developed Western countries to China, a country with a markedly different social context.

The relevance of cultural capital in China

China has important differences that complicate whether Western theories on cultural distinction, including the cultural omnivores account, apply to China. China differs in its cultural, social, development, and historical differences. For Bourdieu, the concept of cultural capital is based on legitimate culture (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 157), which for music was the traditional canon of Western classical and opera. However, legitimate culture is much more complicated in China. Even as empires fall and governments change in Europe, the classical canon has remained stable and continuously favored by elites for hundreds of years. Despite the variations within the West, such as the weaker influence of legitimate culture in the US compared to Europe (Lamont, 1992) and their recent erosion by popular culture (Bennett et al., 2009; Gans, 1974), contemporary studies in the West still frequently regard Western classical and opera as the legitimate highbrow (DiMaggio, 1982a; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010; Levine, 1988; Rössel and Schroedter, 2015; Van Eijck, 1999). Though weaker than before, Western classical music and opera have retained a high status among the elites, allowing the music canon to function as a cultural capital worthwhile to be passed on to the next generation.

Legitimate culture has a much more complicated history in China, as the canon in China has been redefined multiple times. Rounds of political upheaval in modern China resulted in the consecration of different forms of music in different periods, following the changes of Chinese politics in recent history. The historical Chinese high culture of the gentry class fell along with the Qing dynasty (Mackerras, 1973). The Western classical canon entered China first in the late 19th century and reentered again after Reform and opening, carrying immense prestige as the international legitimate culture from the dominant West. But under Mao's communism, the cultural capital from the previous eras became cultural "liabilities" as their patrons and performers were punished and denigrated for their bourgeoisie taste. The cultural revolution particularly uprooted traditional high culture, further complicating the meaning of highbrow culture in China.

The scene of popular culture in China is also unlike that in the West. After Reform and Opening, popular culture from outside Mainland China gained massive popularity (Fung, 2007a). Non-Western countries are in a weaker position under globalized pop culture, resulting in different patterns of music hierarchy compared to the findings from studies that have focused on the developed West. The rare pieces of quantitative research on cultural stratification in China are two masters dissertations analyzing the same dataset. Both studies examine 5 music items to conclude that elites are cultural omnivores, a conclusion that I challenge (Li, 2014; Yu, 2014). Also, the cultural omnivore argument for openness and freedom in consuming popular culture is also problematic in China. Discrimination and stigma toward those with lower social status have long been observed in China. A prevalent discourse used by the upper strata as well as the state is the *suzhi* discourse, which blames the circumstances of the underprivileged on their lack of *suzhi*

(cultivation and internal quality), reinforcing the discriminatory cultural stereotype (Kipnis, 2006; Murphy, 2004; Sun, 2017). The ideals of respect and tolerance that describe the shift in the West seem to have limited relevance in China.

A further difference between China and many countries in the West is the sheer rapidness of social change and the extent of social inequality. The shift from industrial to consumer society—such as new goods, marketing, values of possession, materialism, lifestyle, creation of demand—occurred gradually over four centuries in Europe (Campbell, 1987), whereas the development from agrarian to industrial and postmodern society was compressed within one generation in China (EJ Croll, 2006). The rapid rise in inequality questions how cultural capital can exist to promote intergenerational inequality in the way Bourdieu described when economic inequality was insubstantial before Reform and Opening.

All these issues question whether and how Bourdieu's theories might apply to China. They challenge whether highbrow art is liked by those with high levels of cultural capital in China, and whether there is "highbrow art" in the first place, as the class-based transfer of cultural preference was interrupted both in terms of the music canon and in terms of intergenerational privileges. The debates on cultural boundaries and legitimate culture have primarily taken place in Western societies—with very little research being done in China. This is partly due to the different research interests in China more concerned with economic development and developmental inequalities. Surveys that cover cultural consumption comparable to the scale and timespan of Western studies are non-existent, to my awareness. Given the paucity of research and data, this research contributes to the understanding of cultural inequality in China where the different historical, developmental, and cultural context challenges some of Bourdieu's Western-centric assumptions.

Main contributions

The main argument of this research is that cultural distinction has been rising in China, along with the development of cultural capital that has enabled differentiation by taste. While some sociologists have argued for the irrelevance of social hierarchy in the divisions between cultural consumption, I argue that the differences in taste between people from socioeconomic backgrounds not only exists in China, but is also leveraged as a distinction to differentiate the privileged from others, and to justify the superiority of the privileged. The types of social privilege in the context of cultural distinction is also examined. The thesis argues that taste distinction identifies not only the current socioeconomic position, but also intergenerational privileges accumulated since childhood.

This thesis contributes to sociological research through two main aspects. Firstly, Bourdieu's theory on cultural capital has been challenged due to the decline of high culture in the West and the proliferation of popular culture over the last half-century. This research argues although society has changed since Bourdieu conceptualized his theory of cultural capital, the theory remains helpful in understanding cultural consumption in a world of contemporary popular culture. Cultural capital is embedded in social contexts, which changes along with changing forms of entertainment. This research finds that high-status culture is being constructed in China along with increases in inequality. Furthermore, the "high culture" is not limited to traditional highbrow music but is increasingly Western music—both Western classical as well as selective

Western pop music. Western culture has penetrated the coastal elites, while local culture continues to be dominant among the underprivileged. This research argues that the emerging form of cultural capital is observed in China (Prieur and Savage, 2011). The influx of global culture in China has been disproportionately embraced by the privileged, causing foreign culture to occupy a position of status, allowing culture to be drawn for distinction.

Secondly, this research examines the form of cultural capital in China, how it is deployed for distinction, and how its formation connects with historical developments in China. By establishing the connection between cultural distinction in the present to differences in cultural capital, which can be traced back to parental inequalities and differentiated environment of upbringing, I argue that distinction today is rooted in privileges from the past. This research examines cultural tastes in China to discover not only there are differences in taste between people from different strata, the formation of those tastes—which represent deeper differences in habits, values, and mentality—can be traced back to childhood privileges and parental upbringing. The influx of Western culture in China has played an important role in boundary drawing and the development of cultural capital, as it is Western music that has taken the high-status position and used to draw social distinction against the locals. It is frequently Western music that dominates the music hierarchy as the high-status music in China, due to the better ability of the privileged to access, afford, and consume foreign culture, allowing foreign music to become the high-status culture in China. This suggests that the distinction and discrimination observed in everyday settings are rooted in inequalities of the past. With China's growing inequality and enlarging differences in upbringing, the value of cultural capital has grown. Demonstrating that inequalities are persisting into the new generation provides a new perspective on social discrimination and cohesion in contemporary China.

1.2 Research approach

This research moves beyond typical studies in China that study the specific circumstances of discrimination toward understanding the deeper causes of distinction, by examining whether different social groups have different levels of cultural capital in society. To do this, this research analyzes the pattern of music preferences in the Chinese megacities using survey and supplementary interviews, to understand the differences in cultural consumption between social groups and the underlying sources of distinction.

Music taste

Distinction from cultural capital can be drawn from various cultural preferences and practices. Cultural disposition has been measured as cultural participation (Katz-Gerro, 1999; such as Katz-Gerro and Shavit, 1998) or cultural preferences (such as DiMaggio et al., 1996; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). Previous research has examined various forms of cultural consumption such as attending concerts, visiting museums or galleries, or preferences toward music, paintings, books, or TV programs. Music is chosen in this research because studies that examine multiple forms of cultural preferences have found music to be the most stratifying—a field that most strongly links with social hierarchies (Bennett et al., 2009; Bourdieu, 1984; Le Roux et al., 2008; Peterson, 1992). Music also enjoys widespread popularity among all

strata of the population, making it most suitable for survey research that samples from all segments of the society. In this research, music is used broadly to include art forms with a musical component—which also includes musical drama with a performative component that can also be listened alone (e.g. opera).

Music preference is chosen instead of music participation because of its deeper connection with the internalized nature of cultural capital. Participation is more closely related to economic income, whereas preferences better reflect internalized dispositions (Le Roux et al., 2008; Silva, 2006; Yaish and Katz-Gerro, 2012). Art forms, particularly those that require physical participation, tend to have a substantial barrier to access and lack widespread participation across all strata of society (Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007; Robette and Roueff, 2014). This is likely to find engagement versus disengagement (Le Roux et al., 2008), which is more attributed to economic differences between social strata—another well-researched area in China. In contrast, preferences better capture embodied attitudes, whereas behavior conflates with time, economic and situational constraints (Warde and Gayo-Cal, 2009). Participation is easier to operationalize as it is more quantifiable, but participation is less suitable for understanding cultural taste. Preferences are less influenced by economic or pragmatic factors, so more strongly reflect cultural dispositions related to one's cultural upbringing.

Music taste as a cultural capital would be enacted not only through cultural participation, but more notably through communicating and displaying the internalized dispositions (Holt, 1997: 99). If one were to hold a snobbish attitude toward classical music, it is more readily captured through one's attitude toward it rather than the hours of listening that are claimed. Access to live music in China also depends on one's physical distance from the city center, which is strongly linked to economic factors rather than taste. The amount of time devoted to listening is also influenced by occupation and life stage changes, which vary without an actual change in taste or factors relevant to distinction. Furthermore, surveying music participation brings a false sense of precision, as "hours of listening" or "listened in the past n weeks" is difficult to recall and prone to errors in memory.

The conceptual approach toward music

This research chooses music preference as the angle for investigating cultural capital because of its multiple strengths that allow a deeper understanding of dispositions. The focus of this thesis is on the division of taste by social background, which stratifies cultures into different status standings depending on the socioeconomic positions of their patrons. Threfore, this research regards a music item to be high-status when its consumers are high in socioeconomic positions, without relying on *a priori* definitions of music status.

This thesis is primarily concerned with cultural divisions from the perspective of the consumers instead of the producers of culture. Music is used in this research as a convenient angle to evaluate taste, which is a reflection of cultural capital in individuals. This research is not concerned with the aesthetic debates on the intrinsic superiority of different forms of culture, nor does it take a position on this debate. This thesis considers different music forms and tastes equally and neutrally, distancing from "culture wars" where advocates of high culture attack popular culture for its intrinsic inferiority or harmful effects (Adorno and Simpson, 1941; Gans, 2008: 3–5). This research is also not ethnomusicology, as it does not examine the

cultural context of particular types of music and its meaning and symbols. This thesis looks at music preferences across many music items to see whether and how the tastes are stratified by social privileges—the causes of stratification of taste cultures, and the consequences of the stratification.

Bourdieu's account of the homology of cultural capital has been criticized to be overly deterministic in attributing the relationship between taste and social positions. Studies have found the connection between music preferences and the mood of the moment, such as the connection between bad moods to energetic and joyful music (Knobloch and Zillmann, 2002), and between romantic deprivation and love songs (Gibson et al., 2000). Psychological factors have also been found to influence music taste, such as the linkage between soul music and depression (Miranda and Claes, 2008). Music preferences are related to one's personality (Nave et al., 2018). For example, personality is found to strongly influence music dimensions such as sophisticated, Campestral, intense, mellow, and urban (Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003). Studies even argued that personality traits account for musical preferences more so than age, sex, and education (Greenberg et al., 2016). Gender differences in taste have also been found, which was explained as gender roles and developmental psychology (Schwartz and Fouts, 2003). This research recognizes that music preferences are influenced by many factors aside from social positions, such as mood, personality, psychology, and gender differences, and makes no attempt to claim that social position is the only or the predominant source of differences in taste.

Rather than treating the linkage between taste and social positions as deterministic, I follow Gans's concept of taste cultures to explain the relationship. Taste cultures are shared aesthetic values and standards of tastes between groups of people, applied toward practices, goods, and ideas of art and symbolic products of leisure and consumption (Gans, 2008: 5–6, 94–95). People in different taste cultures are not formalized organized groups, yet the divisions relate to underlying factors such as socioeconomic level, age, gender, geography, psychological preferences, and so forth. People do not necessarily formally organize to participate in certain forms of art for the conscious purpose of snobbery, discrimination, or exclusion. Yet consumers of an art form tend to share similarities, one of which is similarities in socioeconomic level, which allow the art form to serve as an identification for the group—enabling its deployment for social identification and distinction. Although social positioning is only one of many influencers of taste, it is the focus of this research as it is a salient force in distinction. The influence of other factors such as mood, psychology, and gender are left to other researches.

1.3 Outline of subsequent chapters

Part I is the introductory part with 3 chapters. This chapter introduced the main debates, my research approach, and my main arguments. Chapter 2 describes the shortcomings of existing researches and explains my survey design, the execution, as well as the supplementary interviews. A new survey with a large number of specific music items is used to overcome the shortcoming of existing quantitative research that typically finds cultural omnivores. This research also innovates in the use of multidimensional item response theory (MIRT), a latent trait method that is more commonly used in psychology but uncommon in cultural sociology. MIRT is used to derive the fundamental underlying traits which give rise to differences in

preferences, which is an ideal quantitative method for understanding the *habitus* conceptualized by Bourdieu.

Chapter 3 examines the music landscape in China—from its historical development, the history of music hierarchy, to the main types of music in contemporary China, using the 6 taste-factors found by MIRT. The chapter shows the divisions between traditional versus popular music and the divisions in popular music by region of origin. The 53 items of music asked in the questionnaire are also introduced here to introduce the music scene.

Part II focuses more on the *current* pattern of music distinction, whereas Part III analyzes the *historical* Chinese context and its formation. Part II consists of 2 chapters that cover the music hierarchy and its role in distinction. Chapter 4 examines the pattern of music distinction in China. First, the cultural omnivores argument is examined to reveal that while it is empirically confirmed in China, it is dependent on the selection of music items, and fails to reveal other forms of distinction. Then ANOVA (analysis of variance) examines the results from MIRT to show that people's tastes for different music indeed differ by social groups. The result reveals the different roles that different music play in drawing distinction.

Chapter 5 focuses on how embodied cultural capital is leveraged toward social distinction, enabling the elites to navigate social relations through popular music. The use of popular music for social distinction represents the deployment of embodied cultural capital, and also represents an emerging form of cultural capital based on popular foreign culture. I argue that the consecration of selective music items is due to HCCs' inquisitive attitude toward music appreciation, which contrasts with LCC's pursuit of popularity. Although popular music is always changing, with different favorites in different age groups, I describe how the HCCs navigate changing popularity in the music through a process of "upgrading" to move toward high-status music. Interviews supplement the findings by demonstrating how the music hierarchy is known by those with high levels of cultural capital, but less known to others, therefore represent symbolic violence as HCCs are able to navigate the music hierarchy, but leaves LCCs exposed to differentiation.

Part III moves onto the meaning of cultural capital in the context of China and its formation. Chapter 6 uses survey data to show how cultural capital in China is rooted in parental as well as childhood privileges. Chapter 7 uses interview data to explain how childhood upbringing fostered interest in high-status culture. The ability of children of the privileged to access and learn about Western culture has caused it to become an exclusive taste for those raised in privileged families since Reform and Opening. Both chapters demonstrate how taste is rooted in parental privileges, and how Western culture establishes itself in a dominant position in China—despite the heavy censorship and management of foreign culture by the government.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter that argues for the need to understand cultural capital in the unique Chinese context, particularly how the influx of foreign, particularly Western culture led to the creation of local cultural capital that reflects the global hegemony. It also summarizes the contribution of this thesis to theories on cultural distinction, including emerging forms of cultural capital, embodied forms of cultural capital, and their role in the Chinese social context.

In this research, the term "elite" is used to broadly include anyone who is relatively privileged in their social standing, whether by economic income, educational attainment, urban background, etc. Elites are not limited to the small percentages of the most privileged, nor restricted to any specific definition of class. This research focuses on cultural consumption and distinction in contemporary Mainland China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this dissertation, Mainland China is sometimes more simply referred to as "China" when the context is clear (e.g. Reform and Opening in China, instead of Reform and Opening in Mainland China). The practitioners of music are referred to as "artists" in this research, as other terms do not suitably describe the entire group. While most of the artists are singers, they also include songwriters, pianists, bands, and band members who take various (including non-vocal) roles. Names of artists prioritize the use of their known English names or aliases if there is one (e.g. G.E.M.). Otherwise, Chinese names are transliterated using the preferred Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan romanization based on the origin of the person, with the surname first for transliterated first names and the surname last for English-style first names (e.g. Jonathan LEE from Taiwan, LI Yuchun from Mainland China). Despite the complication, this is the most likely way for those names to appear in general English literature.

Chapter 2. Research Design

This chapter outlines my research design and analytical approach. Current debates in cultural distinction are marked by a chasm between the quantitative researchers who tends to find rising cultural eclecticism of elites, and Bourdieusian researchers who tend to find the continuation and transformation of cultural divisions. Bourdieusian scholars have been criticizing quantitative approaches for their fixation on *what* is consumed, advocating the use of qualitative or mixed approaches that examine *how* culture is consumed (Friedman et al., 2015; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2015). My research demonstrates that quantitative approaches can be enhanced through innovations in survey design and quantitative methodology. This research also looks beyond the widely researched rural-urban gap to focus on urban megacities as new sites of inequality, offering an indicator of future China as it continues to urbanize.

My research innovates not only in extending the inquiry of cultural capital into China, but also through the use of a new survey design, which is then analyzed with an innovative method called MIRT—a method common in psychology but has not been used in cultural socioecology to the best of my awareness. I used an innovative research design consisting of a self-designed survey comprising of an unprecedented 52 items of music—wide enough to cover music types relevant in China, but also specific enough to recognize the distinction in specific music types. The survey was commissioned in 4 cities in China targeting people age 16-44 with a valid sample size of 1048, using RDD (random digit dialing) telephone interviews. My quantitative research is also supplemented with qualitative interviews conducted in Beijing and Shanghai that show the sources of taste and how they are deployed in practice.

2.1 Introduction

The methodological divide in cultural stratification research

The debate between cultural omnivores and Bourdieusian homology of taste is a contested topic in cultural distinction today, as introduced in Chapter 1. This debate is marked by a chasm in the method employed. Researches that support the homology between taste and socioeconomic positions have favored interpretivist approaches—either qualitative research, or the quantitative but inductivist method of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). This includes major works such as Bourdieu's Distinction, and subsequent studies in the US, Europe and other countries like the UK (Bennett et al., 2009), Denmark (Harrits et al., 2010; Prieur et al., 2008). Bourdieusian researchers favor MCA because it is more compatible with Bourdieu's worldview, as it is "a relational technique of data analysis whose philosophy corresponds exactly to what, in my view, the reality of the social world is... positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96–97). A key differentiation between the approaches is that, unlike regression results that rely on hypothesis testing and takes significance testing as evidence, MCA is often used without significance testing

as it is used as an inductive method—a visualizer that lays out the pattern for inductive interpretation, often supported by interviews. "MCA graphically represents cultural tastes and practices and, by inspecting the resulting figures (and the accompanying statistical information), allows their clustering and fracturing can be interpreted (sic). This provides a visualization of the organization of the cultural landscape" (Silva et al., 2009). MCA is also a niche method in social sciences, primarily used within the circle of Bourdieusian scholars.

Meanwhile, mainstream quantitative social scientists have long moved onto increasingly complex statistical methods. Positivistic researchers relying on statistical methods, representative surveys, and quantitative models tend to find support for cultural omnivores (Alderson et al., 2010; Bukodi, 2007b; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Kraaykamp et al., 2010; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992; Torche, 2010). These researches have supported the cultural omnivore account and challenged Bourdieu's argument for the homology of taste (Alderson et al., 2010; Chan, 2010, 2019; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b).

Bourdieusian scholars responded to those arguments by advocating *more* qualitative research—arguing that surveys use fixated questions on cultural objects which overlook distinctions on *how* they are consumed (Friedman et al., 2015; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2015). Bourdieusian scholars criticize mainstream quantitative methods as reducing phenomena to variables, flattening relationships into singular variables that fail to capture the complexity of distinction based on aesthetic dispositions (Meuleman and Savage, 2013). This close "homology" between method and finding is a reason for the persistent division in findings in cultural consumption, creating barriers in the understanding of cultural stratification.

I recognize that quantitative approaches tend to overlook deeper divisions in culture, however, I believe that the shortcomings can also be addressed with innovations within quantitative approaches. My research agrees with traditional Bourdieusian research that the relationship between preferences for highbrow, the consecration of highbrow music, and socioeconomic inequality are in a complex relationship that links toward the perpetuation of each other, and is not reducible to simple tests for causality. Yet there is an opportunity to employ more detailed questionnaires and advanced models, to update the research method with the tools and expectations of mainstream quantitative researchers. This is particularly important as the field continues to be polarized by method and conclusion, where cultural capital is supported primarily by interviews and MCA, with skepticisms raised by positivistic approaches. This research attempts to break the impasse through innovation in the survey design and analysis technique described in the next sections.

The paucity of research on cultural capital in China

Elements of cultural distinction in China have been covered across scattered pieces, but so far, they have only described them separately without associating with deeper distinction in society or cultural capital. Researches informed by cultural capital is predominantly based on studies in Western countries, primarily countries in Western and Northern Europe, and the USA. There has been little research on developing countries or China. Research in inequality in China often elaborates on the large rural and urban gap, whereas research in cultural capital or the stratification of culture is scarce (Zhang and Cui, 2017). I will begin by reviewing the rare pieces of research on the topic in China.

(1) Coverage of the status of specific music types

Here I briefly overview the scattered researches and news reports on the status of specific music types in China. Media platforms such as the Douyin (called Tiktok in English) and kuaishou apps appeal to grassroots in lower-tier cities and rural areas, who follow video clips or live-steams of grassroot "artists." They are frequently scoffed in mainstream media and everyday conversations as platforms for those with "vulgar" tastes (Shen, 2018; Zuo, 2018). Similarly, Hip-hop music, marked by the "gangsta" style rapping and violent language, has been growing among the underclass in China but also deemed "vulgar" (Quackenbush and Chen, 2018). The local music subcultures of hanmai (喊麦) and shehuiyao (社会摇) are also popular among the young labor class with low income and education in the Northeast, who were previously ignored by society. Hanmai consists of rapping to a fast beat, while shehuiyao was described as meaningless repetitive body movement often danced on the street, plaza or public buses (Li, 2018). The government has largely sided with the elites against the rise of lowbrow tastes, issuing bans on "actors who are tasteless, vulgar, and obscene…actors with tattoos, hip hop culture, sub-culture (non-mainstream culture) and dispirited culture (decadent culture),"(BBC News, 2018; Quackenbush and Chen, 2018). This led to waves of censorship that led to the temporary disabling of live streams, removal of 33,146 accounts, deletion of "vulgar" content in 2018 as well as in 2019 (Jao, 2018; Wu, 2019). However, these coverage of music status have not linked with wider cultural aspects of inequality or cultural capital in China.

(2) Research on music based on EASS 2008

The 2008 wave of East Asian Social Survey (EASS 2008), conducted in Mainland China, Taiwan, Korean, and Japan, contained 5 questions on music. In Mainland China, it was conducted by a market research firm as part of the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS 2008) commissioned by Renmin University. Although the 2049 samples are nationally representative, a serious limitation of this data is that it has only 5 questions on music taste. The music questions asked about preferences toward 1) classical, 2) rock, 3) jazz/blues, 4) popular music, and 5) traditional *xiqu* (i.e. traditional Chinese opera). Two pieces of master's dissertation by different authors were published in the same issue of a Chinese language journal.

Li Na replicated the methodology of a piece of research on music in England (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b) to adjudicate among the homology, individualization, and omnivore-univore theories of taste (Li, 2014). Latent class analysis found 4 latent classes based on 5 music categories: disengaged, univores of Chinese xiqu, univores of Western music (jazz/blues and rock), and omnivores. The main finding of the research is a "disengaged class"— those with low levels of education and lower social status are more likely to be in this class. However, the "omnivores" and "univores" are indistinguishable—the probability of belonging in either class is not significantly different for those with higher levels of education or social status, a result which is not explained. Her research concludes that "there is a certain relationship between people's social status and cultural taste" and therefore the homology argument is supported, yet there are many limitations in the research.

The second piece of research used the same data and appeared in the same issue of the journal (Yu, 2014). This paper applied factor analysis to the 5 categories of music to determine 2 factors: a factor with 4 music

(classical, rock, jazz/blues, and popular music) that is labeled "Western music", and a factor with just *xiqu* that is labeled "Chinese music." The research tests hypotheses on who tends to like Western music or Chinese music. The paper concludes that "Western music" (with classical, rock, jazz/blues, and popular music) is liked more by the young, the educated, and those who live in higher-tiered cities (as opposed to rural). The finding for "Chinese music" (*xiqu*) is the opposite.

While those pieces of research ventured into an empty space on the stratification of music taste in China, there are significant limitations to their findings. Both studies are brief papers published in Chinese journals that replicated methodologies uncritically. The survey data only has 5 questions on music. The application of factor analysis or latent class analysis based on only 5 types of music is questionable, which produced 4 latent classes and 2 factors—one of which is loaded by 4 music types. Furthermore, the uncritical conclusion on cultural omnivorism based on only 5 music types is questionable. A broader criticism that applies to these articles, as well as other quantitative researches that support cultural omnivores, is that the music categories are unbelievably broad.

Both studies find evidence that the lower strata are disengaged with music, which is unsurprising for a survey that covers both rural and urban areas of China, as the chasm between urban and rural population is already well established. Given the known disparity between rural and urban China in wealth, the opportunity for education, development, life chances, and lifestyle differences, the confirmation that music preferences also differ is important but hardly unsurprising.

(3) Book reading as cultural capital

A piece of research published in the journal *Modern China* finds that reading preference is highly related to the level of education and social class (Wang et al., 2006). The quantitative data came from a 1999 survey of couples in 4 urban cities, randomly selected based on occupation: 20 managers, 20 professionals, 20 officials, 20 workers, and 20 private entrepreneurs in each city for a total of 400 couples, or 800 individuals. The research finds that the highly educated and the elite classes read more genres, read more authors, read more "highbrow" books (derived from PCA, which are religious, reportage, classic masterpieces, biography, philosophy, and so forth), and read more authors of contemporary novels (also derived from PCA: Su Tong, Wang Xiaobo, etc). The research concludes that there is a cultural divide in cultural capital between working classes and elite classes (particularly officials, enterprise managers, and professionals).

This research establishes that book reading habits differ by education and class. However, it does not provide much explanation on possible reasons for the empirical outcome, such as the meaning of those genres and authors, the context of social differentiation, intergenerational advantages, or even the role of schooling. It also lacks socio-economic details of the respondents such as hukou, parental information, and other contextual backgrounds which could aid in the interpretation.

2.2 Survey Design

The lack of suitable data sources in China

Cultural taste is an emerging research area in China. Data on cultural consumption are extremely scarce. To my awareness, CGSS (Chinese General Social Survey) was the only available data source that covered music, and only in the 2008 wave as part of EASS 2008. Furthermore, that data source is severely limited by the number of music items. Alternatives to surveys have been considered but they are not satisfactory. I know of no existing data source in China that covers cultural taste and socioeconomic background adequately. It would be difficult to evaluate the dominant empirical claim of cultural omnivores from a small sample of interviews alone. Collecting data from other sources is also impractical. A history of rampant piracy limited the sale of non-pirated records in physical stores. Nowadays, young people frequently obtain music (legally) from one of several major free online music services (Street et al., 2015), but those sources do not have detailed socio-economic profiles such as the parental background. For these reasons, conducting a new survey is the most appropriate method to achieve research goals.

Shortcomings in existing surveys

Survey research is a common research method in the sociological analysis of cultural taste. Many influential researches in the sociology of culture in the West also rely on survey data (such as Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985; Peterson, 1992; DiMaggio et al., 1996; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Bennett et al., 2009). However, these data sources have a shortcoming in having a limited number of music questions and asking broad and imprecise genres.

(1) The limited number of cultural items in national surveys

Many of these are based on quantitative data from existing national surveys. Despite the strength in sample size and national representativeness, these sources of data have several limitations. A serious shortcoming is that most national surveys tend to be omnibus surveys not designed for cultural analysis. They are often designed for other or multiple purposes, with a subsection that briefly covers cultural items, which severely limits the number of cultural items that can be asked, causing the items to be overly broad labels of genre rather than specific. Asking a large number of specific music types also present a problem in large scale research, as it would produce a large number of "unaware" or missing responses, which are difficult to handle with common multivariate methods. Researchers could only ask well-known thus broad music genre, and quietly drop any missing responses.

(2) Broad genre labels that overlook refined distinction

Peterson's research is based on surveys conducted by U.S. Bureau of the Census for the National Endowment of the Art asked 10 music genres (classical, opera, easy-listening, musicals, big band, country, bluegrass, gospel, rock, blues) (Peterson and Kern, 1996). A piece of research about music in England based on the UK Office for National Statistics data covered 4 genres (opera/operetta, jazz, classical, pop/rock) (Chan and

Goldthorpe, 2007b). The research in China based on the Chinese General Social Survey covered 5 music genres (classical, rock, jazz & blues, pop, traditional Chinese opera) (Li, 2014; Yu, 2014). A relatively large study was conducted in the UK which covered 8 musical genres plus 8 musical work, in addition to questions on a variety of cultural consumption (Bennett et al., 2009). The problem with broad genre labels in analyzing music has been discussed as follows:

> "... genres are extremely broad and ill-defined categories, so measurements based solely on genres are necessarily crude and imprecise. Furthermore, not all pieces of music fit neatly into a single genre. Many artists and pieces of music are genre defying or cross multiple genres, so genre categories do not apply equally well to every piece of music. Assessing preferences from genres is also problematic because it assumes that participants are sufficiently knowledgeable with every music genre that they can provide fully informed reports of their preferences. This is potentially problematic for comparing preferences across different age groups where people from older generations, for instance, may be unfamiliar with the new styles of music enjoyed by young people. Genre-based measures also assume that participants share a similar understanding of the genres. This is an obstacle for research comparing preferences from people in different socioeconomic groups or cultures because certain musical styles may have different social connotations in different regions or countries." (Rentfrow et al., 2011: 4)

Peterson himself is aware of this potential bias, but defends that "We do not claim that these genres comprise a representative sample of all genres in the twentieth-century United States. We do, however, argue that the sample is sufficiently large, and the genres sampled sufficiently diverse, to illuminate patterns in genre forms and trajectories" (Lena and Peterson, 2008: 699).

The shortcomings of existing surveys have resulted in a chasm in research findings. Researches that support cultural eclecticism are often based on quantitative surveys with the limitations mentioned above, while qualitative researches have refuted claims of cultural tolerance from surveys. Some researches have argued that qualitative research or mixed methods is the only solution (Friedman et al., 2015; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2015). However, I argue that these issues can be resolved by designing a customized survey that avoids broad genre labels and has a sufficient number of items to reveal distinctions.

New survey design with 52 items of music

Given the shortcomings of existing surveys, and the lack of data sources in China, this research makes an innovative attempt to conduct a fresh survey. The new survey was conducted using a questionnaire specifically designed for studying the stratification of music. The survey addresses multiple shortcomings in existing research to gain a new perspective on cultural capital in China, and to bridge the divide between qualitative research that finds cultural divisions whereas quantitative research often finds the breakdown of boundaries.

The main part of the survey asks 52 items of music—in order to understand subtle distinction beyond broad labels of genre. The music field in China consists of a mixture of music from foreign countries, Chinese music from outside the Mainland, Mainland pop music, as well as local folk varieties. This diversity of music is captured through 52 items of music in the questionnaire. The music items are carefully selected and trialed, to ensure that topics of theoretical interest—such as potentially emerging forms of cultural capital, the various possible forms of historically consecrated music, and the use of refined music genres—can be better explored in this research. The list of genre and artists in this research tries to be specific to be able to differentiate these dimensions: artist/music from different nationalities, instrumental/songs, solo/bands, eras, styles, and level of recognizability—not recognizing an artist is equally telling in the analysis. Given that the survey consists of a long and specific list of music artists and genre, recalling measurements of listening would be difficult for respondents, further justifying asking about preferences rather than participation. This research also asks for the number of participations in live music events, as well as various socioeconomic variables including parental status, to allow for the analysis of the stratification of the cultural scene. To my awareness, no other comparable research cover as many music items. This decision to cover a larger number of items turns out to be a useful approach for researching cultural distinction, as it dissects music boundaries that were otherwise overlooked by other studies that examined only broad categories of music.

The questionnaire design and trials

The questionnaire was especially designed for this research. It consists of two main parts. The first part asks respondents to rate their preference toward music; the second part asks for their socioeconomic background. The structure of the questionnaire is modeled after similar research on cultural consumption in the West (e.g. Bennett et al., 2009), which asks respondents for their preference toward cultural items along with socioeconomic variables such as income, occupation, education, gender, and also parental background (see Robette and Roueff, 2014).

The music items were chosen by widely selecting music items and testing them with respondents in China to narrow down the list. In the first step, online music stores and general media were surveyed to understand existing music types, categorization, terminology, and representative artists. An extensive list of potential genres, artists, and music types were first written down on a list. For example, a typical music app uses music categories such as hot songs, new songs, rising songs, Chinese songs, Euro-American, Japanese Korean, nostalgic classics, Internet hot songs, Billboard charts, night club dance songs, etc. The items were selected to ensure that every category is represented by an item or artist as much as possible. However, music apps primarily advertise popular music, catering to the young, and mostly those that are currently popular, so additional books and resources are surveyed to ensure other music items that are widely known in the population are also included. Items that fall in this category include many of the operas, folk singers popular in the older generation, and older artists (e.g. Red music).

An important consideration for this questionnaire is that this would be asked to a random sample of the general population, which includes a spectrum of young and middle-aged, from various social backgrounds, with an uneven degree of music exposure. Care is taken to ensure population-wide awareness of the music and artists on the list is reasonable. I have balanced the difficulty of the questionnaire to avoid having too

many niche items that are too unrecognizable for certain population subgroups (such as the older and less privileged ones) to avoid excessive non-response from those groups, as respondents would hang up if they barely know the music items asked. Yet I also avoid making the questionnaire too easy—prime examples being existing surveys that only ask genres that are recognized by all respondents, which risk being not differentiating enough. The questionnaire needs to cover a diversity of music present in contemporary China, but the items should not be a list of only the most popular music or artists, otherwise it is unlikely to be broad enough to be used for social differentiation. The goal is to have representatives of a *diverse* set of music with varying degree of recognizability, but still be recognizable by the public overall. The questions are intended to be a survey on music items that are relatively recognizable to the population at large, rather than a challenging trivia on music knowledge.

Figure 2-1. Music categorization in a typical app in China

The early questionnaire with up to 119 music items was trialed by me in summer 2017 in China through face to face interviews. The feedbacks were used to improve the clarity of the questions, the selection of music and SES items asked, and to ensure there is no ambiguity which may be misunderstood by the respondents. The survey was tested with about 20 correspondents from various social groups in China, followed by an open-ended discussion on the items. In the trials, I read them the survey as if conducting a telephone interview, but they were free to verbalize comments or suggestions. The qualitative feedback helped refine the wording and balance of the final questionnaire. I also asked them to provide names of any important artists or musical types they deem omitted. Most of those suggestions were either similar to existing artists on the list, such as another contemporary famous artist, or very specific "personal favorites" that were too niche to be

recognized when I asked them in subsequent trials. The list of items was progressively revised based on feedback, and narrowed down to the final list of 52 items.

The trials also influenced several decisions in the final questionnaire. First, a decision was made to ask pop music primarily through the names of artists, because genres of pop-music tend to mean different things in different contexts. Examples of popular music genre were perceived as ambiguous were "lighter music / easy listening" or "Chinoiserie / Chinese-style" (*zhongguo feng*). Artists are more specific, with more consistency in the style. For similar reasons, genres relating to one's emotional mood were too ambiguous to the respondents as they wonder which type of music is meant by the question. However, my attempt to reduce "ambiguity" later turned out to be an important method of distinction—Western musical was not included in the final list of 49 music because many in the trial were confused or misunderstood what it was. In retrospect, this would have been very useful to include as, unknown to me at the time, this perceived ambiguity is precisely part of the mechanism of cultural distinction. In the interviews, the HCCs were able to recognize "musicals" and could tell me about the famous works of Andrew Lloyd Webber, while the confusion from others would be picked up as a differentiating sign for the HCCs.

A second decision was to ask non-pop music primarily through music types instead of artist names, because associated artists are too niche to be recognizable to the target respondent—a random sample from the population. The trial questionnaire tried to ask non-pop music using specific names of artists, such as specific performers of Western opera or Peking opera. That worked for a narrow niche of the most highly educated and culture-oriented respondents, but was too challenging for the general respondent—e.g. the "three tenors" in China who frequently perform in popular media and thought to straddle into popular culture received low recognition in the trials. A potential explanation is that those non-pop music forms represent a holistic musical style or movement that, unlike the culture of pop-music, do not iconize specific artists except within very niche circles. Asking artists of non-pop music would be suitable for differentiating within the upper strata of society, but for this survey that randomly samples the population it would be too difficult. If response rate is not a concern, and if I could the survey again with full hindsight, asking artist names for non-pop would have been highly differentiating.

Third, a decision was made to not ask for preferences toward specific pieces of songs. The general population tends to recognize artists' names (or melodies) much better than the names of specific songs. To ask specific names of songs would make the questionnaire much longer to read out, requiring more time to think, making it more like a trivia test which would further reduce response rates.

The items were narrowed down to a more manageable list by eliminating items whose preferences correlate too much with each other, keeping a representative instead. This primarily applied to massively popular music artists, as preferences toward them are not strongly differentiating. This resulted in widely recognizable artists such as Jay Chou not making it to the final list. Other popular artists overlap with other artists on the final list such as Faye Wong, Eason Chan, and May Day. The narrowing down also applied to some genres as well. Musically, the styles of Revolutionary Opera (*yangbanxi*), Chinese folk singing (*minzuchangfa*), campus folk song (*xiaoyuanminge*), and Western musical are distinctly different to most people, but the responses toward those them highly correlate. Thus they were dropped to keep the interview

length under control. The consideration was to balance the music items represented based on the region of origin, the gender, age and era of the artist, and the diversity of styles.

Another improvement was that the respondents interpreted "do not recognize" in different ways. More "humble" respondents were frequently selecting "do not recognize" when they believe they are not experts on the music item, while some respondents avoided selecting "do not recognize" even though they were only aware of the item nominally rather than auditorily. This led to the addition of an explanation that "do not recognize" means "not recognizing the item or unable to recall what that music sounds like." This way the threshold for selecting "do not recognize" is kept more consistent for the respondents.

The final 52 music items

Fifty-two items of music are asked in 3 sections: responses toward pop music from certain regions, different artists, and various music types. No further subgrouping is done. The order of the items is designed for a natural flow and kept consistent for each respondent without randomization. Questions 1 to 5 ask about pop-music by location. This is asked first to gather the respondent's general impression of location, before prompting them with specific artists and music types, which may influence their impression. Question 6-33 ask about specific artists. Questions 34 to 49 ask about music types. Unlike music in the West which is largely grouped by genre, genre is relevant mainly for imported Western music styles. This section includes Western genres, operas, and various categories of music that are not names of artists. Different local forms of opera are asked in question 48 depending on respondents' city. Rather than introducing the music items here, they will be discussed in chapter 3 as part of the overview of the music landscape in China, *after* applying MIRT.

The following table lists the music items in the questionnaire. The attributes on the right are not revealed to the respondents, but are provided to the reader to help understand the context of the music item. To reiterate, this research does not prescribe any existing music taxonomy and wants to avoid influencing the respondent, thus questionnaire does not pre-group the music items by genre, the region of origin, or pop versus non-pop.

Table 2-1: Music items asked in the questionnaire

Questionnaire			Attributes (not revealed to respondents)	
Question	No.	Item	Region	Pop/Non-pop
How much do you like these types of music?	M1	Western pop	Non-China	Pop
	M2	Japanese and Korean pop	Non-China	Pop
	M3	Cantopop	HK	Pop
	M4	Mandopop from HK and Taiwan	HK-Taiwan	Pop
	M5	Mandopop from Mainland China	Mainland China	Pop
How much do you like the music of these	M6	Teresa Teng	Taiwan	Pop
	M7	Jonathan Lee	Taiwan	Pop
	M8	Coco Lee	*Taiwan	Pop
	M9	May Day	Taiwan	Pop
	M10	Jolin Tsai	Taiwan	Pop

Questionnaire			Attributes (not revealed to respondents)	
artists?	M11	Alan Tam	HK	Pop
	M12	Ka Kui Wong	HK	Pop
	M13	Jacky Cheung	HK	Pop
	M14	Eason Chan	HK	Pop
	M15	G.E.M.	*HK	Pop
	M16	Liu Huan	Mainland China	Pop
	M17	Lu Han	Mainland China	Pop
	M18	Cui Jian	Mainland China	Pop
	M19	Faye Wong	*HK	Pop
	M20	Dao Lang	Mainland China	Pop
	M21	Chopstick Brothers	Mainland China	Pop
	M22	Phoenix Legend	Mainland China	Pop
	M23	Qu Wanting	*Mainland China	Pop
	M24	Li Yuchun	Mainland China	Pop
	M25	Yan Weiwen	Mainland China	Non-pop
	M26	Han Hong	Mainland China	Non-pop
	M27	Li Yundi	Mainland China	Non-pop
	M28	Wulantuya	Mainland China	Non-pop*
	M29	Mai Kuraki	Non-China	Pop
	M30	Psy	Non-China	Pop
	M31	Adele	Non-China	Pop
	M32	Justin Bieber	Non-China	Pop
	M33	Lady Gaga	Non-China	Pop
How much do you like these types of music?	M34	Western Classical	Non-China	Non-pop
	M35	Western Opera	Non-China	Non-pop
	M36	Hiphop and Rap	*Non-China	Pop
	M37	Techno	*Non-China	Pop
	M38	R&B	*Non-China	Pop
	M39	Plaza Dance Music	Mainland China	Pop
	M40	Rock	*Mixed	Pop
	M41	Trendy Net Music	Mainland China	Pop
	M42	Red/Communist Music	Mainland China	Non-pop
	M43	Traditional Folk Songs	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M44	Traditional Guqin Instruments	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M45	Kunqu opera	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M46	Peking opera	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M47	Huangmei opera	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M48 a b c d	Local opera Bangzi opera (asked in BJ) Sichuan opera (asked in CD) Canton opera (asked in GZ) Shanghai opera (asked in SH)	Pre-modern China	Non-pop
	M49	Suzhou Pingtan	Pre-modern China	Non-pop

The right two columns are not revealed to the respondent. They are provided here as context, but keep in mind that they are grossly simplified and there are many more dimensions to the items than can be listed in a table.
*Categorization is imprecise and open to interpretation.

The final questionnaire also has two important features in 1) avoiding the categorization of items, and 2) avoiding the randomization of item order.

(1) No reliance on a priori music categories

This research does not depend on any pre-existing music typology. This research is not trying to simplify or frame the music scene into a standardized music taxonomy from music producers, consumers, musicology, or any pre-existing definitions of highbrow or lowbrow. This research is not selecting certain music items to operationalize on some concept of music, or as a basis of forming a hypothesis on music typology to be tested or rejected, nor is it a statistical sample of music "in the population." The 52 music items are more appropriately considered to be 52 separate items of a diverse list of music deemed appropriate to examine to determine whether they are deployed for social distinction. The 52 items are not selected with the aim of being a representative sample of all the music in China, nor are they meant to be the most popular music items in China—those are not the goal of this research. This is in line with other research on cultural stratification, in which the items are chosen using qualitative considerations to test diversified cultural items.

Music items have layers of complexity which cannot be forced into any simple classification scheme. The geographical origin, the historical roots, the style or genre, traits of the specific artist, the era of the music, political and other contextualization of the music all have a role in the meanings attached to the music item. Respondents may also have a different conceptualization of music than cultural producers, music authorities, or academics. The research interest is in the pattern of stratification of taste. This research looks for patterns that relate to social hierarchy, which does not rely on any pre-defined standard of music categorization.

In the questionnaire, the 52 items were asked one by one to the respondents without telling them any music categorization. Attempts have been made to see if music items can be asked in smaller sub-sections for easier survey execution, but ultimately it was not feasible to divide the items into any acceptable smaller subsections. There were always exceptions that did not fit any attempt to categorize, because groups are not mutually exclusive, and the boundaries are unclear. For example, the idea of a category for "the operas" would leave Western classical, Chinese instruments and *pingtan* stranded in an odd category that does not fit into "opera" or "pop." A category for "traditional music" could include all the above, but "Communist music" and "Western musical[2]" would be orphaned. Forcing them into "traditional" would be contentious. Likewise, grouping by era, gender, style, location, pop or non-pop is also difficult and requires forcing ambivalent and fusion art forms into pigeonholes which the respondent may not agree with. In the end, the music items are not grouped by categories, and are only divided based on whether it is a location, an artist, or a music type.

(2) No randomization of item order

The final 52 questions are simply asked in fixed order without randomization, with the knowledge that fixed order keeps the relative appeal of the music items the same for all respondents, but decreases comparability between music items. Randomization, on the other hand, prevents the popularity of music to be influenced

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[2] Western musical was not included in the final list of 49 music.

by its relative position (Schuessler, 1948: 331). Because this research does not intend to measure *absolute* popularity, but cares about the relative taste of each item *between* social groups, fixed order is chosen so that taste on the same music item can be compared between social strata without the influence of randomization.

The order of the items in the questionnaire is also designed to maximize the natural flow of the interview. The interviewer would ask "How much do you like these types of music?" then proceed to read out item names one by one without repeating the question, and only repeat the question twice at the beginning of the other 2 sections. The music items are also ordered to have a natural flow, for example, the list of artists proceeds from HK and Taiwan, to local, and to Western artists, and generally from older to newer artists for neighboring artists, giving the respondent a sense of progress in completing the questionnaire. Total randomization would disrupt the sense of progress, and leave the feeling that the items just go on-and-on. The order is also designed to minimize ambiguity for the typical respondent according to conventional understanding. For example, asking "Mainland Mandarin Pop" first might require the interviewer to clarify its meaning—the intent is to exclude Cantonese artists who are active in the Mainland. In the actual questionnaire, "Cantopop" and "Mandopop from HK-Taiwan" were asked first, so by the time "Mainland Mandarin Pop" is asked, it is naturally clear from the context that it refers to music not asked already. Questions are ordered so that respondents would be least likely to raise clarifying questions, and similarly, least likely to desire to go back to change an answer answered previously. The order of the 52 items was carefully designed and worked smoothly during the trails and the actual survey execution.

2.3 Survey execution

The choice of urban megacities

Although the gap between rural and urban is extremely large in China, existing research in China has already elaborated on the rural-urban differences. It is known that residents in the top tier cities in China enjoy various privileges compared to those in smaller cities, towns, and villages (Zhou et al., 1998). "Inter-city inequality make up a major portion of the overall inequality level" (Wang, 2008: 100). Studies have already established the large gaps between the urban and rural in education and cultural taste (Kipnis, 2013; Lei, 2003; Li, 2014; Sato and Shi, 2007; Yu, 2014, 2014). Furthermore, the urban and rural are each bounded geographic entities, separated by "invisible walls"(KW Chan, 1994). Differences in the level of development, culture, and way of life, akin to different countries, are already well known. Reaffirming the existence of taste differences between the separate entities of urban and rural China would be unsurprising.

Focusing on megacities has allowed this study to contribute that cultural distinction not only exists *between* the richest and poorest areas of China, but is also drawn *within* the richest and most developed areas in China. Urban cities in China are shared spaces where people from different backgrounds interact and where differentiations are instantiated. The richest and the politically most powerful in China reside in major cities (BBC News, 2016). Urban migration also concentrates in major cities (Cox, 2015), where migrant workers are marginalized from mainstream culture, unable to integrate into the life of urban residents (Xu and Xu,

2007). Migration and exchange concentrate in the megacities of China, where people from different social strata and backgrounds come into contact, where cultural stereotypes form and come into action.

Megacities are prime locations to look into the effects of global culture because cosmopolitanism is found to have the strongest influence on the most economically developed societies (Norris and Inglehart, 2009). Urban cities are key nodes in the movement of money, people, and ideas in under globalization (Sassen, 1991). Cities in China are found to be stratified in status, with the coastal megacities occupying the top of the hierarchy (Hanser, 2008: 141–143). Urban cities also give indications of the future of China as the country continues to develop and urbanize. The megacities chosen in this study are also among the most developed cities in China, with population and level of development comparable to countries in the EU, so they are important indications of the shape of cultural capital in the future of China.

Figure 2-2. Urban population in Chinese cities in 2017
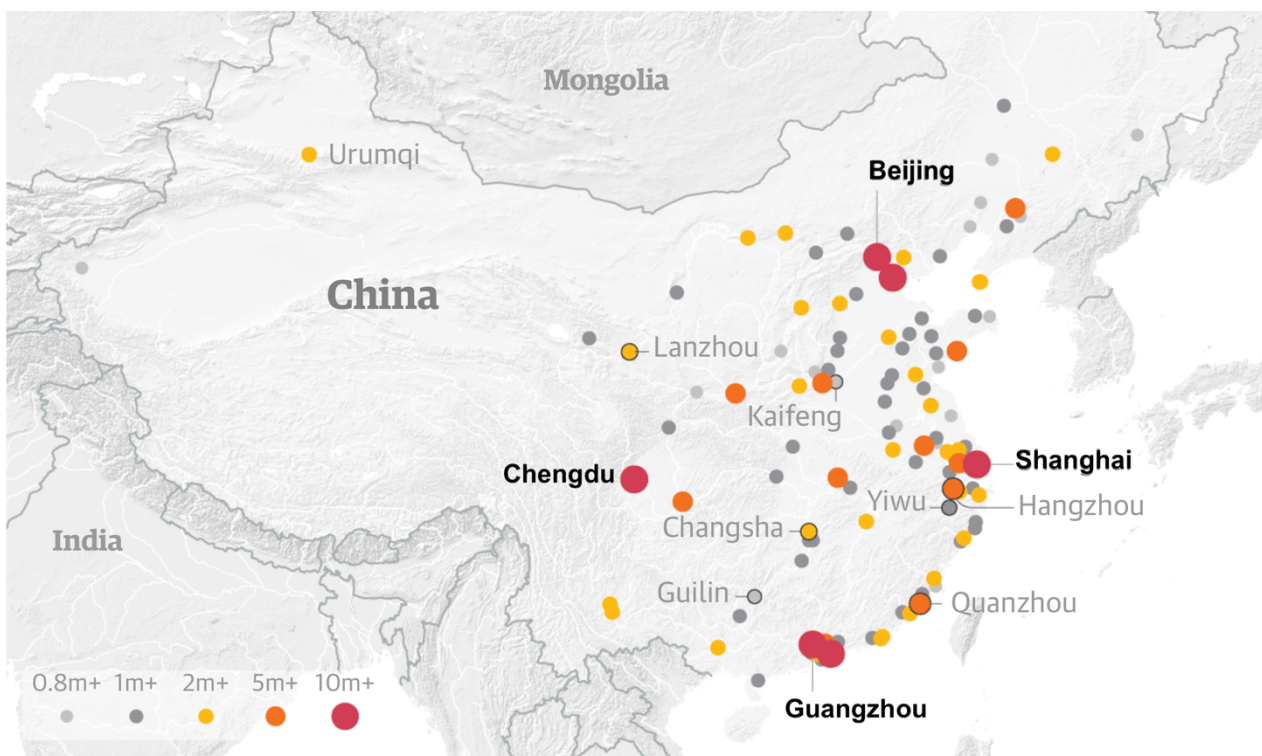
Map from Guardian (Haas, 2017), with the cities selected in this study superimposed in black labels

The number of cities selected is four—small enough for any significant regional differences to be visible within the 1048 sample, but large enough to go beyond a case study of a specific city to give an overall indication about urban megacities in China. The 4 cities selected for this study are **Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu**. The survey was conducted in all four cities to cover the main megacities, because covering multiple cities through telephone surveys incur minimal additional costs. The supplementary interviews were conducted in Beijing and Shanghai to focus on the most cosmopolitan cities. These cities represent the major cities in four geographical regions of China—North, East, South, and West, respectively. They are 4 of the 5 largest cities in China by urban population, with 22, 25, 21, 18 million people

respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012)[3]. The four selected cities are also cities receiving the largest number of urban migration, adding 6, 7, 3 and 3 million residents between 2000 and 2010 respectively (China Statistical Yearbook, 2015; Cox, 2015). They also among the most economically developed areas of China, with GDP per capita by PPP at $32,995 and $32,684 USD respectively in Beijing and Shanghai in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016), for comparison, close to Slovenia and the Czech Republic at USD 32,215 and 33,529 respectively in 2016 (International Monetary Fund, 2017).

The megacities in coastal regions of China are international cities of international trade and culture (Gaubatz, 2005). Beijing, historically known as Peking (e.g. Peking opera), has historically been the capital of China for much of recent history, and is currently regarded to be the political, educational and cultural center of China (Lee et al., 2013: 16). Early port cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou were the first cities in China exposed to foreign consumerism where the earliest urban middle and upper classes showcased consumerist distinction (MacPherson, 2013). Shanghai was perhaps the earliest cosmopolitan city in China in the early 20th century, a city for expats and local immigrants, until the cease of commerce under Communism (Abbas, 2000; Farrer, 2010; Shen, 2009). Shanghai is now regarded to be the center of economic and modernizing China (Lee et al., 2013: 16). Guangzhou, historically known as Canton, is the capital of Guangdong province, geographically near and shares a common Cantonese language with Hong Kong (Bruche-Schulz, 1997). Guangzhou is heavily influenced by the Hong Kong pop cultural scene though physical movements as well as receiving the broadcast of censored Hong Kong TV programs (JM Chan, 1994). Chengdu is less international but complements the other 3 cities as a leading megacity with a large urban population and an important transportation and communication hub in non-coastal, Western China (Lee et al., 2013: 16).

Random digit dialing of mobile phones

Due to the requirement in research design and the lack of existing data, random digit dialing (RDD) of mobile phones is chosen as it provides a relative high degree of representativeness under a reasonable cost. Response rates from telephone RDD have been falling but continue to be well suited for short surveys requiring higher quality than non-random web surveys (Keeter et al., 2006, 2006). Web surveys are cheaper, but the self-selected quota sample is less representative than RDD. Surveying participants from an event or members of an organization only allows for targeting a specific social group in a certain city, which would be insufficient for comparing taste between social groups. The research questions are better answered by sampling from the population despite a lower response rate, than to have a high response rate from a narrow membership group (such as distributing surveys in a class). With the emergence of new data sources from new technologies, research has argued for the use of non-probability samples such as unrepresentative web surveys (Couper, 2000, 2007; Lee, 2006) and transactional data (Adams and Bruckner, 2015; Beer, 2011).

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[3] Chongqing has a slightly larger urban population than Chengdu, but with a much larger rural population, as Chongqing is much closer to a province in its size. For a rough comparison, the size of Chongqing is 82,000 km², larger than Scotland 80,000 km².

Snowball interviews would be even less representative and unfit for analyzing the pattern of taste across the population.

The target population in this study is the population in the four megacities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu. The sampling frame is the mobile phone users in those cities, which provides a low coverage error between the sampling frame and the target population. Data availability and reliability have been an issue in surveys in developing countries (Bulmer and Warwick, 1993). With the increasing availability of inexpensive mobile phones, mobile phone surveys have been used to obtain data in developing countries that were previously unavailable (Dabalen, 2016). China also has the advantage of having a higher penetration of mobile phones than fixed lines, with a mobile phone penetration rate of 94.5% which reaches over 100% in several regions (China Daily, 2015; Steeh, 2008: 222). Studies have found that mobile phone survey data do not differ from landline or face to face interviews (Ballivian et al., 2013; Garlick et al., 2016; Lynn and Kaminska, 2013). As this survey takes place in the most developed regions of China, if there is any issue with penetration rate it would actually be excessive rather than inadequate mobile phone penetration—that those with multiple phones have a higher chance of inclusion in the survey. However, the impact is deemed to be small relative to other errors and the effort needed to mitigate it (such as by asking how many local numbers one has and underweighting the sample accordingly).

Mobile numbers in China can determine the registered location of the user, which makes stratified random dialing by city straightforward. Although it is possible for a user based in a city to use a phone number registered to a different city, this is deemed to be uncommon exceptions, as China requires registering mobile numbers by legal identification, and the benefit of using localized plans. At least, the user is very likely to have lived in those megacities cities for some time, even if they have kept the number after leaving the city. The benefit of an RDD survey of mobile phone numbers is that it produces a probability sample of the target population—everyone in the city with a mobile phone has a chance of being included in the survey. Overall, the RDD survey is cost-efficient for accessing the general population (Steeh, 2008). The drawback of RDD is that it is inefficient, as many numbers randomly dialed are non-assigned or non-working numbers. Also, smartphones have apps that can screen unknown numbers and mark numbers from survey agencies, and it is also easier to refuse over the phone (Lynn, 2008).

A survey with 1048 valid samples was conducted via telephone using RDD (random digit dialing), through a survey agency specializing in CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing). The self-funded RDD costs about CNY ¥60 per sample. The phone interviews were called from a telephone interviewing center that conducts surveys for governments, institutes, and businesses. Each interview took about 10 minutes on average. The telephone survey by RDD is a stratified probability sample, stratified by city, gender, and age group using census data (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The questionnaire given to the research center has been trialed with test respondents in China to refine the wording, choices, and ensure there are no ambiguities. Prior to execution, I went through the questionnaire with the call center to ensure that the meaning, context, and purpose of each question is also clear to the interviewers. The survey was conducted from Nov to Dec 2016.

Response rate

Table 2-2. Responses from RDD

Reached a human	23,817
Refusal and break off (R)	22,403
Partial Interviews (P)*	0
Not eligible	298
Unknown Eligibility, non-interview (U)	68
Complete Interviews (I)*	1,048

*Only surveys with 100% completion are considered complete, so they are all grouped under R.

Response rate calculations have been chaotic, making it difficult to make comparisons, or across time within the same country (Lynn et al., 2001: 1–2; Steeh, 2008: 230). Here I use AAPOR's standard for RDD telephone surveys, as in the box below (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2016). Of the total random numbers dialed, 23817 calls reached a human. Out of those, 22403 calls were refusal and break-offs (R)—either initially or during the interview, which was not differentiated because a survey of music preferences without education, for example, has no partial value. Partial interviews are considered refusal and break off (R). 298 calls reached non-eligible persons—those who are not in the target. A further 68 under unknown eligibility (U) were calls involuntarily terminated due to connectivity. The final sample size is 1048.

Equation 2-1: Response rate calculations

> *Response Rate 1: I/(I+P) + R + U*
> *Response Rate 2: (I+P)/(I+P) + R + U*
> *Response Rate 3: I/((I+P) + R + e(U))*
> *Response Rate 4: (I+P)/((I+P) + R + e(U))*

The response rate is calculated to be 4.5%, which is the same for RR1, RR2, RR3, and RR4. 'e' is the estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that are eligible. 0.5 is used for e, to account for persons being not in the required age group, foreigners, etc. 0.5 results in the same response rate for RR1 to RR4. Traditional survey methods are seeing increasing non-response rates in China (Li and Hao, 2004). The response rate is comparable to the 3.8% response rate of another RDD telephone interview in Beijing in 2011 (a 10 minutes interview about non-communicable diseases) (Qi et al., 2013). The response rate is lower than the golden standards of well-funded large-scale surveys partly due to the requirement for 100% complete responses in the 10-minute interview to be an acceptable sample, and also the nature of low response rates in random digit dialing by phone. However, it is important to recognize that researches make the best use of available data while being prudent on the degree of the claim that can be supported by the data. Reliable data is generally difficult to obtain in developing countries such as China, as can be seen in related published research in China below (see Ward, 1993). While recognizing the limitation of the low response rate of this data, this data is valuable in providing the first representative (non-quota) survey dedicated to music taste in Chinese megacities and the first survey that covers such a large number of items of music in any country, to which I am aware.

According to Groves' total survey error perspective, data quality consists of measurement quality which includes construct validity, measurement error, and processing error, and representation quality which consists of coverage error, sampling error, non-response error, and adjustment error (Groves, 2004; Groves and Lyberg, 2010). My innovative questionnaire design should have high measurement quality on music taste, and the representation quality benefits from a high coverage of the target population through the sampling frame of mobile phone users and a low sampling error from the representative sample through RDD. To emphasize, this probability sample is considered to be more reliable than quota samples which do not have a response rate or self-selected web samples. Data of various qualities have been used in different types of research. See the list below for some related research and their response rates. Unrepresentative samples, like quota samples, have also been used in cultural sociology published in reputable journals. With the rise of Internet research and big data, scholars have advocated pragmatic use of new data sources over insistence on representative samples (Berinsky et al., 2012; Buhrmester et al., 2011; Burrows and Savage, 2014; Hahl et al., 2018). As with any data source, it is more important to consider whether the claims can be supported by the data. The next sections analyze the characteristics of this data.

Table 2-3. Response rates from other related researches

Response rate	Title	Journal	(Author Year)
5.18%	Art and Space: Creative infrastructure and cultural capital in Sydney, Australia	Journal of Sociology	(Stevenson and Magee, 2017)
3.8%	Case analysis of telephone interview application effect in Beijing	Journal of Hygiene Research (Chinese journal)	(Qi et al., 2013).
Not reported	The Uneven Distribution of Cultural Capital Book Reading in Urban China	Modern China	(Wang et al., 2006)
None – non representative	Occupation, Class, and Social Networks in Urban China	Social Forces	(Bian et al., 2005)
None – non representative	The social distinction in having domestic versus foreign favorite music artists	Poetics	(Meuleman and Lubbers, 2014)
None – non representative	A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment	Sociology	(Savage et al., 2013)

Sampling

The data is a stratified random sample which is stratified by city, age, and gender of the target population according to the 2010 census data (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Those with higher levels of education are oversampled, which is part of the goal as this research needs to oversample the higher educated to examine the taste of people with different levels of education.

(1) Stratified random sample

The samples are allocated between cities proportionate to the urban population in the target age group in each city. The table below shows the census data of the population by city, first across China then narrowed down to the target population age 18-45 in the urban areas. The samples in this survey have been stratified accordingly based on the relative populations in the cities.

Table 2-4. Comparing census data and sample (by city)

	Across China		Target Population: Urban, Age [18-45]		Sample	
Beijing	19,612,368	28.30%	15,563,215	**31.40%**	346	**33.00%**
Shanghai	23,019,196	33.20%	17,640,842	**35.60%**	352	**33.60%**
Guangzhou	12,701,948	18.30%	9,687,032	**19.60%**	210	**20.00%**
Chengdu	14,047,625	20.20%	6,610,341	**13.40%**	140	**13.40%**
Target Cities	69,381,137	100.00%	49,501,430	100.00%	1048	100.00%
All Cities	1,332,810,869	-	218,859,806	-	-	-

The distribution of age in the sample is close to the distribution based on census data. The table below shows the census data of the population by age, first across China then narrowed down to the target population in the 4 urban cities.

Table 2-5. Comparing census data and sample (by age)

	Across China		Target Population: 4 Cities, Urban		Sample	
[18,25)	194,005,261	30.60%	8,220,291	**30.00%**	293	**28.00%**
[25,35)	198,152,055	31.20%	10,476,913	**38.20%**	406	**38.70%**
[35,45)	242,779,923	38.20%	8,693,591	**31.70%**	349	**33.30%**
Target Age	634,937,239	100.00%	27,390,795	100.00%	1,048	100.00%
All Ages	1,332,810,869	-	49,501,430	-	-	-

The sample is close to the census data but there are slightly more males in the sample because of the unequal gender distribution in China, as well as because males are more willing to give out personal demographics required for survey completion. The table below shows the census data of the population by gender, first across China then narrowed down to the target population age 18-45 in the 4 urban cities.

Table 2-6. Comparing census data and sample (by gender)

	Across China		Target Population: 4 Cities, Urban within age [18-45]		Sample	
Male	682,329,104	51.20%	14,176,560	**51.80%**	583	**55.60%**
Female	650,481,765	48.80%	13,207,134	**48.20%**	465	**44.40%**
All Genders	1,332,810,869	100.00%	27,383,695	100.00%	1,048	100.00%

(2) Treating education level as between-group design

In this research, the level of education—a variable that best represents the level of cultural capital—is not stratified by population by design. This is to allow for between-group comparisons of music taste by the level of cultural capital—i.e. to test whether taste differs by education. Sampling strictly by population would have resulted in under-representation of those with high education, and over-representation of those with low leveler levels of education. This challenge is also encountered in other research on cultural taste. It is not unusual for those in small subgroups to be oversampled to allow for a more reliable comparison between social groups (Bennett et al., 2009; Bourdieu, 1984). It is particularly true for research in cultural capital in a developing country because elites are underrepresented in traditional national surveys.

To compare music taste by education subgroups requires a sufficient sample in each subgroup. An ideal experimental design would be to have equal numbers of respondents in each level of education, but this was not cost-effective due to the increased difficulty in reaching those with above bachelor's degree and in soliciting participation from those with education middle school or below. The alternative is to oversample those with high levels of education to ensure they are recruited in sufficient numbers in the survey. In this research it was achieved naturally because those with lower levels of education are less likely to be engaged in music and participate in a survey on a topic they are unfamiliar with (Li, 2014; Yu, 2014). The sample recruited achieved the goal of recruiting more people with high levels of education than proportionate to the population.

Table 2-7. Survey Sample by education groups

	Beijing Sample		Shanghai Sample		Guangzhou Sample		Chengdu Sample	
Middle School or Below	31	9.00%	22	6.30%	13	6.20%	8	5.70%
High School	63	18.20%	57	16.20%	42	20.00%	18	12.90%
College	84	24.30%	102	29.00%	56	26.70%	46	32.90%
Bachelor	127	36.70%	134	38.10%	79	37.60%	56	40.00%
Above Bachelor	41	11.80%	37	10.50%	20	9.50%	12	8.60%
Total	346	100.00%	352	100.00%	210	100.00%	140	100.00%

Census data on educational attainment with breakdowns by city and the specific age group is not publicly accessible. Thus there is no accurate measure to weight the data, to examine the extent that this differs from the population. Respondents' level of education will be used in ANOVA to test the between-group effects of education on taste. Aside from lacking data for weighting, the use of ANOVA means weighting is not helpful in this case, as the comparison is on whether tastes differ between educational subgroups. Weighting is commonly used under differential sampling probabilities to measure true values in the population, but this research does not aim to give accurate measurements such as the popularity of songs (see Henry, 2008: 91–93). For the same reason, the order of music items is not randomized in the questionnaire because the interest is not in absolute music preferences but in the relative differences across strata.

(3) Examining potential bias

Low response rate only leads to bias if the bias "is a multiplicative function of the nonresponse level and the nonrespondents' distinctiveness" (Curtin et al., 2000: 414). This section examines the possible bias due to the perceived low response-rate of the underprivileged. Due to the lack of data on education at comparable levels of specificity, it is not possible to directly compare or weight the data to examine or ameliorate any potential bias. Therefore I test 6 different scenarios of potential bias to show that if bias were to exist, biased *against* finding associations between social position and taste—it is more likely to be understating cultural inequality.

The first 2 scenarios consider the case when education has no interaction with music preference. Scenario 1 is that those who like highbrow music have higher non-response (regardless of education). Scenario 2 is that those who like lowbrow music have higher non-response (regardless of education). If "constructs of interest are not correlated with the likelihood of participation, then nonresponse would not distort results" (Reis and Judd, 2000: 243). Therefore, in both scenarios, examining differences in taste between education would not be biased. In these cases, the findings remain unbiased in the between-group analysis by education (scenario 1 & 2 in the table below).

Table 2-8. Examining potential biases in the data

Scenario		Likes Highbrow Music		Likes Lowbrow Music		**Resultant Bias**	**Assessment**
		High education	Low education	High education	Low education		
No interaction effect	1	Higher non-response		-	-	No bias	No bias
	2	-	-	Higher non-response		No bias	
Interaction effect between education and music	3	Higher non-response	-	-	-	Higher education biased toward lowbrow	*Scenario Not observed
	4	-	-	Higher non-response	-	Higher education biased toward highbrow	
	5	-	Higher non-response	-	-	Higher education biased toward highbrow	**Scenario Unlikely
	6	-	-	-	Higher non-response	Higher education biased toward lowbrow	Inequality is *under*stated

*Those with lower education has higher non-response rates
**Preferences for highbrow is socially desirable, and those who like highbrow like to talk about it

The research would potentially be biased if the result in if the cause of the non-response interacts with *both* education and taste, the risks of which are examined in scenarios 3 to 6. Scenario 3 is when those with high education and like highbrow music have higher non-response; scenario 4 is when those with high education and like lowbrow music have lower non-response. Neither of these is possible because we know from the result that non-response concentrates at low levels of education. Scenario 5 is when non-response is higher *only* for the lowly educated who *also* happens to like highbrow. This could potentially amplify the found association between higher education and highbrow, but this scenario is unlikely because, not only is this theoretically unexplainable, the interviews also support that anyone who like highbrow tend to be quite eager to talk about it. Finally, scenario 6 that non-response is higher *only* for the lowly educated who *also* happens to like lowbrow (embarrassment effect), which could potentially amplify the association between higher education and lowbrow, understating the level of inequality. This scenario can be stated more simply as – if those who are embarrassed about their tastes decline to be studied, it makes social distinction appear less severe than it is. While there is potential for inequality to be understated, interviews show that those with lower levels of education tend to be less interested in and are also less aware of the music hierarchy to be embarrassed, making disengagement the more probable explanation for non-response.

Proposing the use of MIRT

This research is intended to bridge the methodological divide between the two sides of the debate in cultural distinction by innovating in the survey design and analytical method. Innovation in survey design has been discussed in the previous section. This section introduces MIRT, which relies on rigorous quantitative approaches of mainstream quantitative sociology, but also uses it in ways that address Bourdieusian criticisms of the methods used in the cultural omnivores account. MIRT is a method traditionally used in psychology but is new to cultural sociology, which enables better analysis of the landscape of music

compared to traditional methods. This method unravels the underlying tastes that lead to differences in music preferences, which produces a categorization of music in China based on the similarity of tastes. This categorization is based on music preferences alone without regard to social status, and is uninfluenced by viewpoints of the researcher, in contrast to some researchers who take a normative position against certain art forms (Adorno and Simpson, 1941; Macdonald, 1953). This leads to the discovery of a pattern of Chinese music that shows the existence of social distinction and social lubrication.

The advantages of MIRT

This research uses Multidimensional Item Response Theory (MIRT), a latent profile analysis, to reveal the divisions and hierarchy of taste eluded by previous studies of taste under popular culture. This technique is commonly used in psychology, education, and clinical research, but to my knowledge, it has not been used in cultural sociology (Hays et al., 2000; Reise and Waller, 2009). Although the discipline of psychology engages with the mind and personality which appears unmeasurable, it has come to rely on quantitative techniques in its analysis, from which cultural sociologists can draw. MIRT is commonly used in psychology to determine underlying personality traits based on responses to personal attitude and preferences—hence the name "latent trait." MIRT is a way of doing latent trait analysis that combines 2 methods: factor analysis, and Item Response Theory (IRT) which developed in psychometrics in the 1950s (Reckase, 2009: 63). In personality tests, respondents would be asked multiple questions on personal attitudes for MIRT to determine a smaller number of factors that explain the variations in attitudes and preferences. The derived factors of latent traits can then be analyzed within the widely accepted analysis of variance (ANOVA), commonly used in behavioral sciences.

(1) Requires no *a priori* assumption on music hierarchy

Responding to relational researchers, MIRT retains advantages of MCA in that it makes no *a priori* assumption on the status of music, allowing for a determination of taste factors without assuming relationships. No *a priori* assumption is made about whether a music item is highbrow or lowbrow, unlike studies such as Peterson's assumes that certain music such as classical is highbrow, which is the fundamental distinction that must be made in the analysis (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Furthermore, it is not possible to make such an assumption on which music is highbrow in China, and no such conceptual assumption is made in this research. As a special case of factor analysis, MIRT is also an interdependence technique which determines latent factors solely based on variations in music preferences alone, without relying on the sociodemographic variables. An interdependence technique does not have a dependent versus independent distinction, which contrasts from dependence technique where all variables are pre-specified to be dependent or independent (Hair et al., 2013: 98). The MIRT model finds the fundamental underlying tastes that give rise to the music preferences, without the assumption that certain music is highbrow, and without the use of sociodemographic variables. Sociodemographic variables are used afterward to test if those tastes are hierarchical and are not hidden in the assumption itself.

(2) Follows statistical standards of mainstream quantitative research

Other advantages of MCA are also achievable with MIRT, yet at the same time, MIRT relies on statistically robust methods that satisfy mainstream quantitative sociologists. The "cloud of individuals" that provides the coordinates of every individual is expressed through the latent taste scores for every individual on each derived music factor. The appeal of visualization is not inherent to MCA, as it can also be achieved by visualization of other techniques, including MIRT. The factor scores analyzed with ANOVA to see what proportion of the differences in taste among individuals is to due specific factors such as age or education. However, the advantage of MIRT and ANOVA over MCA is that it allows quantitative data, supported by representative sampling and statistical testing which are widely accepted in contemporary academia, to be robust and self-standing empirical evidence in themselves, not dependent on scholar's interpretation. To address interpretivists' concerns, this is not used as a simplistic proof of causality which "oversimplifies" complex social phenomenon into variables. Supplementary interviews are used to understand the context of those findings. But MIRT allows quantitative data to be examined for statistical reliability, in the same language and standards as mainstream quantitative research, whereas MCA remains largely a niche method in sociology.

(3) Finds underlying sources of preferences

As a technique from psychometrics, it is also well suited to uncover the personal traits which give rise to objectified consumption. MIRT treats expressed preferences on music as the outcome of more fundamental underlying factors—called latent variables, which is more compatible with the Bourdieusian conception of embodied cultural capital in the habitus and expressed taste. MIRT uncovers the underlying dimensions of traits common across individuals that best explain the differences in objectified differences in taste, which is another quantitative tool to get deeper into the embodied cultural capital described by Bourdieu.

The strongest theoretical benefit of MIRT is that it comes closer to uncovering embodied taste in the habitus than other quantitative methods. MIRT, rooted in psychometrics, is suited for examining taste as an internalized disposition. A common application of the method is in the psychological context, where scholars are interested in knowing how much a person possesses certain traits—such as reading ability or degree of extraversion—traits that cannot be measured directly, like height or weight. In personality tests, respondents' response to a battery of projective tests is used to derive a small number of fundamental latent traits and the latent scores of each individual. This method can also be extended to research on embodied taste.

In this research, I refer to the questionnaire responses as "preferences," and use "tastes" to refer to the latent traits derived from the preferences. Unlike the straightforward measurement on cultural participation, e.g. how many times a month or how many hours a week, embodied taste reflects internalized dispositions which are hard to measure quantitatively. Asking for preferences toward music items brings us a step closer. However, in traditional approaches, preferences toward the limited items of music are directly analyzed. That approach resembles an analysis of, in Bourdieusian terminology, objectified tastes—as the preferences that respondents verbalized are directly analyzed, in and of itself, rather than used for its projective properties. In contrast, the latent trait approach treats music preferences as batteries of attitude questions

that are used to analyze the more fundamental latent traits. Instead of calculating based on responses on music, it focuses on underlying traits that give rise to surface preferences. In this approach, it is the latent traits—i.e. embodied tastes—that give rise to the preferences toward certain music items. This fundamentally shifts the research from analyzing why certain people like specific items such as "classical music," to the more Bourdieusian question of why certain people have tastes for "legitimate music"—which enables them to appreciate "classical music" as a specific instance but extends to other legitimate music that might or might not be asked in the questionnaire. This notion of embodied taste treats taste for certain forms of art as a fundamental, enabling trait, that allows for appreciation of items.

The technical merits of MIRT

Due to the large number of music items, MIRT is also applied as a multivariate technique to reduce the complexity and highlight the patterns. Multivariate methods commonly used in the sociology of culture include MCA, cluster analysis, factor analysis, and latent class. The shared mathematical goal of these methods is to determine a smaller number of variables that can explain the dependencies between the manifest variables. In the sociology of culture, multivariate methods are frequently used to group the various forms of *cultural items* to a reduced set which accounts for most of the variations. Latent class analysis has also been used to group *respondents* into underlying classes based on their manifest cultural behavior or preferences (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005, 2007b, 2007c). MCA which is preferred by Bourdieusian scholars is not a latent variable method, but is similarly in the goal of finding a smaller number of dimensions that encapsulate the variations in the variables.

Examining the methods employed in previous studies reveals that there is a very practical consideration in the choice of method—the type of data available. MCA works on categorical data, which suits Bourdieu's questionnaire in "Distinction" where responses are strictly categorical, such as selecting "three favorite types of films" from a list of 11 (Bourdieu, 1984: 515). The rationale also applies to many questions in "Culture Class Distinction," a more recent study of cultural distinction which also uses MCA (Bennett et al., 2009). In Chan and Goldthorpe's study, the questionnaire asked whether the respondent has attended 4 types of musical events in the past 12 months and whether they had listened to 4 types of music in the last 4 weeks. The binary responses make it unsuitable for methods that expect metrical variables (such as factor analysis), and with only 8 questions, has no need for further reduction. So rather than needlessly reduce 8 items into even smaller groups, Latent class analysis is used to groups the 6 thousand respondents into smaller groups. However, all those methods mentioned above have a common shortcoming in the difficulty of working with cultural data that has a substantial percentage of "unaware" missing responses.

(1) Easily handles Likert scale data with a large number of "unaware" responses

Figure 2-3. Summary of survey responses to 52 music items
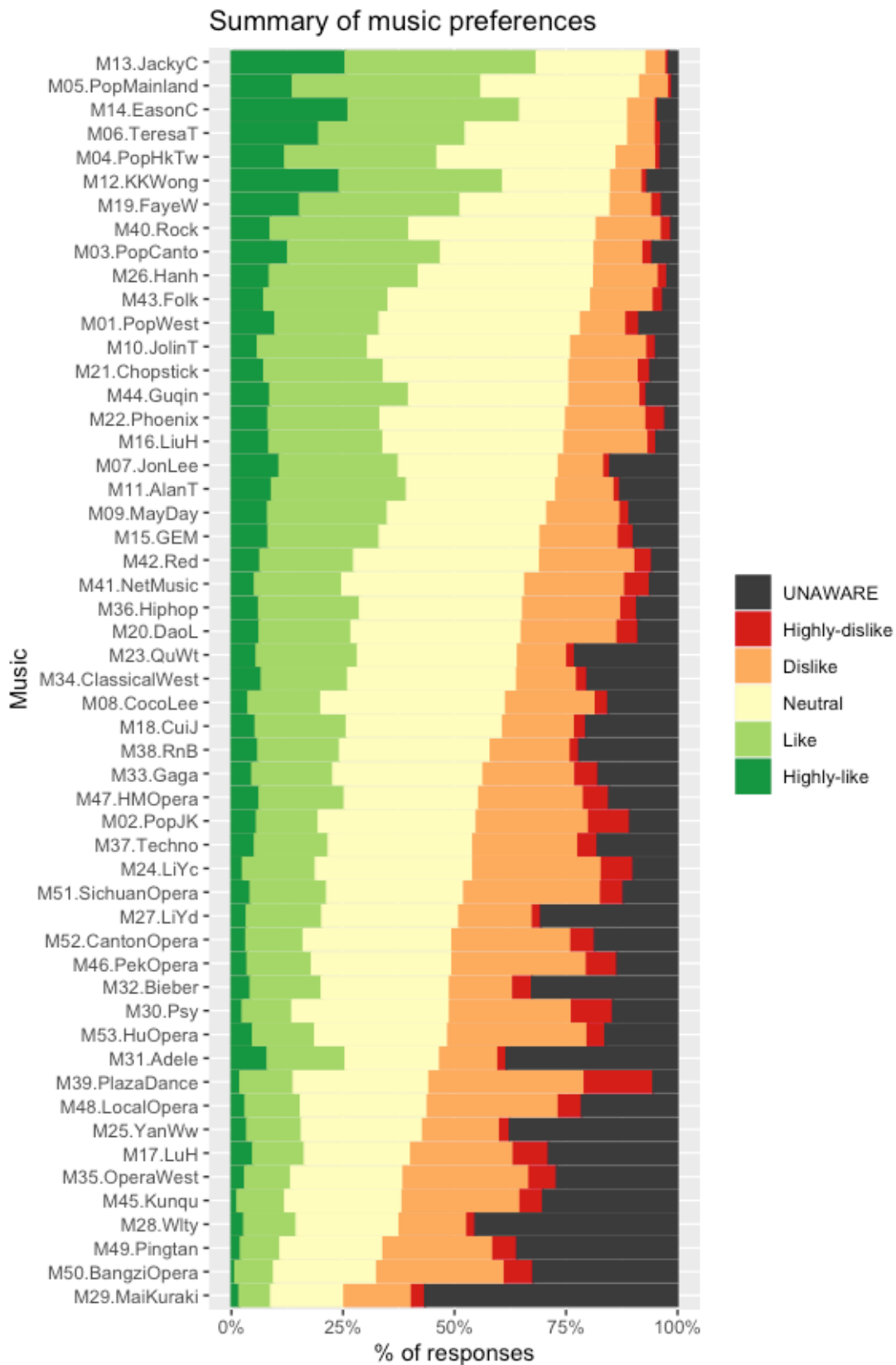
Ordered by decreasing percentages of highly-like, like and neutrals

A large repertoire of music items is needed to reveal the refined distinctions within music categories, and multivariate analysis is needed to reduce items into groups to aid the analysis. A variety of methods can produce smaller groups, but this data format makes creating subgroups more difficult than it may initially appear. Surveys on distinction have been confined to only the most well-known music types, partly because common techniques are unable to handle specific items that produce "unaware" missing responses. Therefore, research typically asks broad genres which are widely known, and quietly drops any remaining responses. This survey asks for preferences toward 52 items of music in the same Likert-scale format: highly-like, like, neutral, dislike, highly-dislike, or the option of unaware—explained as not knowing the music item or not remembering what the music sounds like to be able to give an opinion. The option of unaware is highly necessary as this research asks for specific items of music, which unlike broad genres (e.g. "rock"), would not be understood by every respondent. The results are presented in the figure above, ordered from highest neutral-and-likes, to the highest unaware-and-dislikes. The percentage of "unaware" is as high as beyond 50% of the responses, which pose a significant problem for traditional multivariate techniques.

One option is to apply MCA by treating "unaware" as a categorical response along with the Likert scale responses from "highly-like" to "highly-dislike." MCA works on categorical data, which is preconditioned on the assumption that the choices are discrete. Some questionnaire data, such as a choice of art forms, works well using MCA. The choices from highly dislike, to dislike, to neutral, to like, to highly like, have an underlying ordinal order which is the scale in preference. As multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) only handles categorical variables, conversion from the 6-level Likert scale (including unaware) into categorical variables incurs a loss of useful information. Flattening ordinal scales into the categorical scale treats them as independent responses and overlooking the relationship between them. For example, it ignores that highly-likes and likes are neighboring responses, much closer than the difference between highly-likes and neutral. Although Adele (M31) and Phoenix Legend (M22) are polarizing music items, the dominant relationship between the two is the selection of neutral for both. Since neutral is to the most popular response across music items, it dominates the first axis in MCA, and the subsequent axes groups the other responses. Attempts at using MCA resulted in a degenerated solution which groups all the choices together. MCA is a method in the family of methods called geometric data analysis (GDA). As explained by Roose, "the input for GDA is best served with dichotomous variables. Likert-scale items tend to produce the so-called horseshoe-effect or Guttman-effect, in which extreme answers ('strongly agree', strongly disagree') are opposed to the neutral categories ('neutral', 'somewhat agree') – from a substantial point of view quite uninteresting" (Roose, 2016).

An alternative is to treat the ordinal Likert scale data as numeric scales[4], from which various methods such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) or principal component analysis (PCA) can be applied. However, treating "unheard" responses as missing presents a serious problem for traditional methods of analysis. Previous researches skip over the issue by dropping those cases in calculating preferences (e.g. Bennett et al., 2009:

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[4] This is common in practice but still debated by statisticians, but that is a debate beyond the scope of this research.

79–80; Bryson, 1996: 889). That was possible because previous surveys asked about broad genres, to which unheard responses are rare, and they only asked for limited items of music which result in a manageable number of dropped cases. In this research, music items are designed to be specific—resulting in both higher frequency of unheard per music item, and to be more comprehensive—with 52 items that result in a high chance that unheard occurs in at least one item for each respondent. The challenge is that while at the item level, the unaware responses can be treated as missing values to be omitted from the analysis, across the music items at the level of respondents, there is rarely any respondent who has heard of everything. If the method is applied, there are almost no usable cases left for such an analysis. With only 155 respondents who have heard of all the music items and the mean number of unaware at 7.4 items, most cases must be dropped if factor analysis were to be used. The considerable number of missing responses prevents the use of common methods on continuous variables such as PCA or factor analysis. Conversion of the responses into a numerical scale for PCA or factor analysis is also unfeasible, due to the substantial number of "unaware" responses that must be treated as missing.

MIRT has the power to determine latent traits without requiring all questions to be answered. The power of this comes from its power as a latent method that determines the underlying traits that account for differences in the responses, thus it does not require every question be answered. This capability is also employed in computer-adaptive standardized testing where test scores can be calculated even though test-takers answer different questions, by accounting for the difficulty of the questions (Carlson and von Davier, 2017). This allows the problem of unheard responses in this dataset to be overcome without the need to drop any case with unheard responses.

(2) Differentiates between relative levels of popularity

MIRT, or more specifically the graded response model (GRM), not only properly treats the Likert scale as ordinal, but also differentiates between the scales in different music items, without assuming that an identical scale of responses between questions. In practical terms, MIRT recognizes that not all likes mean the same thing—liking an item that everyone likes is different from liking an item that others dislike—the latter reveals more information about the person. This means those responses are not assumed to be equally scaled not only overall but also between questions. .In factor analysis, differences in means and variances are unimportant as they are assumed to be removed through transformations, but MIRT takes them into account and is thus "a method for modeling the meaningful contributors to the interaction of people with test items" (Reckase, 2009: 71). An example where this advanced tool is employed is in standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Graduate Record Examination (GRE), where answering a hard question correctly means more than correctly answering an easy question (Carlson and von Davier, 2017). This advantage makes MIRT a more granular method compared to plain factor analysis and MCA.

The graded response model (GRM)

MIRT consists of a family of models, including the classic Rasch, 1 to 4 parameter logistic models (1-4PL), graded rating scale model (GRSM), generalized partial credit model (GPCM), and the nominal response model (NSM) (Reckase, 2009). The graded response model (GRM) is chosen for this research. The classic

Rasch and 1-4PL models from unidimensional IRT lack multidimensional capabilities, producing only a single factor of taste. The classic Rasch model has restricted slope, and its extensions the 1-4PL models, do not have the multidimensional aspect of factor analysis. As my 52 items have more than one dimension of latent taste, those models are not considered. Another consideration is that music preference in the data is ordinal (as opposed to binary), so only polytomous models are considered.

Out of the multi-dimensional models, GRCM is the most restrictive as it assumes all category distances to be the same across items—i.e. the like response means the same thing for any music item, whereas GRM's allowance for different slopes per response is more reasonable for this study. Liking a mainstream item along with everyone else may not be the same as liking a rarefied music item, which is accounted by GRM. More complex than the GRM is GPCM, which removes the order constraints beyond adjacent categories. GRM and GPCM outcomes are generally similar but GPCM is sometimes used to test the GRM assumption of order constraints (Templin and Henson, 2010). I have tested both models and determined that GPCM is redundant for the ordinal data on music taste. GRM is chosen as it is the most parsimonious model that recognizes differences between preference for each music item, and suitable for ordinal data. It estimates one slope and 4 thresholds for each item (one for each boundary between the 5 choices) (Samejima, 1968). The unaware responses are marked as missing, or unanswered by the respondent, which is then estimated by the model.

The most complex model is the nominal response model (NSM), which estimates the most variables as it treats the difference responses (of highly-like, like, etc.) as categorical and separately estimates each response. That model has been tasted by keeping the unaware responses in its own category to be modeled. The result indicates that "unaware" is an outlying score at the edge of "highly-dislike" for the vast majority of music items, indicating that "unaware" and "dislikes" are similar indications of distance whereas "likes" indicate closeness. In no case is "unaware" closer to "likes," a result which is also intuitive. Aside from "unaware," the remaining preference responses are clearly ordinal and does not make use of the power of NSM. There is no indication that the more cultural capital one has, the more likely that one has unpredictable extreme opinions on any item (nor the opposite that more cultural capital results in a higher likelihood of neutral opinions). GRM assumes that the choice is ordered, which contains/accumulates all previous choices as a latent trait increases. Since the power of NSM is redundant and result in overfitting, GRM is chosen.

The software used for analysis is R, which is a software package as well as a programming language used for computational statistics. R is also a common tool for psychometric modeling (Rusch et al., 2013). The MIRT analysis is done using the MIRT package (Chalmers, 2012). More than 10 thousand lines of R script has been written for this research for exploration and hypothesis testing. As the scripts are exceedingly long, they are not included in the appendix, but coding has been a significant part of this research.

2.5 Supplementary Interviews

Finally, twenty-one interviews were conducted in Oct-Dec 2018 with individuals in Beijing and Shanghai. They were conducted during my academic exchange to Peking University during the 4th year of my Ph.D., an exchange primarily supported by funding from the LSE's Academic Partnership Office. All the respondents were living in Beijing or Shanghai. Some are native to those cities but others came from a variety of cities, towns, or villages across China.

The goals of supplementary interviews

The semi-structured interviews are conducted after the initial analysis of quantitative data. The survey has revealed the key contours of distinction: a division between traditional highbrow forms and popular music, a division within popular music between foreign and local music (Chapter 4), and that differences in taste can be traced to parental and childhood privileges (Chapter 6). While those empirical findings can standalone, other questions on taste remain unanswered by the quantitative analysis.

Firstly, whether and *how* the music boundaries are deployed for distinction? Stronger forms of the cultural omnivore account insist that anything but exclusionary consumption implies the lack of a Bourdieusian homology, and is interpreted to be boundary-crossing and cosmopolitan tolerance (Chan, 2019; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b). Their claims of tolerance are difficult to evaluate through quantitative research alone. Secondly, *how* did parental and childhood privileges contribute to taste in popular music? Existing accounts have discussed the role of institutionalization of high arts on legitimate culture, but the linkage between privilege and popular culture has been weak. Research that links privileged upbringing and taste has been rare in China. The interviews also hope to contribute to understanding the relationship between taste and upbringing. Therefore, supplementing my findings with qualitative interviews would improve the understanding of distinction in practice in China.

Recruitment and interview setting

To complement the findings from the random-sample survey, the qualitative component aims to have a sample of respondents who can elaborate on the findings on taste found in the quantitative survey. Since they tend to be the more privileged group, I expect to have more interviewees with higher levels of cultural capital, relative to their relative percentage in the population. I exclude professionals in music or theatre-related industries. All the interviewees discuss music as leisure consumption from the personal perspective of a cultural consumer, not influenced by professional or insider judgment. Interviewees are recruited widely through direct and indirect contacts, and snowball recruitment with people who are willing to participate in research on people's general music preferences—to discuss what they like and why they like them. All respondents are recruited *without* screening for their background.

The interviews are conducted in public settings, typically in a nearby coffee shop. They average about 1 hour long but are up to about 2 hour. The profile of the interviewees is in the table below, with the names anonymized. While cultural capital as a complex accumulation of privileged experiences is not readily

quantifiable, a cultural capital score is calculated to allow for a rough comparison—based on educational attainment, parental party membership, hukou at birth, whether they were born and raised in Shanghai or Beijing (the most and the earliest affluent cities in China), and whether they received education in the West (a common aspiration in Chinese families).

Table 2-9: Profiles of interviewed respondents

	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Current City	Edu	Party Parent	Hukou at birth	BJ/SH Native	Edu West	**Cultural Capital ***
1	Chenyue	34	F	Beijing	Master	Yes	Urban	Yes	Y	**CC7**
2	Xujing	44	F	Shanghai	Master	Yes	Urban	Yes	N	**CC6**
3	Yeqin	37	F	Shanghai	MBA	No	Urban	Yes	Y	**CC6**
4	Wenju	29	F	Beijing	Doctorate	Yes	Urban	No	Y	**CC6**
5	Yiyin	24	F	Shanghai	Master	Yes	Urban	No	Y	**CC6**
6	Dingjiao	28	F	Beijing	Master	Yes	Urban	No	Y	**CC6**
7	Xiaoshu	39	F	Shanghai	Bachelor	Yes	Urban	Yes	N	**CC5**
8	Changti	31	F	Beijing	Master	Yes	Urban	No	N	**CC5**
9	Ziguo	26	M	Beijing	Master	Yes	Urban	No	N	**CC5**
10	Dongkun	23	M	Beijing	Master	Yes	Urban	No	N	**CC5**
11	Moliu	23	F	Beijing	Master	No	Urban	No	Y	**CC5**
12	Wumu	43	F	Beijing	MBA	No	Urban	No	Y	**CC5**
13	Muyao	32	M	Beijing	Bachelor	No	Urban	Yes	N	**CC4**
14	Tianfan	35	M	Beijing	Doctorate	No	Urban	No	N	**CC4**
15	Donglu	31	F	Beijing	Bachelor	Yes	Urban	No	N	**CC4**
16	Baoshang	31	F	Shanghai	Master	No	Rural	No	N	**CC3**
17	Shiping	33	M	Beijing	Bachelor	No	Urban	No	N	**CC3**
18	Xiaojing	33	M	Beijing	Bachelor	No	Rural	No	N	**CC2**
19	Zili	28	F	Shanghai	College	No	Urban	No	N	**CC2**
20	Mining	23	F	Shanghai	College	No	Rural	No	N	**CC1**
21	Puchao	26	M	Beijing	College	No	Rural	No	N	**CC1**

Names have been anonymized
*Cultural capital score is intended to provide a rough representation on the relative level of cultural capital, calculated from the sum of education (college=1, bachelors=2, masters or above =3), at least a party member parent (Yes=1), hukou at birth (Urban=1), BJ/SH native (born and raised in Beijing or Shanghai=1), and Western education (Yes = 1)

Interview questions

The interviews are conducted in a semi-structured format. They are asked to describe the music they like and why they like them. They are also asked to describe how they listen to music, the context and the environment. As these questions are initially quite open-ended, some respondents focus on the pop music collection in their phones, while others talk about attending musicals and operas. If they do not mention the social context of music consumption, I also remind them to discuss it, such as whether they listen with others and the reactions when they encounter other music. If they only focus on their likes, I also guide them to discuss what they do not like and why.

By this point, most respondents have already spontaneously revealed either their boundaries or disengagement, without me having to raise questions that might be perceived as judging or put them in a position of defending their taste. The contrast between HCCs and LCCs becomes clear by now as it is what they have not said or what they are unable to articulate that draws the most contrast. Most HCCs spontaneously cover the main taste divisions found in my quantitative research: traditional highbrow and pop, foreign and local, music attendance and personal listening. HCCs also happily provide long analysis of

what they like and sophisticated critiques of what they dislike. In quite a few interviews, I have to guide the HCCs that I am more interested in their viewpoints, than in the detailed historical facts and analysis that they are providing on music. LCCs tend to talk about the most popular contemporary pop music primarily consumed through mobile apps, mentioning the foreign but the description is much briefer. I still encourage them to tell me more, but they do not offer the thick description and critiques anywhere comparable to the HCCs.

At this point, I mentally sweep through my questions to prompt them to discuss any topic from my survey findings that they have not been spontaneously discussed: traditional highbrow and pop, foreign and local, music attendance and personal listening, as well as their dislikes. Then I proceed beyond their current consumption to ask when they first liked what they like, how have their preferences changed, and how have they grown to like what they like? These questions also draw strong contrasts between the HCCs and LCCs. Many HCCs elaborate on their stories of their childhood music lessons, extracurricular activities, media consumption habits, and philosophies about quality music—tracing the paths that led to a sophisticated knowledge about highbrow and selective listening of foreign music. LCCs tend to listen to music as temporal popular consumption rather than accumulated knowledge, and are vague about their trajectory of music preference. The background information of the respondents would also have been revealed by this point. For example, when they describe their childhood music lessons, I ask them about how their parents afforded it; when they describe of not learning any music in education, I ask them about the type of school attended. I also ask them about other questions of my interest, such as the language barrier in foreign music consumption—not just English songs but also the popular Japanese and Korean songs.

Recordings are successfully taken in most of the interviews, which are analyzed to answer to those specific research questions—again the ones which are raised to supplement the findings from the quantitative survey with more depth from respondents' experiences. The interview findings are consistent with the quantitative findings but provides more context.

Discussion of potential bias and limitations

In the interviews, I hope that more respondents with higher levels of cultural capital can be recruited, as the goals are to understand if and how they deploy their boundaries, and the accumulation of their tastes. People with high levels of cultural capital are the people who are harder to find in a representative survey. Yet I also wish to include people with lower levels of cultural capital to compare. As such, the interviews are not intended to be representative of the population, of which the survey result would be more qualified. However, are the HCCs and LCCs recruited typical of the HCCs and LCCs in the population? I have reasons to believe they are representative.

Recruiting respondents for interviews on distinction is tricky because it is easy for the recruiting criteria (such as screening for class and taste) to reveal the research in a way that would bias the recruitment and lead the interviewees' responses. In my interviews, an overarching rule is that all respondents are to be recruited without mentioning social background during the recruitment. Respondents should not have the impression they are screened by their status. However, through my discretion to choose from whom to

snowball recruit, I have some influence in my attempt to have more interviews with the HCCs and LCCs (The MCCs are the easiest to recruit, but it is the HCCs and LCCs that facilitate comparison). For all but 2 interviews, I do not even pre-screen for the type of music they like. According to the survey, interest in traditional Chinese music is less common in young people. As I am interested in the role between education and interest in traditional Chinese music, I interviewed two Peking University students who are interested in traditional Chinese music. Those two interviewees are the only two whose music preferences are known before the interview.

Those with lower levels of cultural capital are the hardest to come by. When I attempt to recruit from those expected to be of lower social status, despite my clarifications that this research is about "your music habits," potential respondents often explain that they are not into music and have little to "contribute" to "music research." A possible explanation is that they, aware of the hierarchy in taste, are hesitant to be interviewed by a researcher based in the prestigious Peking University, or a doctoral research student from the West. (While I do not advertise my privileged position in my message for recruitment, I explain my identity if asked, and had any potential interviewee asked my interlocutor about my background it would also be known.) While I cannot exclude the possibility my advantaged positionality might have an influence, the more likely explanation is that the LCCs are indeed less interested in music—which is the explanation they provide, and a disengagement which is also verified by other studies (Bennett et al., 2009; Bryson, 1997; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Peterson, 1992). The response rate from LCCs is also lower from the telephone interviews which are called from the call center, thus the low response rate from the interviews cannot be totally due to the status of the interviewer. My study also finds that those with lower levels of cultural capital have higher "unaware" responses in my survey, which would make an hour-long interview on music an uninteresting experience for those with little interest in music. Thus, the interviews have not been able to recruit the lowest LCCs. By this recruitment design, I did not interview any respondent who represent the univores and slobs who are disengaged from music. The LCCs interviewed are still less enthusiastic about music, but everyone interviewed all have a certain level of interest in music.

While the recruitment of HCCs and LCCs are not fully representative comparable quantitative sampling, for the reasons mentioned above, I do not think there is significant bias in the result. Through this recruitment which is blind to social background, people with a bachelor's degree tend to like foreign music. Those with interest in traditional highbrow are slightly rarer, and they turn out to be those with more privileged youths with exposure at an early age. The mechanisms of taste formation and distinction across the interviewed HCCs are consistent—with some more snobbish and some more tolerant than others, but the distinction is evident. The interview findings are consistent with survey findings where they overlap, and the interviews gained more depth into the attitudes of interviewees who are interested in the various types of music.

Another question is, would my privileged position have influenced the interview results? For the HCCs, it is possible that they could have emphasized aspects of music distinction believing that I, an interviewer from a privileged background, "would understand." This, however, would exactly be how mechanisms of social exclusion function in society—using music for ingroup identification and to signal a shared high-status. I do not concur with any discussion relating to status. More personally, the high status of selective foreign music

and the low status of local music in the context of China are both vague to me prior to this project, as I did not grow up there. For the LCCs, the opposite effect might be possible—respondents being more hesitant to discuss the local music they love and the experiences of being discriminated (by someone privileged like me). Hence, an interviewer from their own background could improve the understanding of LCCs. My quantitative questionnaire surveyed over the phone addressed that to a certain extent, as the anonymous interviewers reveal a widespread disengagement of the LCCs toward the music that HCCs utilize for distinction. Thus, my findings on the contrast between the HCCs and LCCs, as well as the mechanisms of HCCs' distinction, should not be hindered by my advantaged position.

2.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the design of my research. Research on cultural consumption in the West is divided by a chasm in which quantitative research based on mainstream methods often points to the cultural eclecticism of the elites, while qualitative research and researches that use MCA often support Bourdieusian conceptions of cultural distinction. Furthermore, suitable data on cultural consumption is lacking in China. In response, this research innovates through survey design and analytical methods. This survey asked 53 items of music, which addresses the limitations of typical national surveys that lack specificity in items of cultural consumption. The combination of MIRT and ANOVA has the advantage no requiring no a priori assumption on the hierarchy, in line with statistical standards of mainstream quantitative social sciences, but also examines the factors that underly differences in taste. After quantitative data analysis, the research is complemented by interviews with individuals. The research design brings new data and a new angle into understanding cultural divisions in China that advances the debate on cultural capital—a finding that will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3. The landscape of music in China

This chapter gives an overview of the music landscape in China from the sociological perspective of differences in music preferences between social groups. First, I will introduce the history of music hierarchy in China to show how legitimate music has been deeply rooted in ancient China, but various forms were consecrated as political power changed hands in more recent history. Second, I analyze the survey data to investigate what are the main divisions of music in contemporary China, based on the similarity of tastes. The results indicate that music in contemporary China shows a multi-layered division of traditional versus popular, with popular music further divided by the region of origin, often with high-status and mass forms. The six main types of music include traditional, selective foreign, trendy foreign, classics Hk/Taiwan, trendy Chinese, and local music.

3.1 Introduction

The history of music hierarchy in China

The music hierarchy in China is a topic that has mostly been discussed in music history but rarely from the sociological perspective. This section introduces the history of music hierarchy in China which connects the music with the status of their practitioners. This illustrates a music hierarchy whose cultural context differs from the West in its long history as well as the rise and fall of legitimate music which is not seen in the West. The historical context illustrates the complexity of music hierarchy and helps understand the sources of legitimacy before I investigate the contemporary music hierarchy in the next section.

(1) The ancient roots of legitimate music

The division of culture into the high culture of the elites and the culture of the laypeople is deeply rooted in Confucianism. Around 500 BCE, Confucius believed that music should be used to civilize people to harmonize social orders as part of the Confucian ritual, as it can adjust temperament and regulate the behavior of the people. Confucius compiled the "Classic of Songs," the "Record of Music" as part of "Record of Rituals," as well as the now-lost "Classic of Music" (乐经)(Thrasher, 1981). Confucius distinguished music into the proper "elegant music" (雅乐) of moral individuals versus the vernacular music (俗乐) of the corrupt (Lau, 2008: 118), effectively legitimizing "elegant music" through education and state institutionalization against the illegitimate forms. Confucius' "elegant music" was itself rooted in the institutionalized rituals of Zhou dynasty, as Confucius sees himself only as compilers and followers of the rituals of Zhou dynasty which started in 1046 BCE. Xunzi, a later Confucian philosopher, further emphasizes the political need for music education to oppose the influence of "obscene" folk music (Jin, 2011).

The Zhou social order was already crumbling in Confucius' times, but Confucianism was revived and institutionalized as state ideology under Emperor Wu whose reign started in 141 BCE during the Han dynasty. "Elegant music" was institutionalized as imperial high art to be played in royal courts and temples in

ancient China. It consists of a selection of ancient instruments, one of which is *guqin* the seven-stringed zither(Melvin and Cai, 2004: 54–55; Wong, 1991). *Guqin* in an ancient instrument existed since the fifteenth century BCE, highly venerated by the elites and culturally significant in Confucian morality (Lau, 2008: 122–123). Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit missionary to China, describes his encounter with "elegant music" in a Confucian ceremony in the 16th century Ming dynasty:

> The priests who composed the orchestra were vested in sumptuous garments, as if they were to attend a sacrifice, and after paying their respects to the Magistrate, they set to playing their various instruments; bronze bells, basin-shaped vessels, some made of stone, with skins over them like drums, stringed instruments like a lute, bone flutes and organs played by blowing into them with the mouth rather than with bellows. They had other instruments also shaped like animals, holding reeds in their teeth, through which air was forced from the empty interior(Ricci and Tregault, 1953: 336).

Another wave of legitimate culture came as musical theatre emerged as the leisure entertainment of the noble elites – notably Kunqu opera (Melvin and Cai, 2004: 55). Originating in Kunshan near Shanghai in the 14th century, Kunquis considered the most refined form of opera in China, incorporating ancient poetry, elaborate choreography, and abstracted minimalist forms. While "elegant music" continued to be the music of official ceremonies, Kunqu became increasingly patronized by the imperial literati as entertainment, eventually dominating high culture into the 18th century (Wong, 2009). This period in China was perhaps the closest parallel to Bourdieusian France in 1960s, where a refined literati culture erected a boundary between elites and laypeople. Matteo Ricci also offered an account of Kunqu as elite entertainment in the 16th century:

> These groups of actors are employed at all imposing banquets and when they are called they come prepared to enact any of the ordinary plays. The host at the banquet is usually presented with a volume of plays and he selects the one or several he may like. The guests, between eating and drinking, follow the plays with so much satisfaction that the banquet at times may last for ten hours, and as one play leads to another the dramatic performance may last as long again as did the banquet. The text of these plays is generally sung, and it rarely happens that anything is enunciated in an ordinary tone of voice (Ricci and Tregault, 1953: 55).

Meanwhile, entertainment also spread to the lower strata. Kunqu opera, also known to be the "mother of hundreds of operas" (百戏之母), fostered the development of other more populist forms of opera that spread across China. An important distinction between Western opera and Chinese opera (also called Chinese *xiqu*[5])

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[5]Note: While traditional Chinese drama and theater are commonly called "Chinese opera" in English, some Chinese scholars argue that they should be more properly referred to by the Mandarin term *xiqu* because it has no relation to the "opera" that originated in Europe. While there is some merit to that argument, many scholars still believe it is proper to continue to call it "Chinese opera" (see discussion in Stock, 2003: 4–7). In this paper I wish to point out the *xiqu* perspective but use the term "opera" neutrally, akin to "music"—the

is that Chinese opera is not a unified art form but is a category with hundreds of subtypes that have audiences across the highbrow-lowbrow spectrum (Mackerras, 1975; Tung and Mackerras, 1987). Chinese opera only exists in specific forms such as Peking opera, Kunqu opera, Huangmei opera, etc., often denoted by their local place of origin. There is not a generic "Chinese opera" that can be performed. This reflects the boundaries between the troupes, where tradition and structures such as the disciple system reinforce boundaries between the different types of the opera. Historically, each form of Chinese opera has a local influence, and no form of opera is popular across all of China—at least until the institutionalization of Peking opera as a national art. The more influential forms of opera tend to have a wider influence, while and less influential ones more local. More generally, traditional music in China was divided into hierarchies where a few types were high art for the literati, and countless others were everyday music of the peasants. The operas were generally considered higher status than *quyi*, which involve singing, storytelling, and instrument playing, but not the elaborate costumes, make-ups, onstage performances and acrobatics of the operas. The local forms of music were the traditional entertainment for the mass, whereas the influential forms are enjoyed by elites and have a higher status (Mackerras, 1975; Tung and Mackerras, 1987).

The status of "elegant music" and Kunqu opera as legitimate music crumbled near the end of the Qing dynasty along with the fall of the Confucian order. Peking opera emerged in this period, which developed after opera troupes from Anhui came to Beijing 1790 to perform for the emperor in the courts (Mackerras, 1975). Peking opera was rooted in Kunqu opera and absorbed some of its refined elements, but was the more popular form with percussive music, action-packed stories, and superstar performers and overtook Kunqu opera in popularity (Melvin and Cai, 2004: 24). Although Kunqu was more refined, it distanced from the general audience and was near the brink of extinction throughout the 20th century, whereas Peking opera gained influence near the end of the Qing dynasty (Goldman, 2012). The Republican government institutionalized Peking opera the national standard of Chinese high culture, renaming it the "National Opera" (Goldstein, 1999; Guy, 2005). *Jingkun* is a term that is sometimes used to refer to Peking (Beijing) opera and Kunqu opera because of their rated roots and related status as highbrow.

Different types of music have been consecrated as legitimate music in different periods of Chinese history. Many of them continue to be relevant today, preserved as intangible cultural heritages that can be listened/watched in theaters today. This study has included guqin, Kunqu, Peking, Huangmei, Bangzi, Sichuan, Canton, Shanghai opera, as well as Suzhou pingtan which is a form of quyi, to examine their role in the music hierarchy today.

(2) The arrival of Western music and music under Mao Communism

Although Western classical music is sometimes claimed to be a universal language that crosses cultural boundaries, the arrival of Western classical in Asia was a product of European imperialism. After the first

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specific art forms will be signified as "Chinese opera," "Peking opera," "Cantonese opera" etc., while the Western art form will always be signified as "Western opera."

Concession in Shanghai was established by the British in 1845, the growing population of foreigners desired to have their own classical orchestra. The Shanghai Municipal Band Council funded a Band in 1879, which recruited professional players from Germany in 1906. The first military band was established in Beijing in 1920 by a British customs officer. By 1920 the 23 thousand foreigners living in Shanghai were enough to support a full-time professional orchestra, leading to the development of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra in 1922— "the best orchestra in the Far East" (Melvin and Cai, 2004: 25–26). The Chinese were not allowed to attend its concerts until 1925. Missionary schools have long been providing musical training in the Western canon, but formal pedagogical training started in 1927 with the establishment of the National Music Conservatory. This marked the beginning of Western classical as the music of the elite Chinese (Kraus, 1989). Traditional Confucian hierarchy sees scholar-officials as the noblest, followed by farmers, then merchants and entertainers at the bottom (though in reality the wealth of merchants made them quite powerful) (Thrasher, 1981). Institutionalization of Western classical music by the government as well as educators led it to become the prestigious music in Republican China, elevating musicians to prestigious cultural elites with recognized status, salary, and stable career as performers and teachers (Lau, 2008: 35–36).

Western pop music first entered China in the early 20th century in Shanghai, leading to the rise of an early Mandarin popular music industry in Shanghai. The arrival of Western technology and cultural influences also brought recorded music into China and inspired the launch of a popular music industry that blossomed in Shanghai in the 1930s. Historically, Chinese popular music consisted of various traditional operas, *quyi*, and folk songs, which were live entertainments. The first music recorded in China was the recording of Peking opera in 1904 that marked the beginning of recorded music in China (Li, 2011). The Chinese popular music enjoyed by the early cosmopolitans in China were quite distinct from the traditional opera and folk. Popular music of the time faced criticism and resistance by the conservatives. The themes of romance and love in the songs were considered harmful to society and lowly regarded to as "pornographic" (Jones, 2001; Lau, 2008: 106).

The Chinese Communists, rooted in the philosophy of Marxist-Leninism from the Soviet Union, took over Mainland China in 1949. Initially, the nationalization of previously commercial music troupes brought funding and stability to the arts, distancing them from commercial dependence—an institutionalization which elevated the social status of the arts (Latham, 2007: 305; Mackerras, 1975). But as the political climate changed, the "feudal" elements of traditional opera were increasingly seen as bourgeois, incompatible with Communist efforts to eliminate class. All forms of cultural production were required to praise the Party and expose the enemies (King, 2013: 24). Music and entertainment were tightly regulated, as the CPC (Chinese Party of China) saw a need to have a grip on culture to serve political needs. A guiding principle on arts under Communist China is Mao's "Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art," where he claims, "There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics." (Mackerras, 1973: 479). The Party viewed popular culture and foreign media as hostile, which ended all forms of music consumption except the political revolutionary music, known as Red music—the only music for a generation of Chinese (Ho and Law, 2012: 403). Cultural productions, which included music, film, books, and media, must praise the party and expose the enemies (King, 2013: 24). Traditional opera was "reformed" as revolutionary opera to fit the Communist ideology (Mittler, 2010).

Revolutionary and patriotic Communist music, known as Red music, were legitimized as the official standard (Ho and Law, 2012: 403). It was the music for a generation as it was the only music during radical Communist periods. At the apex of the cultural revolution, many artists of traditional art were humiliated, tortured, and died along with the purge of old elites, interrupting the lineage of what later became consecrated as the intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, the center of Chinese popular music moved to Hong Kong and Taiwan, which in turn, influenced China again after Reform and Opening (Lau, 2008).

(3) The competition between Western and Chinese legitimate music

The radical period ended after Reform and Opening, which saw the marketization of economy and the reopening of China to the world after the death of Mao in 1976. The government has been more relaxed about apolitical music as entertainment, yet maintained censorship as to control what can be consumed.

While Communist music remains the proper standard in formal government, party, and military celebrations (Hung, 1996; Kraus, 2004), the global standard of high art has been gaining acceptance in China. The rise of the middle-class and the increase in inequality led to the adoption of Western classical in affluent families as symbols of the educated and the modernized (Melvin and Cai, 2004), exemplified by the prevalence of piano in middle-class families (Kraus, 1989). The government has allocated funding for an increasing number of professional Western symphony orchestras, which has now reached 82 in China (Halls, 2019). The increased influence of Western classical can be seen in its rising popularity and the younger audience in China compared to the West (ibid). Yet Western classical carries an adherent cultural inequality. Despite the growth of prominent Asian musicians, they have received relatively little attention in the West, still seen to be reproducers of a Western bourgeois canon (Yang, 2007).

Meanwhile, the various forms of Chinese opera have been resurrected. However, interruption of lineage and the rising competition of Western classical, popular music, films, TV, gaming, and Internet activities caused them to be losing the young audience, particularly those in coastal Westernized regions (Ho, 2016b: 159). The government has increased efforts to protect and consecrate Chinese traditional music as cultural heritage in recent years, giving them higher legitimacy than before. Kunqu opera is an example of the re-institutionalization of traditional culture in recent Chinese history. By the end of the Qing dynasty, Kunqu troupes have dwindled and the lineage in the art decayed. For many years, performers disbanded and sought other work as there was no audience for the art. The Kunqu revival came in 2001 when it was declared an Oral and Intangible Heritage by UNESCO, leading to increased public interest and increased funding, such as those from Ministry of culture and Finance, which poured into troupes and performances, museums, research centers, and educations in universities, allowing it to regain a high-status in many of the educated youths (Keane, 2013: 140–143). Commercial enterprises have also started to promote traditional culture as high-end social entertainment for the rich (Liao, 2012). Peking opera was in a better position due to its popularity and institutionalization as national opera during the more recent Republican China, promoted by China's Ministry of Education and TV stations (Ho, 2016a). It too was declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010, after which received renewed interest by the educated young elite in theatres (Zhou, 2009), a sign that it is regaining its value as cultural capital among the newer generation.

The revival of specific highbrow forms of opera also leads to the increasing stratification of opera more broadly. With massive support from the government, most prominent forms of traditional opera such as Peking opera and Kunqu were becoming gentrified. Government subsidies allow them to perform in grandiose halls in China, travel overseas to perform to Western audiences, while less prestigious regional forms of operas are losing audiences, relying on rural festivals and countryside performances to support themselves (Latham, 2007: 309–310).

(4) The penetration of foreign music in China

Since Reform and Opening, cultural influences from abroad have penetrated China. First was the culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan that first influenced mainland China, which was "a hybridized but distinctly Chinese culture" that "represents their accommodation of Western influence" (JM Chan, 1994: 84). People brought pirated cassette tapes and later CDs into China, which copied and spread. The government continued to promote Chinese operatic singing of traditional hymns with a political, patriotic theme (Fung, 2013), but popular music culture already started to captivate the public. China came under the influence of outside culture again, first those from Hong Kong and Taiwan, then Western culture from farther abroad. Records and various forms of media were smuggled from Hong Kong; Cantonese media from Hong Kong became influential particularly in Guangdong province (JM Chan, 1994). Imported entertainment in China had always privileged access to the economically privileged. In 1983, the 20-episode TV drama about a patriotic martial artist, "The Legendary Fok (霍元甲)," was the first TV series to be imported from Hong Kong, which became hugely popular across at a time when less than 5% of the Chinese owned a TV (Lee et al., 2013: 43).

Cultural imports from America, Europe, and Japan, through both legal as well as informal channels, have also been highly influential. Music in China is not just listened but also sang in the KTV, popular leisure in China. Lately, popular music in China has been penetrated by music from outside of Mainland China, particularly music from Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also Japan, Korea, and Euro-America. A representative survey in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Xian in 2006-2007 found that 11% of people's overall media consumption was non-local (Lee et al., 2013). More recently is the Korean wave (韩流) which touched many fans in China (Jang and Paik, 2012; Shim, 2006). Sophisticated Internet users are able to cross the Great firewall to reach blocked foreign websites, and have collaborated to allow pirated foreign entertainments to be downloaded in China almost immediately after the release abroad (Gao, 2018; Gilardi et al., 2018; Liu and de Seta, 2014; Meng, 2012). A survey in 12 Beijing secondary schools in urban Beijing in 2012 found that Mainland pop songs are the most popular, followed by UK/US, other Western countries, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Cantopop, and other Asian pop (Ho, 2016b: 152). More recently in 2018, "Informal industry estimates suggest Chinese-language music accounts for around 80 percent of the market and K-Pop and J-Pop for 10 percent, with the remaining 10 percent going to international repertoire" (IFPI, 2018).

Relative to the size the Chinese economy, Chinese music sales pale in comparison to the West. The top three music markets in the world are the US, Japan, and Germany, with sales of $5.9, $2.7, and $1.3 billion USD in 2017. China only managed to be the 10th, with sales of $292 million(IFPI, 2018). According to an industry

expert I interviewed during my background research, due to the prevalence of privacy, ticket sales from live concerts to affluent consumers is an important source of profit compared to music sales, as well as stars serving as spokespersons in advertising other products (Fung, 2007a). Aside from attending live concerts for the few urbanites, overall music consumption in China is primarily through Internet streaming. Until the last few years, music streaming in China has been primarily free and primarily supported by advertisement, whose revenue was insufficient to support the business model (Tang and Lyons, 2016: 360). This contrasts with countries in the West where revenue comes from subscriptions.

The questions on music divisions in China

This research takes on a sociological perspective to first look at the divisions in Chinese music based on preferences of social actors. Musicians, musicologists, historians, and music fans have different angles of describing and classifying music in China—such as by era, style, movements, etc. An influential categorization in China today has its root from the 1960s, when musicologists under the Central Conservatory classified music in China as new or traditional, whereby traditional consists of literati, religious, folk, and court. Historians of popular music in China divides by era, such as based on the Shanghai-centered era 1920-70s, post-reform PRC era 1979-1990s, and 21st century (Groenewegen, 2011: 55–56). The main music apps in China also organize by region/language, era, plus mood or emotional descriptions. Most of the popular music in China in this study, aside from Western pop, would fall into the "world music" category based on the Grammy classification above.

In the West, genre has been a common way to discuss and group music. However, the categories of music found are not genres, as genre is primarily relevant to popular music from the West. This is relatively under-discussed in current research, as even researches in China by Western scholars have used a genre-centric perspective to navigate China's music landscape, looking into various music subcultures (de Kloet, 2010). While there is no denying that such music subcultures exist, and can be used to distinguish fan ingroups from outgroups, those subcultures are far from mainstream compared to Mandopop, especially those by Hong Kong and Taiwan artists, which today dominates the popular music scene and is difficult to force into a genre-framework (Moskowitz, 2010a, 2010b). However, genre is less important in Chinese music compared to Western music. Most of the Grammy Awards, a prominent music award in the US, are awarded by genre, such as dance/electronic, rock, alternative, R&B, rap, country, new age, jazz, gospel, Latin, American roots (e.g. bluegrass, folk), reggae, musical, and world music in 2019 (The Recording Academy, 2019), whereas Taiwan's Golden Melody Award is awarded by profession (vocal/instrumental/technical), language and gender (Groenewegen, 2011: 53–56).

Given the penetration of global music in China, with the influx of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and foreign pop culture along with the spread of Western legitimate music, what are the main divisions of music in China? This will be evaluated using MIRT in the next section. Secondly, in the midst of competition between the various forms of music, is music in China stratified? This will be discussed with the homology versus cultural omnivore debate outlined in the introductory chapter.

3.2 Key music divisions in China—traditional vs pop, and region of origin

This section uses survey data to examine the main divisions of music in contemporary China, to argue that the region of origin is a main division of music in China. The music categories are determined based on the similarity of taste among the respondents. Details on the MIRT modeling were discussed in chapter 2.

MIRT derived 6 music factors based on music preferences of the sampled population, which means that these 6 dimensions best represent the differences in taste of the people across the music items. The 6 categories are traditional, selective foreign, trendy foreign, classics Hk/Taiwan, trendy Chinese, and local music. The overall finding in this section is that contemporary Chinese music is firstly divided into a traditional versus pop. Popular music is further divided based on the region of origin—foreign, HK-Taiwan, and local. Furthermore, internal hierarchies exist within them that separates high-status and mass variants, which I explain below.

Interpreting MIRT results

In this research, respondents provided their preferences toward a diversity of music items. In traditional methods, the responses to music are directly treated as the object of analysis in itself—the likes, dislikes, and participation are directly disseminated for patterns. In the latent variables approach, the object of analysis shifts from the music responses to the individuals' tastes. Music responses are treated as observable indicators of unobservable, internalized music taste. Preferences for Adele and preferences for Bieber are not studied as 2 separate likes or dislikes but would be treated as indicators of something more fundamental—an aptitude for foreign music. Each trait can thus be seen as internalized dispositions for or against certain styles of music. Latent methods calculate based on underlying similarities rather than observed similarities (Hair et al., 2013: 103). Latent methods determine the fundamental traits that give rise to people's differences in attitudes toward different music items.

MIRT came from two roots—item response theory (IRT) which has a root in psychometrics, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which enable the determination of multiple factors. MIRT extends IRT to have multiple, in this case, 6 latent traits—which are the music latent taste factors. Because of the dual roots of the method, some concepts have dual names, for example, each factor derived is also a latent trait. The derivation is mathematical, but the process can be intuitively understood. Tastes for some music items (such as Peking and Kunqu opera) are likely similar, so a latent trait such as a "taste for traditional music" could possibly be found as the fundamental latent taste that underlies the overall preferences for the operas. MIRT also accounts for opposites, such as a dislike of young idols might indicate a taste for traditional music—in this case, the music item would load negatively on the latent taste factor. While the preferences for each individual item may vary for a variety of individual reasons, the underlying "taste for traditional music" is a more reliable measure because it is a composite measure determined from responses to multiple music items. If one likes Jackie Cheung, Alan Tam, Eason Chan, etc., the person likely has a "taste for Cantopop," even if one personally dislikes KK Wong for some reason.

MIRT produces 2 main outputs. First, it determines the **factor loadings**—the degree that each music loads on each taste factor. The music items that load highly on a trait are the items that reveal more information about the trait – e.g. one's taste for traditional music is indicated more so by Peking opera than Red music, therefore Peking opera has a higher loading on the factor for traditional music. MIRT looks at all the responses to determine the 6 music factors. It must be emphasized that the factors are not determined by grouping music items based on the similarity of responses, as the approach in MCA. Instead of grouping at the level of music items, MIRT looks a level deeper at the level of latent traits that form music preferences. It determines the underlying traits in individuals that best explains people's preferences across the music items. The latent traits can be thought of as a better representation of the *embodied* music tastes behind the displayed attitudes on music preferences.

Secondly, MIRT also calculates a **latent taste score** for each trait of each person—such as a score for the latent taste for traditional music, selective foreign music, etc. The factor scores indicate one's disposition— how much one has a taste for each type of music. Differences in the factor scores among socioeconomic subgroups will be to understand the music hierarchy in the next chapter.

The six music factors

Minimum AICc and BIC criteria suggest that six factors are sufficient in modeling the music pattern of the 52 items of music. SABIC, AIC, and log-likelihood suggest additional factors. The selection of the number of factors in models does not have a clear-cut guideline. There are multiple criteria which may not be consistent with each other, and different researchers give different advice on the number of factors. Reckase compared different methods and concludes that there is no correct answer because technically to totally model all the relationships in the data "require as many dimensions as test items" (Reckase, 2009: 202). In this research, 6 factors are chosen supported by minimum AICc, BIC, and SABIC criteria.

Table 3-1. Factor determination

Number of factors	AIC	AICc	BIC	SABIC	Log likelihood
1	109184.2	109334.5	110398.1	109620.0	-54347.12
2	107529.4	107757.9	108981.1	108050.5	-53471.70
3	105900.2	106228.2	107584.8	106504.9	-52610.11
4	104779.9	105231.9	106692.4	105466.4	-52003.96
5	104196.9	104801.4	106332.3	104963.4	-51667.44
6	103852.7	**104643.3**	**106206.2**	**104697.5**	-51451.36
7	103705.7	104722.2	106272.2	104627.0	-51334.87
8	**103633.3**	104923.5	106407.9	104629.3	**-51256.66**

The chosen 6-factor solution has been highlighted

The model determined the loadings of each music item onto each of the 6 factors. The GRM result is determined using the quasi-Monte Carlo Expectation-Maximization algorithm (QMCEM), as suggested because the number of selected factors is greater than 3 (Chalmers, 2012). The matrix was rotated with orthogonal varimax rotation, meaning the resultant 6 factors are not correlated. Following general convention, the factors are then rotated with varimax rotation to make the results easier to interpret. As a result, most music items load heavily on only one factor.

A note that, while the 6-factor solution is not the only possible solution, the 6 factors of taste succeed in outlining the main contours of Chinese music, as will be further demonstrated in the subsequent sections. For comparison, the 5-factor solution disbands trendy Chinese music (a relatively insignificant factor in relation to social hierarchy) into other factors, and the 7 factors solution further separates classics Hk/Taiwan music into Hong Kong Cantopop and Taiwan Mandopop. Neither case would change the key arguments of this research. The loadings on the 6 factors are shown in the table below.

Table 3-2. The loading of each music item on the factors

	F1: Traditional	F2: Selective Foreign	F3: Trendy Foreign	F4: Classics Hk/Tw	F5: Trendy Chinese	F6: Local	h2
M01.PopWest	0.18	**0.42**	0.28	0.15	0.14	-0.14	0.35
M02.PopJK	0.16	0.28	0.25	-0.19	**0.39**	-0.04	0.36
M03.PopCanto	0.13	0.08	0.13	**0.50**	0.29	-0.06	0.37
M04.PopHkTw	0.14	-0.04	0.05	0.44	**0.48**	0.07	0.45
M05.PopMainland	0.07	-0.20	-0.01	0.28	**0.66**	0.18	0.59
M06.TeresaT	0.23	0.16	-0.14	0.37	0.14	**0.38**	0.40
M07.JonLee	0.19	0.21	0.02	**0.48**	-0.04	0.24	0.37
M08.CocoLee	0.13	**0.39**	0.12	0.14	0.28	0.29	0.37
M09.MayDay	0.04	0.19	0.21	0.16	**0.48**	0.00	0.34
M10.JolinT	0.00	0.29	0.20	0.05	**0.48**	0.21	0.41
M11.AlanT	0.12	0.07	0.06	**0.57**	0.09	0.29	0.44
M12.KKWong	0.07	0.02	0.16	**0.69**	0.01	0.11	0.51
M13.JackyC	0.09	0.08	0.09	**0.72**	0.05	0.22	0.60
M14.EasonC	0.05	0.22	0.15	**0.45**	0.37	-0.12	0.43
M15.GEM	0.03	0.32	0.15	-0.00	**0.42**	0.18	0.33
M16.LiuH	0.33	0.13	-0.10	0.21	0.04	**0.62**	0.56
M17.LuH	0.13	0.12	0.19	-0.28	**0.48**	0.23	0.43
M18.CuiJ	0.25	0.21	0.19	0.35	-0.16	**0.41**	0.46
M19.FayeW	0.11	**0.36**	-0.03	0.35	0.06	0.26	0.34
M20.DaoL	0.10	-0.08	0.15	0.21	-0.03	**0.71**	0.59
M21.Chopstick	0.05	-0.02	0.32	0.16	0.23	**0.54**	0.47
M22.Phoenix	0.12	-0.02	0.11	0.05	0.16	**0.78**	0.66
M23.QuWt	0.05	**0.36**	0.22	0.13	0.26	0.34	0.37
M24.LiYc	0.16	0.26	0.16	-0.17	0.36	**0.38**	0.43
M25.YanWw	0.42	0.10	-0.07	0.06	0.02	**0.59**	0.55
M26.Hanh	0.26	0.21	-0.13	0.21	0.06	**0.64**	0.59
M27.LiYd	0.31	**0.49**	0.03	0.16	0.09	0.31	0.47
M28.Wlty	0.18	0.29	0.02	-0.02	0.02	**0.70**	0.61
M29.MaiKuraki	0.25	**0.56**	0.09	-0.03	0.04	0.28	0.47
M30.Psy	0.04	0.27	**0.43**	-0.04	0.22	0.23	0.36
M31.Adele	0.22	**0.59**	0.16	0.18	-0.13	-0.02	0.48
M32.Bieber	0.09	**0.43**	0.40	-0.01	0.14	0.05	0.37
M33.Gaga	0.00	0.36	**0.46**	0.06	0.09	0.11	0.37
M34.ClassicalWest	**0.53**	0.41	0.09	0.17	-0.06	-0.02	0.49
M35.OperaWest	**0.62**	0.34	0.08	0.07	0.06	-0.06	0.51
M36.Hiphop	0.16	0.19	**0.64**	0.05	0.21	0.05	0.52
M37.Techno	0.10	0.08	**0.63**	0.14	0.05	0.03	0.43
M38.RnB	0.32	**0.46**	0.34	0.19	-0.05	-0.10	0.48
M39.PlazaDance	0.25	-0.04	0.21	-0.08	0.24	**0.53**	0.45
M40.Rock	0.13	0.02	**0.63**	0.26	0.05	0.12	0.50
M41.NetMusic	0.01	-0.23	0.29	-0.04	0.41	**0.47**	0.52
M42.Red	**0.52**	-0.08	-0.01	0.11	0.04	0.52	0.56
M43.Folk	**0.58**	-0.09	-0.09	0.18	0.05	0.47	0.62
M44.TraditCn	**0.62**	0.18	-0.05	0.18	-0.04	0.26	0.52
M45.OperaKun	**0.78**	0.10	0.08	-0.01	0.07	0.16	0.66

	F1: Tradition al	F2: Selective Foreign	F3: Trendy Foreign	F4: Classics Hk/Tw	F5: Trendy Chinese	F6: Local	h2
M46.OperaPek	**0.85**	0.02	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.15	0.76
M47.OperaHM	**0.76**	0.01	-0.03	0.04	0.08	0.24	0.64
M48.OperaLocal	**0.71**	0.10	0.14	0.04	0.03	0.09	0.54
M49.Pingtan	**0.77**	0.13	0.17	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.66
PVE	12.0%	6.8%	5.8%	6.9%	5.6%	11.5%	-

The highest loading factor of each music item is highlighted.

The music factors are named based on the music items that contribute most heavily to the factors. Factor 1 is labeled traditional music because it includes both Chinese and Western music items that have a long history. There are 2 factors related to foreign music. For reasons that will become apparent later, they are labeled as selective foreign (factor 2) and trendy foreign (factor 3) because preferences toward them differ depending on the respondents' socioeconomic background. Factor 4 is labeled classics Hk/Taiwan because it consists of music primarily from those regions, and represent the classic oldies in popular music compared to contemporary trendy music. Factor 5, trendy Chinese music, consists of contemporary mainstream artists—a combination of Mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan artists who are popular. Factor 6 is labeled local music because it consists of artists and music from the mainland. The last row in the table above is the proportion of variation explained, which is the factor's eigenvalue—the sum of the squared factor loadings divided by the number of variables.

The loadings indicate how heavily preferences toward a specific music item contribute to the taste in a certain type of music. The signs of the loadings were flipped so that factors have mostly positive loadings and can be interpreted as liking a music item positively contributes to the taste in the music factor. For example, the loading of 0.42 of Western pop music (M1) on the selective foreign factor means that *liking* Western pop music weights positively toward the selective foreign taste. Western pop music also contributes somewhat to trendy foreign, with a loading of 0.28. Negative loadings mean that *disliking* the music constitutes a taste, such as the negative loading (-0.14) of Western pop on local music. The factor that each music item loads most heavily is highlighted in the table below, which indicates which music category the item is most closely related. The heaviest loading ranges from 0.36 (M19 Faye Wong and M23 Qu Wanting) to 0.85 (M46 Peking opera). For Peking opera, this means it is very closely related to traditional music, but is far from all other music types since the loadings on all other types are very low (<0.2).

Some music items load heavily on more than 1 factor. Classical West (M34) has a loading of 0.53 on traditional and 0.41 on selective foreign, which means it is an important constituent of traditional music as well as selective foreign music. Popular HK-Taiwan music (M4) loads heaviest on the trendy Chinese factor (F5) at 0.48, with the second-highest loading on the classics Hk/Taiwan factor (F4) at 0.44. Teresa Teng, the singer from Taiwan who is famous for her folk-style songs, loads heaviest on the local factor (F6) at 0.38, but also the classics Hk/Taiwan factor (F4) at 0.37. Faye Wong (M19) is one of the most popular artists in China and she grew to fame in Hong Kong. She loads heaviest on selective foreign (F2) at 0.36, then on the classics Hk/Taiwan factor (F4) at 0.35. Qu Wanting (M23) is a Chinese Canadian singer originally from Mainland China. She loads heaviest on selective foreign (F4) at 0.36, then on the local factor (F6) at 0.34. Red (M42) loads on both the traditional factor (F1) as well as Local (F6), both equally at 0.52.

Next, I will describe the six factors, explaining the labels and the music items that load heavily in them. This also introduces the items of music asked in the questionnaire.

Traditional music

Figure 3-1. Factor loadings on the traditional factor
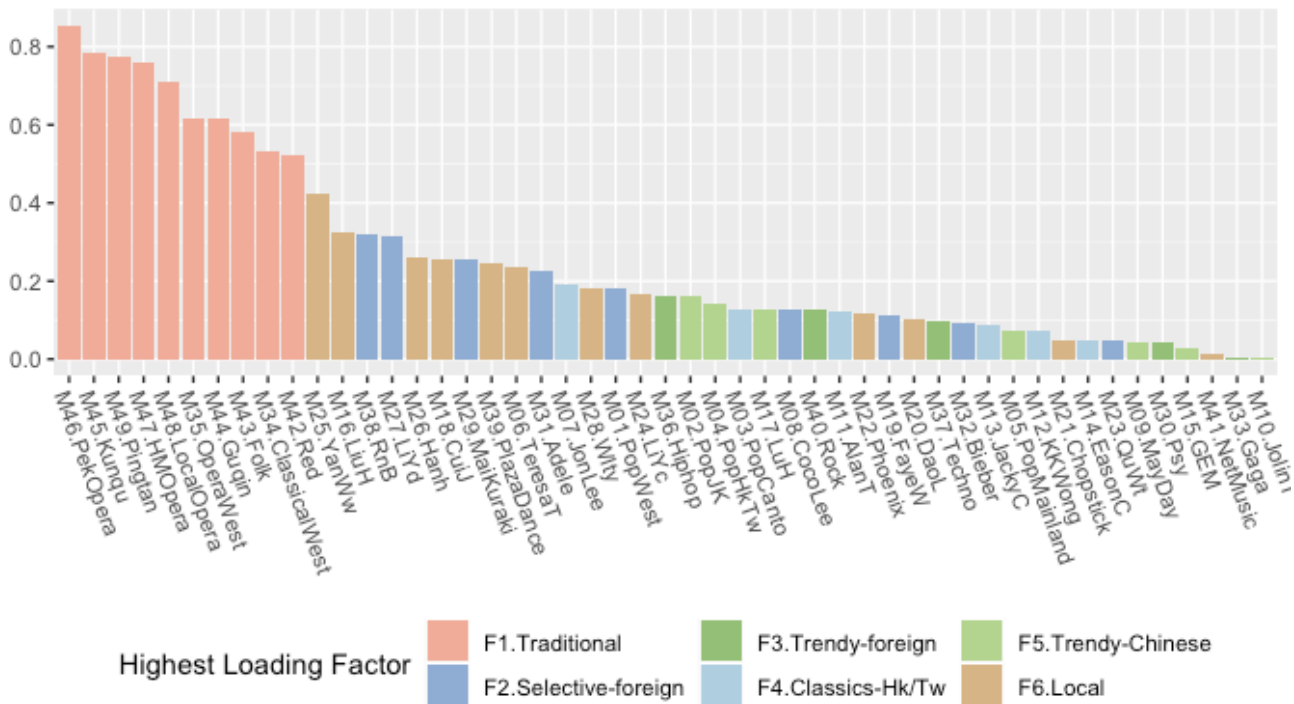
This factor is iconized by Peking opera (M46), followed by other forms of Chinese opera and traditional art, all of which were formulated in pre-modern China. Western opera (M35) and Western classical music (M34) also load most heavily in this factor, however, they also load heavily on Selective foreign. Red Communist music (M42), which came after the rise of Communism, also loads most heavily in this factor.

Figure 3.2-2. Pictures of traditional music items[6]

| Peking opera (M46) | Kunqu opera (M45) | Suzhou Pingtan (M49) | Huangmei opera (M47) | Western opera (M35) |

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[6] Images obtained from Google under licensed for non-commercial reuse whenever possible. This applies to all pictures of music in this section.

Guqin
(M44)

Folk
(M43)

Western classical
(M34)[7]

Red songs (M42)

Western opera (M35) and **Western classical (M34)** are "highbrow" music categories of the West which have spread to China during the end of the Qing dynasty. After the opium wars in 1898, Western music entered China, supported by newly founded Chinese institutions such as Shanghai Municipal Council Symphony Orchestra, the National Conservatory of Shanghai, the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music which institutionally promoted Western music (Li, 2011). The Western canon was interrupted during Mao's period, but resumed its influence after Reform and Opening as the standard of high art (Kraus, 1989, 2004; Melvin and Cai, 2004; Yang, 2007).

Like the West, Chinese music has traditional "highbrow" variants, which had been in decline, particularly during the years of cultural revolution. Historically, the Chinese "high culture" equivalents in theatrical stage music were **Kunqu opera (M45)** and **Peking opera (M46)**. They were historically consecrated in different periods but are receiving a revival as a new form of status distinction for the Chinese middle class, as traditional values became again treasured after China's economic rise (Ma, 2018). **Huangmei opera (M47)** is one of the youngest forms of traditional Chinese opera that rose from local roots into national popularity from the 1940s onwards. Question 48 asks for different forms of local opera depending on the city. **Bangzi opera (M50)**, **Sichuan opera (M51)**, **Canton opera (M52)**, and **Shanghai opera (M53)** were asked in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Shanghai respectively. In many parts of this research, particularly in the results of MIRT analysis, the four are aggregated as **Local opera (M48)**. Peking opera, the "local" opera in Beijing, has a high status and national recognition due to the status of Beijing as the capital, so Bangzi opera was asked—an opera local to Hebei province which in the past was the villages and rural areas that surrounds the walled Beijing city (Tian, 2006).

The following are the non-operatic forms of music. "Traditional Chinese instrumentals" is a broad category that includes a variety of highbrow but also grassroots music, therefore **guqin (M44)** is mentioned as the specified traditional Chinese instrumental music to avoid the problem with broad labels. *Guqin*, traditionally called *qin*, was a highbrow instrument of the ancient literati (Wong, 1991). Western piano, considered a highbrow instrument in China, took the name of gangqin, i.e. a steel *qin*, and the traditional qin is now commonly referred to as guqin or the "ancient" *qin* (Kraus, 1989: 23). **Suzhou Pingtan (M49)** is one of the more famous forms of *quyi* which came from Suzhou, popular in the Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang regions

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[7] Picture of a performance by the China National Symphony Orchestra

of China. **Folk music (M43)**, *min ge* in Chinese, refers to traditional ethnic music including those of non-Han ethnic minorities, such as Mongolian or Tibetan folk. However, folk is a vast category that might also include modern singers who style their music in folk, so the boundary is blurry.

Finally, **Red songs (M42)** include the Communist, revolutionary, or military brigade music sung in official ceremonies but are also popular entertainment for some of the older generation. The picture included represents red song singers standing alongside a government official. Red songs have been consecrated since the founding of the Communist government and are still a consecrated form of music today. However, those with high cultural capital appear to have shifted their preferences.

Foreign music

Aside from music within the Chinese cultural region, foreign music has also entered China. While music from Hong Kong and Taiwan are becoming mainstream music, some types of foreign music are appealing to the HCCs. Within the East Asian circle, Japanese and, more recently, Korean pop music is exerting a strong influence in China. Korean drama, songs, and stars have become highly popular in China in the last 10 years as the Korean-wave swept through China. Western pop music, largely from the English speaking countries, has also gradually reached China since Reform and Opening. The taste for popular music in China is rather international, especially among the youth (Wang, 2005).

Figure 3-3. Factor loadings on the selective foreign and trendy foreign factors
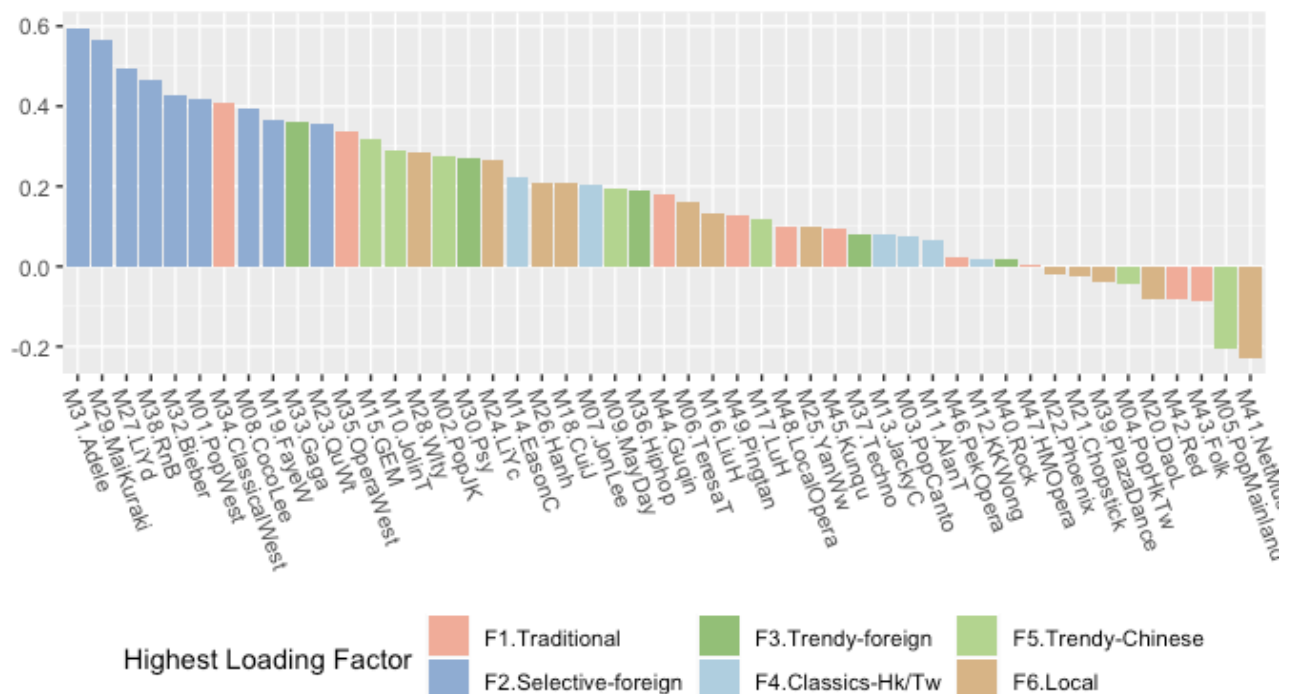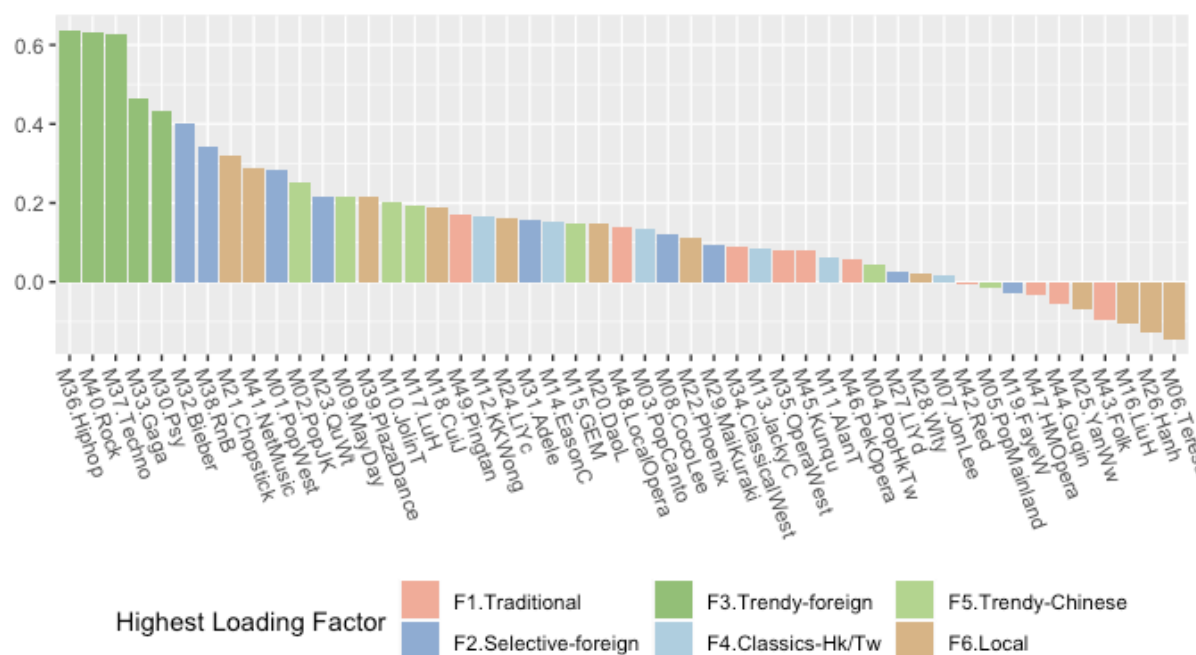
(1) Selective foreign music

Selective foreign is a category that relates to foreignness in music rather than a political categorization, as it also includes ethnically Chinese artists. The loadings for **selective foreign** is led by Adele (M31) and Mai Kuraki (M29), who are respectively British and Japanese singers. Western classical (M34) and Western opera (M35) also loads moderately on this factor. Some Chinese artists associated with "foreignness" also has a heavy loading here. The negative loadings are also telling. Oppositions to selective foreign include Chinese Net Music (M41) as well as Mainland pop music (M5), indicating that tastes toward selective foreign associates with distaste toward younger popular local music.

Figure 3-4. Pictures of selective foreign music items

Coco Lee (M8)

Faye Wong (M19)

Qu Wanting (M23)

Li Yundi (M27)

Mai Kuraki (M29)

Adele (M31)

Justin Bieber (M32)
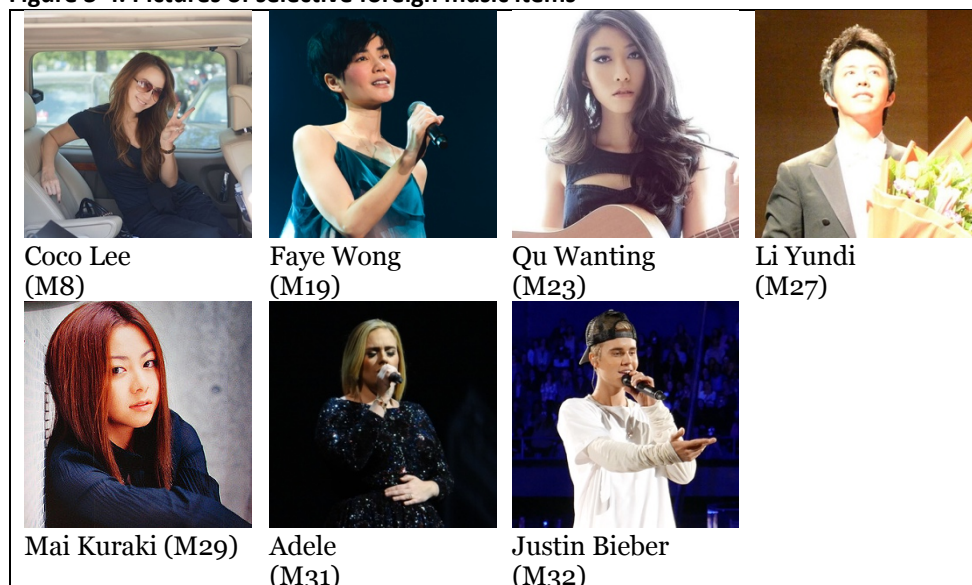
Western pop (M1) specifically identify music from those origins. **R&B (M38)** is more strongly associated with musical styles of the West, even though there are also Chinese musicians who are active in it. R&B is also foreign in that its Chinese translation "*jiezou landiao*" is not widely known, and some are more familiar with "R&B," so it was asked as "*jiezou landiao* / R&B." **Adele (M31)** (F, 1988) is an artist from the UK who has become famous among those with high cultural capital. **Justin Bieber (M32)** (M, 1994) is a young Canadian pop idol. Both Adele and Bieber had been banned from China for crossing the moral and political lines of the party—a topic which will be further discussed on party influences. **Mai Kuraki (M29)** (倉木麻衣 F, 1982) is a singer from Japan.

Four ethnically Chinese artists also appear in this group, likely because of their various associations with "foreignness" from association with classical music, musical style, or oversea origin. **Qu Wanting (M23)** (曲婉婷 F, 1983) is a singer-songwriter and pianist raised in China but studied in Canada and is associated with a Western-style. She has also released English albums. **Li Yundi (M27)** (李云迪 M, 1982) is not a singer but purely a performing classical pianist, who is relatively well known in the popular media. In this regard, he is quite similar to another pianist named Lang Lang. During the questionnaire trail, Li Yundi was discovered to be less well-known outside pop music circles in comparison, so he was asked instead of Lang Lang. **Coco Lee (M8)** (李玟 F, 1975) is a Chinese American singer born in Hong Kong but educated in the USA. She became famous in Taiwan and sings dance-pop and R&B in Mandarin and has also released albums in English (Benson, 2013). **Faye Wong (M19)** (王菲 F, 1969) is a highly well-known superstar with a mixed background. Originally from Mainland China, she launched her professional career and rose to great fame in Hong Kong, adopting an HK-friendlier stage name Shirley Wong (王靖雯). She later returned to Mainland China and reverted to her previous name as she becomes the superstar across Greater China (Fung, 2009). She loads heavily in classics Hk/Taiwan music, as well as selective foreign.

(2) Trendy Foreign music

Figure 3-5. Pictures of trendy foreign music items

Lady Gaga (M33)   Psy (M30)
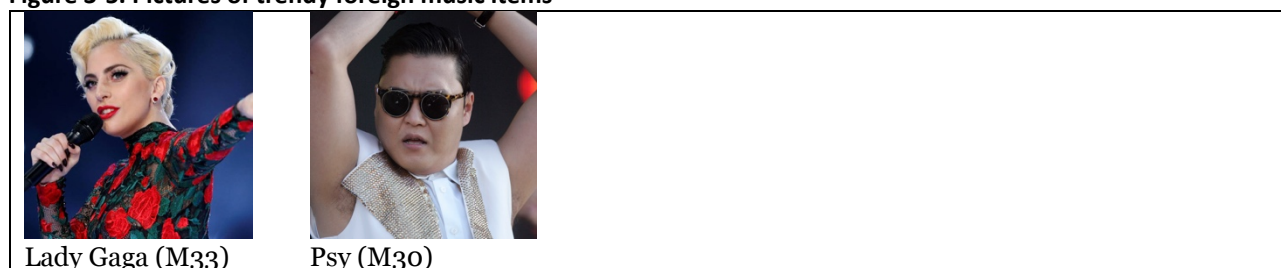
Trendy Foreign is loaded heavily by Hip-hop (M36), Rock (M40), Techno (M37), Lady Gaga (M33), Psy (M30), and Justin Bieber (M32). The oppositions to trendy foreign are Teresa Teng (M06) and Han Hong (M26), who are older artists.

The artists in this list include **Lady Gaga (M33)** (F, 1986) from the USA, **Justin Bieber (M32)** (born in 1994) from Canada, and **Psy (M30)** (鸟叔/朴載相 M, 1977) from Korea famous for his hit song "Gangnam

Style" that swept across China in 2012 (Ho, 2016b: 147). All these foreign artists here are primarily active in their home country, but their fame spread to Mainland China. This contrasts with most other Mainland and Greater China artists who actively develop their professional careers within the Mainland. Both Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber had been banned in China—Bieber "purified" for his "misdemeanors" in 2017 (Phillips, 2017; White, 2017), and Lady Gaga for being "vulgar" in 2011 and again in 2016 for meeting the Dalai Lama (Lynch, 2016; Lynskey, 2011; Phillips, 2016).

Rock (M40) in China is a mixture of both a music style related to Western rock, but more so a Chinese music movement centered in Beijing not identical to the Western music genre. It started in the late 1980s as a music opposition movement with a political tint but is now increasingly mainstream (Brace and Friedlander, 1992; de Kloet, 2005a, 2010; Harris, 2010). The rock musicians also tried to differentiate itself from Western rock to create a Chinese identity (de Kloet, 2005a). The Chinese rock as a subculture has received a disproportionately high amount of focus in Western academic research, due to its rebellious political identity and connection with Western rock, both of which captivate Western scholarly interest. However, rock is not quite as Mandopop or Cantopop and not as representative of the mainstream pop culture in Chinese society (Moskowitz, 2010b). Yet the complexity in the meaning of rock and the distinction between Chinese and Western rock might only be relevant to aficionados rather than the general public. During the questionnaire trial, "rock" is found to be more associated with Chinese rock singers, more so than Western rock artists or rock as a Western genre. The term "Chinese rock" is not colloquially used, so it would be leading and distracting for the survey to distinguish "Western rock" and "Chinese rock" when the distinction do not exist in the mind of all but the most discerning respondents. The music type is simply called "rock" in China, so it is asked the way it is popularly known despite the ambiguity. **Hip-hop (M36)** and **Techno (M37)** are more strongly associated with musical styles of the West, even though there are also Chinese musicians who are active in these genres.

Music from Greater China

Culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan entered Mainland China through informal channels of intercepting border signals and pirated cassettes (Lee, 2003; Stephanie and Keane, 2002). The best example is the music of Teresa Teng, who herself never set foot on Mainland China (Lee and Fung, 2003). Her pop music, illegally smuggled into the Mainland, contrasted with the music under authoritarian control and introduces modernity and fresh imaginations of foreign lifestyle to the public. Her songs, imbued with values of freedom and romance, became highly popular and agitated the authorities, thus was unofficially censored from state media at the time (Groenewegen, 2011: 70). The modern images of these types of music, as well as having access to informal channels, mean that this category of music appealed to the privileged class in the 1980s.

Figure 3-6. Factor loadings on the classics Hk/Taiwan and trendy Chinese factors
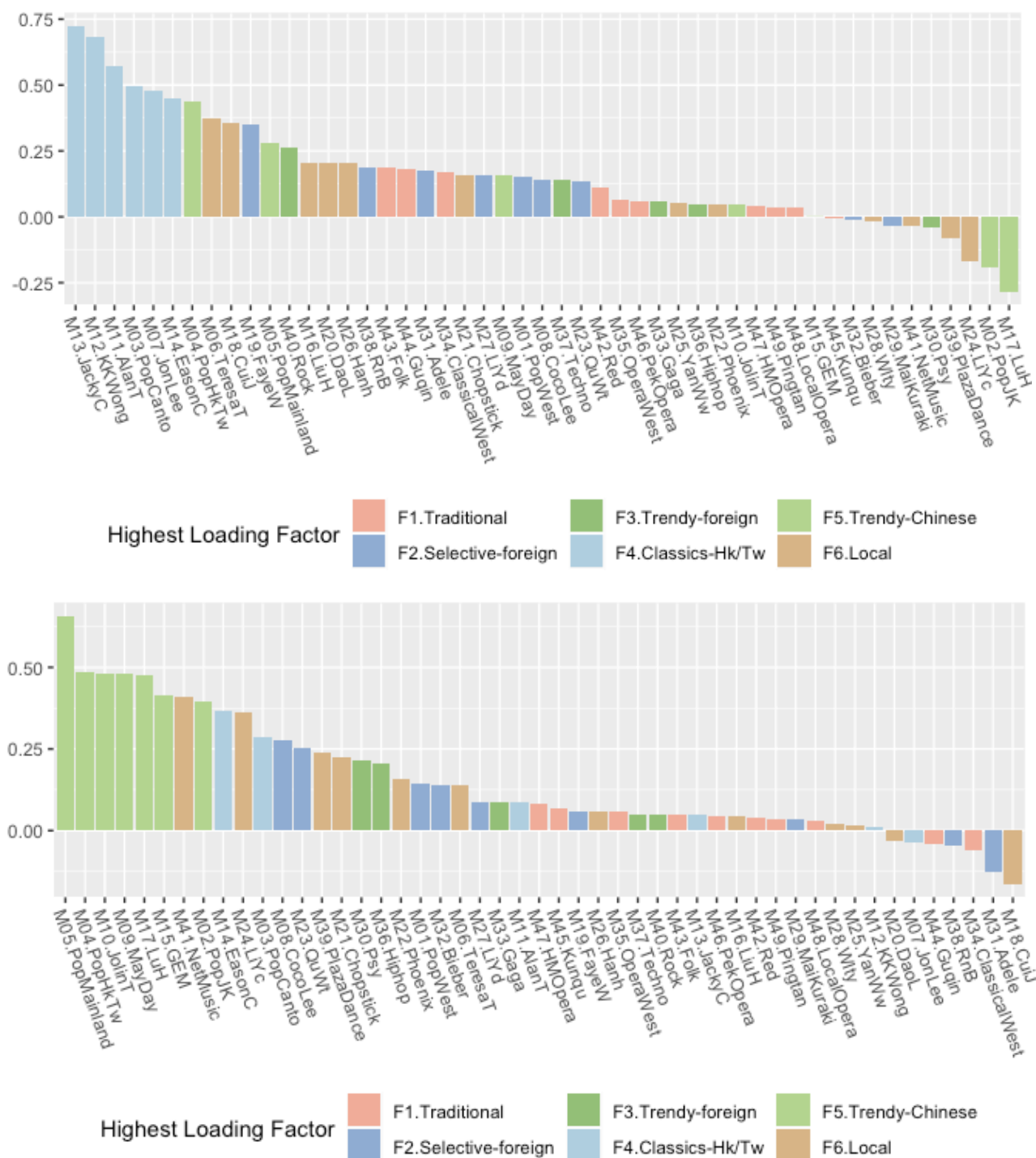
Hong Kong and Taiwanese artists have become the most dominant popular music in China. It has achieved the most commercial success, accounting for 80% of Chinese language music sales in Mainland China (Moskowitz, 2010a: 2) and topping the list of favorite musicians in surveys (Wang, 2005). The government has always faced tensions with Hong Kong and Taiwan music, but the censorship has usually been ambiguous and unofficial. The state was not a unitary actor, with different forces and voices from within (Baranovitch, 2003: 227). As China modernized, the tensions between Hong Kong and Taiwan music and the authorities eased. By the 1990s, the authorities have learned to utilize Hong Kong and Taiwan music to serve

the interests of the state. Researches have pointed to examples of Hong Kong and Taiwanese artists being utilized as compatriots (*tongbao*) to promote the party's agenda—such as Andy Lau and Jay Chou (Baranovitch, 2003: 231; Fung, 2007b, 2013; Lee and Fung, 2003). Singers who angered the Communist authorities, such as Taiwanese singer A-mei who performed for the presidential inauguration in Taiwan in 2000, vanished from mainland media for several years (Groenewegen, 2011: 27). This has been described as "co-optation," in which stars are promoted but are coached on the informal rules (Fung, 2013). As Hong Kong and Taiwan music have become more embraced by the authorities, they have grown to become the most influential music in Mainland China. Eventually the music became promoted across mainstream media, the difficulty of access declined along with the "foreignness" of Hong Kong and Taiwan, leading to decreased social distinction for this new generation of artists.

The combination of Hong Kong and Taiwan music in a shared category reflects a Mainland view of the music landscape. Hong Kong and Taiwan are two different centers of music production, producing pop songs in different languages, but music from these places are often combined and called *Gangtai* music in Mainland China, a combination of Hong Kong (*Xiang gang* in Mandarin) and T<u>ai</u>wan, which is a mainland construct that centers Chinese music and culture in Mainland China (Moskowitz, 2010b: 236). Hong Kong and Taiwan music share a similarity in their shared influence on China after Reform and Opening.

(3) Classics Hk/Taiwan Music

This factor consists of artists from Hong Kong and Taiwan, skewing to the older artists, while more contemporary artists from Hong or Taiwan load more heavily on other factors. Compared to trendy Chinese music, the items here consist of more mature artists around 60 years old, indicating the status of "classics" in pop (*jingdian* is a typical name for this in music apps). Classics Hk/Taiwan and trendy Chinese music represent a division between the older, classical pop artists that are more stratified, and the most popular contemporary artists that have a high popularity and low degree of stratification. Classics Hk/Taiwan music is most heavily loaded by Jacky Cheung (M13), born in 1961. The top 3 loadings artists are of the same or even older generation of Hong Kong singers—which are KK Wong (M12, 1962) and Alan Tam (M11, 1950). The 4th is Cantopop itself, with Pop Hong Kong and Taiwan nearby. Taiwanese singers are also represented here but less strongly, with Jonathan Lee (M07, 1961) in the 5th loading, and Teresa Teng (M06, 1959) nearby. Both KK Wong and Teresa Teng died in the 1990s, thus have not been singing for 20 years. Faye Wong (1969), who early in her career was active in Hong Kong and sang many Cantonese songs, loads 2nd most heavily on this factor. The music items that load negatively on this factor is Lu Han (1990), a young pop-idol from Mainland China, and Japanese and Korean music.

M03. Cantopop, which specifically asked for popular music sung in Cantonese represents a very influential form of music in mainland China, particularly in the 80s and 90s. Now Hong Kong singers are still influential but no longer as dominating, and they increasingly sing in Mandarin to cater to the rapidly increasing Chinese Mandarin market. Cantonese popular music arose in the 1970s, and at its peak in the 1980s had a profound influence on East Asian Chinese-speaking communities, including non-Cantonese speakers in Mainland China (Chu and Leung, 2013). When Cantopop first entered Mainland China, it was seen as foreign and modern, from a British colony that carries the cosmopolitan symbol of capitalism and

freedom (Fung, 2013). Chu and Leung attribute the success of Cantopop to its signature hybridity in renditioning Euro-American, Japanese, and Mandarin music. Many of the songs were covers and adaptations of other foreign popular music with Cantonese lyrics, at a time when both the Mainland and Taiwan music industry were more tightly regulated (2013).

Sales of Cantopop music declined in Hong Kong after 1997, coinciding with the advent of Internet piracy, the East Asian economic crisis, and the return of Hong Kong to China. After the downturn, music companies in Hong Kong focused their resources on the profitable teenage audience, retreating to mass production of popular styles and idol worship, while the once vibrant hybridity in Hong Kong culture was lost as Hong Kong became ever reliant on Mainland market. Cantonese music, while still popular, yielded to Mandopop which emerged as the leader in popular music, helped by the ever-increasing importance of the Mainland Chinese market and the rise in the social status of Mandarin (Chu and Leung, 2013). Hong Kong Cantopop singers frequently also release Mandarin versions of the same song to appeal to the Mainland market.

Figure 3-7. Pictures of classics Hk/Taiwan music items

| Alan Tam (M11) | Wong Ka Kui (M12) | Jacky Cheung (M13) | Eason Chan (M14) | Jonathan Lee (M7) |
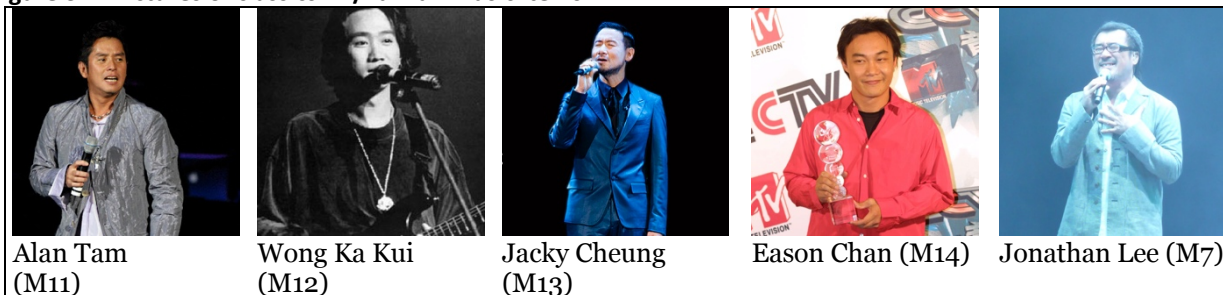
The following artists are in the classics Hk/Taiwan category. **Eason Chan (M14)** (陈奕迅 M, 1974) is one of the most popular contemporary singers who sings in both Cantonese and Mandarin. The popularity of **Wong Ka Kui (M12)** (黄家驹 M, 1962-1993) is notable because he died more than 20 years ago, which reinforces this group as the classics of pop in China. He was the lead singer and guitarist of a band called "Beyond," and sang in a style of rock (not associated with the Chinese rock movement). He only sung in Cantonese and never promoted in Mainland China before his premature death in 1993, at a time when the Mainland market was largely overlooked, though this probably made preferences for him distinctively a classics Hk/Taiwan music. **Jacky Cheung (M13)** (张学友 M, 1961) is the most popular singer in this survey, appealing broadly across age groups and social groups. He is a Cantopop singer from Hong Kong, who also sings Mandarin song and is highly popular across Asia. **Jonathan Lee (M7)** (李宗盛 M, 1959), a Taiwanese singer who is also well known as a record producer and songwriter for other popular Taiwanese singers in the Mainland. **Alan Tam (M11)** (谭咏麟 M, 1950), one of the icons and early pioneers of Cantopop who led it to its peak starting from the 1980s.

(4) Trendy Chinese music

This factor contains a mix of popular music from mostly Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also Mainland China. The artists are generally younger and favored by younger fans compared to the classics Hk/Taiwan pop, therefore this is labeled trendy Chinese. Trendy Chinese music is heavily loaded by categories such as Mainland pop music (M5), HK-Taiwan pop (M4), Jolin Tsai (Taiwan singer born 1980), May Day (Taiwan band, 1973 & 1977), Lu Han (pop idol born 1990), and GEM (Hong Kong singer born 1991)—who are noticeably younger than the artists in the classics Hk/Taiwan factor. This factor contrasts with Cui Jian (M18), the father of Mainland rock in the 1980s, as well as Adele (M31) a Western pop artist. Some music items overlap with Local music, such as Net Music (M41) and Li Yuchun (M24).

Trendy Chinese music represents the most mainstream contemporary music in China. Classics Hk/Taiwan and trendy Chinese are related, as many of the musicians who load heavily in trendy Chinese are still from Hong Kong and Taiwan, whereas classics Hk/Taiwan is more of a classics-pop. "In the PRC there are other distinct musical genres—such as Beijing's rock movement, *xibeifeng*, revolutionary songs, and PRC pop music—but these all play a minute role in comparison with Mandopop from Taiwan." (Moskowitz, 2010a: 3). Social hierarchy is relatively unimportant for trendy Chinese music, which is preferred by the young, though there's a slight distaste for trendy Chinese music by the highly educated. Females also have stronger tastes for this group. The category consists of a relatively neutral combination of contemporary mainstream artists from Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also some Mainland artists. The music in this group is considered Mandopop—popular music sung in Mandarin, the lingua franca of Mainland China and Taiwan. As the Mainland market grew more important, singers from Hong Kong also release songs in Mandarin and blends into the Mandopop music category.

The following items are in the trendy Chinese category, which consists of contemporary pop music. **Mainland Mandarin Pop (M5)** is the item that specifically asks for pop music from Mainland China. People in Mainland China tend to think of this as just "Chinese pop" and would not use the term Mainland unless to distinguish from Hong Kong and Taiwan. **Popular Hong Kong and Taiwan Mandarin Music (M4)** refer to Mandarin popular music from Greater China regions, which is now the most popular and recognized form of popular music in Mainland China. **Japanese and Korean pop (M02)** which specifically identify music from those origins.

Figure 3-8. Pictures of trendy Chinese music items

| Jolin Tsai (M10) | May Day (M9) | Lu Han (M17) | G.E.M. (M15) |

G.E.M. (M15) (邓紫棋 F, 1991), an acronym for "Get Everybody Moving," is the English stage name for a young Hong Kong singer who started her career in Hong Kong but became famous in Mainland China after winning a Mainland singing/idol contest. She is known in Mainland China by her Chinese name Deng Ziqi. **Lu Han (M17)** (鹿晗 M, 1990) is a young male pop idol who was once part of a Sino-Korean band, before pursuing an individual career in Mainland China. He has been studied for his massive idol engagement with the online community (Liang and Shen, 2016). **Jolin Tsai (M10)** (蔡依林 F, 1980) is a Taiwanese singer well known for her dance-pop/electronic dance music. **May Day (M9)** (五月天 5 males, born in 1973-77) is a Taiwanese band famous for its mainstream Mandopop.

Local music

Local pop music had always been present in China since Reform and Opening, typically associated with the voices of the grassroots, such as the Chinese rock movement (de Kloet, 2005b, 2010). But it never reached mainstream in popularity, a position long dominated by pop music from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Local pop also traditionally had lower status compared to Hong Kong and Taiwan pop, as music that comes from more developed regions are signs of cosmopolitan modernity and commercialism (Moskowitz, 2010a).

Figure 3-9. Factor loadings on the local factor
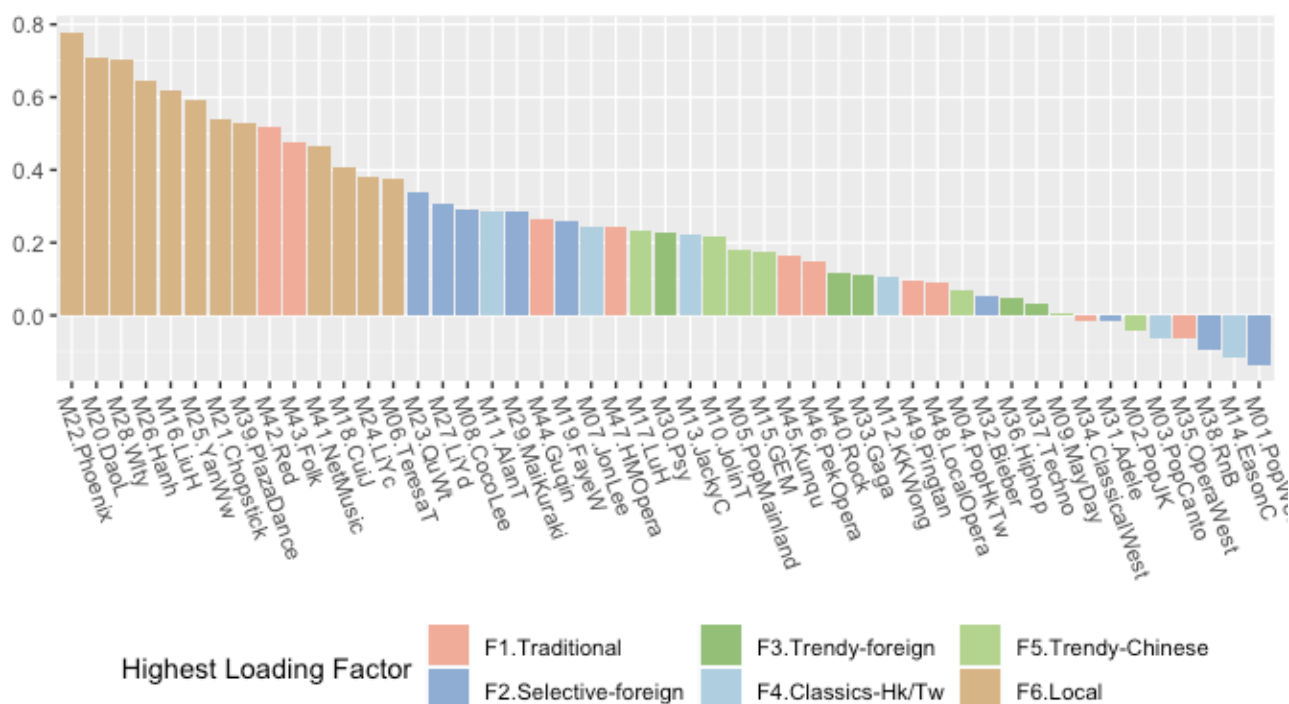
Local pop singers, Communist singers, as well as folk singers are all included in the local music category. This factor is labeled Local music because it consists of primarily contemporary artists from the mainland. Some of the artists here are also associated with modernized variants of Chinese folk. Loading most heavily on this factor is Phoenix Legend (M22). Red (M42) and Folk (M43) are 2 music items which load heaviest on traditional music, but also load moderately high in this factor. Preferences for local music is primarily

opposed by preferences for popular Western music (M1) and preferences for Eason Chan (M14), a contemporary Hong Kong Cantonese singer who also sings in Mandarin.

Trendy Net Music (M41) represents the contemporary phenomenon where music from unknown artists or amateurs, typically of grassroots origin and at the fringe, who are not promoted by mainstream record labels but are accumulating fans through online platforms. Most recently, the rise of online streaming provides new platforms for grassroot artists to display their music to the public. The streaming platforms have become highly popular to the mass, allowing unknown artists to come to instant fame with viral songs, creating a category of "Internet hits." However, those with high cultural capital looks down on those types of music. The names of artists in net music are quite diverse and niche. Practicalities of a survey random-sampling large populations require well-recognized artists to be asked—which would no longer qualify as a net music artist anymore. **Plaza dance music (M39)** (广场舞) is the music associated with people who dance in public plazas, a popular pastime for mid-age housewives and retiring people.

Figure 3-10. Pictures of local music items

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Phoenix Legend (M22)

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Dao Lang (M20)

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Wulantuya (M28)

Han Hong (M26)

Liu Huan (M16)

This photo has been removed as copyright clearance cannot be obtained.

Yan Weiwen (M25)

This photo has been removed as copyright clearance cannot be obtained.

Chopstick Brothers (M21)

Plaza Dance (M39)

Cui Jian (M18)

Li Yuchun (M24)

Teresa Teng (M6)

The following are the names of specific artists or groups. **Li Yuchun (M24)** (李宇春 F, 1984) is a well-known pop singer and an example of artists who launched a professional career through a talent show. A new wave of Mainland pop appeared after 2005 through popular singing/idol competition, where the winners are legitimated through popular vote by the national audience (Meng, 2009). Li Yuchun came to fame by winning as the "Supergirl." The shows target the Chinese youth, and more than 3 million text message votes were cast in the 2005 season. The grassroots support for the Supergirl became a legitimizing mandate and empowered a new wave of Chinese pop music that reflects local taste (Fung, 2013). **Wulantuya (M28)** (乌

兰图雅 F, 1983) is a Mongolian singer who sings folk songs that blend pop with Mongolian themes. **Phoenix Legend (M22)** (凤凰传奇 1M and 1F, 1979 & 1980) is a male and female duo who sings Mandopop that blends hip-hop with folk elements and is seemingly popular among the grassroots. **Chopstick Brothers (M21)** (筷子兄弟, 2 males, born 1969 & 1980) is an example of an Internet music group, who later rose to national fame with their performance in the 2015 CCTV New Year's Gala. **Han Hong (M26)** (韩红 F, 1971) is a Tibetan singer more famous for her ethnic songs as well as Communist singing but is also active in the mainstream media. Contemporary folk music often associated with the Communist party. She is an example of a popular folk singer who attempts to capture the symbolic meanings of ethnic folk songs through popularized versions (Baranovitch, 2001). **Liu Huan (M16)** (刘欢 M, 1963) is a songwriter and singer who is considered to be an important figure in pop music in mainland China. **Dao Lang (M20)** (刀郎 M, 1961) is a more grassroots pop-singer whose name and style associate with ethnic and folk music. **Cui Jian (M18)** (崔健 M, 1961) is known as the Father of Chinese Rock, an early pioneer and the figurehead of the Chinese rock movement. For a period, Chinese rock music and musicians were not allowed to appear in broadcasts or on television (Fung 2016). Compared to Hong Kong and Taiwan pop which is mainstream and from glamorous regions, the Chinese Rock music movement came from grassroots with a geographic reach centered around Beijing (de Kloet, 2010; Harris, 2010). Yet it received a disproportionate amount of Western scholarly interest for its rebelliousness under China's political repressiveness, as well as its linkage to rock as a genre familiar in the West (Baranovitch, 2003; de Kloet, 2010). **Yan Weiwen (M25)** (阎维文 M, 1957) has origins in the People's Liberation Army and is well known as a singer of Red music.

Teresa Teng (M6) (邓丽君 F, 1943-1995) is an unusual case as she was from Taiwan, and loads equally on local as well as classics Hk/Taiwan. Being most heavily loaded in the local music factor simply means that preferences for her are most similar to preferences for other musicians in the category. She was a Mandarin pop singer who was a superstar across East Asia but died in 1995 without ever traveling to Mainland China. She was born and raised in Taiwan and belonged to a generation who lived the years when Taiwan and mainland China were politically hostile with little civilian contact. She was one of the first Taiwanese singers to become wildly popular in Mainland China after Reform and Opening, when a generation was exposed to popular entertainment for the first time through cassette tapes sneaked onto the Mainland.

3.3 Discussion—The key divisions in Chinese music

This section presented a categorization of music in China based on preferences of the population, using latent trait analysis, which presents an overview of the Chinese music scene by showing its main divisions. This answers the research question on the main divisions of music in contemporary China. In support of previous research, the genre-based division prevalent in the West is less dominant in China. All the genre questions (R&B, hip-hop, rock, techno, or even Western classical and opera) appear as a sub-division under foreign music. The divisions are best described as along 3 dimensions: 1) traditional versus pop, and for pop, 2) the region of origin from local, to classics Hk/Taiwan and foreign, and 3) a further division into high-

status and mass variants where selective foreign music has higher status than trendy foreign music, and classics Hk/Taiwan music has higher status than trendy Chinese music.

The division between tradition and modern music can be seen in traditional music (F1), which contains all the traditional music of both Chinese and Western origins. Traditional music (F1) contains both Chinese operas, and Western classical and opera, which are stylistically different and similar only in that they are both traditional, heavily institutionalized, and "legitimate" art forms. There are some elements of folk in Local music (F6), but they are singers of modern music that blends elements of folk, such as Dao Lang (M20), Wulantuya (M29) and Han Hong (M26), rather than adherents of the traditional canon, which are all heavily loaded in factor 1. The traditional music factor accounts for the most variations in music taste, which is 12%.

The second key finding is the importance of regional origin—the division of popular music into foreign (F2 and F3), classics Hk/Taiwan (F4), trendy Chinese (F5), and local (F6) show that region of origin is an important division. Trendy Chinese music is the only factor which encompasses music from a diversity of regions—Mainland China, Hong Kong/Taiwan, and Korean/Japanese. Thus, after traditional music is considered, the region of origin is an important division in popular music.

The third division in music represents a status-hierarchy. This is most evident in the separation of foreign music into 2 factors. Selective foreign contains popular artists like Adele (M31), the Chinese pianist Li Yundi (M27), and R&B (M46), while trendy foreign contains genres like hip-hop (M36) and techno (M63), Lady Gaga (M33) and the Korean artist Psy (M30). Analysis of those music items indicates a division between highbrow and lowbrow foreign music types, thus they are named selective foreign and trendy foreign respectively. Also, the division between classics Hk/Taiwan (F4) and trendy Chinese (F5) can also be seen as division into higher-status and popular forms of pop music. Further support comes in the next section where socioeconomic status will be analyzed.

Remarkably, artists have been grouped into geographic groups surprisingly accurately, merely based on information on people's music preferences. This shows a clear line of distinction in preferences along geographic lines. However, the division by the origin of the music is not rigid. For example, Chinese artists with a foreign background or whose music associates with foreign music also load heavily on foreign music. The 6 factors that are found indicate that music is patterned largely by music-types, yet it does not quite fit the individualization hypothesis that everyone is free to like as they choose. The next section, which investigates the stratification of music in China, will explain that this represents divisions in status rather than a rigid division based purely on the region of origin.

Part II. DISTINCTION UNDER POP CULTURE

Chapter 4. Cultural omnivores or the persistence of distinction

4.1 Advancing the debate between Bourdieusian and cultural omnivore analysis

Current theories on cultural stratification are divided into two main opposing camps: cultural capital theories that argue for the persistence of cultural hierarchy and cultural capital, and cultural omnivore theories that demonstrate the rise of cultural eclecticism under contemporary pop culture. This research explains how both theories are partial truths. The cultural omnivore argument that elites are accepting toward popular culture is valid but is limited to popular, trendy music, but it overlooks the stratification through niche items that fail to be picked up in surveys. While the Bourdieusian theories correctly point out the persistence of distinction, it overlooks that some forms of popular culture can be a taste shared neutrally by people in different strata. By looking across a broad spectrum of music in China, this research shows how different forms of music serve as repertoires for distinction and popular entertainment.

Theoretical divisions

The Bourdieusian account of cultural capital and the cultural omnivore thesis are two opposing accounts in cultural stratification, both in the theory and in the methodology. The theory of cultural capital contends that culture continues to be an asset that is being drawn for cultural distinction, while cultural omnivore accounts suggest the breakdown of barriers under popular culture. Bourdieu's original account describes how elites leverage high art as a cultural capital for social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). His theories have been increasingly criticized as popular culture becomes dominant in modern societies. An influential account is the cultural omnivore thesis, which suggests that elites are increasingly eclectic in their consumption due to increasing openness and tolerance (Peterson and Kern, 1996). This debate was introduced in chapter 1.

Other scholars continue to believe in the relevance of the theory of cultural capital. Researchers have been attempting to update Bourdieu's theory to explain how cultural distinction continues to be enacted through new forms of popular culture, but in ways that are consistent with the mechanism of habitus and intergenerational inequality described by Bourdieu. This research agenda can be referred to as "emerging forms of cultural capital," which updates Bourdieu's theory by explaining how new ways of cultural distinction do not rely on traditional highbrow cultures (Prieur and Savage, 2013). One variant is "cosmopolitan cultural capital," which discusses the potential for a cosmopolitan outlook to be a recognizable cultural resource (Prieur and Savage, 2014). Researches are finding that cultural distinction, especially among the educated youths, has shifted from traditional culture to new forms of commercial cultures (Bennett et al., 2009; Savage, 2015).

Proponents of cosmopolitan cultural capital claim that cosmopolitanism is a new form of cultural capital. Often cited cosmopolitans are professionals and business people with high mobility and involvement in

global networks (Bauman, 1998), flourishing "in the top management of multinational corporations and even more in the consulting firms that serve them" (Calhoun, 2002: 890). Cosmopolitanism describes of movements that allow elites to experience unfamiliar cultures, gaining cosmopolitan identities and mindsets which reach beyond local identities. In various countries in Europe, the young, mobile cosmopolitan class is increasingly picking up a cosmopolitan orientation to culture, where the ability to "stand outside one's own national frame of reference may itself be an important cultural marker" (Prieur and Savage, 2014: 310). Cosmopolitanism is an internalized mindset, which excludes the superficial mobility of "tourists, exiles, expatriates, translational employees, migrant workers" (Rantanen, 2005: 121). In this interpretation, cosmopolitanism is itself a cultural inequality, "What seems like free individual choice is often made possible by capital – social and cultural as well as economic" (Calhoun, 2008: 433). Cosmopolitan cultural capital is typically referenced in studies to describe the increasingly international outlook of elites in different sectors such as in business or education (Bühlmann et al., 2013; Igarashi and Saito, 2014; Weenink, 2008), but the exact relationship between cosmopolitanism and cultural stratification remains elusive and under-theorized.

Most ironically, proponents of cultural omnivores also invoke cosmopolitanism to explain the decline of cultural capital (Chan, 2019). For those scholars, cosmopolitanism promises a mindset of tolerance based on a mindful recognition of difference (Beck, 2006, 2018; Hannerz, 1990, 1996; Szerszynski and Urry, 2002; Vertovec, 2009). Cosmopolitanism is not just the ability to travel, but "a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting" (Hannerz, 1990: 293). The cosmopolitans are expected to be more open-minded about the cultures of the underclasses. In this interpretation, cosmopolitanism explains the fall of distinction, as it encourages interest in cultures outside that of exclusionary elite circles.

The methodological divide

Methodologically, Bourdieusian scholars favor MCA and qualitative interviews, whereas advocates of cultural omnivores prefer surveys and rigorous quantitative methods from mainstream social sciences. Bourdieusian scholars have been advocating the use of qualitative research in cultural stratification, arguing that surveys are failing to pick up distinction beneath the appearance of cultural eclecticism (Friedman et al., 2015; Holt, 1997; Jarness, 2015). This research presents my effort to examine cultural capital through more advanced quantitative methods. Through a customized survey and MIRT analysis, this research examines the music landscape holistically, revealing a more comprehensive landscape than previous studies.

Current methods are guilty of highlighting data from a particular perspective. The MCA approach has long been favored by Bourdieusian scholars. Even if cultural omnivores were to be a dominant feature in the cultural scene, MCA methodologically will not present it as the first axis, instead it would continue to salvage any minor polarization to present as axes. The shortcoming of MCA is that design is too tailored to support the homology argument, and is a niche method outside of the Bourdieusian circle. MCA is designed to generate the axes that best magnify the polarity in preferences. Input any data to MCA, and it will try its best to demonstrate the existence of the hierarchy. The use of MCA has also traditionally avoided tests of statistical significance, which has become a standard in quantitative social sciences. At the very least, the penchant for MCA within the Bourdieusian circle has hindered dialogues with broader social scientists.

The methods used in cultural omnivore accounts are often based on large surveys with a limited number of items. They end up examining the most recognized forms of cultures and finds them to be widely consumed by the elites. The shortcoming with this approach is that it only quantifies the music landscape holistically, without considering differences within the music types. It merely shows that high-status individuals are liking more items in popular culture. As I will show, this approach is also flawed in being methodologically biased against the cultures of the underclasses.

Key contributions

This research advances cultural capital research and breaks the impasse through a new survey and quantitative methodology. This research neutrally categorizes music according to the similarity in preferences, avoiding the shortcoming of existing methods which highlighting data from a particular perspective. This allows the hypotheses on social distinction to be open for examination and comparison (see chapter 2 for the full methodological discussion). Firstly, this research finds compelling evidence for the existence of a cultural hierarchy with the strengths of quantitative research—based on a random sample, validated through tests of statistical significance. Secondly, this research also demonstrates how it coexists with cultural eclecticism under popular culture. The proliferation of mass culture does not imply the breakdown of barrier, but rather, enables social distinction to be executed with increased complexity. My research shows that different types of music allow for different types of distinction—traditional music as a Bourdieusian legitimate culture capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), the rise of popular highbrow through emerging cultural capital (Prieur and Savage, 2013), and the symbolic exclusion music of underprivileged groups (Bryson, 1996). Compared to previous quantitative studies that primarily reveal one dimension of cultural stratification, this study comprehensively shows the interaction of various dimensions of cultural capital.

The next section looks at the cultural omnivore argument by replicating Peterson's methodology to show that, while cultural omnivore is observed, the apparent eclecticism of the HCCs is actually the exclusion of the LCCs from high-status popular music. Then, I will use MIRT and ANOVA to demonstrate the music hierarchy of different types of music.

4.2 Cultural eclecticism of the elites?

This section tests if that empirical observation of cultural omnivores is observed. First I'll follow Peterson's method to examine if cultural omnivores exist in China as well. In this research, 52 items of music were asked, a much larger number of items of music compared to typical quantitative surveys, which aims to include a diversity of music items in the Chinese music scene.

Examining cultural omnivores

(1) Are lovers of "highbrow music" crossing cultural boundaries?

Peterson hand-picked the music that constitutes highbrow and included only traditional highbrows in their definition, predefining highbrow as consumers of Western classical music and opera to examine whether they are crossing boundaries (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Following their approach, the cultural omnivore hypothesis is examined using two criteria—whether lovers of highbrow music are "crossing boundaries," and how "boundary-crossing" relate to socioeconomic variables. Highbrow persons are defined as those who highly-like both Western classical and Western opera. Highbrow (Western-only) contains 1.5% of the sample. I also add a second definition which includes the traditional highbrow music in China—Chinese Peking opera and guqin instrumentals. Although Kunqu opera is also highbrow in the eyes of the literati, it is niche in the sampled population, highly liked by only 14 respondents, so it is not included to not overcomplicate the definition. Highbrow (Chinese & Western) is operationalized as knowing and highly liking at least 2 of the 4 music above. This definition allows for multiple dimensions of flexibility in the preferred forms of high art— those who only like highbrow forms of opera, those who only like highbrow forms of instrumental music, and those who only like Western or Chinese highbrow forms. The criterion is not overly lenient as it only categorizes 4.5% of the sample as highbrow persons.

Table 4-1. Descriptive statistics for cultural omnivores

		Heard	Strong Likes	cases	Pct
Highbrow definition 1	Highbrow People	31.3	9.63	19	1.8%
	Non-Highbrow People	29.0	3.62	1029	98.2%
Highbrow definition 2	Highbrow People	29.6	9.45	47	4.5%
	Non-Highbrow People	28.2	3.33	1001	95.5%

Highbrow definition 1 defines highbrow people those who like Western classical and Western opera. Highbrow definition 2 defines highbrow people as those who like all the above, plus Peking opera and guqin instrumental music.

Do people who like traditionally highbrow art forms also like pop music? The table above provides the descriptive statistics. In the first definition of highbrow which includes only Western highbrow, highbrow people have heard of a greater number of music items (31.3 versus 29.0) and also have more strong likes (9.36 versus 3.62) than non-highbrow people. In the second definition of highbrow which includes both Chinese and Western highbrow music, highbrow people also have heard of more music (29.6 versus 28.2) and have more strong likes (9.45 versus 3.33) than non-highbrow people.

Next, regressions are run to examine whether lovers of highbrow music significantly differ in their 1) preferences and 2) awareness toward non-highbrow music, and 3) attendance of live music. Highbrow (Chinese & Western) and Highbrow (Western-only) are dummy variables where 1 indicates belonging to the group and 0 otherwise. The regressions are identical to running a t-test in several models, but this is to keep

a consistent method as the analysis in the next section. Models 1-3 analyzes based on the definition of highbrow used in the West, while models 4-6 uses a definition that includes both Chinese & Western music.

Table 4-2. Regression of awareness, preference, and participation on whether the person highly-likes traditional highbrow music

	Highbrow definition 1 those who like Western-only			Highbrow definition 2 those who like Chinese & Western		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Items Highly Liked	Items Aware	Live Music Participated	Items Highly Liked	Items Aware	Live Music Participated
Highbrow People	6.016***	2.248	1.097***	6.12***	1.441	0.833***
(Intercept)	3.615***	29.016***	0.117*	3.327***	28.197***	0.096*
r2	0.028	0.002		0.076	0.002	
adj.r2	0.027	0.001		0.075	0.001	
AIC			3110			3106
loglikelihood			-3104			-3100
cases	1048	1048	1048	1048	1048	1048

Preference, awareness, and participation are the number of non-highbrow items highly liked (max 45 for model 1-2), the number of non-highbrow items aware (max 47 for model 4-5), and the number of live events attended last year (model 3 and 5).

Highbrow (Western-only) is a dummy variable where 1 indicates highly liking both Western classical and Western opera. Highbrow (Chinese & Western) is a dummy variable where 1 indicates highly liking at least 2 of Western classical, Western opera, Peking opera, and guqin instrumental.

Model 1-2, 4-5 apply the linear model, while model 3 and 6 apply the negative binomial model.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Preference is measured by the number of non-highbrow items highly-liked. Out of a total of 49 music items, removing the 4 highbrow items leaves 45 as the maximum number of non-highbrow items in the dependent variable, of which a linear model is applied. Model 1 shows that lovers of highbrow music indeed like more items of non-highbrow music, more so than everyone else. This supports the omnivore thesis as they do enjoy non-highbrow music as well.

Model 2 analyzes in terms of awareness. In the questionnaire, each respondent indicated whether he or she is aware of the music item, and if so, how much it is liked or disliked. In this case, lovers of highbrow are aware of more items, but not significantly more so. Model 3 examines participation in live music events, which includes classical performances as well as pop concerts. Since this number range from 0 to 5, with 0 being the most popular, a negative binomial model is applied. The results indicate that lovers of highbrow music are indeed more active participants of music.

Model 4-6 repeat the same analysis for the broader definition of highbrow that includes Chinese and Western variants. In models 4 and 5, the 2 highbrow items are removed, leaving 47 as the maximum number of non-highbrow items in the dependent variable. The results are highly similar. Lovers of traditional highbrow music are clearly "crossing boundaries" to enjoy non-highbrow items, in fact, liking more items than everyone else. They also participate in significantly more music events in a year.

While this test supports the observation of cultural omnivorism, this test based on "highbrow people" is problematic in several ways. It requires an assumption of the meaning of highbrow, which may not apply to

the Chinese context. Although this research attempts two different definitions of "highbrow" art, it ignores that popular music can also constitute highbrow, which is a core finding of this research. This definition of eclecticism is also limited by the small number of "highbrow people," which are 19 (1.8%) or 47 (4.5%) out a whole sample of 1048. Furthermore, it is possible that the "highbrow people" identified include people who are more generous in selecting "highly-likes." The next part tests an alternative test of cultural eclectism.

(2) Are people with higher levels of cultural capital crossing cultural boundaries?

Peterson's original approach is problematic in that by assuming Western classical and opera to be highbrow, a predefined cultural hierarchy is inherent within the definition of cultural omnivores, a rather Bourdieusian highbrow hierarchy. It only examines whether those who already like highbrow are crossing into the middlebrow and lowbrow category. However, to have elites crossing boundaries requires the existence of boundaries in the first place. The omnivore account as originally defined is merely highlighting the unsurprising result that elites who consume highbrow are also consuming popular culture—it is hardly surprising that the elites in contemporary society also like pop music to some extent. This prevents the conclusion that cultural omnivores are signs of falling boundaries and increased openness and tolerance.

Table 4-3. Descriptive statistics: the number of items heard and highly-liked by different education groups

	By Awareness		By Preference		cases
	Heard	Unheard	Highly-Like	Not highly-like	
Middle School or Below	27.6	21.4	2.6	46.4	74
Middle Technical	27.8	21.2	2.2	46.8	62
High School	29.7	19.3	3.6	45.4	118
College	31.0	18.0	3.5	45.5	288
Bachelor	31.4	17.6	4.3	44.7	396
Above Bachelor	31.1	17.9	4.9	44.1	110

Therefore, this second part examines cultural omnivorism from the perspective of socio-economic background, rather than predefining a "highbrow" and testing for cross-covers. Here I examine how the number of items that have been heard and the number of items that are highly-liked differs between educational groups. The table above provides the descriptive statistics of the mean number of items heard or high-liked by different educational groups. The mean number of items that are highly-liked always increases as the level of education increases, from 2.63 for those middle school or below, to 4.94 for those with degrees above bachelor. Similarly, the mean number of items heard increases for each educational group, from 27.6 items for middle school or below, to 31.4 items for bachelor's degree. The number of items heard decreases slightly for the above bachelor (which may be due to the increase of "snobs" who abstain from popular culture in the HCCs, as discussed toward the end of this chapter). This suggests that cultural eclecticism of those with high culture is observed. The next part will apply regression.

Table 4-4. Regression of awareness, preference, and participation on education and other socioeconomic variables

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
			Live Music
	Items Liked	Items Aware	Participated
Edu	0.235***	0.314***	0.12***
Party	0.517	0.391	0.255*
Income-Log	0.123	0.507*	0.219***
Age	0.033	-0.099***	-0.005
GenderF	-0.765**	1.453***	-0.006
(Intercept)	-1.727	21.161***	-3.654***
r2	0.029	0.058	
adj.r2	0.024	0.053	
AIC			3051
loglikelihood			-3037
cases	1048	1048	1048

Preference, awareness, and participation are the number of non-highbrow Items highly liked (max 45), known (max 45), and the number of live events attended last year.
Model 1-2 applies a linear model, while model 3 applies a negative binomial model.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Education, party, and income represents cultural, political, and economic capital respectively, to see if they influence music awareness, preference, and participation. Age and gender are the controls. The logarithm of income is used in the regression model, as income is skewed toward large values. Models 7-9 uses the Chinese & Western definition of highbrow.

Model 7 and 8 shows that cultural capital is the most significant influencers of preference and awareness. Those with high cultural capital are "crossing boundaries" in support of the omnivore thesis. Every additional year of education associates with a 0.235 increase in the number of items of highly-likes and 0.314 increase in the number of items aware, as well as 0.12 events a year. Participation in live music relates most significantly to not only cultural capital but also economic capital, bringing income as an influencer of cultural engagement.

The cultural omnivores argument depends on item selection

On the surface, the results confirm Peterson's omnivore account. In the first test, those who like "highbrow" music are indeed eclectic consumers of music. This is true in the number of items liked and in the number of live music events participated by those who like "highbrow," but not significantly so in their number of items aware. The result is consistent whether "highbrow" is defined as Western classical and opera, or the broader definition of those music types plus Peking opera and guqin. Lovers of highbrow music do not favor it exclusively. In the second test, those with higher levels of cultural capital as defined by years of education are higher in the number of items liked, aware, and events participated. This also responds to the engagement versus disengagement division by showing that lovers of highbrow music and those with high cultural capital are also more engaged in live music. Thus, lovers of highbrow music and those with high cultural capital do not favor it exclusively, as their music preferences are not confined to legitimate items.

The results appear to confirm that "cultural omnivores"—the increased eclecticism of the elites—are observed in China as well. However, Peterson's original method is problematic in requiring an *a priori* definition of

highbrow art. Using the updated test of cultural eclecticism, people with more education are more eclectic, but there is not a straightforward number on the size of this group. Unlike latent class analysis, Peterson's method does not segment the population into groups of omnivores, univores, etc. that have a measurable size (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b). The omnivore thesis is often interpreted to imply the breakdown of social boundaries, with the disappearance of "snobs." However, I disagree with that interpretation and will demonstrate this in the subsequent sections. In contrary, I argue that social distinction continues under the cloak of cultural eclecticism, turning subtle and executed with increased complexity.

I argue that the cultural omnivore argument depends on the type of items asked. Therefore, cultural omnivore is an artifact of a survey that asks more items that are favored by the elites, therefore giving the impression that elites like more items. Cultural omnivorism has been measured through more items that the elites like, aware, or the count of live music events that were attended in the past year. In real life, distinction is drawn by specific items rather than under broad categories. In the following section, I examine the meaning of "likes" and "awareness" of more items by looking at how each of the 53 music items is stratified. The results reveal that the stratification of music is clear at the item level, therefore omnivorism is dependent on the particular selection of music items.

(1) HCCs have higher awareness, particularly for selective foreign items

Figure 4-1. Music awareness by years of education
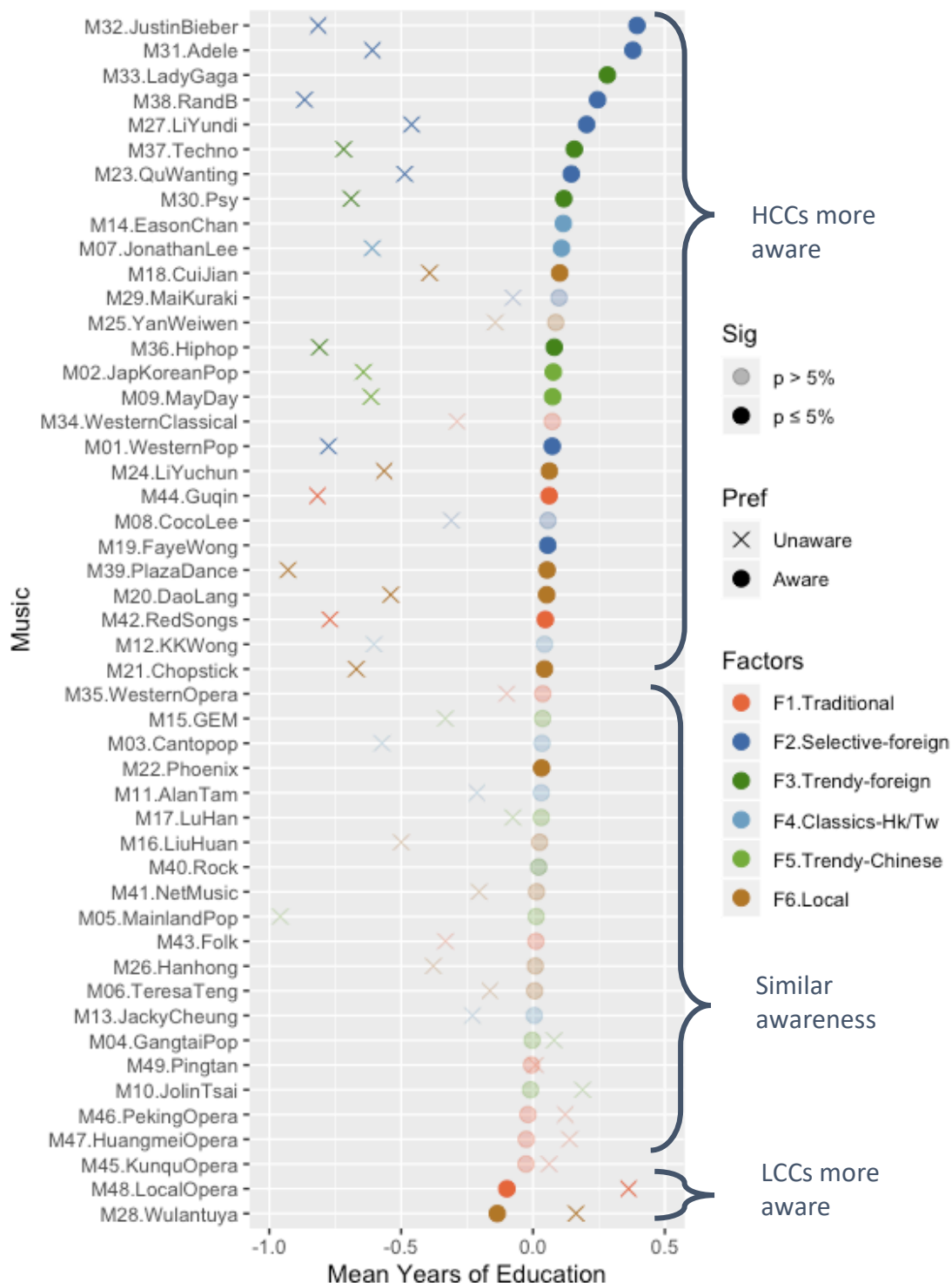
Details of the means and the t-test are in the appendix.

Under the proliferation of pop music items, the first distinction that can be drawn is music awareness, which draws boundaries even before preferences are discussed. Recall that respondents choose from highly-like, like, neutral, dislike, highly-dislike, or unaware. The figure above compares the average years of education of

those who indicated a preference (aware) and those who were unaware of the music item. T-test examines whether the mean years of education are significantly different, and indicated by faded colors on the figure when it is not.

A pattern persists across most music items—education level is consistently lower for those who indicated a lack of awareness on mainstream pop music items, lower than the mean years of education. Awareness does not identify the HCCs, but unawareness is shared by the LCCs. The music items asked in this survey are not "difficult," as the average years of education of those who are aware are close to the average years of education of the whole sample. To have aware of those music items are not too surprising, whereas being unaware is rarer and serves as a more important distinction—only those with lower levels of education have higher unaware-responses. Most of those items have higher awareness as education increases. Being aware of foreign music items is linked with higher years of education, with M32 Justin Bieber being the most stratified. There are only two exceptions—the local operas (M48), and Wulantuya (M28), which are slightly better known by people with lower levels of education. It is also notable that this aware-unaware distinction is more observable for specific music items, but is obscured for broad music categories—rock, Mainland pop, Cantopop, HK & TW pop, folk, Internet music, and classical West do not show a significant difference in awareness.

This result confirms the cultural omnivore account that those who are highly educated are aware of music items, particularly selective foreign music. This presents two dilemmas for the cultural omnivore account. Firstly, the "omnivore test" is highly dependent on the music items that are asked. Asking more foreign items increases the degree of "cultural eclecticism," whereas asking more items like local opera and Wulantuya drives the opposite result. Currently there is not an exhaustive list of cultural items out there, nor a proper way to neutrally sample cultural items that represent the interests of the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, therefore the "omnivore test" is always subject to researcher bias.

Secondly, the claim of the cultural omnivore account that elites are more tolerant of low culture appears absurd since it is selective foreign music that they are more aware of, hardly a low culture. Therefore, I offer an alternative interpretation of cultural omnivores—both HCCs and LCCs are equally aware of mainstream music, but HCCs are also aware of a long list of selective foreign music. Rather than an indication of elite tolerance, the appearance of eclecticism points to 1) the bias in the inclusion of music items consumed by the elites, and 2) the very evidence for the exclusion of LCCs from cultural consumption.

(2) Likes and dislikes by item

The figure below uses a similar methodology as that in the previous figure, but shows the mean years of education of those who selected highly like or like the item in a green triangle that points upwards, and a downward red triangle for those who selected highly like or dislike. The years of education has been centered at the average years of education of the sample. Those who selected neutral or unaware are not included in the calculations for the specific music item. This clearly separates the high-status music items from the low-status ones, as the mean years of education flips from being higher for those who like, to being higher for

those who dislike. The differences between the years of education of likes and dislikes are t-tested, and indicated with a bar if the differences are significant.

This figure shows the similarity between the status as defined by likes and status as defined by dislikes. Music items that are liked by the highly educated are also generally polarized in being disliked by those with low levels of education—this would not be the case had more respondents selected unaware or neutral instead of selecting polarized results. There are also a number of local items which are more liked by LCCs than HCCs, an indication of symbolic exclusion (Bryson, 1996).

Examining the cultural omnivore claim that those with higher education like more items, the conclusion is similar to that for awareness—it depends on the music items that are asked. While slightly more items see an increase in likes as education increases, there are also many items that are less liked—primarily local music items. Asking more local items will indicate lower cultural omnivorism or even the cultural eclecticism of the non-elites. Furthermore, this again demonstrates the superficiality of the cultural omnivore argument. While both HCCs and LCCs like mainstream music items, HCCs also like a long list of foreign and traditional highbrow items. Rather than demonstrating the cultural tolerance of elites, cultural omnivore is an indication of cultural exclusion.

Figure 4-2. Music preference by years of education
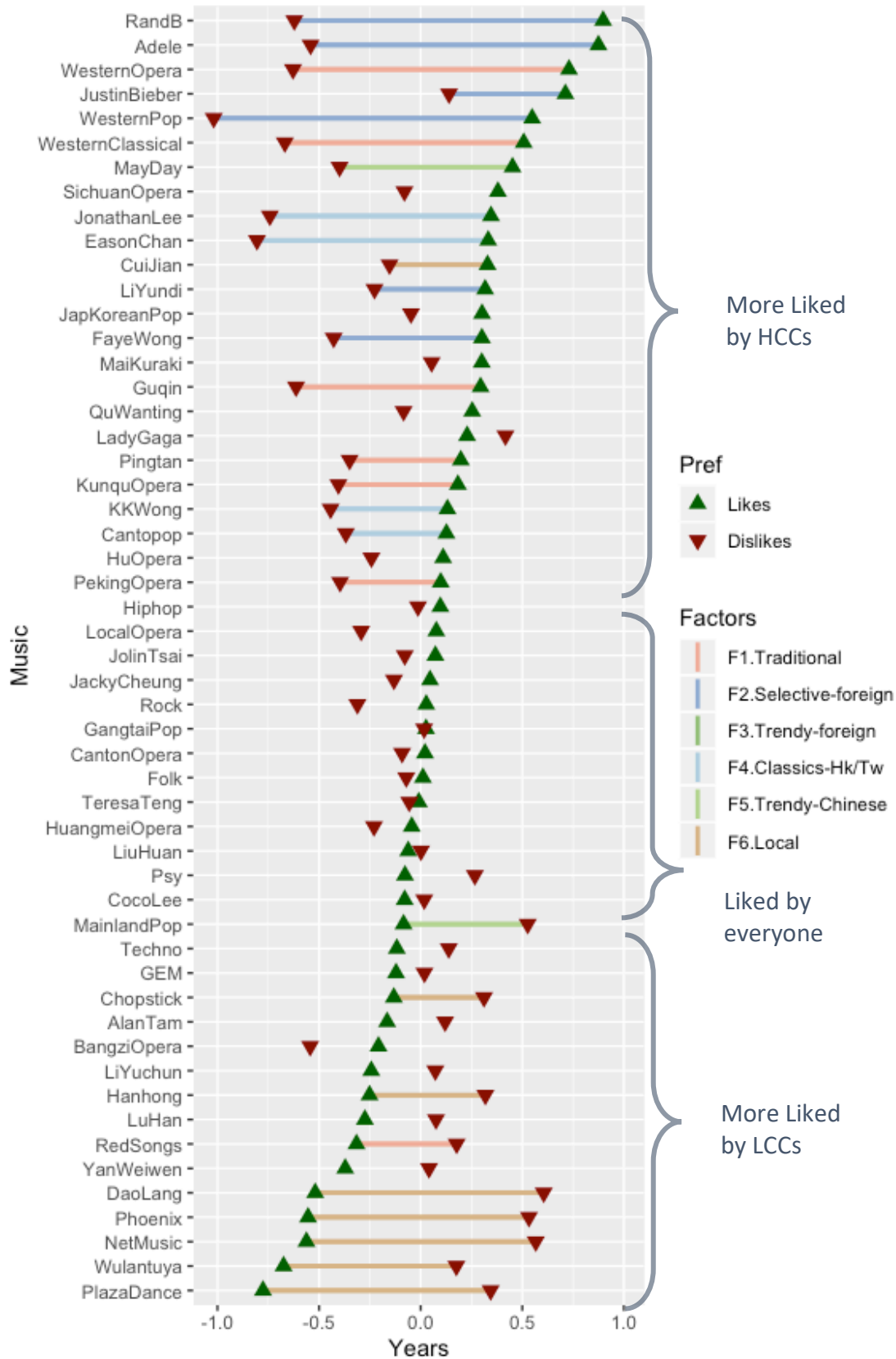
The line between the triangles indicates a statistically significant (<5%) difference between the years of education for the music item.

Divisions within popular music

Under pop culture, the most popular items of music are consumed across social strata, by its own definition. This gives the impression that popular culture is indeed widely consumed and free of symbolic violence, giving the benign appearance of freedom of consumption. However, under mass culture, music distinction is drawn not through mainstream items, but through less popular items which are distinctive. The following figure explains how less popular items are the ones that are stratified in society.

Figure 4-3. The most stratified music items are less popular, while the most popular items are less stratified
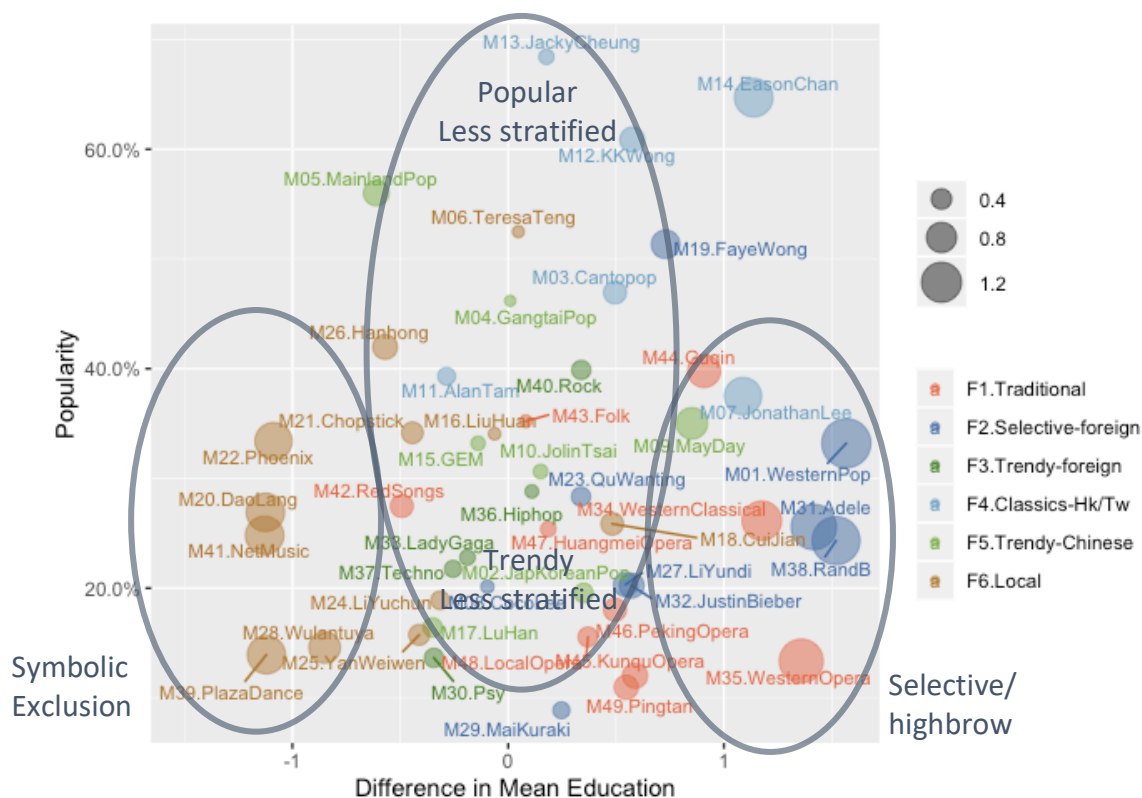
Plotting the popularity (percent of people like or highly like the music) and the difference in the mean of education for each music item. The size of the dot represents the degree of stratification.

The difference between the average years of education of those who like and dislike the items is plotted against popularity. The differences between the years of education of those who like and dislike the music, i.e. the length of the horizontal distance between the triangles in the earlier figure, are shown the horizontal axis. The vertical axis shows the popularity of the music item—the percentage of the sample who reported highly-like or like on the music. To emphasize music items that are stratifying, the size of the bubbles is in relation to the degree of stratification, the absolute value of the difference between the years of education of those who like and dislike the music.

Having popularity on the vertical axis reveals the relationship between hierarchy and popularity under popular culture. The most popular items tend to be not stratified. After all, being popular implies being widely liked across the population, providing the appearance of free-for-all choices in the consumption of mass music. Trendy items include newer contemporary artists, who tend to be popular among certain age

groups. These are the items that HCCs also embrace to lubricate their social relations. The stratifying music items are the ones that are less popular and more obscure in popularity. They include selective music such as R&B (M38), traditional highbrow music such as Western opera (M35). Stratifying music also includes items that are markers of low cultural capital, such as Plaza Dance (M39) used for symbolic exclusion. "Popular music" leaves a general impression of neutrality, but the hierarchy continues to persist at the fringes of popularity.

(1) Popular and trendy items are least stratified

The trendy items are the music items that tend to be more popular and are less stratified. They are used by the HCCs, particularly those with high cultural capital, to reach down to lubricate social relations. These are the music items in the middle, which are neutral and not stratified by cultural capital. Latent trait analysis demonstrated this by separating foreign music into two different factors, with selective foreign being the stratifying and trendy foreign being the unstratified form. Similarly, Chinese music is separated into trendy Chinese and classics Hk/Taiwan. Items in the trendy Chinese and trendy foreign categories are not stratified by education, which can also be witnessed by their position in the middle vertical section on this chart. The analysis in the next section will also show that trendy music is the music for the cosmopolitans, as it is the music that bridges privileged and under-privileged people.

(2) Stratified music items are niche items that are less popular

While most HCCs also consume popular music alongside the high-status ones, they particularly pursue selective, selective music items, which are the items that draw the highest distinctions. At times HCCs consume music as popular entertainment, such as to turn the brain off when jogging, or when there is a need to bridge across social divides, yet other times, they consume selective music items for enjoyment and appreciation.

The high-status stratifying music items include traditional highbrow and selective popular items, both of which are consumed by the HCCs and distinguish their tastes from others. The selective music items include Western pop (M1), R&B (M38), Adele (M31), and traditional highbrow items included Western opera (M35) and Western classical (M34). Some stratifying music items are low status, which are used for symbolic exclusion. They include Phoenix Legend (M22), Dao Lang (M20), Net Music (M41), and Plaza Dance music (M39). Being unpopular by itself does not necessarily imply stratification, as niche items can be high-status, neutral, or low-status, as seen in the figure.

The role of age has been found to be an important division in the shift from traditional highbrow culture toward "emerging" forms of cultural capital (Prieur and Savage, 2013). Researchers have found that while older elites are more attracted to traditional highbrow culture, younger elites are attracted toward newer commercial forms of culture (Bennett et al., 2009; Reeves, 2014). However, popular music items with high status are always changing, as each generation pursue the music that is niche and selective of its time. This section shows how HCCs upgrade through the changing current, and plateau in their favorites as they reach a certain age.

Differences in high-status music for different age groups

Figure 4-4. Different high and low-status music of each age group
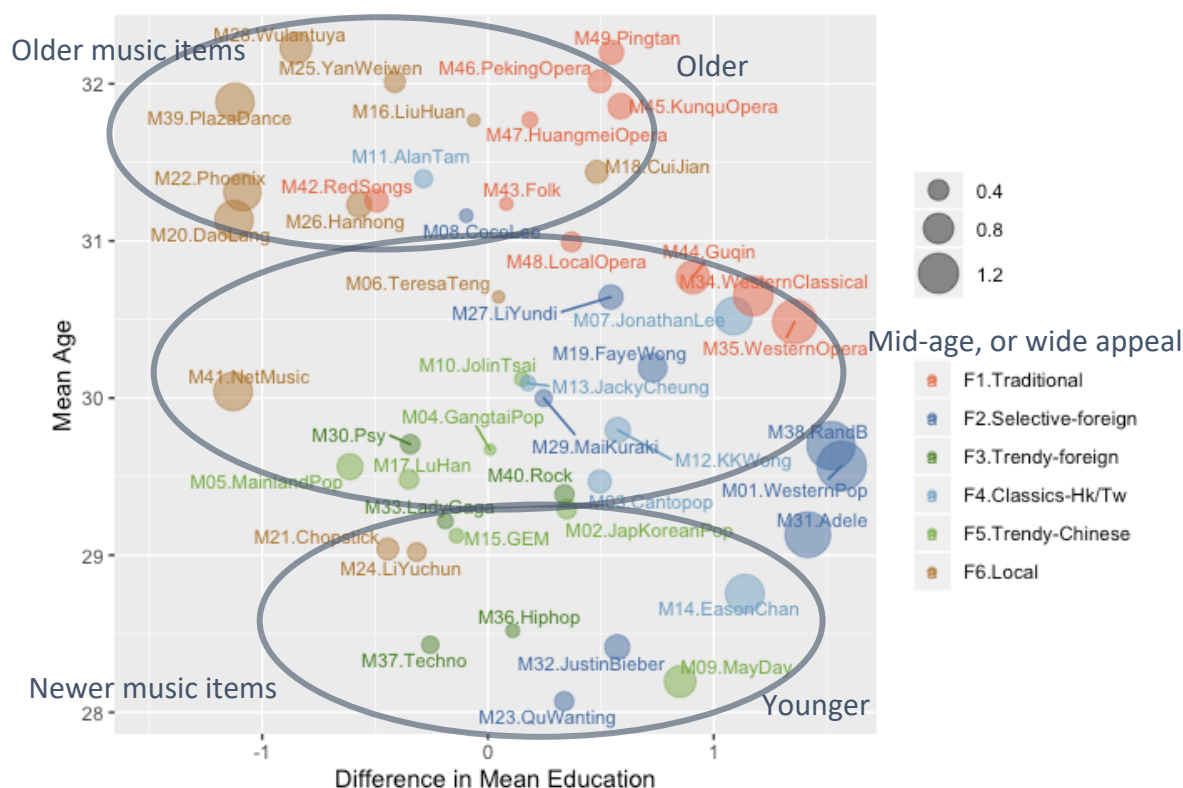
Comparing differences in age (y) with educational stratification (x)

The figure above compares the educational stratification of the music items by age. The horizontal axis shows the differences between the years of education of those who like and dislike the music. The vertical axis is the mean age of the people who like those music items. Recall that the age of the respondents ranges from 18-44 and the mean age of the sample is 29.9 years. This figure shows that every age group has its own favored music. More favored by the young are items such as hip-hop, Justin Bieber, May Day, and Qu Wanting. More favored by the old tends to be local and traditional music, such as Yan Weiwen, Suzhou Pingtan, Wulantuya, and the Chinese operas. The music items that appear in the middle horizontally include items that are favored by those near 30 and those items that are favored across a diverse age range (which is not differentiated in the figure).

Each age group has its own high-status and low-status music. The older respondents contrast between Wulantuya as low-status and Pingtan and Peking opera as high status. The younger respondents contrast between techno as lower status and May Day as higher status. Recognized across age groups are the most powerful music for distinction across the population, which are Western pop, R&B, Adele, Western opera, against Net Music, Daolang, and Phoenix Legend. It also shows that the music items liked by the older respondents are more likely to be low-status compared to the music items liked by younger respondents— this is likely to be due to the rapid increase in the level of education of the younger respondents in the developing country, which leads the music associated with the less educated old to be weighted down as low-status. It could also be partially due to research design which did not include specific low-status items that

are recognized by the youngest Chinese (which could be names of specific stars of Net Music, who would be less recognized by the older respondents thus lowering the mean age). Also notable is the increase in cultural stratification for the younger respondents compared to the older ones—the "highbrow" music for the oldest age group is far less stratified compared to the Western pop music of the younger age groups.

Therefore, the competition for high music status is always changing. The high-status of Pingtan and Kunqu, for example, is concentrated in the older group, while Western opera has high-status among the middle age group in this study. For the younger respondents, high status means R&B and Adele. New items of music will continue to appear, and some will climb toward high status for the next generation of Chinese. The process on how respondents pursue selective music, "upgrading" their initial mainstream tastes toward high-status tastes, will be discussed in the next section.

Distinction in popular music occurs in niche, selective items

The last chapter showed how the music landscape is a field of competition between status and popularity. The most popular items are unstratified, and it is the less popular items that mark distinction, which the LCCs are less able to differentiate. The earlier section also showed that LCCs tend to judge music through popularity, following the mainstream, whereas in their search for quality, HCCs pursue the niche and selective.

Researches that look at large categories of music only observe "boundary crossing" at the category level, where elites appear to also like popular genres, but they miss the nuanced distinction which cannot be captured through genre-based preferences common in national surveys. The large number of music items asked in my survey enables the illustration of the relationship between popularity and status at the item level. Hence, surveys that ask only about the most popular and widely known items are only scraping the surface (the upper part of the chart) and fails to find the stratification by less popular items (situated toward the bottom of the part). For example, traditional music shows a heavy degree of internal stratification. Nowadays, the location of performance (rural stage or urban theatres) and the location of the audience (developing regions or cosmopolitan cities) allow varieties of traditional art to occupy across different status positions (see Xiao, 2015 for Henan Opera; Yin, 2003 for Huangmei Opera; Zhang, 2014 for Shanxi Opera). The local operas are more confined in influence and seen as less prestigious. Local operas and folk music were once entertainment of the mass, as part of rural entertainment, or local festivals (Johnson, 1985), but now frequently associated with an aging audience and poorer social standings. Nowadays, the location of performance (rural stage or urban theatres) and the location of the audience (developing regions or cosmopolitan cities) allow varieties of traditional art to occupy across different status positions (see Xiao, 2015 for Henan Opera; Yin, 2003 for Huangmei Opera; Zhang, 2014 for Shanxi Opera).

The findings in this study confirm the above. Western highbrow music occupies the most dominant position in the traditional music hierarchy, followed by the Chinese music types which were traditionally legitimized at the national level, however, there is also a variety of traditional music that does not have a highbrow status. While countless traditional art forms of the mass are becoming endangered or extinct, selected traditional highbrow variants are receiving state support and public interest from those with high cultural

capital. Finally, red songs are lowbrow in the category, showing that the most educated ones have distanced from that category of music.

Slippery omnivores

The decrease in awareness to a certain extent, but particularly the decrease in preference of the elites are too numerous to unequivocally support that elites "like more of everything." As described earlier, elites favor items rather selectively. A sizable number of music items decreases in awareness or preference as education increases. In fact, there are music items with increased awareness but decreased preference, and vice versa—showing that while educated elites exhibit cultural eclecticism, they are also less aware of local music items. Elites do tend to be aware of more mainstream and foreign items in general, but if more local items are asked it would show a different side. Their dislikes are also more complicated than simply disliking what the lower-strata likes (Bryson, 1996), as they also dislike what those in the local strata-dislike, but to dislike it more (for example, Plaza Dance M39). The optimistic proposition that tolerant elites are open to liking everything is not well-grounded, and is due to not asking enough specific, local items. In contrary, "cultural omnivores" points to the cultural exclusion of LCCs from high-status selective foreign music and traditional music consumed by the HCCs.

Empirical evidence for cultural eclecticism is partly magnified by having surveys that ask apparently "mainstream" items that favor the relatively well off, overlooking the more diversified, grassroot cultures of the local. Eclecticism would be a prevailing finding had this research only focused on the "most popular" music items. If only the most popular artists are selected (M13 Jacky Cheung, M6 Teresa Teng, etc), plus the most favorable and highly aware genres (M40 Rock, M43 Folk, M36 Hip Hop, M34 Western classical), plus some generic categories (M1 Western pop, M3 Cantopop, M2 J-pop/K-pop)—which seems quite reasonable of a research design and highly reminiscent of the items researched in the West—the evidence would point to cultural omnivores. Popular items and generic categories lead to the discovery of cultural omnivores. Whereas research that asks about local and less mainstream items (M48 local operas M48, M20 Dao Lang, M22 Phoenix Legend, M39 Plaza Dance, M25 Yan Weiwen, and M41 Net Music) would paint a remarkably different picture. Elites are more aware of commoditized mainstream items, but less aware of local items. Quantitative research that focuses on the mainstream picks up the eclecticism but not the stratification.

Although Peterson and Kern never intended to refute Bourdieu with the omnivore account, saying "omnivorous taste...does not signify that the omnivore likes everything indiscriminantly" and that "omnivorousness does not imply an indifference to distinctions" (1996: 904), some critics use the largely empirical finding to refute Bourdieu's theory. Those attempts are usually based on a grossly oversimplified understanding of Bourdieu. Bourdieu's concepts are difficult and oversimplified by his critics, which is not helped by the need for translation from French, or his often criticized cryptic writing style (DiMaggio et al., 1979: 1466; Goldthorpe, 2007: 2). Critics frequently reduce Bourdieu's theory to a grossly simplified form—turning his elaborate arguments on taste to a simple argument that elites exclusively consume highbrow art. With the rise of quantitative survey results suggesting the rise of omnivores, critics are quick to debunk Bourdieu's theory based on that evidence. His theories became somehow contingent on elites who exclusivity

consume highbrow art. To those scholars, the discovery that elites also consume other art forms is taken to be a refutation of Bourdieu's theory (e.g. Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b).

In many ways, Bourdieu's theory of taste and the omnivore account are on separate levels of analysis that do not directly speak to each other. Bourdieu's theory of taste is a complex set of theories encompassing concepts like cultural capital, habitus, and field, while the omnivore account is closer to an empirical finding still in search of explanations. The omnivore account presents an empirical challenge for Bourdieu, but without adequately explaining why and how there are status differences between art forms. Cultural eclecticism is explained rather simplistically as increasing respect, tolerance, and openness to cultures of others (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Characteristics of being open to other cultures are also inherent to many theories in cosmopolitanism (Hannerz, 1990; Roudometof, 2005; Szerszynski and Urry, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999), "a willingness to engage with the other" (Hannerz, 1990: 239). Yet scholars have continued to argue that the number of omnivores as described is limited in numbers (Warde and Bennett, 2008), the persistence of exclusion (Bryson, 1996, 1997; Warde et al., 1999), and the issue of cultural disengagement (Bennett et al., 2009; Le Roux et al., 2008). The omnivore account is primarily an empirical observation, based on eclectic methods and definitions—from counting the number of likes between social groups, to seeing whether those who like highbrow music also like middlebrow and lowbrow art, without consistent theorization on what omnivorism actually entails (Robette and Roueff, 2014).

This section examined whether the phenomenon of cultural omnivores is also witnessed in China. On the surface, the evidence for cultural omnivorism appears compelling. However, a closer inspection into the meaning of cultural omnivorism reveals that the concept is problematic and does not imply the decrease of cultural barriers. Firstly, the cultural omnivore thesis has a conceptual shortcoming that overstates its meaningfulness—eclecticism of the elites and disengagement of the lower strata can easily be the result of the choice of music items. This research asks a larger number of items as well as more specific artists compared to typical research on music, and discovers that the items that the privileged like more tend to be imported and globalized music items, while the underprivileged typically like more of local music items. Testing more items preferred by the lower strata can easily flip the result to find eclecticism of the underprivileged (e.g. in my case by asking more of Phoenix Legend, Wulantuya, and other local artists, while asking fewer items of foreign music). Cultural eclecticism is simply a reflection of the balance on items asked. Claims that elites consume more "types of music" or more "types of cultural activities" is slippery as they are largely dependent on how the "types" are operationalized. Cultural omnivorism is a tautology because, rather than 'elites like more of everything,' it merely shows 'the questionnaire asked more items that elites like.'

Secondly, the cultural omnivores thesis portrays highbrow consumers crossing boundaries into middle and lowbrow music as a sign of increasing equality. This account overlooks the hierarchy that has developed within popular music, as elites are selective and exclusionary in their consumption of pop culture. Cultural omnivorism should be more narrowly seen as—people who enjoy highbrow music now also likes pop.

4.3 Multivariate analysis using MIRT

Using ANOVA to compare taste between socioeconomic subgroups

To further examine whether a cultural hierarchy exists, this research uses MIRT (a latent trait analysis) and ANOVA, which examines different subtypes of music to examine their stratification. MIRT first distills the different types of tastes that give rise to differences in music preferences, to discover that different music serves different roles in social distinction (see chapter 2 for the full discussion on MIRT).

After deriving the six music factors, they are analyzed by analysis of variance (ANOVA), a method common in behavioral sciences and is methodologically related to regression (Cronbach, 1957). ANOVA is regarded to be a robust test, with a high tolerance for violations to its normality assumptions such as under conditions of skew and kurtosis (Field et al., 2012: 412–414). Given the potential that the survey oversampled privileged individuals due to their higher interest in music and thus their participation rate, the use of ANOVA to compares tastes between groups is an appropriate test to use. ANOVA is used as a between-group design which tests whether different subgroups differ in their tastes, which eliminates most issues caused by over-sampling privileged subgroups. ANOVA is also robust to unequal sample sizes to a substantial extent, with the homogeneity of variance has been tested and that assumption has not been violated. This provides proof whether socioeconomic factors stratify the different taste factors in society at large, while the mechanisms of taste division will be further analyzed through smaller sample interviews in later chapters.

Different forms of social advantages, such as urban hukou, political advantages of the parents, parental education and parental wealth, reinforce each other in China. Of particular importance is education attainment, which all the privileged leverage their positions to advantage their child (Chiang, 2018; Deng and Treiman, 1997; Wu, 2010, 2011). The variables are added one by one into a model instead of adding all variables to the same model because the goal is to examine, for example, whether different income groups differ in their tastes once cultural capital and individual differences of age, sex and city are considered, rather than to examine whether income is influential on taste on top of occupational class. In other words, they are examined as a separate treatment effect, rather than for their marginal effects on top of all the other variables. Also, the goal of this research is not to *predict* the taste of hypothetical respondents, e.g. the taste of non-party parents who work in the government, which requires controlling for *every* factor to determine which of these causes highbrow taste *in isolation*. ANOVA is used to see whether differences in mean are statistically significant between population subgroups. The goal of this is to examine whether the factors that tell about the past influences taste, and whether the influence of the past is direct, or indirect through the higher chances of educational attainment.

Dependent variables: music tastes and participation

The concept of "legitimate" art used by Bourdieu poses a methodological challenge in China. Whereas research in the West sometimes use classical music and opera as variables for legitimate culture to measure the effect of enjoying highbrow art on various aspects of social attainment or position (DiMaggio, 1982a; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010; Rössel and Schroedter, 2015; Van Eijck, 1999),

this approach that relies on *a priori* assumption on what is highbrow is untenable in China because it is unclear which music is highbrow in contemporary China. In this research, "legitimate" culture is part of the open inquiry rather than assumed in advance. Items are not presumed to have a relationship with socioeconomic variables in the derivation of the taste factors; the relationship of socioeconomic variables and tastes are analyzed using regression afterward.

Research that assumes certain music to be highbrow has only 1 independent variable to analyze—the number of highbrow or lowbrow music liked or disliked (Bryson, 1996; e.g. Peterson and Kern, 1996). By not taking the assumption in China, multiple music variables need to be analyzed. For each of the 49 music questions (53 music items in total), respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale from highly-like, like, neutral, dislike, highly-dislike, or the option to select unaware if they cannot sufficiently recall what the music sounds like to give a preference. MIRT (Multidimensional Item Response Theory) reveal the 6 underlying dimensions of taste that lead to the differences in expressed music preferences. Individuals' taste profiles are then compared to see the differences in means between population subgroups.

Figure 4-5. The density function of the six factor-scores
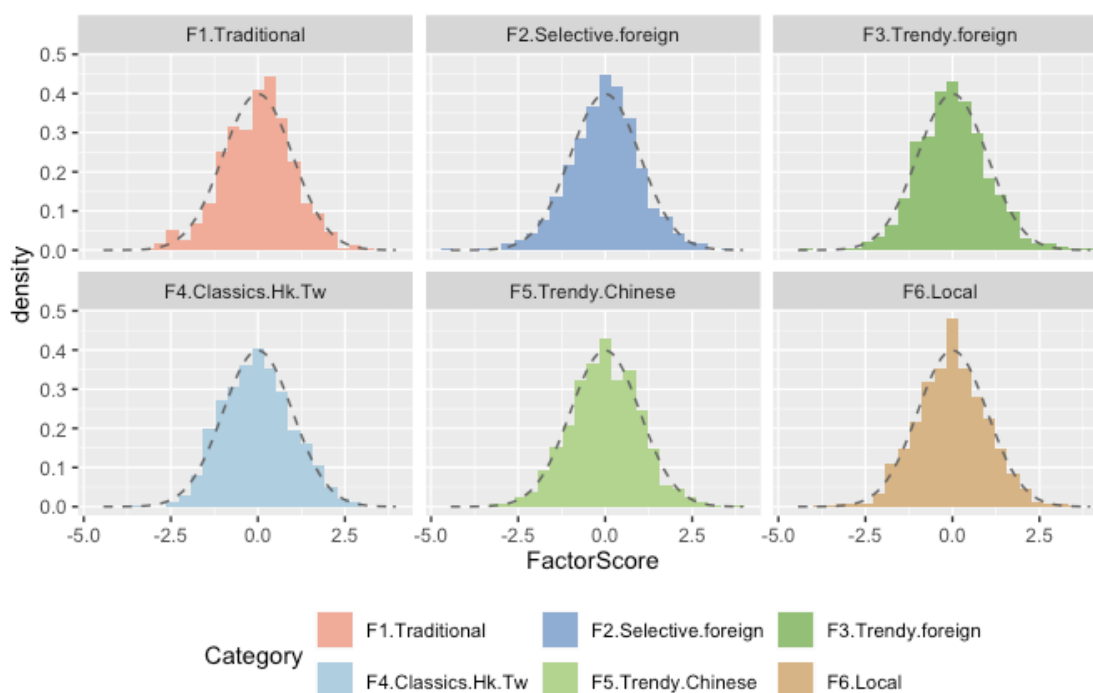
A fitted normal distribution is over-plotted in black dash

In addition to the 6 taste factors above, this research also ask for the number of **live music events attended** in the past year. The variable has been converted to a continuous variable. The graph above shows that a negative binomial distribution (size = 0.7119, mu = 1.1651) best approximates the data, whereas a normal distribution does not.

Figure 4-6. Density function of live music attended
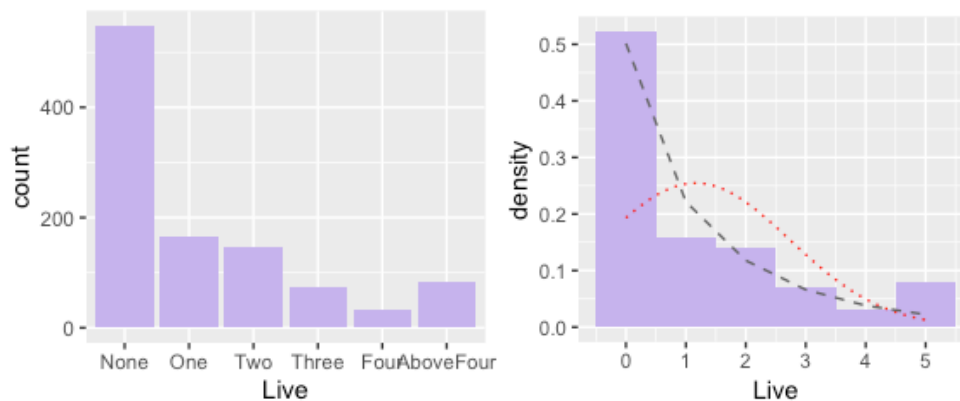
A fitted negative binomial distribution (size = 0.7119, mu = 1.1651) is over-plotted in black dash, and a fitted normal distribution (mean = 1.1651, sd = 1.5673) in red dots.

Independent variables

The music taste and participations will be compared between different socioeconomic subgroups, which are education, occupational class, income, as well as the controlling variables of age, gender, and city. Each of those variables will be described below.

(1) Education

The first socioeconomic variable to examine is years of education. It plays a key role in social stratification in modern societies, with a strong linkage between social origin and education attainment, as seen in multiple comparative studies (Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993; Treiman and Yip, 1989). Education reflects the primary accumulation of cultural capital from parental cultural background, as well as their own secondary achievement, so it is commonly used to operationalize cultural capital. In empirical studies, education has a strong linkage with cultural taste and practices (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010; Reeves, 2015). While education is influential in countries in the West, to the extent of being frequently used as a proxy for cultural capital, whether education influences taste in China may not be as obvious as it seems for two main reasons. Firstly, Bourdieu believes cultural capital primarily comes from being raised in a family with high cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), but it's questionable whether this exists in contemporary China. Inequality developed in China only within the most recent generation, different from most Western societies which never experienced a period of socialism. Secondly, education opportunities increased massively in China in recent decades. This increased social mobility and challenges the intergenerational social reproduction process described by Bourdieu.

Table 4-5. Subgroups by education

	cases	pct
Middle School or Below	74	7%
High School	177	17%
College	286	27%
Bachelor	396	38%
Above Bachelor	110	11%
Total	1043	100%

Excludes 5 young students whose eventual education attainment is uncertain

Those with middle school or below, high school, college, bachelor, or above bachelor's degree consist of 7%, 17%, 27%, 38%, and 11% of the sample, respectively. Those who are currently pursuing a degree are presumed to be able to complete their degree. For increased precision, this analysis also excluded young students whose eventual highest education attainment is uncertain. 88 respondents are currently students, implying their eventual higher education attained might be higher than currently reported, which may distort the relationship between education and taste. 64 students already pursuing bachelor's degree or above already have a high level of education so they are kept in the sample. For the students pursuing middle school or below, high school, or college, those who are adult students behind the typical educational trajectory are kept in the sample, as they are presumed unlikely to complete a degree beyond the current one. There are 3 high school students age 18, and 2 college students age 19 whose eventual educational attainment is uncertain. Although the impact of this is determined to be almost negligible, these cases have been dropped from the analysis. The continuous variable for education is used for ANOVA.

(2) Occupational class

The definition of class is a sensitive topic in China. Because Marxism-Leninism continues to be the national ideology, government's official position on class is still a Marxist conception with the exploiting classes eliminated, allowing for 2 classes in China—proletariats and peasants, as the Communist party prides itself in abolishing all other exploitive classes after the Communist revolution (Li, 2016). Goodman argues that today's Chinese society is stratified into a dominant class—consisting of political elites and economic elites, the middle classes—consisting of educated white collars in large cities, and a sizable subordinate classes who exchange physical labor for income (Goodman, 2014). According to Goodman, the state discourse on "middle class" includes what normally would be recognized as the upper class in other societies, downplaying the existence of an upper class in the supposedly socialist society (2014: 93). In recognition of the changes since market development, the government now allows the discussion of (mainly occupational-based) social *strata* (Anagnost, 2008; Lu, 2002; Tomba, 2016).

Chinese scholars have been pushing for the recognition of increasing inequality through an occupational hierarchy modeled after Goldthorpe, adeptly called strata instead of class (Guo, 2016; Lu, 2012). The occupational class model of Erikson–Goldthorpe–Portocarero (EGP) is a definition of social class common in Europe and the US, and is modeled after the distinction between employers, employees, and employment on labor and service contracts. This data is not used to discuss the construction of class, but examine whether the EGP occupational definition of class show differences in taste.

Occupational information has been collected from the respondents through an open response on their occupation, as well as a clarifying question on whether they are the employee, manager, or owner of the organization. These are used to determine the EGP strata. The official EGP classification consists of 7 classes, which are 1) higher and 2) lower managerial and professional occupations, 3) intermediate occupations, 4) small proprietors, 5) lower supervisory and technical occupations, 6) semi-routine and 7) routine occupations. To reduce the false sense of precision, this analysis groups them under three wider groups of the service occupations (EGP 1 & 2), mixed occupations (EGP 3 & 4), and manual occupations (EGP 5, 6, 7). Naturally, this analysis excludes all students from the sample.

Table 4-6. Subgroups by EGP class

EGP	HH Income	Years of Education	cases	pct
Manual (EGP 567)	13,492	12.7	181	21.1%
Mixed (EGP 34)	22,530	14.4	456	53.1%
Service (EGP12)	25,638	15.5	221	25.8%
Total	-	-	858	100%

Excludes non-working respondents (students, home-makers, unemployed, etc)

Those with manual, mixed, and service occupations consist of 21.1%, 53.1%, and 25.8% of the sample respectively. Because occupational class is linked with educational and economic positions, descriptive statistics on education and income grouped by occupational class are provided above. The mean household incomes per month for the three occupations are 13492, 22530, and 25638 from low to high occupation. The years of education are 12.7, 14.4, and 15.5 respectively.

(3) Income

Income is measured as the average household monthly pre-tax earnings. Household rather than personal income is used because it accounts for those who choose not to work for income and rely on the income of the household. This is intended to be a rough measure of the amount available for spending, recognizing that individuals in a wealthy family might take on otherwise lower-income jobs for passion or to abstain from work. The log of income is used in the model to represent a normal distribution more closely. Some of the respondents are students, which recorded household income of the parental household. Although there is no conclusive difference in the results whether students are kept or removed, to eliminate any uncertainty, the student cases (8.4% of the sample) have been dropped, leaving us with 960 cases.

Table 4-7. Subgroups by income

Monthly household pre-tax income	cases	pct
Below 4k	104	11%
4 to10k	328	34%
10 to 20k	266	28%
Above 20k	262	27%
Total	960	100%

Excludes 88 students

Those with monthly household income below ¥4,000, ¥4,000-¥10,000, ¥10,000-¥12,000, and above ¥20,000 consists of 11%, 34%, 28%, and 27% of the sample respectively. The clearest difference in taste

between income groups is in local music and live music. Selective foreign, trendy foreign, and classics Hk/Taiwan also shows a less decisive trend of increasing taste as income increases.

(4) Cosmopolitan experience

Cosmopolitan experience is the experience of being well-traveled and rising beyond local perspectives (Beck, 2006; Calhoun, 2002; Hannerz, 1990). This is operationalized through three variables: experience living abroad, employment by a foreign company, and experience living in multiple cities.

Table 4-8. Crosstabulation of the subgroups for lived abroad, working for a foreign company, and the number of cities lived

		Foreign Employment		
		No	Yes	Row Total
Lived abroad	No	909	68	977 (93.2%)
	Yes	55	16	71 (6.8%)
	Column total	964 (92.0%)	84 (8.0%)	

		Number of cities lived		
		One or Two	Above Two	Row Total
Lived abroad	Yes	37	34	71 (6.8%)
	No	590	387	977 (93.2%)
	Column total	627 (59.8%)	421 (40.1%)	

Experience living abroad is based on the survey question that asks whether the respondent has lived outside of Mainland China for over 6 months, which can be for work or study. Foreign experience is rather rare in the sampled respondents. Seven percent of the respondents have lived abroad for at least 6 months, while the majority have not.

Foreign employment is a binary variable from a question on the type of company that the respondent works (or last worked) for, which could be a foreign company or joint venture, as opposed to working for the government, state-owned enterprises, local company, or self-employed. Those who are students are considered to be not working for a foreign company. The percentage of respondents who currently works for a foreign company is 8%.

The number of cities lived measures the number of cities that the respondent has lived for over 6 months. According to the cosmopolitanism hypothesis, those who have lived in more places have a broader exposure to a diversity of cultures and have a vision beyond the local, with the potential for higher openness and tolerance. The number who have lived in one, two, and more than two cities represent 28%, 32%, and 40% of the sample, respectively.

Control variables

ANOVA is run to both test for significance in the differences, as well as to control for other factors. For example, due to the expansion of educational opportunities, younger respondents are likely to have higher levels of educational attainment, so differences in taste between educational subgroups could be truly due to education, or could be due to being enjoyed by the young who tends to be better educated. Age, sex, and city are the three variables which are controlled. A multilevel model which models city as a random effect has been tested, but the results show a negligible difference, therefore the simpler model is presented in this research.

(1) Age

Respondents between the age of 18 and 45 (non-inclusive) were included in this study. They are further grouped into a young, middle, and older subgroup as age 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44 (all inclusive). The continuous variable for age been used as a control, but the subgroups are presented below.

Table 4-9. Subgroups by age

	cases	pct
Age 18 to 24	293	28%
Age 25 to 34	406	39%
Age 35 to 44	349	33%
Total	1048	100%

(2) Gender

Gender is a dummy variable with males as the reference. Gender is controlled in ANOVA models because it has been found to be linked with music preferences.

Table 4-10. Subgroups by gender

	cases	pct
Male	583	0.56
Female	465	0.44
Total	1048	100%

(3) City

Four megacities in China are included in this study, stratified according to their urban population. City is a categorical variable, converted into dummy variables with those in Beijing, the capital city, coded as the reference category. A study in overall media consumption has found significant differences in media consumption by city. Shanghai has a strong region-centrism in showing much more interested in local media and local issues, supported by a strong local media industry under the leading Shanghai Media Group whose TV channels achieved 76% during prime time in 2003 (Lee et al., 2013: 50–53). Consumption between coastal and inland regions have also been found to be different (Zhou et al., 2010). Regional differences in

China complicated by various factors such as regional cultural differences, internal migration, socioeconomic factors, local regulation and industry composition which has eluded encompassing explanations.

Table 4-11. Subgroups by city

	cases	pct
Beijing	346	33%
Shanghai	352	34%
Guangzhou	140	13%
Chengdu	210	20%
Total	1048	100%

4.4 Divisions in music taste

Applying ANOVA to factor scores

The following section substantiates my claims by applying ANOVA to the six music factors from MIRT. The result shows that educational attainment is the most influential on taste, supporting the role of cultural capital. Selective foreign music and traditional music have the highest status, along with participation in live music. Local music has the lowest status. These results confirm that selective music types are the most stratifying. Trendy Foreign and trendy Chinese music are not stratified by education—they are neutral and used by the HCCs for social lubrication. Finally, classics Hk/Taiwan has an intermediate status of being popular but also weakly stratifying.

The most high-status music types

(1) Highbrow traditional music constitutes a traditional form of cultural capital

This analysis examines the music variables between different social-economic subgroups to see how the music taste differs. We start with traditional music. The first model considers whether taste for traditional music differs by years of education, controlled by age, sex, and city. This indicates that education stratifies the taste for traditional music, and is significant at 0.1%. Age also significantly influences the taste for traditional music on top of education.

Table 4-12. ANOVA results for traditional music

	Model 1 Education		Model 2 EGP		Model 3 Income	
Edu	**27.94** **(29.40)**	***	23.88 (24.61)	***	24.53 (25.78)	***
EGP			**0.3** **(0.16)**			
Income (Log)					**0.02** **(0.02)**	
Age	27.5 (28.94)	***	21.41 (22.07)	***	21.59 (22.69)	***
Gender	1.21 (1.27)		0.73 (0.75)		0.66 (0.69)	
City	4.67 (1.64)		2.62 (0.90)		3.94 (1.38)	
Residuals	984.56		823.64		905.9	
cases	1043		858		960	

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Model 2 adds EGP occupational class to the previous model. In models without education (a result which is not presented here), EGP is significant but becomes insignificant after controlling for education. Education is kept in model 2 to examine whether EGP stratifies taste after controlling for cultural capital. The result indicates that EGP class does not stratify taste once education is controlled.

Similarly, income is added to model 3. The sample size used in the model is different because they exclude different respondents in each model: students, non-working people, people without income, as explained earlier in the variables.

For brevity, none of those terms are significant, which leaves education and age as the only significant terms in the influence on traditional music. The factor scores for traditional music are plotted below, by the subgroups which are significant—in this case education and age. Traditional music is stratified by education, where those with higher levels of education show higher appreciations for traditional music. It is also more appreciated by those who are older. Therefore, despite the social upheavals that saw the changing legitimacy in music as well as the ban of elite cultures during the Cultural Revolution, traditional music continues to be a cultural capital today. This result parallels Bourdieusian descriptions of classical music as highbrow music Western societies.

Figure 4-7. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for traditional music
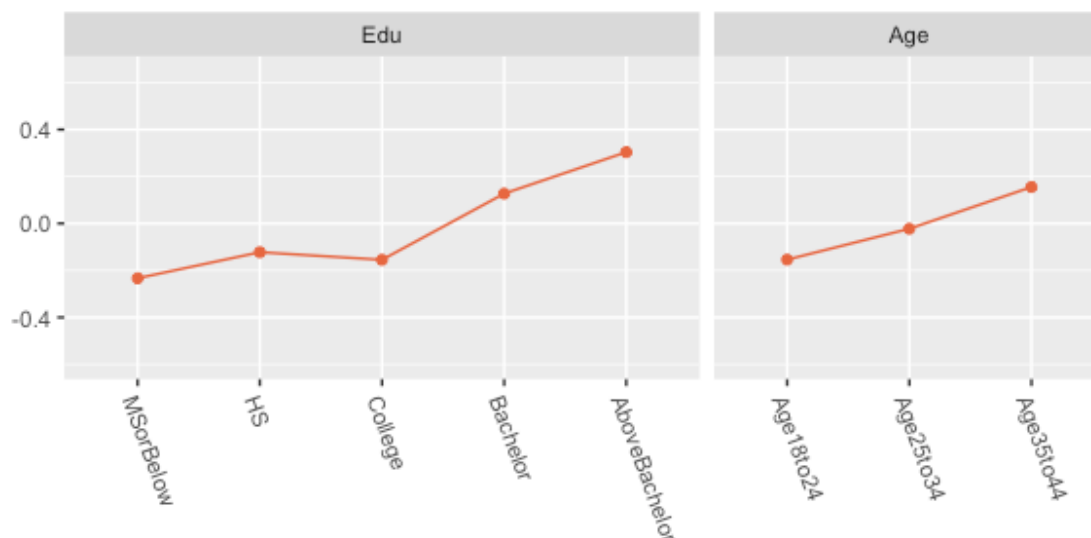
(2) Selective foreign music is an emerging cultural capital

The same ANOVA models are also applied to selective foreign music. Differences in the taste for selective foreign music continue to be associated with different years of education, significant at 0.01%. Gender is also significant at 0.01%. Other variables tested from model 2 to 3 are not significant.

Table 4-13. ANOVA results for selective foreign music

	Model 1 Education		Model 2 EGP		Model 3 Income	
Edu	**57.37** **(62.73)**	***	36.59 (39.54)	***	47.48 (50.97)	***
EGP			**0.94** **(0.51)**			
Income (Log)					**0.96** **(1.03)**	
Age	0.15 (0.16)		0.02 (0.03)		0.22 (0.24)	
Gender	29.06 (31.77)	***	17.95 (19.40)	***	25.3 (27.16)	***
City	5.11 (1.86)		3.12 (1.12)		3.53 (1.26)	
Residuals	947.53		785.67		886.8	
cases	1043		858		960	

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The figure below shows the differences in factor scores between subgroups which were significantly different based on ANOVA F-test, which are education and gender. The extent of stratification by education shows that selective foreign is high status music, with a contrast between educational groups that is greater than traditional music—the differences in taste between college and middle school and below is much greater for selective foreign than for traditional music. Furthermore, preferences for selective foreign are not significantly different for different age and income groups, showing that they are not merely limited to the youth or the rich, but valued by society overall as a cultural capital.

Figure 4-8. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for selective foreign
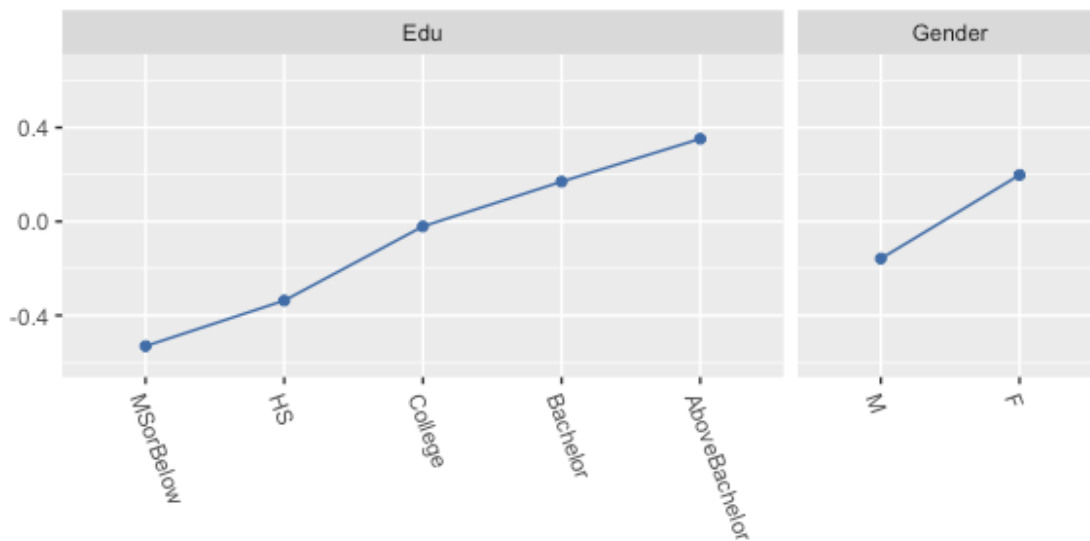
(3) Participating in live music

Finally, the questionnaire also asks for the number of live music events participated in the last year, which is also analyzed here by using ANOVA with a negative binomial model. Live music is significantly stratified by education (model 1) at 0.01% significance. Yet this is also stratified by income (model 3). Age, gender, and city have no significant influence.

Table 4-14. ANOVA results for participation in live music

	Model 1 Education	Model 2 EGP	Model 3 Income
Edu	**54.63** ***	34.2 ***	33.1 ***
EGP		**4.27**	
Income (Log)			**24.09** ***
Age	0.02	0	0.52
Gender	0.1	0	0.08
City	2.84	1.01	2.35
cases	1043	858	960

The cells indicate Chi-squared values, and the level of significance
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The figure below shows the actual number of live events participated by subgroups. Participating in live events is a high-status behavior, as it is higher for privileged social groups. The high participation rates by those with high levels of cultural capital indicate that attending live music is a high-status taste.

Figure 4-9. Significant subgroup differences in the participation of live music
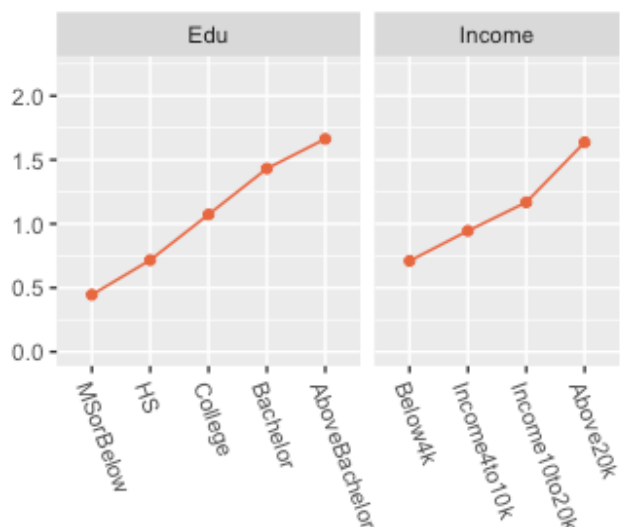
The music for symbolic exclusion

(4) Local music is distinctive as the music for LCCs

Local music is the music that is recognized to be low status across the most subgroups. Tastes for local music is significantly different between education and EGP class subgroups, both at 0.01%. By income, it is significantly different at 5%. It is also different by age, gender, and city, significant at 0.01%, 5%, and 0.01%, respectively.

Table 4-15. ANOVA results for local music

	Model 1 Education		Model 2 EGP		Model 3 Income	
Edu	**38.99** **(43.57)**	***	26.4 (29.08)	***	22.61 (25.09)	***
EGP			**11.63** **(6.4)**	***		
Income (Log)					**6.92** **(7.68)**	*
Age	26.21 (29.28)	***	12.68 (13.97)	***	19.38 (21.51)	***
Gender	3.95 (4.41)	*	2.68 (2.95)	.	3.24 (3.6)	.
City	30.41 (11.33)	***	18.95 (6.96)	***	24.94 (9.23)	***
Residuals	927.2		770.86		857.83	
cases	1043		858		960	

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The values of the tastes for local music by subgroups are presented in the figure below. Local music is low-status because it is disliked by those with high levels of education and income, and liked by those who work in manual jobs. It is also liked by those who are older. Differences between cities are also visible, as it is most

liked by those in Beijing and least by those in Guangzhou—which is much more influenced by music from Hong Kong.

Local music is the only item that is stratified by both education, EGP class, and income, which shows that its dislike is recognized across many forms of privileges. Local music is widely recognized to be low-status, denigrated by both HCCs and MCCs in the interviews as well.

Figure 4-10. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for local music
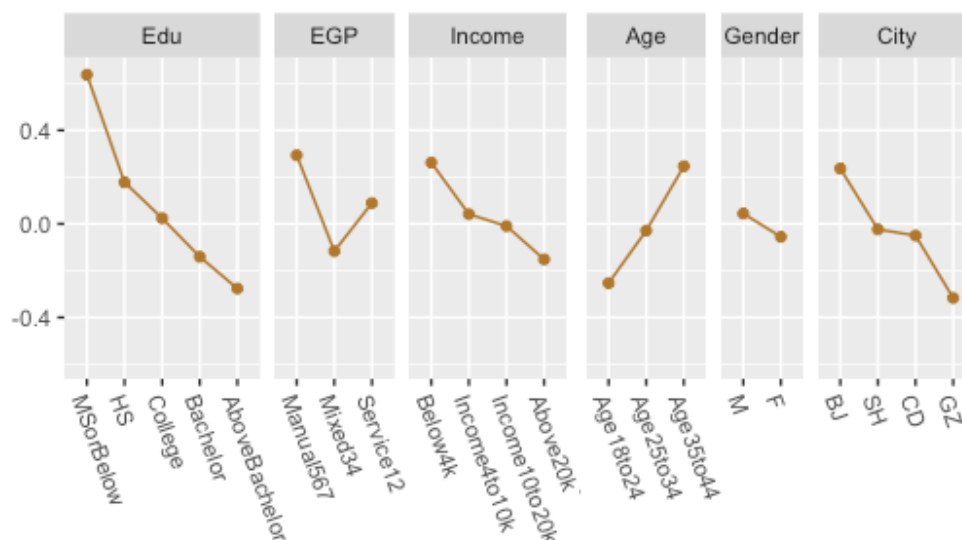
Popular and weakly stratifying music types

(5) Classics Hk/Taiwan music

Classics Hk/Taiwan music exhibits characteristics of a weakly distinguishing music. It is stratified by education (model 1), which is significant at 0.01% but less so than traditional, selective foreign, or live music. Neither EGP nor income stratifies it (models 2,3), but gender and city do (at 0.01% and 5%, respectively).

Table 4-16. ANOVA results for classics Hk/Taiwan music

	Model 1 Education	Model 2 EGP	Model 3 Income
Edu	**24.81** *** **(27.70)**	16.14 *** (18.18)	19.83 *** (21.79)
EGP	-	**3.6** **(2.03)**	-
Income (Log)	-	-	**0.42** **(0.46)**
Age	2.13 (2.37)	0 (0.00)	0.57 (0.63)
Gender	80.38 *** (89.75)	70.08 *** (78.92)	63.42 *** (69.66)
City	9.22 * (3.43)	8.41 * (3.16)	9.36 * (3.43)
Residuals	927.78	753.95	866.75
cases	1043	858	960

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Classics Hk/Taiwan music has the sign of a distinguishing type of music because it is more preferred by those with higher levels of education, but only slightly, and much weaker than the stratification of traditional, selective foreign, and local music—a result which can be seen in the figure below, as well as the relatively low F-value in education (24.81). It is more preferred by people in Guangzhou, which is a city close to Hong Kong and more influenced by Hong Kong music.

Figure 4-11. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for classics Hk/Taiwan
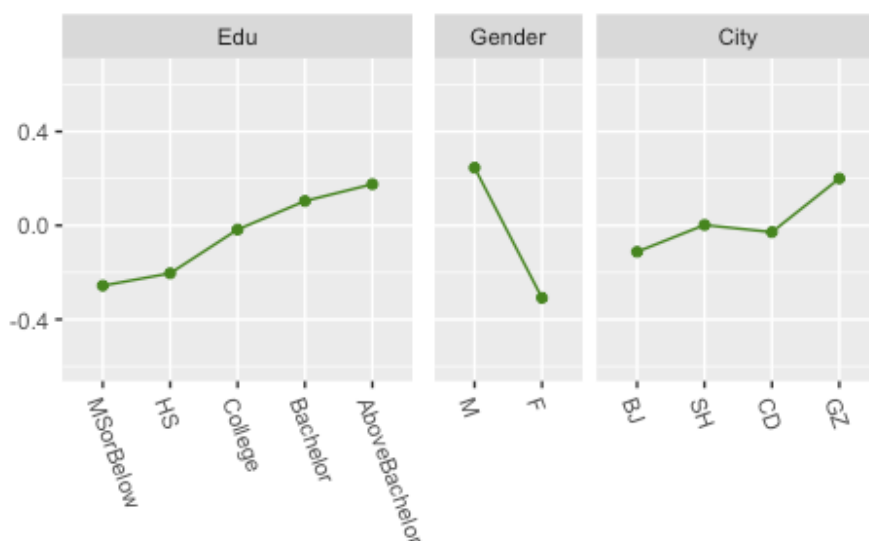
Trendy music is popular and the least stratified

(6) Trendy foreign music

Model 1 shows that the taste for trendy foreign music is not stratified by education, in contrast to selective foreign. Trendy Foreign is stratified by age and gender, both at 0.01%. Yet tastes for trendy foreign are significantly different between income (5%) subgroups.

Table 4-17. ANOVA results for trendy foreign music

	Model 1 Education		Model 2 EGP		Model 3 Income	
Edu	**0.39**		0.00		0.01	
	(0.41)		(0.00)		(0.01)	
EGP			**2.87**			
			(1.49)			
Income (Log)					**5.98**	*
					(6.23)	
Age	36.84	***	38.99	***	37.5	***
	(38.85)		(40.48)		(39.13)	
Gender	14.25	***	13.65	***	11.7	***
	(15.02)		(14.17)		(12.20)	
City	7.16	.	7.8	*	7.44	.
	(2.52)		(2.70)		(2.59)	
Residuals	982.44		817.91		912.33	
cases	1043		858		960	

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The figure below shows the factor scores for trendy foreign by the significant subgroups. Firstly, the preferences for trendy foreign does not significantly differ between levels of education or differences in occupational class. But unlike selective foreign, trendy foreign is more liked by the younger. It is also slightly better liked by those with higher income (significance at 5%). Trendy foreign can thus be considered a music type that serves for social lubrication, particularly for those with various associated with the foreign, and music that is more liked by the youth.

Figure 4-12. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for trendy foreign
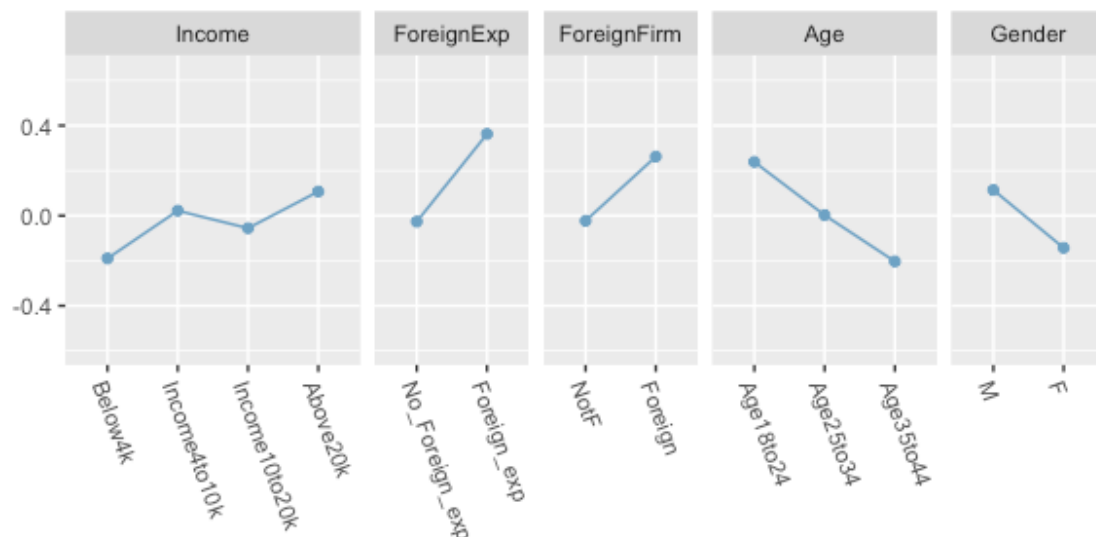
(7) Trendy Chinese music

Likewise, model 1 shows that education does not stratify trendy Chinese music, whereas age, gender, and city all play a part. The other models show that different levels of EGP class differ in their taste for trendy Chinese music, a result which is significant at 5%.

Table 4-18. ANOVA results for trendy Chinese music

|	Model 1 Education		Model 2 EGP		Model 3 Income	
Edu	**3.28**	.	4.29	*	2.64	.
	(3.54)		(4.71)		(2.92)	
EGP			**7.24**	*		
			(3.98)			
Income (Log)					**1.07**	
					(1.18)	
Age	27.35	***	36.2	***	38.64	***
	(29.52)				(42.67)	
Gender	34.05	***	23.8	***	29.18	***
	(36.74)				(32.23)	
City	20.82	***	14.9	***	17.81	***
	(7.49)				(6.56)	
Residuals	960.09		772.61		861.9	
cases	1043		858		960	

The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The figure below shows how the factor scores for trendy Chinese music differ by subgroups. The important result is that cultural capital again does not stratify trendy Chinese music. Income does not stratify, and EGP is only slightly significant at 5%. Primarily the differences arise from factors that are not directly linked to social inequality, such as age, gender, and city. Trendy Chinese music is a popular type of music more favored by the young.

Figure 4-13. Significant subgroup differences in the factor scores for trendy Chinese
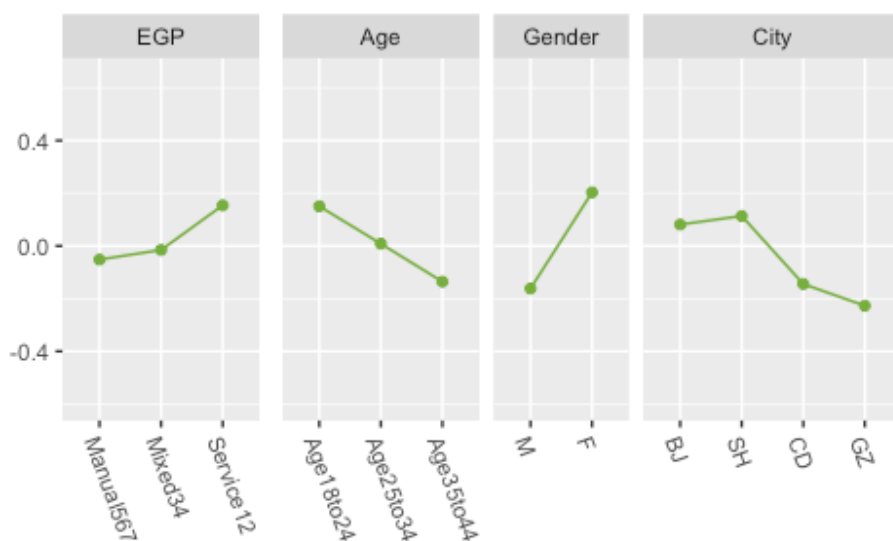
Cosmopolitan cultural capital and taste eclecticism

Table 4-19. ANOVA results for

	F1 Traditional	F2 Selective foreign	F3 Trendy foreign	F4 Classics Hk/Taiwan	F5 Trendy Chinese	F6 Local	Live Music
Lived Abroad	0.03 (0.03)	0.05 (0.05)	**10.88 *** (11.69)	0.03 (0.03)	0.11 (0.12)	0.19 (0.21)	**8.45 ***
Foreign Firm	1.49 (1.57)	2.40 (2.63)	**4.30 *** (4.62)	0.66 (0.74)	3.71 . (4.02)	2.87 . (3.23)	0.14
Cities Lived (Sqrt)	1.67 (1.76)	0.35 (0.39)	0.59 (0.63)	**6.00 *** (6.72)	**5.34 *** (5.79)	**5.69 *** (6.42)	**6.50 ***
Education	23.28 *** (24.55)	50.95 *** (55.80)	0.18 (0.19)	20.83 *** (23.35)	4.87 * (5.28)	40.29 *** (45.43)	42.83 ***
Age	26.73 *** (28.20)	0.32 (0.35)	42.88 *** (46.06)	2.43 (2.72)	27.20 *** (29.50)	26.44 *** (29.81)	0.17
Sex	1.33 (1.41)	27.84 *** (30.49)	12.90 *** (13.86)	75.87 *** (85.02)	38.02 *** (41.24)	3.19 . (3.60)	0.03
City	4.20 (1.48)	4.71 (1.72)	5.07 (1.81)	8.63 * (3.22)	20.16 *** (7.29)	31.82 *** (11.96)	3.16
Residuals	984.04	947.70	966.22	926.32	956.94	920.50	3.00
cases	1048	1048	1048	1048	1048	1048	1048

F1-F6: The cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
Live music: the cells indicate Chi-squared values, and the level of significance
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Instead of contributing to social distinction as a "cosmopolitan cultural capital" (Bühlmann et al., 2013; Igarashi and Saito, 2014; Prieur and Savage, 2014), cosmopolitanism is contributing to openness and tolerance (Beck, 2006, 2018; Chan, 2019; Hannerz, 1990, 1996; Szerszynski and Urry, 2002; Vertovec, 2009). This can be seen through all three indicators of cosmopolitanism.

Experience living abroad and working for a foreign company are indicators of "foreign cosmopolitanism"—which leads to higher interest in trendy foreign music. Whereas traditional and selective foreign are most favored by those with higher levels of education, foreign cosmopolitanism has no influence on those music types. The sum of squares for the living abroad term is 0.003 for traditional music and 0.05 for selective foreign, and the coefficients of foreign firm are 1.49 and 2.40 respectively, none of which are significant. Experience abroad only contributes to favoring trendy foreign music (Sum of squared 10.88, 0.1% significance)—a relatively popular, social lubricating music not stratified by education. It also contributes to higher participation in live music (Chi-squared 8.45, 0.1% significance), an activity also associated with income and education. The influence of working for a foreign firm is similar to living abroad but much weaker, with significant influence only on trendy foreign music (sum of squared 10.88, 0.1% significance).

Figure 4-14. Music categories significantly stratified by experience abroad
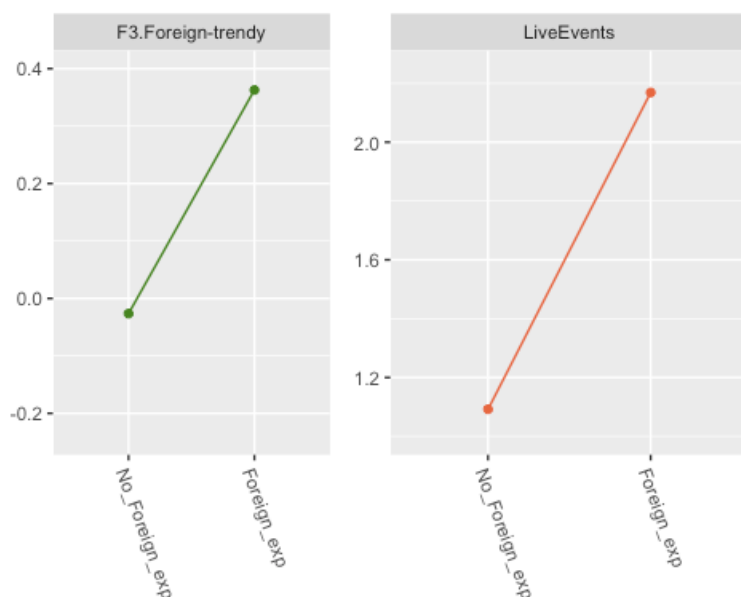
Figure 4-15. Music categories significantly stratified by working for a foreign company
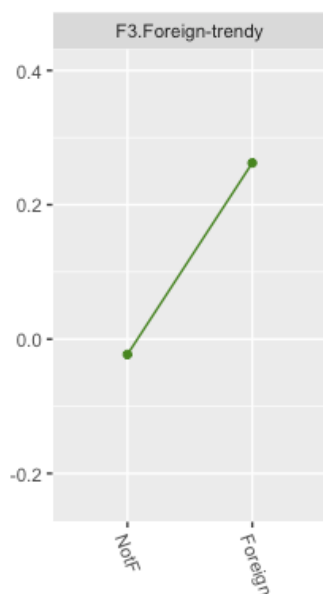
In this study, the number of cities lived is primarily local cities, so this is a variable for "local cosmopolitanism." Those who have lived in more cities are also more likely to prefer the Chinese music categories that are lubricating—classics Hk/Taiwan and trendy music (Sum of squared 6.00 and 5.34, both significant at 5%), both of which are music types for social lubrication. Surprisingly, local cosmopolitanism also *increases* the taste for local music (Sum of squared 5.69, 5% significance)—the only factor that *decreases* symbolic exclusion. Likewise, local cosmopolitanism does not increase preference for traditional highbrow or selective foreign music, both of which are highly favored by the educated.

Figure 4-16. Music categories significantly stratified by number of cities lived
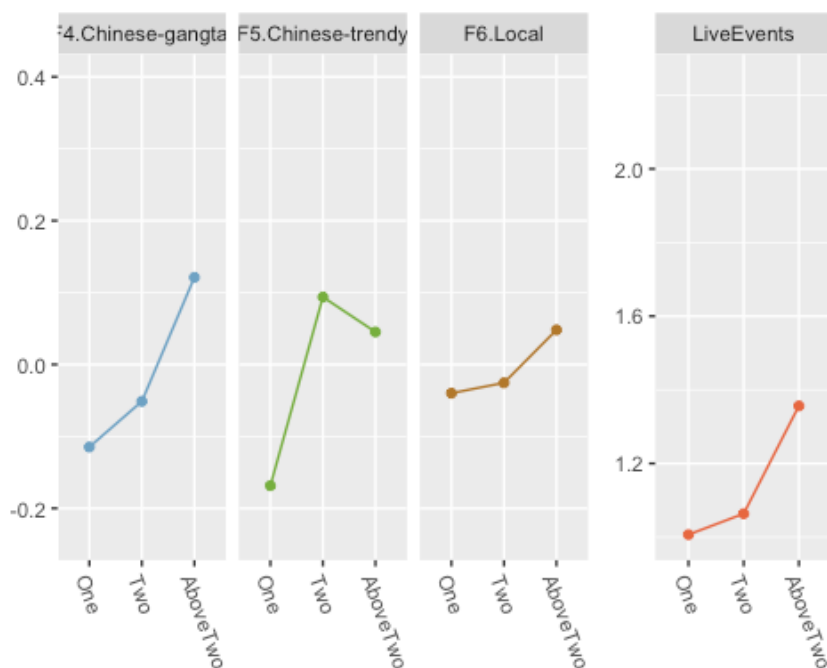
4.5 Discussion

This research finds that Bourdieu's description of the music hierarchy is observed through stratifying music, but in support of the cultural omnivores account, there also exists a category of music which is generally unstratified and consumed across social positions. Furthermore, music is taste is also influenced by many other factors such as age, gender, and geographical divides.

(1) The existence of music hierarchy, drawing distinction based on stratifying music

Education is the socioeconomic variable that has the highest influence on taste—significant for traditional, selective foreign, local, classics Hk/Taiwan, and live music. Occupational class by itself does influence taste (a result not presented) but its overall effect became insignificant after education is controlled (aside from the symbolic exclusion of local music). Thus, while music taste differs between occupational classes, it is much more strongly influenced by the higher levels of education of those in higher classes. Furthermore, age, gender, and city all leave their influences, contributing to the complexity of the formation of music taste, and obscuring the power of music to draw distinctions. However, it is still cultural capital that has the highest influence on taste, and is the variable that most strongly influences taste.

This analysis demonstrates the existence of a music hierarchy. Traditional music is more preferred by those with high cultural capital, fitting Bourdieu's classical description of legitimate culture. Furthermore, cultural capital is not limited to traditional highbrow music, but is also seen for selective foreign—a popular form of music. The stratification of selective foreign music by education is an important result because this extends

Bourdieu's theory by showing that popular music, or at least certain forms of it, can also be stratifying. The stratification of popular music demonstrates an "emerging form of cultural capital" which is new ways of distinction after the decline of the once dominating classical music in the West (Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2014). In China, the emerging form of cultural capital is in the form of Western popular music, which has centered China as the cultures of the dominant West, even though the music is not necessarily highbrow in their Western origins.

(2) Trendy music is largely unstratified

The ANOVA analysis in this chapter verifies that selective foreign and classics Hk/Taiwan are the higher status types, whereas trendy foreign and trendy Chinese are the mainstream types. This demonstrates that although cultural capital is stratifying on music, there are also some contemporary music types liked by younger respondents which are not stratifying. The influence of economic capital and EGP class on these music types is either non-existent or weak. Therefore, interest in trendy music is shared across educational, income, and class divisions, making this a music that lubricates social relationships across divides. Trendy music is the best example of music that fits the cultural omnivore argument of elites cutting crossing boundaries. Given that elites also consume selective and highbrow art in exclusion, cultural omnivore analysis thus shows that elites are more eclectic in their tastes—because they consume both trendy music and high-status music, whereas others consume trendy music but not high-status music.

A curious result from MIRT in the last chapter is the division of foreign music into selective foreign and trendy foreign, and the separation of classics Hk/Taiwan and trendy Chinese music. We now know the reason for their separation. Recall that MIRT derived underlying taste factors based on how they best explain the differences in preferences, based on only individual preferences *without* information on socioeconomic divisions. The ANOVA analysis in this chapter verifies that selective foreign and classics Hk/Taiwan are the higher status types, whereas trendy foreign and trendy Chinese are the mainstream types.

Instead of cultural capital, those popular music forms are influenced by cosmopolitanism experiences. Local cosmopolitanism is linked with higher preferences for trendy Chinese music, whereas foreign cosmopolitism and working for foreign company associates with higher preferences for trendy foreign. Therefore, foreign and local cosmopolitanism influences taste through the increased breadth of music preferences and openness to these popular forms of music, which marks them as lubricating music types that help bridges people from different parts of society. However, the increased eclecticism of taste of the cosmopolitans does not extend to highbrow music such as traditional and selective foreign, which remains limited to those with high levels of cultural capital.

Classics Hk/Taiwan music and participation in live music include characteristics of both social lubrication and social distinction. Notably, higher income does not relate to higher interest in the distinguishing music types, as it is associated with lubricating music types as well as participation in live events. This reaffirms Bourdieu's distinction between the tastes of those with cultural capital and those with economic capital, as they are not interchangeable for one another (except very weakly so for classics Hk/Taiwan music).

(3) Other factors that influence music taste

Cultural preferences under mass culture are influenced by many factors, such as changing popularity, life-stage, age and cohort, gender, geographic region, personality, and mood (Gibson et al., 2000; Greenberg et al., 2016; Knobloch and Zillmann, 2002; Miranda and Claes, 2008; Nave et al., 2018; Reeves, 2014; Rentfrow et al., 2011; Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003, 2007; Schwartz and Fouts, 2003)—portraying the impression of individualism and making the stratification by cultural capital less visible, unlike the highbrow culture of the past. In China, different music is popular for different cohorts, from the earlier Hong Kong and Taiwan superstars, to the more recent Western mainstream (where mainstream as perceived by local reception rather than popularity in Western societies). The influence of life-stage can also be seen, as fervor for popular music subsides after a certain age. Regional influences are also visible as people from coastal regions tend to be more Westernized in their preferences for pop and traditional music. All of these obscures from the underlying hierarchy of culture and gives the impression of diversity and neutrality of mass culture.

This research shows that age, gender, and city all exert their influences on taste. The younger respondents prefer trendy foreign and trendy Chinese, whereas older respondents prefer traditional and local music. Those in the middle age group (age 25-35 in this study) shows the highest taste for selective foreign, classics Hk/Taiwan, and live music. In China, the role of age is complicated by its high correlation with socioeconomic status. The youths in China more likely to be highly educated, urban, working in the service industry, etc., simply due to the rapid development of privileges in China. Age has been added as a control variable in all the relevant quantitative analysis, to allow the partial effects of age on the independent variables to be separated. Age will be more fully discussed as part of cohort influences and "upgrading" through the changing popularity of mass culture in the next chapter.

This study finds that females have higher tastes for selective foreign and trendy Chinese, but lower interest in trendy foreign and classics Hk/Taiwan. Females are also slightly more interested in traditional and live music, and lower interest in local music, but these differences are insignificant. While gender inequality is linked with cultural capital, through access to education and other resources which lead to the formation of cultural capital (Bauer et al., 1992), studies on cultural capital have not particularly focused on the linkage of taste and gender inequality. Witnessing the marks of inequalities such as wealth and privileged education through taste are regarded to be inequalities being ingrained into the cultural fabric, but the identification of feminine taste has been the ones that are associated with higher taste and higher cultural capital. Researchers have found that females have tended to be more interested in classical music and high arts—signs of cultural capital—than males. Psychologists have found, for example, that in the UK males like heavier music such as rock, heavy metal, and reggae, whereas females and femininity are associated with preferences for lighter pop, country and classical (Colley, 2008). The gender differences in music preferences have been linked with gender roles and developmental psychology (Schwartz and Fouts, 2003), which is beyond the scope of this research. For the purpose of this research, gender is controlled as a variable in the examination of cultural taste.

City also contributes to regional differences in taste. A study in overall media consumption has found significant differences in media consumption by city. Shanghai has a strong region-centrism in showing

much more interested in local media and local issues, supported by a strong local media industry under the leading Shanghai Media Group whose TV channels achieved 76% during prime time in 2003 (Lee et al., 2013: 50–53). Regional differences in China complicated by various factors such as regional cultural differences, internal migration, socioeconomic factors, local regulation, and industry composition which has eluded encompassing explanations.

Chapter 5. Social distinction in practice

5.1 Navigating social relations with embodied cultural capitals

The last chapter offered a quantitative analysis of how those with high cultural capital (HCCs) are using stratified music for social distinction, which includes preferences for high-traditional music and high-status selective popular music, and the distaste for low-status local music. This chapter supports the quantitative findings with qualitative interviews to see how they are applied in practice, to better understand the mechanisms of distinction through popular culture.

Social distinction under popular culture is a topic of much contention. Bourdieu's claim of cultural capital, based on the French society of the 1960-70s, was based on the high cultures of its time. Since then, exclusive high culture has been in decline. Not all privileged are found to consume traditional high culture, and most privileged have crossed boundaries to consume mass culture (Peterson and Kern, 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). Some scholars take strong positions that the evidence for cultural omnivores implies that cultural tolerance has penetrated the consumption of popular culture, showing little evidence of a class divide in consumption (Chan, 2019; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007a). Other scholars argue for adapting Bourdieu's theory to contemporary times through new forms of cultural capital—such as one based on increasing global vs local divide (Prieur and Savage, 2013).

A response to the cultural omnivore challenge is the attempt to revive the concept of "embodied cultural capital" which came from Bourdieu but overlooked by some scholars (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu believed that cultural capital takes multiple forms, including objectified and embodied forms. Scholars have attempted to rescue Bourdieu from the cultural omnivore challenge by arguing that distinction is not only about what types of art are consumed, but how they are appreciated (Coulangeon and Lemel, 2007; Holt, 1997). Holt in his article titled "Recovering Bourdieu's theory of tastes from its critics" argues to further examine distinction in embodied forms of taste (1997). Cultural capital in the objectified form relates to the possession of objects or participation in certain cultural activities, whereas embodied cultural capital differentiates in the attitude of consumption. Embodied cultural capital is distinguished by the mode of disinterested appreciation—the Kantian aesthetics of appreciation of art marked by distance and withdrawal from everyday necessities (Bourdieu, 1986).

The argument based on "embodied cultural capital" has turned out to be a worthy challenge to cultural omnivore account, as Peterson acknowledged the possibility of "discriminating omnivores" who, even when consuming the same items, "appreciate and critique it in the light of some knowledge of the genre, its great performers, and links to other cultural forms" (Peterson and Kern, 1996: 904). This argument is also supported by increasing and primarily qualitative accounts that examines the application of aesthetic disposition toward cultural consumption in modern forms of culture such as fashion, comedy, gourmet food, and reality TV (Entwistle and Rocamora, 2006; Friedman and Kuipers, 2013; Johnston and Baumann, 2014; Kuipers, 2006; McCoy and Scarborough, 2014; Skeggs et al., 2008). Aesthetic disposition in contemporary

society has been argued to have moved from traditional high culture toward a postmodernist appreciation that emphasizes conceptual and abstract aesthetic visions (Hanquinet et al., 2014).

However, cultural taste is not only a social capital that lubricates relations among people in similar social positions as posited by Bourdieu. In modern society, there are also benefits to lubricating relations across social divides. Research has found that highbrow culture increases strong-ties, popular culture increases weak-ties (Lizardo, 2006). Taste in modern societies is a resource not only in terms of identifying and excluding others, but also in its use in bridging connections across divides. This view is supported by Friedman's research, in which he finds that omnivorousness exists only within the upwardly mobile who shares the taste to connect with people from lowbrow origins and also the higher tastes of networks later in life, albeit highbrow tastes are displayed clumsily due to lack of natural confidence (2012)

I offer my argument that taste has the power to be used for both social distinction—in-group solidarity of the privileged, as well as social lubrication—to lubricate relationship with outgroups when necessary. I further argue that it is the privileged who have both resources at their disposal, allowing them to draw upon pop culture as a repertoire to enable them to navigate social relations. I demonstrate this through three aspects. First, HCCs and LCCs differ in their mode of appreciation of pop culture. Second, the hierarchy within popular music is more recognized by the HCCs. Thirdly, HCCs are able to leverage this advantage in having repertoires of music to cross boundaries with those with lower levels of cultural capital at times but also practice social distinction at times. Research has shown that omnivores are more likely to learn higher wages and move up the social ladder (Reeves and de Vries, 2019).

5.2 Modes of appreciation—the discerning appreciation of the HCCs vs the taste followers

This section draws from the interviews to illustrate how HCCs, MCCs, and LCCs describe the music they like and dislike. In the interviews, HCCs and LCCs reveal fundamental differences in the way they view music. In particular, HCCs show discerning appreciation in their approach to music in which they are attracted by "quality" music, whereas LCCs are taste-followers driven by a pursue of popularity. These differences have been theorized as embodied cultural capital, which moves distinction beyond what is consumed to include how it is consumed (Friedman, 2011; Holt, 1997; Prieur and Savage, 2014).

HCCs are confident critics of music, relying on their own judgment instead of popularity, offering critical explanations of what is laudable about each piece of music or a particular rendition of a piece of art. During the interviews, the most discerning HCCs offer an informative lecture on the context, history, and details of the art form. In contrast, MCCs and LCCs tend to vaguely describe what sounds "good" and what is "popular." They tend to follow the list of popular hits, but generally have difficulty articulating why they like those hits. They are primarily opinion-followers who are driven by popularity, regarding high popularity to be hip and desirable, a testimony of quality, and are generally less interested in the meaning of the lyrics or the background of the artist or genre. Some LCCs are also generally uninterested in music.

Instead of taste-followers, HCCs confidently believe that they are the ultimate judge of musical quality, sometimes against popular opinion. They show a **discerning appreciation** driven by **"quality"** (of their own judgment)—putting research effort to gain knowledge, critical engagement with music. They offer a rich description of their favorite music, depicting details such as the context, the song/lyric history, the meaning in the lyric, and the personal meaning of the music. HCCs believe that enjoying music requires putting effort into researching and understanding the context and meaning behind the work. They share a similarity of having a deep knowledge of their favorite music, as well as a strong discernment as to what constitutes quality in their music type. Many share a habit of listening to their favorite song repeatedly such that they understand it by heart, to recognize subtle details in the song, to be able to engage the songs critically. A disinterested disposition is often engaged in HCC's description of their favorite music. This discerning appreciation requires extensive cultivation to develop. They claim that the response from music should not be spontaneous ephemeral emotions, but with emotional distance, which creates deeper meanings that persist. HCCs look down upon music that provides instant gratification but lacking in meaning or depth. Because of their discerning attitude toward music, HCCs sees the music landscape in a hierarchy.

The LCCs tend to be less involved in music, treating it passively as popular entertainment. The higher LCCs/mid-low MCCs listen to music through apps and video apps. To the unaware, their music preferences appear to be quite inclusive, unmarked by boundaries. They listen to the most popular artists as everyone else, encompassing a diversity of music types including local, classics Hk/Taiwan, and foreign (but usually not traditional music). However, their interest in music is limited to the mainstream items, and their discussion of music never showed the elaborate critical appreciation of the HCCs. They are primarily **opinion followers** driven by **popularity**—they follow the list of popular hits, but have difficulty articulating why they like those hits (especially so when compared to the endless explanations that HCCs give for highbrow music). Descriptions tend to me ephemeral such as liking the rhythm, "it sounds good." They regard high popularity to be fashionable and desirable, and are less interested in the meaning of the lyrics or the context of the artist or genre. LCCs evaluate music in neutral terms of popularity without awareness of its loaded nature, even as their tastes are regarded to be "low quality" by the HCCs. The sections below draw from interviews to illustrate the contrast between the discerning versus popular approach.

Discerning appreciation – HCCs and upper MCCs

(1) HCCs

The HCCs like selective foreign because it allows them to engage in their knowledge and critical appreciation of music. HCCs distances away from "popular" music to pursue non-mainstream pop. Selective, rarefied music is a key distinction in HCC's pop music. For them, vaguely liking Western pop is not enough—liking the hottest "Billboard" Western pop indiscriminately is definitely not a sign of good taste.

When HCCs discuss music, they are accompanied by backgrounds, context, and aesthetic descriptions that draw on the cultural capital of HCCs. Wenju (CC6) likes Western pop songs such as "Say You Love Me" by Patti Austin (American singer born in 1950), but is also heavily devoted to musicals, which was introduced to her during her English class at her private high school. She mentions favorites such as Chicago, Le Petit

Prince, Matilda, "Le temps des cathedrals" from Notre-Dame de Paris. She likes them because they convey emotions with deeper meanings in the songs. In understanding a song, Wenju (CC6) does her own research on the context and background of the work. She often reads related works such as original novels. She likes "The Fighter," a song by Keith Urban (Australian country singer) and Carrie Underwood (American singer), because she is drawn by the deeper meaning in the work, which is the theme of defending and supporting a woman. She is touched by the lyrics of "Me and the Sky," a song from the musical "Come from Away," which tells the heroic story of Beverley Bass, the first female captain of an American Airlines aircraft. She appreciates music that conveys emotion with deeper meanings. She contrasts those against the Chinese musical "Murder on the Hanging Garden" (空中花园谋杀案) by Meng Jinghui (孟京辉), which she says was shallow and provokes temporary but superficial emotions without leaving meaningful substance. Another way that popular music can be appreciated is through the lyrics. Lyrics with poetic qualities are important to Dongkun (CC5). He current favorite song is the pop song "A whale incarnating as a lonely island" (化身孤岛的鲸) by Zhou Shen (周深), which to him "reflects the change in feeling when one falls in love—from freedom, to being humbled as infinitesimal." For the HCCs, the discerning appreciation is often also applied to traditional highbrow music, but they have been equally applied to selective music as well.

(2) Upper MCCs

MCCs lack clear defining characteristics, sharing some aspects of HCCs and LCCs. In these affluent megacities, the MCCs are still privileged but less so than the HCCs. Upper MCCs show discerning appreciation toward culture, even though the art form may not be traditional high arts.

An example of the higher-end of middlebrow is Muyao (CC4), a fan of Western rock music. He was born and raised in the privileged city of Beijing and learned how to play music instruments. He demonstrates a high level of critical judgment, albeit toward rock music, which he admits is not high-status. Now, with a family, he encourages his children to play learn the piano. His example demonstrates a discerning consumption of pop music, and an example of a music type generally favored by males. Muyao (CC4) followed Western pop at an early age, but rock is not recognized to be the highest status in society. He recalls following the "American top 20" on China Radio International's (CRI) "Hit FM" radio broadcast. His parents gave him money for music which he used to buy rock, metal and punk dakou CDs (bootleg CDs from abroad) and to subscribe to *Tongsugequ* (a magazine on rock music). He admits to being rebellious when young, and followed rock and metal because "the mainstream pop music that everyone followed were for vulgar people." He likes music by Bruno Mars (American singer), The Eagles (American rock band), Scorpions (German rock band), Oasis (British rock band), Coldplay (British rock band). He also learned drums and electric guitar, allowing him to form a band with friends when he attended university. He used to read and post critiques on music forums and feels quite confident of his discerning ability in rock music, as he has "heard a lot of songs, more than many people."

Figure 5-1. A respondent's exposures to rock music

Hit FM radio station	Rock magazine

Taste followers—the MCCs and LCCs

(3) Shallow eclecticism of MCCs

In contrast to HCCs, lower MCCs may also like Western pop or traditional music, but their tastes are more mainstream or do not show the same level of critical appreciation. MCCs also claim to like "Western pop." They follow the most popular Western songs on popularity rankings that are increasingly accessible in China. MCC respondents show me how they access those Western pop songs which are available on every app. When HCCs pursue Western pop earlier (before they devoted to traditional music), the process was much more research-intensive. They subscribed to magazines, discussed in forums, and read musical critiques. The music liked by MCCs is better considered to be trendy foreign.

An example is Donglu (CC4), who lived in and attended university in Shandong province before moving to Beijing to work. She likes 80s and 90s Hong Kong and Taiwan pop singers such as Priscilla Chan, Leslie Cheung, Terry Lin, and Eason Chan. She likes jazz and rock in general, but she is unable to name any specific music or artist, unlike the way she effortlessly names Chinese pop singers. She also says she has, in her own words, "heard of opera by Sara Brightman," which opera lovers would disagree as she is a crossover singer. Sara Brightman is relatively well known in China, exemplified by her duet with Chinese singer Liu Huan in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Donglu also listens to a variety of opera such as Huangmei opera (M47) and Yu opera from Henan province, but she says she is unable to distinguish between them. She also says she listens to classical, though her favorite is Joe Hisaishi (久石让), the Japanese composer of film scores for popular animation films of Hayao Miyazaki. She dislikes "saliva songs," distinguishing herself from LCC tastes. She also dislikes hip-hop (M36) and R&B (M38). Quantitative findings indicate that hip-hop is indeed lowbrow, but R&B is well regarded among the HCC circles. She exemplifies an MCC who is quite eclectic in her tastes, but does not demonstrate the same level of interest in selective items, the depth of knowledge and the critical appreciation expressed by the HCCs.

(4) LCCs as popularity followers

From the representative survey, the LCCs in megacities are characterized by a lower level of awareness of music, particularly highbrow music, and a higher likelihood of liking local music. LCCs' attitude toward music is much more passive, hearing them through broadcasts, without a critical opinion nor interest in critiquing music. They rely on popularity as a way of learning about new songs and music evaluation, which persists into adult life.

Puchao (CC1), who defied his disadvantaged background to end up residing in the capital, is an example of an LCC who is interested in music but is driven by popularity. He grew up on a rural farm and his father is an apple farmer. He never had the chance to learn any musical instrument. He attended elementary school in a village which was poorly resourced. He remembers that the school had trouble recruiting students, and about 3 years later the school was closed and consolidated into one in the closest town. His family did not afford him any music lessons or any cultural activities. He followed mainstream media and never had any engagement with foreign culture except those through Chinese media.

Compared to others with a similar background, he was one of the few luckier ones who climbed the trajectory to end up working in the capital, though in a satellite district of Beijing. His father has a high-school degree, relatively well educated for a farmer, and placed emphasis on his education. He attended elementary school in his village, and with his good grades, studied high school in the city that administered his village, eventually completing a technical degree (college) in computers in the outskirts of Beijing, where he stayed to work. Although Puchao is moderately educated, he came from an underprivileged background and he otherwise would have been like all his friends back home who did not beat the odds to make it to Beijing. Unfortunately, other lower educated persons contacted and other contacts suggested by him declined to be interviewed about music—all explaining that they do not have much to say on it.

His music repertoire appears surprisingly wide on the surface, as it includes Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korean, and Western pop songs. He showed me the songs in his playlist, which includes foreign songs such as "Despacito Remix" featuring Justin Bieber (M32) (2017), "Ddu-du Ddu-du" a song by Korean female group Blackpink (2018), and the Chinese version of "Levitate" (back-translated as "Beyond Lightyears" (光年之外)), the theme song of the Hollywood movie "Passengers" (2016). His playlist also includes many local songs such as "Desert Camel" (沙漠骆驼) by "Rabbit Bros" (展展 and 罗罗) (2017), the theme song of "Running Man" (奔跑吧兄弟)—an outdoor reality show adapted from Korea (2014), "Chengdu" (成都) by Zhao Lei (赵雷) a local Chinese singer (2016), and "Next door Tai Mountain" (隔壁泰山) by the local group "Arirang Family" (阿里郎组合) (2018).

Despite the appearance of "omnivorous" taste crossing national boundaries, his choice of songs is quite different from the HCCs. When exact titles are discussed, he listens to much more local music compared to HCCs and MCCs who rarely mention them except as derogatory examples. He is mostly interested in the hottest songs recommended by music apps. He learn about those songs from app suggestions on the hottest and most viral songs. He also has little loyalty toward his favorite songs, saying that he enjoys change—"when

the hot songs lose popularity, I don't listen to them anymore." Lyrics are not important for him, which is how he consumes English and Korean songs, saying that "I listen for the rhythm and the beat. I like the fast tempo."

Thus, if the criterion is whether foreign songs are listened, then Puchao's songs do include Western, but it is clear that his tastes are quite different as he is only interested in the most popular items which lead to the inclusions of Western music, but he does not pursue Western music in particular. This is akin to the difference between liking specific pieces of popular classical music like Blue Danube, and the lovers of classical music who display much deeper knowledge of the category (Bourdieu, 1984). The HCCs research deeply into the specific music types or artists to gain an appreciation of their favorites, and are able to talk and justify their favorites through critical lens. HCCs are always keen to point out that despite their interest in critics' reviews, they interpret and appreciate music based on their own judgment. On the other hand, Puchao lacks words to describe what he admires, only describing his interest in "huode" (火的)—the "hottest" and "the most hip" music determined based on music rankings. He also uses the app "Ticktok" (which HCC sees as the app for lowbrow people), and says "I know a song is hot at the moment when it is frequently used in clips." Furthermore, he does not follow musicians or music bloggers, opposite of the critically engaged music followers of the HCC.

Sensing the difference between HCC and Puchao's enjoyment of music beneath the surface, I probed Puchao on the notion of the quality of the music or singers. Is that something he considers when he listens? Which artists does he think produce quality music? He explains "I'm aware that other singers sing better than these Internet hot songs, such as Eason Chan (M14) and those classic pop music (经典歌曲), but I still prefer the hottest songs. I don't like songs that are old, or ones about love and emotions. The songs very hot in the short term are very relaxing and easy to listen." His love for recent hot songs is evident as the songs he mentioned are generally from the past 1-2 years, compared to HCCs whose pop music playlist contains primarily of older songs. Perhaps the most evident difference in Puchao's music is the lack of any traditional music in his playlist—no Western symphony, folk, Chinese traditional, or any instrumental music, which are all fundamental to HCCs. He explains that he has not heard of them and has little interest in them.

5.3 Awareness of the hierarchy

(1) HCCs are more aware of what is highbrow

The status of certain traditional music as highbrow, particularly Western classical, is recognized by all the HCCs and MCCs, but the impression becomes vaguer and less confident as the level of cultural capital decreases. On the other hand, Chinese traditional music tends to be associated with respondents' grandparent's generation, and is recognized to be highbrow but to a slightly smaller extent compared to Western classical canon. Respondents describe of "highbrow" in Chinese as *gaoya* (高雅), defined in the Oxford Chinese-English dictionary as "elegant: have an elegant style, be gracious in manner, high art" (Oxford, 2017).

All the HCCs already enjoy some form of highbrow traditional music and easily recognize their high status. HCCs' views of their favorite music will be further discussed in the section on their mode of appreciation. MCCs also generally recognize the status of certain traditional music as highbrow. The LCCs generally have a vague impression that Western classical and traditional music are highbrow, but are unable to elaborate on it. They do not think it is something relevant to their lives, compared to HCCs who confidently and effortlessly explain the quality they see inherent in highbrow music. LCCs say they have little interest to learn about Western classical, which they say they do not listen and do not like. Mining (CC1), for example, flatly says she does not listen to pure instrumentals.

(2) HCCs denigrate local music

Although HCCs initially claim to like all kinds of music, their attitudes demonstrate a deeper resistance toward lowbrow music (Bryson, 1996). HCCs and even MCCs look down on local music and trendy Chinese music. HCCs often criticize the quality of local music. Their criticisms of local music follow Adorno's arguments—as mass-produced tunes without substance (Adorno and Simpson, 1941). Muyao (CC4) says "there are very few local musical talents. The popular singers are mostly just packaging, like Jolin Tsai (M10). Local music is usually produced simplistically, with little use of chord. Listening to it doesn't improve taste (听了没有提升). I don't like local music in general. Some singers with lesser fame are actually better"—again preferring selective musicians over the mainstream.

However, HCCs usually avoid a blanket denigration of music from Mainland China, well-aware that these are mainstream and liked by many people. HCCs often direct their attacks at specific bad examples of local music, avoiding openly "disliking" of a whole category of music as described by Bryson (1996), which would be less socially acceptable. The HCCs have various negative labels for these local songs—saliva songs (口水歌), divine songs (神曲). LCCs, however, describe them positively as songs that are explosive—i.e. hot and popular (火爆). The term I used in the survey was the more neutral "popular Internet songs" (网络热曲)—a term also used in music apps. They are typically songs by unknown grassroot musicians, some of which infamously catapulted to national fame through Internet channels such as Ticktok, via clips that HCCs find distasteful. They are popular particularly among teenagers generally with lower socioeconomic status.

Dingjiao (CC6) says she does not like the divine songs either. She targeted her criticism on "Learn to meow (like a cat)" (学猫叫)—a song that went viral in 2018. "It was played on alleys and streets, but it has no content and no quality. It is dumb, and the lyric has no meaning. You can memorize the song after hearing it twice. Those viral songs are like fast food. It fills your hunger, but you cannot eat it all the time." She also does not like the Chinoiserie-style of many viral songs which combines Chinese cultural elements into viral songs, describing them as a catchy way to package low-quality music. Muyao (CC4) is similarly critical of saliva songs. "Those are for the mass. The chords are repetitive. For example, the song 'Small apple' (小苹果) has beguiling (讨巧) lyrics and simple dancing which draws conversations (有话题感), but they are not innovative, just repetitive. It represents a decline in taste. The listeners are definitely not highbrow people, more likely naïve teenagers or middle-aged aunties (大妈)." Yiyin (CC6) says "I cannot feel the beauty in

saliva songs, even though they are down to earth (接地气), they associate with 'the 3 vulgars' (三俗8). The lyrics of saliva songs has no beauty, but I cannot avoid hearing them as they are everywhere."

Local music is besieged by HCC and MCCs in both the interviews as well as quantitative data. In the quantitative survey, items that load heavily on the local music factor include Phoenix Legend, Dao Lang, and Wulantuya. Local music is disliked by all categories of socioeconomic status—significantly disliked by those with higher levels of education, those from urban backgrounds, those with higher levels of income. It is also disliked by those who are older. Since this factor consists of mainly local music, it shows that popular music is stratified by region, and local is relegated to a relatively lower status.

(3) LCCs' low awareness of the music hierarchy

The previous sections have shown that HCCs recognize the overarching hierarchy in popular music, ranging from foreign, to classics Hk/Taiwan, to local music. But if the music hierarchy is so evident, what prevents everyone from liking or claiming to like high-status music, shattering the symbolic boundary? Turns out, MCCs only have an incomplete understanding of the hierarchy, while LCCs are generally unaware of the difference between the selective and mainstream pops.

MCCs, like the HCCs, are clear about what is bad taste. They widely dislike the lowbrow tastes of local music, particularly the viral Internet hot songs, differentiating themselves from the tastes of the LCCs. They too, tend to be aware of the highbrow status of Western classical, but lack the knowledge and discerning appreciation that distinguishes the HCCs from the MCCs. MCCs also compete amongst themselves to appear to be HCC in tastes, which irritate other MCCs. Shiping (CC3) respects the status Western classical and admits to not understanding it, but complains that too many people around him "flaunt their love for Western classical yet only have a superficial understanding of it. They are merely *fuyongfengya*"—a Chinese idiom which means to pose as a lover of culture (附庸风雅). He is a proud fan of traditional opera who is frustrated by his inability to refute the flaunting parvenus. The knowledge and ability to discuss high-status music at ease will be further discussed in a later section.

The LCCs are less interested in music in general, and not as aware of the loaded implications of music taste. To them, music is popular entertainment, and everyone is free to choose what styles they like, as if following the arguments of the "individualization" argument as described by Chan & Goldthorpe (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b). The LCCs are either aware of the most popular music items passively through social life, or are actively seeking the most popular music items through playlists. After all, they think that one cannot be criticized by following what everyone else is listening, which is a dilemma found by my research—the taste of the mass implies high popularity, a positive for the LCC, but indiscriminately following popular songs is a

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8 The 3 vulgars is a Chinese phrase to refer to philistine, uncultured, and purposely appeal with low tastes (庸俗、低俗、媚俗)

huge sign that yells bad taste to the HCCs. The HCCs generally believe there are intrinsic qualities in music, which only those with better taste can differentiate (Adorno and Simpson, 1941), though admits that some popular music can be good.

The LCCs are typically not aware that foreign music is of a higher status than local music, partly because they also consume foreign music as they follow the most popular music, though not in the selective and critical manner of the HCCs. They have a vague but unsure impression that Western classical as highbrow, compared to HCCs who confidently and effortlessly explain the quality they see inherent in highbrow music. Mining (CC1) says she has only heard a small number of Western songs, which are the most famous ones like "You raise me up" (the song looked down by Changti earlier). Though she is aware of a hierarchy between classical music, mainstream popular music, and lowbrow music like Phoenix Legend, she does not think her music tastes makes a big difference in her daily life.

The power of the hierarchy of music taste is that only the HCCs has a good grasp of it to be able to "measure" others, whereas the LCCs are being measured without their awareness. The MCCs are caught in-between, frustrated by being compared, yet also utilizing it against the LCCs. The post-modernists' belief that people are free to choose what they like is only partially true. Individuals do have the *freedom* to consume and form lifestyles of their choosing without being bound by class rigidity (see Baudrillard, 2016; Bauman, 1988; Featherstone, 1990; Giddens, 1991), yet LCCs, unaware of the "rules of the game," are in informational asymmetry despite the free choice.

5.4 How HCCs navigate social distinction and lubrication through music

Preferences for selective music depends on the amount of cultural capital of the individual. However, there is also another group of music called trendy music, which is not structured by cultural capital. Thus, I have quantitatively shown how Bourdieu's argument for the stratification of culture and the cultural omnivore contention for the fall of boundaries are both practiced in real life—through differences between niche and trendy music types. This section further builds on the argument to show that HCCs are more aware of the music hierarchy—leveraging the information asymmetry to use music for both social distinction and lubrication, disadvantaging the LCCs.

The interviews show how those with high cultural capital (the HCCs) are aware of the hierarchy and belittle the music liked by those with low cultural capital (the LCCs), whereas the LCCs are generally not aware of the stigma of music taste. Furthermore, the HCCs are able to navigate social life—at times connecting with the LCCs through their cultural eclecticism, while identifying and distancing from LCCs in other times. The HCCs explain how they use popular music both to connect across social strata, but also to recognize and draw of distinction. HCCs consume music in dual modes. At times HCCs consume music as popular entertainment to bridge across social divides, yet at other times, they pursue music for discerning appreciation. Some HCCs continue to be "snobs" who abstain from pop-culture—Peterson's description of elites who solely consume high culture but not popular ones (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Meanwhile, the LCCs are oblivious to the hierarchy. While they believe they are enjoying music without barrier, their tastes are being observed and

marked by the HCCs. Thus, despite the appearance of cultural eclecticism, mass culture continues to allow for social distinction and lubrication of the elites.

Using trendy music as social lubricants

On the surface, the musical preferences of many HCCs are eclectic. But to describe the taste of HCCs as "omnivorous" would be a gross simplification of their listening habits, as their intensity sharply differs among music types. There is a clear difference between the general "likes" toward the popular music frequently but passively encountered in everyday life, and the favorites which HCCs actively learned about and sought after. Some HCCs are favorable about specific popular contemporary artists (Eason Chan and Jay Chou are perhaps the best examples), while others HCCs do not listen to these popular singers. However, it is clear that none of the HCCs are particularly passionate about following pop culture—their music passion is reserved for more selective pop-culture or traditional highbrow music, where they put a disproportionate amount of energy, research, and passion. These are the music types which they research the artist and background, read music critiques, and take the effort to find and download—which is marked by selectivity. While their playlist may include Chinese artists, the regional origin of their music interest is primarily foreign.

Many HCCs consume highbrow music along with pop music without conflict. Pop music tends to be more general leisure, whereas highbrow music tends to be enjoyed by engaging with discernment and disinterestedness. Pop for Chenyue (CC7) is the music to be played in the background that "doesn't consume the brain," such as when driving or running; classical is for "listening with the heart." Ziguo (CC5) thinks that pop music is for general leisure, centering around everyday themes such as "romances and breakups," but traditional opera is valued for its formality and grandeur (正式、隆重).

Their acceptance of mainstream popular culture is used to help them navigate social relations. Wenju (CC6) provides an example of an experience when she jokingly said her friend lack taste for liking "diva songs"— songs that went viral on the Internet often regarded to be lowbrow for HCCs (神曲), which angered her friends. She now realizes that people from certain backgrounds genuinely enjoy those songs, so she will not make such comments anymore to keep the cordial friendship. She comments that "there's no need to use nurture to overcome nature" (不要用教化去排斥天性)—an acknowledgment that natural dispositions are hard to change and it's preferable to recognize and accept it. Therefore, she now consciously plays different songs depending on which friend is in her car, because she wants to play music that everyone can enjoy to avoid conflict. She also plays funny Internet songs or videos to have a laugh with friends (such as "Learn to Meow" (学猫叫), which many HCCs regard to be lowbrow.) She says she hopes to find similarities between people, and keeping the differences to themselves.

Indeed, cultural omnivorism functions as a social lubricant to connect across classes, yet the very expression of tolerance reveals an underlying acknowledgment of inferiority. The laughter from amusement is different from the pleasure from the wholehearted enjoyment given to her highbrow favorites. Wenju (CC6)'s personal favorites are Western musicals and classical. She attends those performances whenever she has a chance.

This attitude does not apply to pop concerts, which she never goes because pop concerts are "too noisy." A deeper connection is established with others who share her tastes, while "Learn to Meow" is used to bridge.

Using selective music to draw social distinction

In the interviews, people never admitted to have openly discriminated against others based on taste. Nonetheless, HCCs show pride and superiority in their high regard for their favorite music, while showing distaste for low-status music. The stigmatization against underprivileged groups, though, has been observed to be a problem wider in society—such as the difficulty for migrants to connect with native urbanites, and the prevalence of the *suzhi* discourse (inner quality) as a denigratory term indicates that social distinction is happening in wider society (such as Anagnost, 2004; Chen, 2013, 2013; Gan, 2014; Guan, 2011; Jacka, 2009). Studies have also found that the blind pursuit of popular culture has been criticized as "without discrimination" (EJ Croll, 2006: 29).

Yiyin (CC6) explains, "some local artists may have good music, but they are liked by those with low levels of education, so I don't enjoy being associated with them. For example, some songs of Phoenix Legend (M22) are otherwise fine, but they are always played in [lowbrow] plaza dances (M39)." Since popular talent shows had been a breakout point for stars in China (Meng, 2009), Yiyin sympathizes with talented singers who sing lowbrow music, as "those otherwise talented singers need to appeal to grassroots in order to rise from popular contests, so they have to cater to populist tastes." Although she appreciates some local pop songs, she distances away from them because of the association with lowbrow. She describes the songs she likes as "those created by artists with musical education, such as those who create musicals, operas, or movie soundtracks. I also like music from different cultures, which are fresh to my ears. Perhaps I was rebellious when young. I felt that music liked by fewer people are higher class (高级)." This demonstrates that social distancing is also an important factor, as people who low-status music is recognized for their lower social background.

In contrast, HCC interviewees display a sense of pride in the discussion of their favorite music. There are also a small number of HCCs who abstain from pop music. "Ticktok," "saliva songs," and "divine songs" trigger deprecating attitude from most HCCs and MCCs (those with high levels and medium levels of cultural capital), but a few HCCs are so disengaged from popular music that they are not aware of those specific terms. Instead of symbolic exclusion of specific subtypes as described by Bryson (Bryson, 1996), they look down upon popular music more broadly as snobs who exclusively consume high culture (Peterson and Kern, 1996). They direct criticisms not to local music or Internet songs, but to the mindlessness and commerciality of popular culture as a whole along the lines of Adorno (Adorno and Simpson, 1941).

The existence of "snobs" who only consume highbrow music

For Chenyue (CC7), "popular music is very superficial. The singing is poor, and the songs are unpleasant. I never follow the music stars. Nowadays anyone good looking can be a singer without any skill or training." When pressed about Internet celebrities, she says, "I don't understand, and I do not care. They change very quickly and disappear very quickly. They rapidly become obsolete and displaced. The songs are very low and

uncultured. Internet celebrities are very ignorant. They digitally alter their appearance to look pretty. That's all." Changti (CC5)'s music interest has primarily been Western classical music, explaining that she was never a group person so never really followed pop culture with her classmates. Dongkun (CC5) is the respondent most distanced from popular culture. He watches many opera performances online and in theaters, but he doesn't watch movies, saying "I don't really like popular culture." He gave me long histories of Kunqu opera, but could not talk about popular music. When asked about "Ticktok," he's part of the few HCCs who has no denigrating attitude because he is not aware of what it is. "I don't have anything to say about it. I totally do not know what it is." Dongkun (CC5) appreciates Kunqu opera because it is a "heritage that has passed the test of time." He believes that "to understand Kunqu, one needs to be sufficiently cultured." He draws from the ancient Confucian belief that elite music has intrinsic qualities that can cultivate people, "music education has the power to cultivate society to establish harmony and social order " (e.g. see Thrasher, 1981). While he does not directly say that people who like pop music are uncultured, he clearly believes that the music he likes is high culture.

For some HCCs, their distastes go beyond local music and extends to mainstream music more generally. HCCs complain of mass Western pop frequently played in stores and widely recognized in China. One example is "You raise me up" a song by Irish-Norwegian duo "Secret Garden" in 2002, which happened to be played during the interview with Changti. She interjected "I don't like this. It gives me headaches. The song is too flat, just a plain direct expression of emotions (直抒胸臆) that leaves no room for "chewing" (没有咀嚼余地—no room for further interpretation or appreciation.)" Heidi Rupke, while teaching English in China, describes the Western songs popular in China as "easy listening music, with its themes of home and love...are played in restaurants, department stores, and on public transportation vehicles. American music has penetrated even the most rural areas, where taxi drivers switched the Chinese music tape in their cassette player to Richard Marx when Rupke hailed the cab" (Rupke and Blank, 2009: 130, 137). Due to the vast popularity of Western-mass music, it is looked down by HCCs. Similarly, a distaste toward "noisy" songs like rap, hip-hop, and techno is shared by almost all the HCCs interviewed. Ziguo (CC5) says "I'm not sure whether they can be considered music, or just a behavioral art."

5.5 Discussion—cultural hierarchy under pop culture

Cultural hierarchy persists under pop culture because the HCCs are advantaged in 1) their discerning appreciation and 2) better awareness of the hierarchy, which allows them to 3) navigate social relations suing both social distinction and social lubrication. Firstly, the cultural elites differ in the way they approach music, demonstrating the importance of embodied cultural capital. Due to differences in the level of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), the HCCs are pursing niche and selective music for "quality," whereas LCCs are taste followers who pursue popularity. HCCs reveal a discerning approach to music, relying on research, learning, and critical appreciation, whereas LCCs show either musical apathy, or are taste-followers driven by popularity. HCCs describe the research they conducted to find those non-mainstream items, and to understand the backgrounds and meaning of the music which is crucial to their appreciation. They say they are not blindly pursuing rarity for the sake of rarity. They pursue "quality" which is their own judgment, and

its pursuit often leads them away from popular music toward alternative and non-mainstream music, distancing away from the most popular Western pop widely recognized in China. HCCs are much more confident critics of music, relying on their own judgment instead of popularity, which leads them toward engagement with selective and non-mainstream artists and songs. When HCCs discuss music, they are accompanied by backgrounds, context, and aesthetic descriptions which draw on the cultural capital of HCCs. HCC's discerning appreciation and the music they like exist in a symbiotic relationship. They prefer music that can be appreciated critically, and the music they are the ones that allow them to deploy their embodied cultural capital. The differences in the way music is approached and discussed is quite evident in the interviews. HCCs also eagerly volunteer themselves to be interviewed, whereas recruiting LCCs to discuss 'their favorite music' has been challenging. This concurs with Bourdieu's finding where the mass may like items within highbrow genres, such as the Blue Danube, but HCCs distinguish themselves with more comprehensive knowledge of selective and specific items, which they can critique, discuss, and demonstrate appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984).

While the most popular music items appeal across social divisions, the less popular but selective items continue to draw social boundaries. Cultural distinction is not contingent on high culture as it persists in a world filled with pop culture. Bourdieu did not see highbrow culture as the only legitimate culture, but viewed legitimate culture as the ones that are recognized as valuable in the struggle in symbolic violence where the tastes and preferences of the dominating groups are valued and those of the dominated being devalued (Prieur and Savage, 2011). What is legitimate is embedded in local contexts and subject to change. In China, the influx of global music culture becomes a differentiator that allows the privileged to identify those with and without proper tastes, supported by the discerning tastes of the elites which are hard to imitate. Instead of enabling everyone to select their own lifestyles, distinction persists in subtle ways, from a simple highbrow-lowbrow distinction, to a complex but subtle denigration. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is still relevant in society today.

Secondly, LCCs are disadvantaged in this hierarchy because the music hierarchy is obscured to those with low cultural capital (LCC). Social distinction is becoming hidden by the mainstream mass culture, which is widely popular across the population. Tastes in popular music are obscured by many factors such as changing popularity, personal preferences, mood, and age that makes the landscape appear benign to the LCCs. Popular music, constantly under the flux of different ages and styles, gives the impression of freedom of expression which obscures the continual persistence of stratification that continues to be recognized by the HCCs. The inequality in information allows HCCs to recognize and navigate through mass culture to lubricate social relationships yet also discriminate against the tastes of the LCCs.

Thirdly, while cultural capital theory continues to be accurate in identifying the persistence of distinction, it understated the power of popular music to lubricate social relations. This research shows the coexistence of cultural distinction and lubrication. Since only the HCCs are able to recognize the hierarchy, they are lubricating social relations through trendy music to give the false impression of open tolerance, while identifying ingroups through stratifying music—leveraging the information asymmetry through the opaque hierarchy to disadvantage those with low cultural capital (LCCs). The two forces coexist in the music scene,

allowing the HCCs to both distinguish as well as lubricate relationships. This is another example how highbrow culture increases strong-tie connection which fosters ingroup cohesion, while popular music helps establish weak ties (Lizardo, 2006). HCCs are empowered through music to navigate social relations, distinguishing others from their ingroups, while lubricating relation with outgroups when needed. The music hierarchy is known by the HCCs but unbeknownst to the LCCs, marking an informational asymmetry which is utilized to the disadvantage of the LCCs. The LCCs, passively enjoying what they like, are being evaluated for social exclusion or inclusion at the mercy of the HCCs.

In practice, it is not so easy for the LCC to distinguish which music is high-status, yet HCCs are often able to navigate this complex hierarchy to send and receive signals of distinction. This reveals a complex sub-group hierarchy which is difficult for the LCCs to differentiate, and often missed in surveys that focus on broad genres. Vaguely "liking" foreign music is not enough to pass as an elite, and liking foreign-mass music turns into a sign of bad taste. HCCs navigate this complexity to deploy their cultural capital for distinction, whereas LCCs do not. As music change in popularity and become mainstream, HCCs have a history of progressing away from mainstream items toward selective artists and music. Despite the changing popularity of cultural items, HCCs navigate through the changes by "upgrading their tastes" (see chapter 5). Thus, they can utilize popular music for both social lubrication and social distinction, whereas the LCCs are either not interested in music, or unaware of the differentiation that is being drawn. Those with high cultural capital (the HCCs) have the freedom to use those types of music to both distinguish others, and at the same time bridge social divides as they choose. The LCCs, on the other hand, are oblivious to the power of music to draw distinctions.

Part III. Cultural Capital in China

Chapter 6. The sources of taste in China—intergenerational endowment or individual attainment?

6.1 The context of inequality in China

The previous chapters have shown the stratification of musical taste in a manner which would be consistent with the existence of cultural capital in China—the shared tastes and the distastes by those in privileged social positions. This and the next chapter look more fundamentally at the sources of tastes. Using quantitative analysis, this chapter seeks to answer two main questions. Firstly, what are the socioeconomic factors that influence taste in China, and what is the extent that cultural capital is rooted in intergenerational inequalities? The finding shows that differences in taste in China can be traced all the way back to parental and childhood privileges. This provides convincing evidence that the formation of taste is rooted in intergenerational inequality, a testimony of the power of the cultural capital. Although the marketization that led to the rise of economic inequality occurred only a generation ago, differences in parental privileges have already led to the formation of cultural capital that is visible in China today. Furthermore, the linkage between forms of inequality and the various aspects of cultural capital will be established—which are traditional highbrow cultural capital, symbolic exclusion, cultural engagement/disengagement, and emerging forms of capital.

Understanding cultural capital in China

It is important to understanding distinction today by tracing back to the development of social inequalities in China, including inequality in education and hukou. The study of cultural capital is important in China because it helps explains the deeper causes of inequality and stigmatization that is prevalent in China today. Bourdieu believes that symbolic violence between social groups can be explained by deeper inequality in the endowments of cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital—distinctive cultural tastes which signify and advantages a person's status in society—is developed into the habitus from childhood upbringing, fostering a certain taste for those in privileged social groups, which is then drawn for social exclusion. Bourdieu's theory on symbolic violence is also supported by researches that point to discrimination and stigma toward those with lower social status in China, which questions whether the sources of those inequalities are based on personal achievement, or rooted more deeply into parental or childhood endowments. Bourdieu is doubtful on the potential for secondary socialization to overcome deficits in primary socialization (1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133). Under the Western context, cultural capital is accumulated primarily through childhood upbringing through privileged parents. Through childhood upbringing and secondary socialization, taste for legitimate culture is developed as a resource.

However, this narrative does not readily apply to China, as there have been no sustained intergenerational privileges in China to the extent of countries in the West that did not experience Communism. China was

highly egalitarian until reform and opening in 1978. Before Reform and Opening, China was under a socialist economy with few inequalities. Furthermore, whereas modernization happened over generations in developed countries in the West, the development of economic and cultural capital was compressed essentially within one generation in China. This diverges from Bourdieu's conception that cultural capital is sourced in inequalities in elite families. An effect of this compressed development is that the gaps between social strata co-existing in the same space and time are much wider, not only economically but also in lifestyles and mentality. Even today, a considerable proportion of the population is still agricultural, while those in the most developed cities are living lifestyles comparable to most developed regions in the West. Thus, the debate needs to be contextualized in a specific regional setting. Bourdieu's theory was formulated in a historic French society, and critics say it might have lost relevance in contemporary societies under the profusion of popular culture. Western accounts may not be directly applicable in China, due to both differences between European, American culture and Chinese culture, their different historical trajectory, as well as current differences in the level of development. This provides an exceptional case to understand how cultural capital has been formed from an egalitarian society.

Prevalence of social boundaries

Amidst increasing levels of economic inequality in China (Chen and Ravallion, 2009; Sicular et al., 2007; Xie and Zhou, 2014; Yang, 1999), we are seeing increasingly visible boundaries being drawn between social groups. This can be seen through increasing boundaries erected by the new rich, the middle class, and the stigmatization experienced by the underclasses. The rise of "symbolic boundaries" is the perception of social boundaries between people which produces social closure and exclusion (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). Due to the economic-centrism of existing studies, accounts of the social hierarchy in China is dominated by economic, material, and urban-rural based stratification (Goodman, 2014; Lu, 2012), which has overlooked cultural aspects of inequality. I summarize their findings to demonstrate the prevalence of social boundaries in China, but will argue afterward why a cultural perspective allows a clearer understanding of distinction.

Market reforms since 1978 have created a generation of new riches, but also a huge disparity in society (Osburg, 2013). The "new rich" are showing off their affluence and taste through luxury goods (Goodman, 2008a; Osburg, 2013). The rise of economic disparity has led to various terms to describe the affluent class: *xingui* (the new rich), *xinfu* (new wealth), *dakuan* (big spender), *baofahu* (parvenu: the nouveau riche, for the unrefined rich people), *furen jieceng* (the rich stratum), and *shangliu shehui* ("high society"), with various extents of delegitimizing connotations (Goodman, 2008b; Lei, 2003; Miao, 2016: 24; Osburg, 2013: 11). Unconscious sensibilities make the privileged feel entitled to more respect and social recognition, which the privileged deloy in social expressions to legitimize "the construction and communication of symbolic boundaries, in particular those demarcating class differences" (Hanser, 2008: 186). The lower classes also distinguish people by status. The retail clerks sub-segment and discriminate the less wealthy from the more wealthy in their services. In response, the rich use tactics to convey their status and wealth, to show why they deserve deferential treatment in the "theater for counter performances of distinction" (Hanser, 2008: 137).

Similarly, economic development has led to the rise of the "middle class" in Chinese urban cities. There are ample studies on the lives of the "middle class" in China (such as Chen and Goodman, 2013; E Croll, 2006;

Miao, 2016; Tsang, 2014; Zhu, 2016). The "middle class" is not used here to refer to a specific definition of social class, as Chinese social hierarchy "is distinguished more by sociocultural than by economic factors" (Tsang, 2014: 13). Definitions of social class remain subtly problematic in China. Officially, the Communist party has already eliminated exploiting classes after the revolution so only two classes remain—proletariats and peasants (Li, 2016).-"Middle-class" here refers to the rise of consumerist society and distinction based on ownership of material goods, fashion, and lifestyles of leisure (Cartier, 2013; Davis, 2000b; Latham et al., 2006; Tsang, 2014). In practice, the "middle class" is not a coherent group with a clear ingroup self-identity, but rather an identity based on outgroup exclusion—defining themselves against those from poorer backgrounds. Class perception in China is based on subjective prejudice—"often determined through means of exclusion rather than inclusion – what they believed they are not rather than what they believed they are" (Miao, 2016: 29). I now turn to the boundaries they erected—the social discrimination against the underclasses.

Researches in China have described the stigma between the rich and poor (Osburg, 2013), between migrants and locals (Honig, 1989, 1990, 1992; Zhang et al., 2009: 20019), and between rural and urban (Gan, 2014; Kipnis, 2006; Murphy, 2004; Zhang and Treiman, 2013). Social discrimination against lower social groups has been increasingly evident, targeting rural migrants, the urban poor, *dagongmei* (female workers) (Pun, 1999, 2005), *baomu* (domestic workers) (Sun, 2009a), and even retail clerks (Hanser, 2008). Stigma against rural workers has been found across much of the developing world (Erman, 2001; Mosse et al., 2002), and discrimination against migrants also has a long history in China. One of the first waves of migrants in Chinese urbanization was the rural migrants to Shanghai since the 1850s, who were discriminated for being "poor, ignorant, dirty, and unsophisticated" (Honig, 1989, 1992). Internal migration was restricted under Mao's period, but the influx of rural workers into the cities after Reform and Opening created another wave of discrimination against the migrants. After Reform and Opening, many people from the countryside migrated to cities to provide manual labor. The total number of rural-to-urban migrants in China was over 260 million in 2013 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). The urban population in China more than doubled from 26% in 1990 to 56% in 2015, but a substantial portion of the population is still rural (China Statistical Yearbook, 2015). The migrant workers provided cheap labor force that contributed greatly to industrialization, modernization, and the economic miracle in China, yet they are deprived of rights such as social security provision and educational opportunity in the cities (Kuang and Liu, 2012; Wu and Treiman, 2004, 2007; Zhang et al., 2014; Zhang and Treiman, 2013). The migrant workers often take on dangerous, dirty, and demeaning "3D-jobs" (Roberts, 2001).

The experiences of stigmatism and targets of prejudice have been documented in many pieces of research (such as Chen, 2013; Chen et al., 2011; Gan, 2014; Guan, 2011; Kuang and Liu, 2012; Li et al., 2007; Solinger, 1999; Zhang, 2001; Zhang et al., 2009; Zhang and Wu, 2017). Cultural distinction between people from urban and rural areas was described as a cultural politics, part of a coproduction between urban elites and the state (Lei, 2003). Marginalized social groups, particularly the migrant workers, have frequently been ridiculed in taste and behavior, for their "unattractive physical appearance, as potential perils of disease or crime, and discredited places of origin" (Guan and Liu, 2014: 75). Labeling and stereotyping based on tastes and appearance are common, such as smell, behavior, and uncivilized language which are signs of underlying

"dirtiness" and the lack of class (*cengci*) (Hanser, 2008: 108, 134; Li et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2009). These can also be expressed subtly as symbolic violence—"the modern form [of prejudice] which is expressed implicitly and indirectly" (Yang et al., 2010: 204). The underclasses are not only deprived of material resources but also in cultural and symbolic resources (Sun, 2013). The stigmatization of rural workers is often justified by the *suzhi* discourse—that they are indeed inferior in lacking "innate" dispositions inside.

Furthermore, social exclusion results in the difficulty for rural migrants to integrate into urban life. The first generation of migrant workers never managed to integrate into urban life, as they tended to return to the countryside after temporarily working in the cities during their youth. The youngest cohort of rural migrants has spent most or all their lives in cities, engaging with consumerism and leisure much like other urban youths (Pun, 2003), yet they still live a segregated life with no urban friends (Cheng, 2014). Despite being relatively better educated and improved materially, they faced deeper social exclusion than the earlier generation, with deeper frustration as there is no returning to the rural (Pun and Huilin, 2010). Guanxi is an important component of social relations in China (Yang, 1994), which is heavily restrained by "having the same forms of lifestyle practices, which in this context mean having matching accents, matching dialects, similar kinship, or blood relationships or even the same surname" (Tsang, 2014: 123; Wank, 1999: 164). Despite their attempts to "shed the signs of their rural origins" (Cheng, 2014: 141), rural origins still prevent them from integrating into the guanxi networks of the urbanites, indicating continued boundaries between the social groups.

Development of Inequality in China

To understand the development of cultural capital in China, I will first describe the recent history of social inequality in China which includes the perspectives of economic inequality, inequality in political capital, hukou (rural versus urban household registration), and the inequality in education. These provide the context to situate the sources of cultural capital in China and the relationship between cultural capital and existing conceptions of social inequality.

(1) Inequality prior to China's Reform and Opening

During the Communist period under Mao, political capital was the most relevant form of capital in China. After the Communists took power in 1949, the party abolished the private economy and flattened the former social ladder. Economic capital ceased to confer power, replaced by benefits from association with the party-state apparatus, giving tremendous power to political capital. The old elites were suppressed, with their wealth confiscated into state ownership. Despite the rise of egalitarian society for most people, political status conferred significant power for a small number of cadres. This is common across countries that have experienced Communism, where a class of bureaucrats used their political power to obtain privileges, akin to the ruling classes in a capitalist system (Djilas, 1959). Party members privileged themselves and their family members in access to resources. The government was ruled by the party, where policies were commanded by authoritarian planning guidelines. Political status became a new form of social hierarchy. Political capital rests in party membership—which is also associated with one's class origin as well as political background (Andreas, 2016). In work units, members are classified as workers or cadres, of which cadres are usually

party members and given leadership roles. The concentration of resources in the centralized state results in privileges through affiliation with the state.

Political capital was not just a status symbol but could also be converted into cultural capital. Compared to the Communist cadres who usually came from low social origins, the educated ones had cultural capital in specialized knowledge or management skills. Under state socialism, they were supervised by the red cadres, as cultural capital became secondary to political capital. (Andreas, 2016). As party members were able to privilege themselves and their family members in access to resources, they were also better able to access cultural capital for their family members, leveraging their resources to put their children through education and better job opportunities (Andreas, 2016). Secondary education expanded for everyone, but university education was still limited favored bureaucrat families, a phenomenon common in many Communist countries, such as Soviet Russia (Gerber and Hout, 1995), Czechoslovakia (Mateju, 1993), Hungary (Hanley and McKeever, 1997; Simkus and Andorka, 1982) and Poland (Heyns and Bialecki, 1993). During Mao's period and early periods in the reform, children of cadre or military families had better chances of enrollment in senior high school and above (Zhou et al., 1998), even during the cultural revolution (Deng and Treiman, 1997).

(2) The rapid rise in economic inequality in China

Economic capital regained power after Reform and Opening. Reform and Opening since 1978 led Communist China to a new period of state capitalism, a unique path of development with its successes and challenges. The post-Mao period is a period of Reform and Opening under state capitalism, which launched 4 decades of rapid economic development to this day. Deng Xiaoping's plan for economic reform starting in 1979 aimed to achieve a "*xiaokang*" (relatively comfortable) life (Lu, 2000: 124). A key economic reform in China which differentiated from the Soviet reforms was the creation of a dual-price structure, which priced production differently between the co-existing planned and market economy. The initial period of Reform and Opening was regarded to be a period of "wealth creation" that benefitted the majority. While ex-bureaucrats *xiahai* (entered the private sector, literally "jumped into the sea") to leverage their relationship with bureaucrats for great wealth, a greater number of entrepreneurs coming from low social status saw rapid increases in income. The massive transformation in the last decades turned the poor but egalitarian country into a state-capitalist economic power. State capitalism achieved remarkable economic growth and lifted many people out of poverty. In fact, overall income inequality declined in the 1980s, as the gap between rural and urban narrowed, because those who were the poorest saw their income rise the fastest (Nee, 1991).

The gaps in economic wealth began to widen in the 1990s, as income differences grew increasingly wide between different groups of the population. By the late 1990s, China is regarded to have shifted to "wealth concentration" where wealth mostly consolidates amongst the elites (see Xiang and Shen, 2009). Individual business owners grew into privately owned corporations, and the management in corporations earned far more than the average workers. Those in state-owned enterprises who previously enjoyed lifetime employment and social benefits saw their "iron rice bowl" shattered starting in the 1990s (Davis, 2000a: 17). Income inequality became increasingly worsened in the 21st century, as the privileged ones in society have the most resource to grow their wealth. As disposable income increased, the proportion spent on food

decreased from 57.5% in 1978 to 35.8% in 2006, in line with Engel's Law. However, the bottom 5% of city households still spent 47% of income on food in 2006, compared to 27% for the top income decile (Solinger, 2013: 62). Although the wealth of Chinese improved as a whole, much of the improvement concentrated on the top and widened the disparity between social groups. Differences between social groups have widened considerably since Reform and Opening. The distribution of wealth has been increasingly unequal, concentrating wealth for into those who established a privileged position in society early in the economic liberalization (Davis and Wang, 2009; Sun and Guo, 2013; Whyte, 2010). Despite nominally being a "socialist" country, China has higher levels of inequality than developed "capitalist" societies such as the US and UK based on the GINI index (Goodman, 2014; World Bank, 2010). Coastal regions, urban cities, and certain social groups gained wealth more quickly than others. Spatial and regional inequality also enlarged, with wealth concentrating in the special economic zones and coastal cities, and the rural areas falling farther and farther behind.

(3) Persistence of political capital after Reform and Opening

The supremacy of political capital declined after Reform and Opening, as market forces confer power to economic capital again. Marketization led to the rise of private business in the early 1980s. Political capital, which previously conferred power in the production and allocation of resources under socialism, ceded to markets driven by ownership, property, and economic resources. Victor Nee proposed the power transfer thesis that political capital, almighty prior to 1978, has ceded to economic capital since Reform and Opening (Nee, 1989, 1996). However, other researches find the persistence of political capital and its conversion into economic, social, and cultural capital.

Scholars have argued that economic capital is only valuable "under state protection or freedom from state interference," without which is always under the risk of political persecution (Guo, 2013: 20). Despite the increased visibility of economic capital, many scholars see a close collaboration between officials and entrepreneurs, and thus the continued power of political capital at the elite level (Goodman, 2014; Guo, 2013; Liu, 2009). Many scholars have found the salient convertibility of political capital and economic capital under the mutual collaboration between state and market (Bian and Logan, 1996; Davis and Wang, 2009; Goodman, 2008a; Wang, 2008). Although the party-state tried to prevent the misuse of power by party officials, in practice the party's power has not been constrainable by the constitution, the rule of law, or the judiciary, which enabled the conversion of political power into economic capital. The initial rich were the cadres, who purchased commodities at the lower state-controlled prices to sell at the higher market price, and selling land-use rights to commercial companies for tremendous profits (Tsang, 2014: 6). Collective goods were privatized for great profits for the well-connected. A large number of cadres in state-owned enterprises switched into the private sector (*xiahai*), converting political capital into economic capital for profits. Nee describes this as a hybrid of "cadre-entrepreneurs" (Nee, 1989, 1991, 1996). Many of China's new rich are children of high-ranking cadres that scholars describe the existence of a "red capitalists" class (Dickson, 2003) and a dominant class of political elites (Goodman, 2014). The convergence of the capitals is also argued by Goodman's conception of China's ruling elites. Economic and political elites are closely connected, and are often quite affluent themselves or from their close-ones (Goodman, 2016). Due to its

recognized importance, political status has also been incorporated in the standard model of social stratification in China (Lu, 2012).

The conversion of political capital into economic capital is believed to be enabled through social capital, as having political connections through facilitates business after market-reforms. In a country where the boundary between state and market overlaps, having political capital—by either being in a position of power or having political connections to such—is a valuable resource. With ambiguity in law, regulation, and enforcement, entrepreneur and professionals cooperate with their political connections to facilitate exchanges. "Generally speaking, officials enjoy better access to state power even where they are not in charge than citizens who lack connections with officials. The latter can achieve inclusion through open official channels, guanxi (connection) networks or bribery… Differences in these powers constitute a principal form of power inequality and are major causes of class and status inequalities in post-socialist China." (Guo, 2013: 19). Social capital is connected with the concept of *guanxi* in China, which is seen as a culturally intricate development of friendship and loyalty (Yang, 1994). Unofficial political power can be accessed through economic capital in the form of bribery, or through the *guanxi* network—ties that facilitate exchanges of favors based on mutual benefits and indebtedness (Bian, 1994, 2002). Connections are important in a society whose state capitalism grants high authority to person and social bonding in charge over transparent institutional processes, such as in financing, taxation, investment, and real estate (Faure, 2008: 485; Tsang, 2014: 123). The collaboration between officials and the rich enabled officials the access to resources and the new rich the access to political protection and influence. The political elites are comparable to businessmen due to the reform in China that put economic development central to governments. County governments are like local corporate headquarters (Oi, 1999), and "the business of government is business" (Goodman, 2016: 252). Many of the most successful business owners are those well-connected with the party-state. Studies have found that party status continues to be important in the state-capitalist society (Li, 2016). Ex-cadres with strong ties with the party-state used their *guanxi* network to profit from their connection with the government which remains influential under state capitalism (Tsang, 2014: 9)

Research has also found the conversion of political capital into cultural capital. The new generation of political elites, unlike earlier generation party members, are also extremely well educated. A party member with a college education is 26 times more likely to become a cadre (Li, 2012), and 74% of provincial standing committee members have master's degree, and 23% even have doctorates (Walder, 2006). Studies show that even after marketization, the political status of parents is still more influential than economic resources in determining one's educational attainment (Zhou et al., 1998), and multi-generational surveys show that the offspring of party elites (even if purged during radical Maoism) is favored to inherit elite status (Walder and Hu, 2009). A study on book reading habits has also found a clear cultural divide between elites and other social groups, with government and party officials with the highest amount of cultural capital (Wang et al., 2006). Parents like to send children to public service jobs and jobs under state monopoly for their financial benefits, subsidies, and prestige (Guo, 2013). Thus, economic, cultural and political capital are ultimately intertwined.

(4) Educational inequalities

Education is fundamental in producing cultural practices and the differentiation in cultural patterns (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The level of education is itself a measurement of socioeconomic position and is crucial in the development of the *habitus* which further class differentiation through internalized aspects such as attitudes, instincts, and taste. The habitus reflects itself in lifestyles and consumption practices that are limited to certain social groups, which becomes an instrument for social distinction. Education is such a core of social reproduction that is often used as the single variable to represent cultural capital.

Education in the first 10 years after the revolution (1949-1959) was a period of improved education across the population. Elementary education became universal, and higher education opportunity expanded drastically from 229 formal colleges in 1957 to 610 in 1962 (Zhou et al., 1998: 202). This period of rapid state development and educational expansion ended with the disastrous rushed development period of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1959). The new few years was a period of decline in economic development thus educational opportunities, which saw the increasing importance of parental political status in education attainment. During the cultural revolution (1966-1977), education was disrupted as education institutions shut down. Education opportunity became more equal in this period, surprisingly due to sharply decreased enrollment which reduced the opportunity for education for everyone. The effect of interventionist policy on education opportunity was significant in this period. Even though education opportunities expanded under Communism, parental origin becomes influential for advancing to higher levels of education. Despite the official determination to promote social equality, education inequality was still substantial in the Socialist period.

After the end of the cultural revolution, education and college entrance examination (*gaokao*) were reinstituted, restoring education to, at least ideally, a meritocratic enrollment system. The period after Reform and Opening also saw an increase in educational opportunities, particularly the expansion of higher education since the 1990s. The school enrollment rate for those between 6 and 16 was already 95.5% in 1978 and reached 98% by 1994. Nine-year compulsory education was implemented in the 1990s (Tsui, 1997). The transition from elementary school to junior high school reached 90% in 1995 (Wu and Zhang, 2010). Higher education enrollment rapidly expanded in the 1990s thanks to improved educational policy (Wan, 2006; Wang, 2014). The number of institutions expanded by 67% from 1990 to 2005, with the number of students increasing more than 7 times in the period (Wu and Zhang, 2010). In the 10 years from 1998 to 2008, the number of students more than doubled from 9.8 million to 23.3 million (Li et al., 2014). These served to reduce the gender and rural-urban gap in education opportunities.

Educational institutions in China are stratified in not only educational attainment, but within the levels of primary, secondary to university, with the intention of selecting and producing talents more efficiently for the country. Enrolling in the better-resourced "key" (*shifan / zhongdian*) schools at each level is a "class sorter" that funnels toward better life chances and class positions (Li et al., 2014; Woronov, 2013). There's also the stratification in academic majors, where students from rural areas are concentrated in fields

unpopular in the job market, but urban students tend to be in majors with better-paid career potentials such as English, economics, law, and management (Liu et al., 2009).

Education achievement is also complicated by economic factors. Parents of the elites have the resources to spend a hefty amount for children's education, from costly kindergarten, paid tutoring, enrolling in expensive elite schools, purchasing homes in neighborhoods with better schools (which is an extremely expensive endeavor in the megacities), using connections and donations to get into key schools, and for oversea education (E Croll, 2006; Solinger, 2013; Tang, 2013; Zhao, 2015). Furthermore, children of the privileged are receiving piano, martial arts, calligraphy, and swimming lessons, plus traveling on vacations to faraway places, even studying abroad, compared to the underclass who did not have opportunities for those opportunities (Davis and Sensenbrenner, 2000). Parents with higher levels of cultural capital tend to value artistic development in the children, and it is parents with sufficient economic capital who can afford such education. In particular, learning to play music instruments is a sign of high cultural and economic capital of the parents. Paying for lessons, especially buying expensive instruments like the piano for children, was a luxury during the early years of Reform and Opening, and a tremendous prestige.

The respondents' age ranges from 18 to 45, thus their parents are roughly born in the 1950s-70s, under Mao's period prior to Reform and Opening. As discussed earlier, that generation primarily lived under egalitarian period in China. Education level in that period was generally low, thus being relatively highly educated is much less common and more prestigious than today. However, the Cultural Revolution disrupted the intergenerational advantages of cultural capital, as there were parents from otherwise privileged families who lost the opportunity for higher education during that period. Comparing the influence of parental education and education will reveal whether the sources of highbrow taste come from respondents' own cultural attainment and the extent of parental influences.

(5) Hukou inequalities

The *hukou* system is a household registration system modeled after the Soviet *propiska*. It was established in 1958 to control internal migration, which was to assist agricultural collectivization and manage food shortage in cities (Lu and Perry, 1997; Wang, 2004). Every citizen is required to be registered in the place where they reside, with a dual classification of the residential area and the agricultural/non-agricultural status, which determined the eligibility for welfare provisions (Chan and Zhang, 1999; Kuang and Liu, 2012). Traveling and migration had to be approved, which prevented peasants from entering cities without prior permission. This reinforced the division between rural and urban, restricted urbanization, and created preferential treatment toward the urban which persisted to this day (Tsang, 2014: 37).

After Reform and Opening, there is freedom of movement but the hukou status limits the social privileges that one can obtain—such as jobs, health care, education opportunities (Pun, 2005; Wang, 2004). The freedom of movement created the wave of migrant workers who moved to cities in search of work. This forms the basis for the enormous number of rural migrants who work in Chinese urban cities, but without access to social provisions from the cities. In 1982, 79% of the population in China lived in the rural, a number which decreased to 54% in 2005. However, in 2005 73.9% of the population still hold a rural hukou, demonstrating

the ease of migration but the difficulty in getting one's hukou converted to urban status (Wu and Zhang, 2010). Hukou status is assigned at birth based on parental registration status, unrelated to the actual locale of the individual (Chan and Zhang, 1999). Hukou conversion remains difficult, such as by a considerable amount of money, or by university admission and then job placement, which allows only the most selective from the rural to convert into urban hukou (Wang, 2004). Conversion from rural to urban hukou is quite selective, limited to those who have gone beyond odds in educational attainment or wealth (Wu, 2011).

The hukou policy is well known for its effects in limiting social mobility and a source of social inequality. Having an urban hukou is a privilege, and hukou status is intricately linked with other forms of social hierarchy, such as the wealth of family origin, education attainment, party membership, and place of residence. Studies have shown the negative impact of rural hukou on income (Liu, 2005), education (Wu and Treiman, 2004), and occupational equality (Wu and Treiman, 2007). The inequality of hukou, education, and wealth are quite intertwined and difficult to isolate a clear cause and effect. For example, government policies often privilege higher-level cites over smaller cities, and urban over rural, in the provision of social benefits such as access to higher education. Those with lower education are also the ones who are less able to convert to urban hukou.

Furthermore, in addition to being a source of disadvantage in society such as in occupation and income opportunities, rural hukou also leads to stigmatization. Research has shown that the hukou system is a form of segregation which forms different social identities between urban and the rural (Otis, 2003). "Hukou provides one of the most helpful means for sociologists to distinguish members of the Chinese new middle class from the rest of the population." (Tsang, 2014: 37–38).

6.2 Research Approach

This section outlines the research approach and the variables that are to be investigated. Given the extent of social discrimination and inequality in China, this chapter seeks to answer—how cultural capital relates to existing inequalities in China and the extent that cultural capital is rooted in intergenerational inequalities. What constitutes cultural capital in China? The relationship to be investigated is represented in the figure below.

Figure 6-1. Diagram of the intergenerational sources of cultural capital
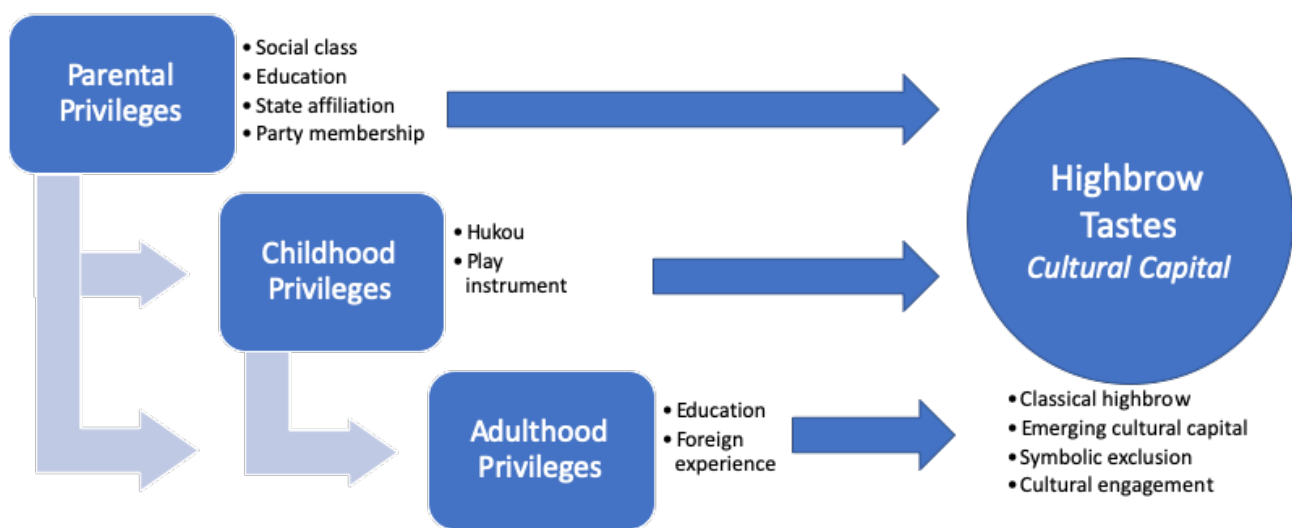
The next part describes the various dimensions of cultural capital, which will be used as dependent variables to test for differences between subgroups. The part after that describes the variables that measure intergenerational inequality, which will be used to examine if the levels of cultural capital differ between popular subgroups who with different parental, childhood, or adulthood privileges.

Dependent variables—various dimensions of cultural capital

The concept of cultural capital is central to the discussion of cultural inequality in sociology. Cultural capital has been defined as "institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 156). While Bourdieu was the first to comprehensively theorize the concept, the form that it takes could differ in societies, and this research questions the meaning of "high status cultural signals" in contemporary China against four possibilities—classical highbrow arts, symbolic exclusion of the lowbrow, higher cultural engagement of the elites, or orientations toward new, including popular, forms of art.

Cultural capital was first conceived by Bourdieu, which based on his study of French society in the 1960s and 1970s, is represented by elites' penchant for the traditional high culture of the time (Bourdieu, 1984). In this research, Bourdieu's classical conception of cultural capital is called "**classical highbrow**," represented by the traditional music factor from MIRT. To recap, that music factor is heavily loaded by various Chinese operas and traditional music, along with Western classical and Western opera, the preference for which suitably represents classical cultural capital.

However, with the decline of highbrow culture and rise of the challenge of the cultural omnivores, which suggests that elites are increasingly tolerant and inclusive in consumption (Peterson and Kern, 1996), Bourdieu's original theory seems outdated in contemporary society under the proliferation of popular culture. There have been three alternative perspectives on the pattern of cultural distinction in contemporary society. Bryson argued that the elites, under the pretense of tolerance and openness, continue to practice the "**symbolic exclusion**" of cultural forms favored by the underclasses (Bryson, 1996). This is operationalized here research by the local music factor from MIRT (see Chapter 4), which consists of various local music items that are favored by the underprivileged but almost universally denigrated by the privileged.

Alternatively, a study on cultural consumption in contemporary Britain applied MCA to find a new division between the cultural engagement of the elites versus the disengagement of the underprivileged (Bennett et al., 2009). Elites are found to be more active participants in cultural life. This argument preserves the Bourdieusian homology between culture and social position without being dependent on classical highbrow art. In my research, this is called "**cultural engagement**," operationalized by the variable on the number of live music events participated in the past year.

Lastly, Bourdieusian scholars have recently turned to the concept of **emerging cultural capital**, which suggests alternative forms of distinction by elites in the contemporary world based on "mode of consumption" (Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2014). This argues that cultural distinction can be drawn through contemporary popular culture through distinction in the attitude of consumption. This is best operationalized in my research as the taste for selective foreign music, which has the characteristics of being contemporary music forms that are marked by a discerning mode of appreciation, selected by elites due to their ability to distinguish "quality" (see Chapter 5).

The analysis uses analysis of variance (ANOVA), the same as described in Chapter 4. This analyzes whether people's level of cultural capital (represented using having high-status tastes) different between socioeconomic subgroups, controlling for differences in age, gender, and city.

Parental privileges

The influencers of cultural capital have been divided into the three stages of parental privileges, childhood privileges, and adulthood privileges. Parental privileges are the advantages of the respondents' parents, of which the ones included in this study are parental occupational class, education, state affiliation, and party membership. Childhood privileges are the privileges experienced as a child, which include hukou and play whether the individual learned to play a musical instrument—which reflects both parental interest in culture as well as parental affluence to afford music lessons. Finally, adulthood privileges include the level of education, of which higher education obtained as adults is the most relevant, and foreign experience which is most likely to be accumulated through study abroad or work engagements later in life. It is also recognized that parental privileges may also influence childhood privileges and adulthood privileges, and childhood privileges may also influence adulthood privileges, so mediation effects will be considered in the models

(1) Father's occupational class

This variable is similar to the EGP variable described in an earlier chapter, but asks for the fathers' EGP class instead of the respondents'. This question is based on the current employment situation of the father, or the last employment situation for fathers who are unemployed/retired/diseased. Ideally, the research hopes to obtain an earlier EGP status of the father—such as when the respondent was born or at a certain age. However, it is deemed to be unnecessarily challenging and may induce higher non-response rates. Given the rapid development of China in the past 40 years, it is reasonable to believe that father's EGP status during respondents' childhood is the same or definitely no worse than the current one, thus this is taken as father's occupational class in the past, while recognizing that this is not as ideal as a precise reflection of parental privilege during respondents' upbringing. The EGP status is segmented 3 segments which represent a hierarchy of occupational class of the father[9].

Table 6-1. Subgroups by father's EGP

	cases	pct
Manual (EGP class 5,6,7)	514	49%
Mixed (EGP class 3,4)	284	27%
Service (EGP class 1,2)	250	24%
Total	1048	100%

Father's occupation was divided into manual (EGP 5, 6, or 7), mixed (EGP 3 or 4), or service (EGP 1 or 2), with 49%, 27%, and 24% of the sample, respectively.

(2) Father's education

Education is the socioeconomic factor of focus in this chapter. Education is commonly used to operationalize cultural capital. Education reflects the combination of both the primary accumulation of cultural capital from their parental privileges, as well as their own secondary achievement later in life. In the West, education has a strong linkage with cultural taste and practices (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010; Reeves, 2015). Education in China underwent rapid expansion in recent decades. On the surface, this is a sign of expanding equality, but education opportunity has been unequal, and education attainment encompass other forms of inequality in China, such as parental socioeconomic status and the urban-rural divide (Wu, 2010; Wu and Zhang, 2010; Zhou et al., 1998).

Parental education is measured through the father's educational attainment. Asking only for father's education is not uncommon in China, because paternal and maternal education are highly correlated, plus traditionally fathers are the better educated in the family as well as being the main wage earner, whereas

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[9] The official EGP classification consists of 7 classes, which are 1) higher and 2) lower managerial and professional occupations, 3) intermediate occupations, 4) small employers and own account workers, 5) lower supervisory and technical occupations, 6) semi-routine and 7) routine occupations.

some mothers do not work outside of the home (Wu, 2011). This is intended to reflect the father's level of cultural capital.

Table 6-2. Subgroups by father's education

	cases	pct
MS or Below	416	40%
HS	355	34%
College or Above	277	26%
Total	1048	100%

In the sample, respondents whose father's educational attainment is middle school or below, high school, and college or above consist of 40%, 34%, and 26% of the sample, respectively. The level of educational attainment is noticeably lower than that of the respondents.

(3) Father's state affiliation, and parental party membership

Aside from occupational class, some scholars have argued that association with the state apparatus is also a form of privilege in China. Goldthorpe's class has been criticized to overlook non-market institutions, such as the importance of political-status of the institution in employment relations (Bian et al., 2005; Zou, 2015). The social structure under Mao was based on bureaucratic rank and state-mechanisms, which to some extent has continued to this day (Yan, 2010). The most influential adaptation of EGP's model of occupational social strata in China comes from the CASS Institute of Sociology, which includes whether one is inside or outside the party-state system10 (Lu, 2002: 44). While this research does not intend to debate the merit of certain class definitions, two variables relating to political affiliation have been included.

First, the father's job affiliation is asked. This is intended to differentiate the father's employment hierarchy, rather than the higher ideal of precisely measuring the father's occupational status when the respondent was growing up. This is by asking whether the father's current/last occupation was in the government, a state-affiliated institution, or a state-owned enterprise (as opposed to working in the private economy: private firms, foreign firms, or joint-ventures, or self-employed).

Secondly, the "party parents" variable ask about membership in the Communist Party of China. The question for parents was asked as "do you have any parent who is a member of the party?"—this is true if either or both parents are party members. Political resources are operationalized as party membership of the respondent and the parents. While recognizing that this does not differentiate between ordinary party

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10 The 9 social strata are 1) state and social administrators, 2) higher managerial, 3) private business owners, 4) individual business owners (self-employed or employ manual workers), 5) professional and technical personnel, 6) office workers, 7) service workers, 8) industrial workers, 9) agricultural laborers.

members from those who with deep connections, in a mass survey these should give a rough indication of political resources and any taste distinction from affiliation with the group.

Table 6-3. Subgroups by father's job affiliation and parental party membership

	Party Parent/s	No Party Parent	Total
Dad works for the State	215 (20.5%)	223 (21.3%)	438 (42%)
Dad does not work for the State	101 (9.6%)	509 (48.6%)	610 (58%)
Total	316 (30.0%)	732 (70.0%)	1048

Party membership relates to whether the father works in a state-job, but both party members and non-members have jobs affiliated with the state. In this sample, 42% of the respondents have a father who is employed by the state, while 58% are in the private economy. In this sample, 70% of the respondents do not have any parent who is a party member, whereas 30% have at least one parent who is a party member. There is a strong correlation between parental party membership and the father having a job affiliated with the state.

Childhood privileges

(1) Childhood hukou

Hukou is a dummy variable that reflects whether the respondent has an urban hukou (household registration) at age 18. Since the respondents by sample design are already residing in the cities, this variable captures the individual's hukou background. 18 is used because those who convert a hukou based on their own merits, such as through education, occupation, or wealth, are likely to have converted after age 18. Although hukou conversion through parents is possible at an earlier age, age 18 was chosen because hukou status at a major turning point would be easier to recall.

Hukou, the household registration which divides its population between urban and rural, is another important source of cultural capital in China. Hukou status marks arguably the largest binary division between being privileged or underprivileged in contemporary Chinese society. However, instead of investigating the more obvious question of whether rural and urban populations differ in taste, this examines whether the hukou that one had while growing up leaves any persistent effect on the accumulation of cultural capital. This helps to answer whether the stigma against migrant workers is primarily based on occupation and wealth, or can it be attributed to a cultural distinction that is deeper.

One's *hukou* at the age of 18 was asked as an indicator of one's rural or urban upbringing. Instead of asking one's current hukou status, this survey asked one's hukou status at age 18—to see which hukou one held during their childhood development, as a status inherited from parents excluding the hukou status obtained by their own achievement as adults. The respondents currently living in megacities could have converted from rural to urban hukou as adults by their own educational, vocational, or economic achievement, so hukou at the age of 18 is a measurement of parental influence. This allows us to trace further back to see whether hukou during one's upbringing influences cultural taste. This is quite important, as it allows us to

determine whether cultural capital is primarily linked to achievement as adults—attaining higher education, high income, joining the party (with the recognition that parental factors nonetheless have a heavy influence on adult achievements), or whether cultural capital is inculcated earlier in life, a position that Bourdieu takes with his concept of habitus. If *hukou* status as childhood is still discriminating in the music taste, it reinforces existing research that childhood *hukou* status is not only disadvantaging, but also leaves an imprint in ways that future income and education are unable to make-up. The difference between this measurement and *hukou* at birth is that those who converted to urban *hukou* before age 18 are considered as urban here, since this reflects a higher likelihood of growing up in the urban and reflects parental achievement. Childhood in the rural village parallels to Bourdieu's observations of countryside upbringing in France, from which he conceptualized the perpetual influence of habitus on later life.

Table 6-4. Subgroups by childhood hukou

	cases	pct
RuralBg	484	46%
UrbanBg	564	54%
Total	1048	100%

In this sample, 46% of the respondents have a rural background, while 54% have an urban background.

(2) Childhood musical instrument lessons

This variable is a dummy variable that indicates whether the respondent received music instruction as a child—defined as having learned to play any musical instrument for over 1 year as a child (under age 18). Economic capital became increasingly important after Reform and Opening, but the economic wealth of the parents is difficult to measure in retrospect. It is also highly improbable for respondents to know about their parent's historic income during their childhood. However, an alternative way to capture this is through whether the parents afforded their child a musical education. Learning to play an instrument in their childhood indicates parental interest in children's cultural development (parental cultural capital) as well as having the disposable income to pay for instruments and lessons (economic capital). Music education is a sign of middle-class taste, particularly so for the generation who grew up during the beginning of Reform and Opening.

Table 6-5. Subgroups by music lessons

	cases	pct
No	758	72%
Yes	290	28%
Total	1048	100%

Most respondents have not learned a musical instrument for over a year as a child, comprising 72% of the sample. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents did.

Adulthood privileges

(1) Education

Education has been discussed in the section on parental education. The sample is believed to be skewed to those who are higher educated. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, and 10% have above a bachelor's degree. The use of ANOVA, to analyze whether taste is affected by educational subgroups, is robust to different subgroup sizes.

Table 6-6. Subgroups by education

	cases	pct
Middle School or Below	74	7%
High School	180	17%
College	288	27%
Bachelor	396	38%
Above Bachelor	110	10%
Total	1048	100%

(2) Foreign living experience

The foreign experience variable shows whether the respondent has lived outside Mainland China for 6 months or more, continuously or in total. Although this might be thought of as an experience that accumulates cultural capital, the results (discussed in an earlier chapter) indicate that foreign experience is primarily related to tastes of the high-income rather than those of high cultural capital. Foreign experience is thus an indicator of the affluence to travel and spend time abroad through short-term education or work, instead of the quality of upbringing that is more influential on cultural capital. Since foreign education can lead to higher income, and for those in higher-paying jobs to have the opportunity to work and live abroad, this is not meant to be an indication of causality.

Table 6-7. Subgroups by foreign experience

	cases	pct
No foreign exp	977	93%
Foreign exp	71	07%
Total	1048	100%

Correlation between the variables

The table of correlations below shows that parental inequalities and development inequalities are, unsurprisingly, highly related. The categorical variables have been converted to dummy variables for the correlation. All the correlations are significant at 0.1%. In particular, although education attainment most heavily influences highbrow taste, education is correlated with all the other variables.

Table 6-8. Pearson's correlation between various privileges

		Parental Privileges				Childhood Privileges		Adulthood Privileges	
		Service Dad	Edu Dad	Gov Dad	Party Parents	Play Instrmt	Hukou	Edu	Foreign
Parental Privileges	Service Dad	-	0.395	0.087	0.301	0.174	0.222	0.232	0.143
	Edu Dad	0.395	-	0.100	0.316	0.246	0.330	0.355	0.204
	Gov Dad	0.087	0.100	-	0.128	0.072	0.173	0.094	0.066
	Party Parents	0.301	0.316	0.128	-	0.198	0.254	0.202	0.154
Childhood Privileges	Play Instrument	0.174	0.246	0.072	0.198	-	0.222	0.208	0.173
	Hukou	0.222	0.330	0.173	0.254	0.222	-	0.342	0.128
Adulthood Privileges	Edu	0.232	0.355	0.094	0.202	0.208	0.342	-	0.204
	Foreign	0.143	0.204	0.066	0.154	0.173	0.128	0.204	-

All of the correlations are significant at 0.1%, therefore they are not individually marked with asterisks.

The positive correlations between the variables indicates that parental, childhood, and adulthood privileges are closely related. This supports the numerous previous researches that point to the conversion of various forms of capital, and the sustaining of privileges between different generations (Bian and Logan, 1996; Davis and Wang, 2009; Goodman, 2008a, 2016; Guo, 2013; Li, 2012; Liu, 2005; Nee, 1989, 1991; Tsang, 2014; Walder, 2006; Walder and Hu, 2009; Wang, 2008; Wu, 2011; Wu and Treiman, 2004, 2007). In other words, it is not surprising that they all play a role in the development of high tastes. Therefore, these terms not all go into a single model, due to the high degree of collinearity. Furthermore, this research aims at dissecting the relationship between these inequalities and highbrow taste to understand which of these are more important—to better understand the meaning of cultural capital in China. In particular, the influence of parental, childhood, and adulthood privileges on taste will indicate whether cultural capital in China is recent in formation or represents a solidifying intergenerational inequality within the 40 years of Reform and Opening.

6.3 Tracing the sources of cultural capital to parental and childhood privileges

Drawing from survey data, the cultural capital indicators will be compared between people whose father's occupational class, education, party membership and employment relationship with the state are different. Then childhood privileges and adulthood privileges will be examined. Cultural capital is separately examined as classical highbrow cultural capital, emerging cultural capital, symbolic exclusion, and cultural engagement. The overarching finding is that the sources of cultural capital can be traced to parental and childhood privileges, even though widespread inequality in China only occurred one generation ago since Reform and Opening.

The influence of parental privileges on cultural capital

(1) Father's occupational class

First, we look at the differences in classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, and symbolic exclusion scores between the groups of people whose fathers' occupational classes are different—the left three charts in

the figure below. The charts show that those whose fathers are in higher occupational classes have higher scores for classical highbrow and emerging cultural capital but demonstrate lower symbolic exclusion. Next, we examine the chart for cultural engagement, which shows the average number of cultural engagement events attended in the past year among the same subgroups. The chart shows that the higher the occupational class of the father, the higher the cultural engagement. Thus, father's occupational class appears to influence all forms of cultural capital of the individual, which suggests that it is rooted in parental privileges.

Figure 6-2. Differences in cultural capital by father's EGP occupational class
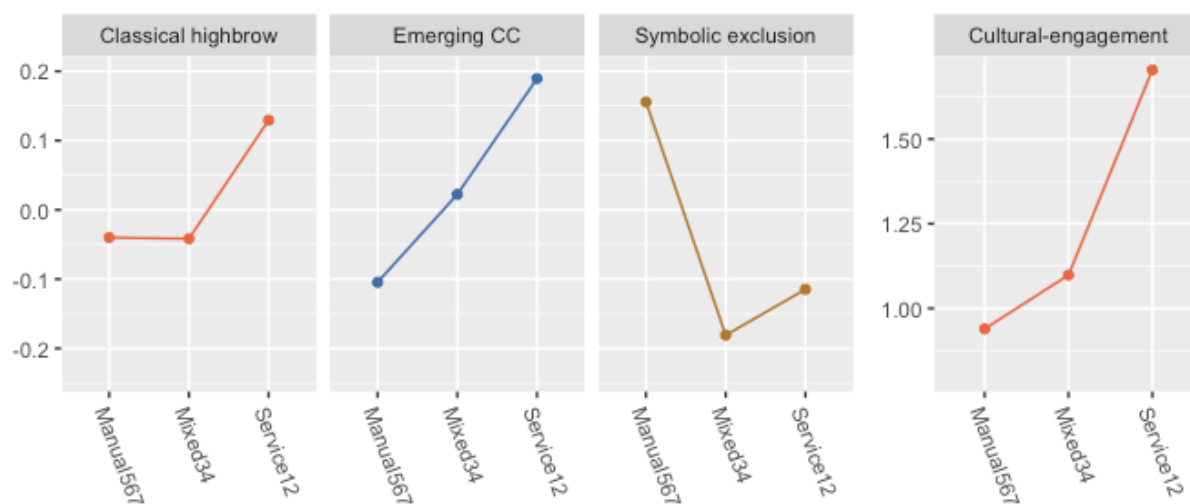
To examine the statistical significance of the finding, as well as to examine whether the influence is direct or indirect—i.e. the possibility that father's class increases the chances for higher education and it is the higher education that leads to higher cultural capital—ANOVA models are run (see table below).

The first set of ANOVA models, model A, test if the cultural capital scores are different between the groups of people whose father's EGP are different, after controlling for age, gender, and city. For classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, and symbolic exclusion, ordinary ANOVA is run, with the sum of squared and the F-value in parenthesis being reported. Cultural engagement is a variable of counts, so the negative binomial ANOVA model is run, with the Chi-squared likelihood is reported. The significance level of all the tests are reported using the asterisks. The father's EGP is statistically significant in model 2A, 3A, and 4A, which indicates that emerging cultural capital, symbolic exclusion, and cultural engagement differ depending on the father's occupational class.

To examine whether the increased cultural capital scores are more strongly due to parental privileges of father's EGP class, or is it more strongly due to the individual's own achievement, the years of education is added to the ANOVA model to control for the influence of the individual's own achievement. The additional models are added as model 2B, 3B, and 4B. (There is no need to test the model 1B because the taste for classical highbrow has already been shown to be not significantly different by father's EGP class in model 1A).

Table 6-9. ANOVA results for father's EGP

	(1A)	(2A)	(2B)	(3A)	(3B)	(4A)	(4B)
	Classical highbrow	Emerging cc		Symbolic exclusion		Cultural engagement	
EGP Dad	**5.02.** (2.58)	**11.18***** (5.83)	**2.00** (1.09)	**17.16***** (9.38)	**7.54*** (4.25)	**30.52*****	**14.16*****
Edu	-	-	47.87*** (52.42)	-	29.51*** (33.28)	-	39.01***
Age	22.89*** (23.58)	1.12 (1.16)	0.23 (0.25)	28.15*** (30.79)	23.39*** (26.38)	0.41	0.04
Gender	1.61 (1.65)	31.93*** (33.32)	28.08*** (30.76)	4.15* (4.54)	3.11. (3.51)	0.11	0.26
City	4.34 (1.49)	3.98 (1.39)	4.63 (1.69)	30.71*** (11.20)	30.66*** (11.53)	2.16	2.37
Residuals	1009.98	996.52	948.66	950.82	921.3	30.52	14.16

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The result suggests that father's occupational class continues to influence the degree of symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement even after controlling for the person's own educational attainment. In model 3B and 4B, the father's EGP class continues to be significant, at 5% and 0.01% significance, respectively. Therefore, emerging cultural capital is influenced by education, whereas the father's occupational class still influences symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement. Symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement are inculcated earlier in life, as it relates to parental occupational class.

(2) Father's education

The analysis for father's education and subsequent variables is the same as that before, therefore I will not repeat the description of the shared aspects with previous models. The figure below compares the indicators of cultural capital by father's education, divided into middle school or below, high school, and college or above. Parental privilege, this time examined through father's education, again appears to influence the development of cultural capital. Classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, and cultural engagement again increases, and symbolic exclusion decreases, as father's education increases.

Figure 6-3. Differences in cultural capital by father's education
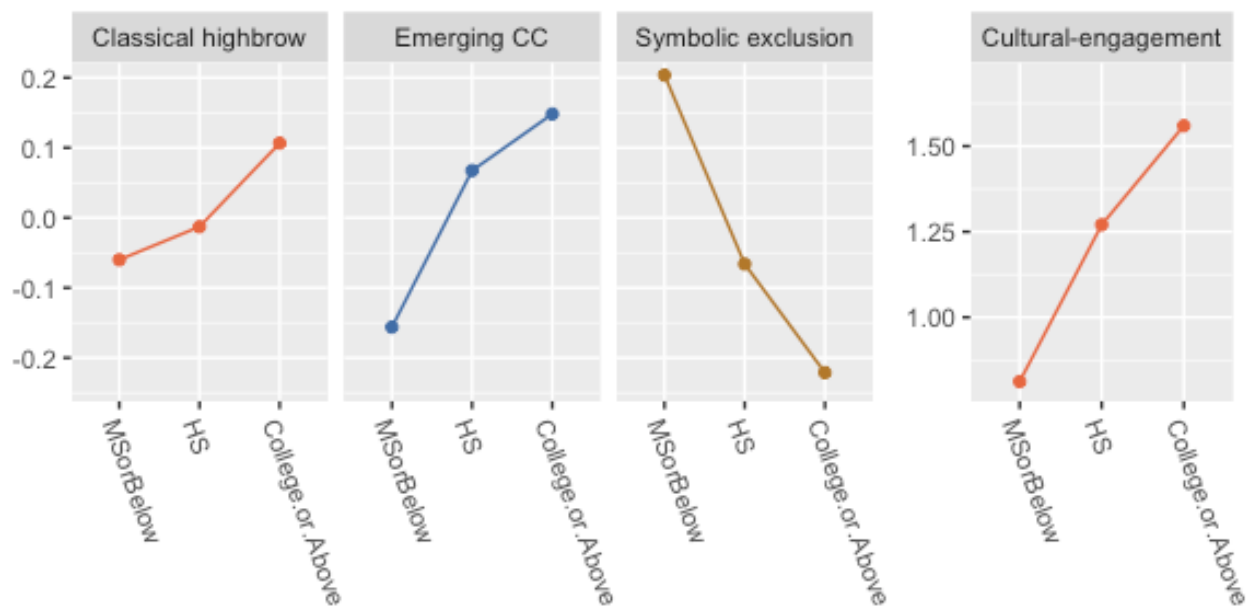
We again turn to the ANOVA models to examine statistical significance as well as to distinguish direct and indirect influences of parental privilege on cultural capital. Model 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A show father's education to be significant, which means the cultural capital scores are significantly different according to father's education, after controlling for age, gender, and city. Model 1B, 2B, 3B, and 4B show that the individual's years of education mediates the effect of parental education for classical highbrow and emerging cultural capital, because father's education is no longer significant in model 1B and 2B. However, father's education continues to be significant for symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement after controlling for education, in model 3B and 4B. Thus, symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement are both influenced earlier in life through father's privileges, whereas the influence for classical highbrow and emerging cultural capital is indirectly through educational attainment of the individual.

Table 6-10. ANOVA results for father's education

	(1A)	(1B)	(2A)	(2B)
	Classical highbrow		Emerging cc	
Edu Dad	**4.08***	**0.03**	**9.78***	**0.25**
	(4.20)	(0.03)	(10.21)	(0.27)
Edu	-	23.73***	-	47.51***
		(24.99)		(51.99)
Age	23.51***	27.62***	1.1	0.2
	(24.21)	(29.10)	(1.15)	(0.21)
Gender	1.64	1.03	32.55***	28.39***
	(1.68)	(1.09)	(33.95)	(31.07)
City	4.5	4.82	4.3	4.93
	(1.55)	(1.69)	(1.49)	(1.80)
Residuals	1010.92	987.2	997.92	950.4

	(3A)	(3B)	(4A)	(4B)
	Symbolic exclusion		Cultural engagement	
Edu Dad	**27.44*****	**10.52*****	**33.3*****	**12.34*****
	(30.37)	(11.91)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Edu	-	22.2***	-	34.31***
		(25.15)		(1.00)
Age	30.47***	25.88***	0.27	0.01
	(33.73)	(29.31)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Gender	4.63*	3.6*	0.15	0.28
	(5.12)	(4.07)	(1.00)	(1.00)
City	32.36***	31.81***	1.7	2.1
	(11.94)	(12.01)	(3.00)	(3.00)
Residuals	940.53	918.33	33.3	12.34

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The influence of parental education on cultural capital is partially indirect, accounted by higher education for the child after the child grows up. Although parental education strongly influences other privileges for the child, the privileges were not exclusionary. Continuous reforms such as the expansion of education and urbanization opened pathways for others to attain cultural capital. Yet parental education still has an influence on cultural engagement, which is potentially caused by children of well-educated parents being brought to cultural activities, which becomes a habit when the child grows up. Similarly, symbolic exclusion was influenced by parental education, potentially due to influencing the child away from the local toward the foreign. These will be further explained based on interview data in chapter 7. However, the influence on emerging cultural capital was explained by higher education of the child, potentially because the rise of selective music is a much more recent phenomenon.

(3) Fathers' state affiliation

The figure below compares the cultural capital by different fathers' state affiliation. The graphs show that the father's work affiliation with the state is linked with higher scores for classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, and cultural engagement, but the relationship is not clear for symbolic exclusion.

Figure 6-4. Differences in cultural capital by father's job affiliation
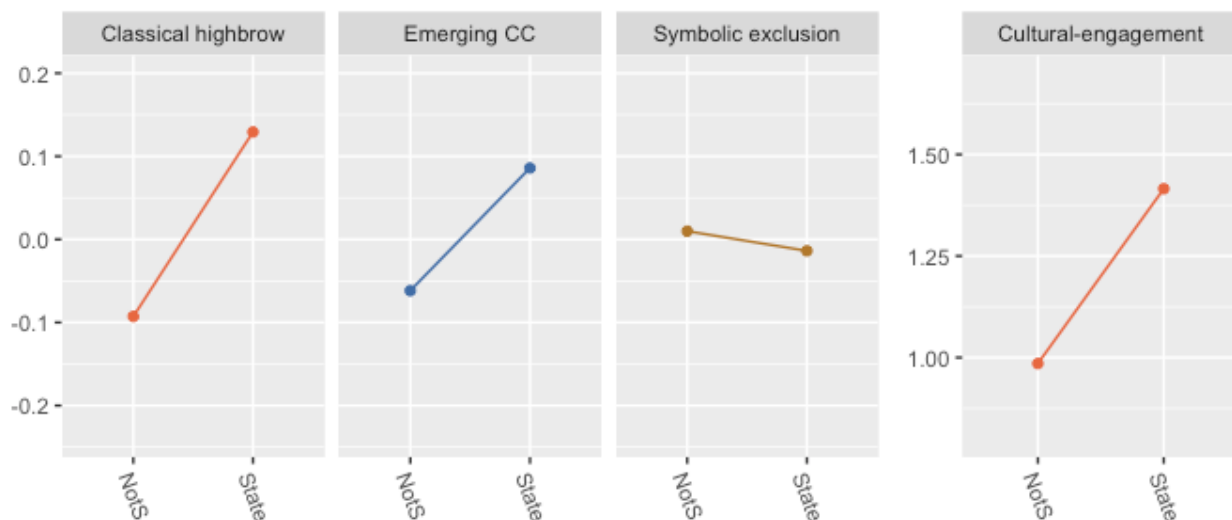
ANOVA shows that, after controlling for age, gender and city, the term for father's state job is significant for all four cultural capital indicators (model 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A). This means cultural capital scores are different depending on whether people's fathers worked in state-affiliated jobs or not. Adding the individual's own education to the model makes the father's state job term insignificant for all models (1B, 2B, 3B) except for cultural engagement (4B), which means that the influence of father's state job is primarily through the higher educational attainment of the child except for cultural engagement, where a father's privileges in association with state continue to be influential even after controlling for education.

Table 6-11. ANOVA results for father's state affiliation

	(1A)		(1B)		(2A)		(2B)	
	Classical highbrow				Emerging cc			
Father State Job	**5.75**	*	**2.65**	.	**6.22**	*	**1.91**	
	(5.93)		(2.80)		(6.46)		(2.09)	
Edu	-		24.68	***	-		52.74	***
			(26.07)				(57.81)	
Age	17.52	***	22.85	***	2.78	.	0.54	
	(18.07)		(24.14)		(2.89)		(0.59)	
Gender	1.81		1.01		34.09	***	28.43	***
	(1.86)		(1.06)		(35.44)		(31.16)	
City	4.22		4.45		4.38		4.86	
	(1.45)		(1.57)		(1.52)		(1.78)	
Residuals	1009.25		984.58		1001.48		948.75	

	(3A)		(3B)		(4A)		(4B)	
	Symbolic exclusion				Cultural engagement			
Father State Job	**4.86**	*	**1.65**		**16.17**	***	**8.62**	***
	(5.25)		(1.85)		(1.00)		(1.00)	
Edu	-		35.92	***	-		47.94	***
			(40.28)				(1.00)	

Age	37.08	***	27.9	***	1.96		0.49
	(40.08)		(31.30)		(1.00)		(1.00)
Gender	5.81	*	3.99	*	0.05		0.22
	(6.29)		(4.48)		(1.00)		(1.00)
City	32.65	***	31.84	***	1.31		1.71
	(11.76)		(11.90)		(3.00)		(3.00)
Residuals	963.12		927.2		16.17		8.62

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
For cultural engagement, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

(4) Parental party membership

The charts below compare cultural capital scores depending on whether the respondent has at least a parent who is a party member. The results show that parental party membership is associated with higher classical highbrow cultural capital and higher cultural engagement, but the results for emerging cultural capital and symbolic exclusion are less clear.

Figure 6-5. Differences in cultural capital by parents' party affiliation
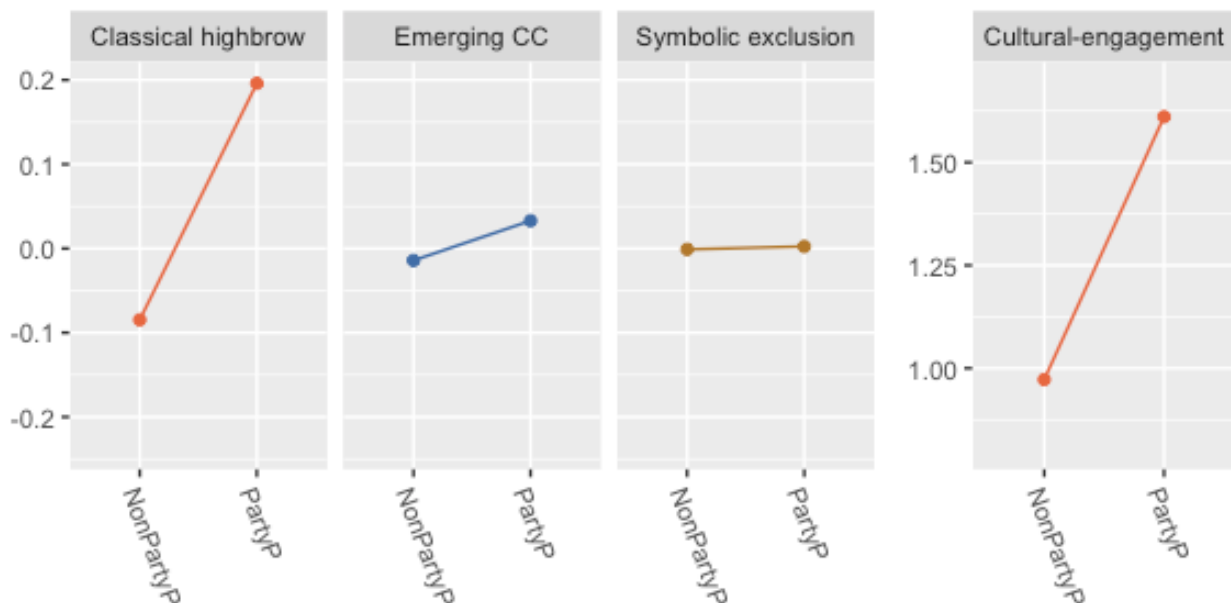
Testing the result with ANOVA shows the score for classical highbrow and cultural engagement are significantly different for those who have parental party membership, because the party parent term is significant in model 1A and 4A. There is no influence from parental party membership on the score of emerging cultural capital or symbolic exclusion. Adding the respondents' own party membership to the model, in model 1B and 4B, tests if the respondents' own party membership mediates the effect of parental party membership, i.e. is the influence of parental party membership on cultural capital direct, or is it

indirect through the higher chances of party member parents to have children who also become a party member.

Both party parents and the party terms are significant in both models 1B and 4B, therefore growing up in a family with party members does increase classical highbrow cultural capital and cultural engagement, even after controlling for the person's own party membership. The increased classical highbrow cultural capital is a sign of the better social positions of party members as a political capital, as well as a sign of patriotism toward national culture. As political capital, party membership is a resource that relates to high social positions since Mao's China. Studies have found its convertibility to economic and cultural capital. The possession of political capital increases the frequency of book reading, and sophistication of the books that are read (Wang et al., 2006). The well-educated and people successful in their fields are granted the opportunity to become party members, therefore they are in a stronger social position in society to develop classical highbrow cultural capital.

Table 6-12. ANOVA results for parental party membership

	(1A)	(1B)	(2A)	(3A)	(4A)	(4B)
	Classical highbrow		Emerging cc	Symbolic exclusion	Cultural engagement	
Party Parents	**15.58** ***	**9.34** ***	**0.69**	**0.34**	**27.98** ***	**19.89** ***
	(16.23)	(9.84)	(0.71)	(0.37)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Party	-	12.45 ***	-	-	-	8.43 ***
		(13.12)				(1.00)
Age	21.92 ***	22.98 ***	1.46	33.36 ***	0.73	0.78
	(22.83)	(24.22)	(1.51)	(35.88)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Gender	2.06	1.87	34.88 ***	6.10 *	0.00	0.03
	(2.15)	(1.97)	(36.06)	(6.56)	(1.00)	(1.00)
City	4.11	4.09	4.49	31.31 ***	1.77	1.96
	(1.43)	(1.44)	(1.55)	(11.23)	(3.00)	(3.00)
Residuals	999.42	986.97	1007.01	967.63	27.98	19.89

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The ideological influence of party membership (and state affiliation) on classical highbrow (i.e. traditional music), and the lack of influence on emerging cultural capital (i.e. selective foreign music) deserves additional mention, as they both relate to current Communist ideologies of patriotism and fear of Western cultural values. Worries about the negative influence of foreign culture have long been a concern of the Communist party. Communist China traditionally had strong state control of media and foreign influences, but loosened control after Reform and Opening led to the emergence of transnational media. After Reform and Opening, the government has been more relaxed about apolitical music as entertainment, yet maintained censorship to control what can be consumed. A sign of the state's acceptance toward popular

culture was the establishment of CCTV's music television station in 1993, which in its early years served a range of both politicized songs promoting patriotism and nationalism, along with popular songs (Baranovitch, 2003: 194). Baranovitch shows that the state recognizes that people no longer accept undisguised propaganda messages, and adapted to the changing sentiments by "Chinese MTV programs featured different songs that alternated with one another, some very politicized, some with subtle propaganda, others with no political message at all. The result, taken as a whole, was a hybrid of popularized, sugarcoated political propaganda." (Baranovitch, 2003: 169). The media policy changed from absolute control to actively guiding and influencing popular music to be aligned with national ideologies.

However, the Party continued to maintain control in filtering, limiting, and censoring the amount and the content of cultural consumption that entered China for fear of ideological erosion. There have been successive movements such as "CCP's campaigns against "spiritual pollution" in 1983, against "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987, and against "peaceful evolution" in 1989 (JM Chan, 1994: 81). Even after joining WTO in 2011, China blocked media groups from open access to the local market, maintaining control and ownership of cultural producers, limiting Western influence to investments, joint ventures, partnerships, and special licensing (Lee et al., 2013: 44). Western media delivery companies such as YouTube and Google Play App store are completely blocked, allowing full party control over media censorship. (Yang, 1997). The state company China Film Group (CFG) oversee the import of foreign movies by controlling the proportion of revenue of US distributors, imposing quotas on the number of imports per year, censorship of content, and imposing blackout periods which forced Hollywood blockbusters to compete with each other on release dates (Boyd-Barrett, 2014: 171–173). Legally imported Western media are limited by import quotas, screened for content, censored for specific sensitive scenes, and dubbed by local producers, which can be viewed by the average Chinese. Those in luxury residential compounds or install illegal/grey satellite or devices may have access to additional foreign channels. Later on, new technologies such as file sharing and Internet Protocol Television allowed foreign media to be downloaded, supported by fan-groups who record, decrypt, subtitle, and share those content (Lee et al., 2013: 46–47). The consumption of Western culture is still quite accessible through informal and illegal means to those with the knowledge and agency to seek out for them, resulting in a stratified consumption.

Similarly on music, the government has been hesitant about the influence of foreign culture, generally opening up the market to foreign musicians, yet censoring certain music or artists deemed inappropriate to maintain control (Brace and Friedlander, 1992; Kraus, 2004; Rupke and Blank, 2009). In earlier decades, pop concerts were rare events that draw a large crowd in China and are therefore viewed as risks to be controlled. Early concerts in the 1990s, described were treated as collective national events, with anchors who delivered formal, prewritten text that emphasized nationalism and patriotism, while musicians were instructed "to avoid talking to the audience, not to try to stir them, just to sing and get off stage" (Baranovitch, 2003: 207). The censorship of songs, lyrics, and certain artists are opaque, unwritten, and negotiated boundaries which tighten or loosen depending on the sentiment of government officials at the time. Metal and rock had been sensitive in China, with rock experiencing a band in the 1990s. Tang Dynasty (metal band) and Cui Jian (rock singer) had concert tours terminated early, believed to be for violations such as speaking to the audience, getting off stage and stirring up the crowd, as official explanations are not

always given (Baranovitch, 2003: 217). Hong Kong and Taiwan singers performing in China felt the need to show patriotism to the motherland (Ho, 2000). Artists who acted against the interest of the party have been banned from China. Justin Bieber's misdemeanors caused him to be banned in 2017 to "purify" the nation (Phillips, 2017; White, 2017). Lady Gaga was banned in 2011 for "being vulgar," and again in 2016 after meeting the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing considers to be a separatist (Lynch, 2016; Lynskey, 2011; Phillips, 2016). A more recent example was the government's ban on hip-hop (Quackenbush and Chen, 2018).

Therefore, heavily influenced by party ideology, parental party membership influenced the stronger preference for classical highbrow, which primarily consists of traditional Chinese music, but not emerging cultural capital, which consists of both old and new foreign music. This also reflects the change in political ideology since reform and opening. Political capital in China has diverged from traditional Communist principles under Mao that oppose classical highbrow art as signs of bourgeoise and capitalist culture, favoring austerity and communal bonds over conspicuous consumption (EJ Croll, 2006: 23). Instead, political capital is a sign of high social status, associated with the consecration of traditional highbrow culture as national heritages and a sign of national pride, reflecting the shift in ideology since Reform and Opening.

(5) Summary—compelling evidence for the influence of parental privilege on cultural capital

Looking at all four indicators of cultural capital, we see that they can be strongly traced to parental privileges. Part of this effect is direct, while part of this is mediated through the respondent. Classical highbrow cultural capital most strongly relates to parental and respondents' party membership. Emerging cultural capital, which is displayed through newer forms of music, is primarily related to the respondents' own education. However, parental influences are strongest in instilling what they should not like—the distastes used for symbolic exclusion. Finally, cultural engagement seems to be related to all forms of privileges of the parents and respondents.

The influence of childhood privileges on cultural capital

After looking at parental inequalities, this section focuses on two main inequalities experienced by the child, which are the hukou background, and the level of educational attainment.

(1) Hukou

The figure below compares the cultural capital scores of people depending on their childhood hukou at age 18. The results show that having an urban hukou in the past is linked with having higher cultural capital.

Figure 6-6. Differences in cultural capital by childhood hukou
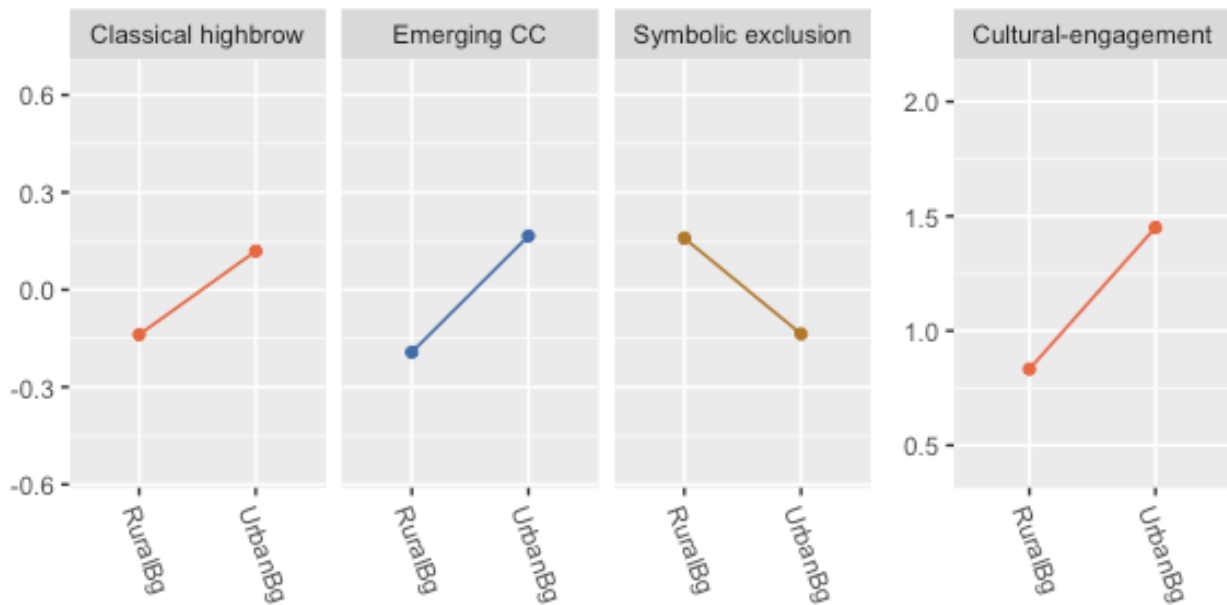
ANOVA is again used to examine the results for statistical significance after controlling for age, gender, and city. The results are in the table below. The differences in cultural capital are significant between people with or without childhood urban hukou, which are highly significant at 0.01% for all four cultural capital indicators (the childhood hukou term in model 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A). To examine whether the influence on taste from childhood hukou is mediated by the respondent's own educational attainment, education is added to the models. The result indicates that the childhood hukou remains highly significant for all cultural capital indicators (model 2B, 3B, 4B) except for Classical highbrow (model 1B).

Table 6-13. ANOVA results for hukou

	(1A)	(1B)	(2A)	(2B)
	Classical highbrow		Emerging cc	
Childhood Hukou	**12.28*****	**2.94.**	**31.50*****	**9.56*****
	(12.75)	(3.11)	(33.59)	(10.56)
Edu	-	18.43***	-	35.1***
		(19.48)		(38.79)
Age	18.24***	23.77***	3.63.	0.96
	(18.94)	(25.12)	(3.87)	(1.06)
Gender	1.42	0.93	30.93***	27.44***
	(1.48)	(0.98)	(32.98)	(30.32)
City	5.08	4.97	3.83	4.36
	(1.76)	(1.75)	(1.36)	(1.61)
Residuals	1002.72	984.29	976.2	941.1
	(3A)	(3B)	(4A)	(4B)
	Symbolic exclusion		Cultural engagement	
Childhood Hukou	**30.36*****	**12.14*****	**37.02*****	**15.8*****
	(33.71)	(13.78)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Edu	-	20.9***	-	34.15***
		(23.72)		(1.00)
Age	41.3***	31.97***	2.07	0.54
	(45.86)	(36.27)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Gender	4.57*	3.58*	0.01	0.12
	(5.07)	(4.06)	(1.00)	(1.00)
City	30.13***	30.23***	1.73	2.01
	(11.15)	(11.43)	(3.00)	(3.00)
Residuals	937.61	916.71	37.02	15.8

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Thus, hukou influences all four indicators of cultural capital directly. After controlling for education, all but the score for classical highbrow cultural capital remain highly significant. The effects of urban background remain strong even *after* accounting for education, showing that primary socialization in the formative years indeed leaves an imprint on cultural capital. This demonstrates that cultural capital is significantly influenced by earlier childhood experiences in the habitus, a deficit which can be ameliorated but not completely overcome through education attainment later in life. The widely documented discrimination against the rural migrants can be ameliorated through education, but the influence from the past remains. One's rural background leaves an imprint on taste that is hard to overcome by education or income—an imprint can be drawn for stigmatization.

(2) Music lessons

The figure below compares the amounts of cultural capital between people who learned to play musical instruments and those who did not. The results show that those who had music lessons have higher scores for classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, and cultural engagement, but the influence on symbolic exclusion is not significant. Thus, they are more likely to prefer highbrow music, but unlike other privileges, the influence on symbolic exclusion is not obvious.

Figure 6-7. Differences in cultural capital by learning to play an instrument when young
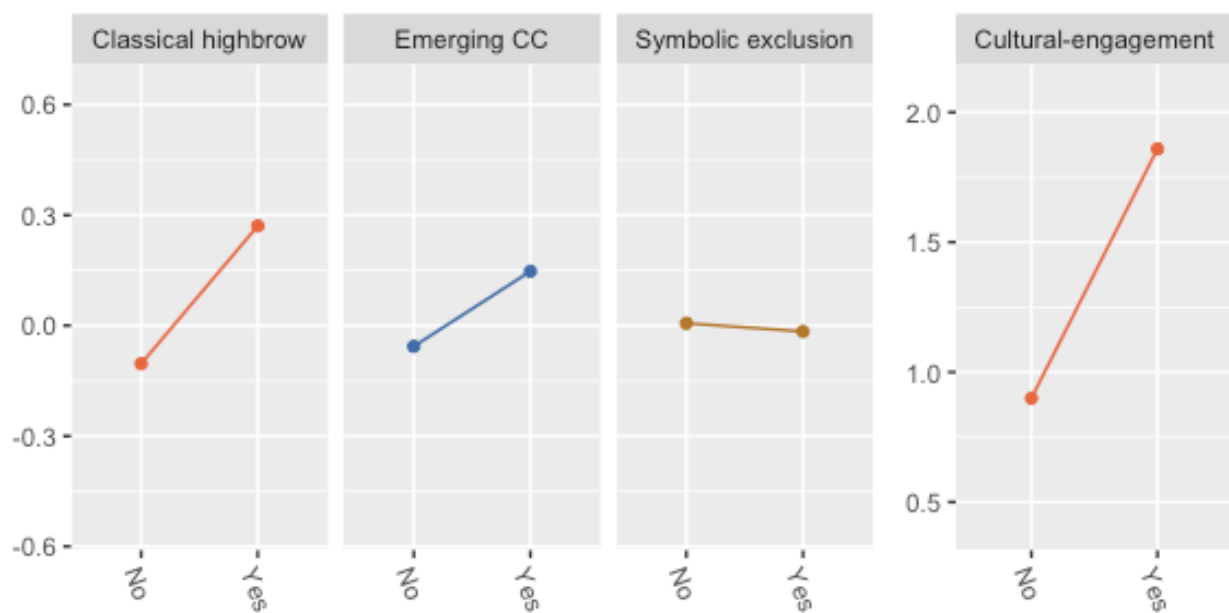
The ANOVA model confirms the interpretation above. Model 1A, 2A, 4A shows that music lessons significantly influence classical highbrow cultural capital, emerging cultural capital, and cultural engagement. Symbolic exclusion has no statistically significant change (model 2B). Adding respondents' own level of education to the model shows that the influence of childhood music lessons continues to influence classical highbrow cultural capital and cultural engagement.

Having music lessons is most heavily related to classical highbrow cultural capital and cultural engagement, which is unsurprising because instrument lessons tend to be classical highbrow instruments, then enjoyed in live concerts, and weakly linked to popular music. Thus, playing instruments relates to all cultural capital indicators except for symbolic exclusion—which is possibly because increased interests in music overall mitigates any influences of distaste from other factors.

Table 6-14. ANOVA results for music lessons

	(1A)	(1B)	(2A)	(2B)	(3A)	(4A)	(4B)
	Classical highbrow		Emerging cc		Symbolic exclusion	Cultural engagement	
Instru-	28.07***	18.44***	7.60***	0.38	0.49	59.48***	41.87***

ments	(29.61)	(19.80)	(7.92)	(0.43)	(0.52)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Edu	-	18.14***	-	39.02***	-	-	38.55***
		(19.48)		(43.71)			(1.00)
Age	23.27***	27.21***	1.34	26.22***	33.13***	0.45	0.04
	(24.55)	(29.21)	(1.40)	(29.37)	(35.65)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Gender	1.28	0.75	33.1***	4.15*	5.88*	0.07	0.27
	(1.35)	(0.81)	(34.45)	(4.64)	(6.33)	(1.00)	(1.00)
City	4.45	4.58	5.04	30.23***	31.42***	1.04	1.42
	(1.56)	(1.64)	(1.75)	(11.29)	(11.27)	(3.00)	(3.00)
Residuals	986.93	968.79	1000.1	928.47	967.48	59.48	41.87

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

The influence of adulthood privileges on cultural capital

(1) Educational attainment

Education is the factor that most heavily relates to cultural capital. The figure below compares cultural capital scores between people with different levels of education. The charts show a clear rise in classical highbrow cultural capital, emerging cultural capital, and cultural engagement, and lower symbolic exclusion, as the educational level increases.

Figure 6-8. Differences in cultural capital by education
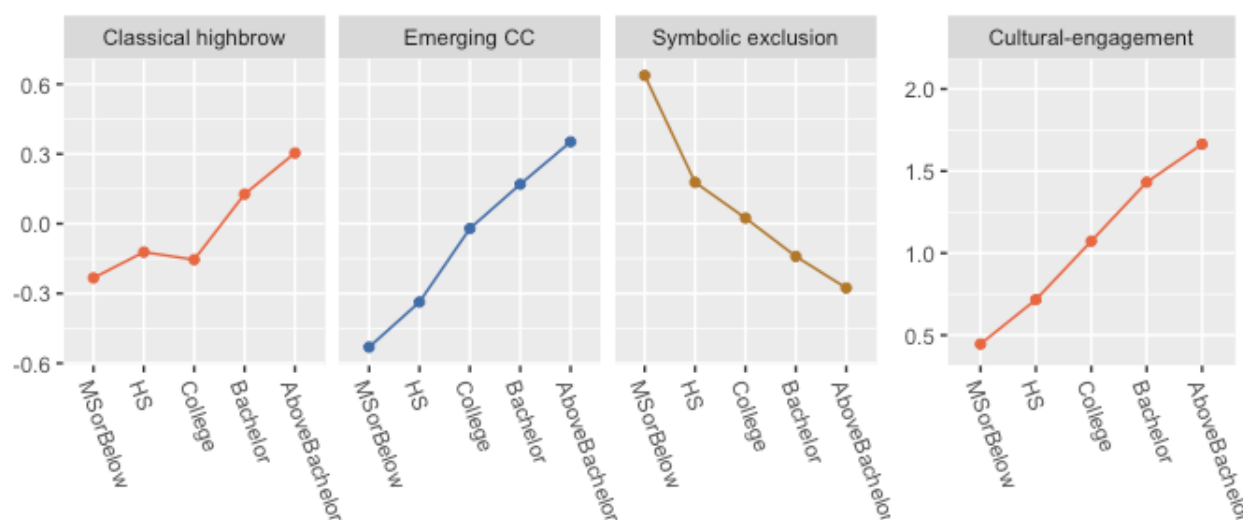
The ANOVA results also confirm the high significance of the interpretation, with the education term highly significant at 0.01% on all four cultural capital indicators. This result is unsurprising, demonstrating that education is the best indicator of cultural capital. Education is also used as a control in models to examine whether the influence was direct or indirect, therefore the difference in taste by education is again presented here to demonstrate its high significance in influencing cultural capital. The residual influences of other

factors have indicated how influence from parental and childhood privileges have developed cultural capital by shaping the person's habitus and influencing the opportunities for higher education.

Table 6-15. ANOVA results for educational attainment

	(1) Classical highbrow	(2) Emerging cc	(3) Symbolic exclusion	(4) Cultural engagement
Edu	**27.77*****	**57.05*****	**39.12*****	**55.93*****
	(29.29)	(62.47)	(43.85)	(1.00)
Age	27.61***	0.20	26.28***	0.00
	(29.11)	(0.22)	(29.45)	(1.00)
Gender	1.05	28.62***	4.06*	0.09
	(1.11)	(31.34)	(4.55)	(1.00)
City	4.84	4.97	30.98***	2.66
	(1.70)	(1.82)	(11.58)	(3.00)
Residuals	987.23	950.65	928.85	55.93

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

(2) Foreign living experience

The last variable to examine is whether the person has lived abroad. The figure below shows the differences in cultural capital between people who have and the people who have not. While the result also confirms the increase of classical highbrow cultural capital, emerging cultural capital, cultural engagement, and the decrease in symbolic exclusion, the influence of foreign experience is strongest for cultural engagement. The influence on the other three indicators of cultural capital is not as strong.

Figure 6-9. Differences in cultural capital by foreign experience
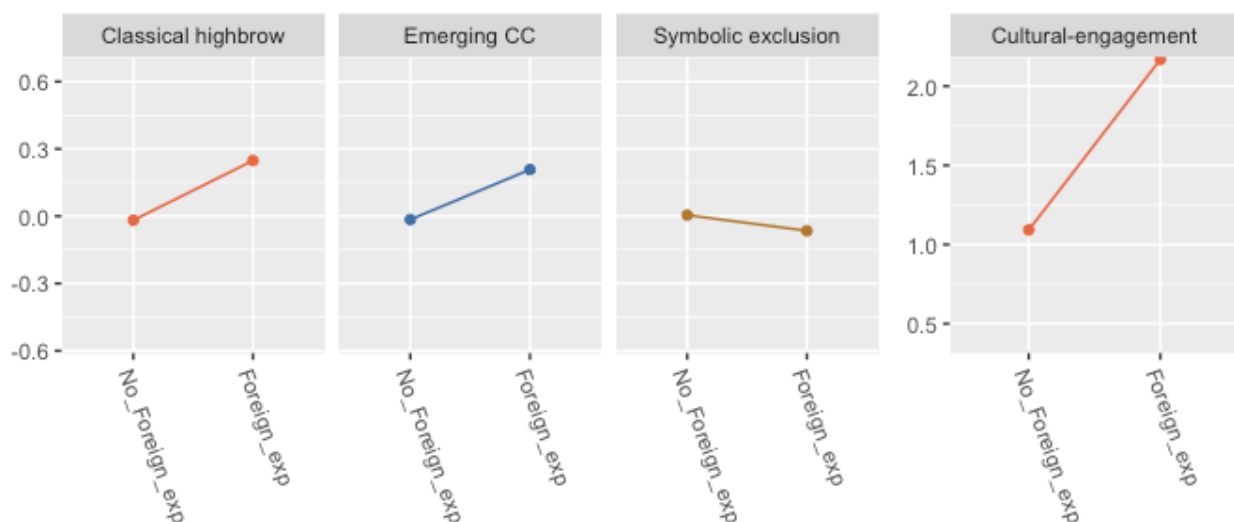
The interpretation above is verified with ANOVA. Model 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A show that having lived abroad mostly influences cultural engagement, with the term highly significant at 0.01% (model 4A). The influence on emerging cultural capital is also significant, but at a weaker 5% level (model 2B). The influences on classical highbrow and symbolic exclusion are not significant (model 1A and 3A). Adding education to the models in which lived-abroad is significant, the influence on emerging cultural capital is no longer significant (model 2B), whereas the influence on cultural engagement continues to be highly significant at 0.01% (model 4B). Therefore, the influence of foreign experience on cultural capital is limited to cultural engagement only. The slight influence on emerging cultural capital is fully explained by the higher levels of education of those who have lived abroad. The result suggests that the foreign living experience, which likely occurred later in life such as through higher education or work placement, has a relatively weak influence on cultural capital, which is molded earlier in life as Bourdieu described.

Table 6-16. ANOVA results for foreign experience

	(1A) Classical highbrow	(2A) Emerging cc	(2B)	(3A) Symbolic exclusion	(4A) Cultural engagement	(4B)
Lived Abroad	**2.27**	**4.16***	**0.14**	**2**	**20.25*****	**9.09*****
	(2.33)	(4.32)	(0.16)	(2.56)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Edu	-	-	53.03***	-	-	44.17***
			(58.02)			(1.00)
Age	20.86***	1.99	0.25	34.81***	1.49	0.28
	(21.44)	(2.06)	(0.27)	(37.52)	(1.00)	(1.00)
Gender	2.08	35.45***	28.75***	6.28*	0.01	0.13
	(2.14)	(36.77)	(31.45)	(6.77)	(1.00)	(1.00)
City	4.17	4.12	4.9	31.5***	2.73	2.94
	(1.43)	(1.42)	(1.79)	(11.32)	(3.00)	(3.00)
Residuals	1012.74	1003.54	950.51	965.59	20.25	9.09

In model 1-3, cells indicate the sum of squared (F-value), and the level of significance.
In model 4, the cells indicate Chi-squared likelihood and the level of significance.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

6.4 Discussion

Table 6-17. Summary of the significance of the variables from the previous models

		(1A) Classical highbrow	(2A) Emerging cc	(3A) Symbolic exclusion	(4A) Cultural engagement	(1B) Classical highbrow	(2B) Emerging cc	(3B) Symbolic exclusion	(4B) Cultural engagement
Parental Privileges	Father's EGP class	.	***	***	***			*	***

	Father's Edu	*	***	***	***			***	***
	Father's State Job	*	*	*	***	.			***
	Party Parents	***			***	***	/	/	***
Childhood Privileges	Childhood Urban Hukou	***	***	***	***	.	***	***	***
	Music Lessons	***	***		***	***		/	***
Adulthood Privileges	Education	***	***	***	***	/	/	/	/
	Foreign living experience		*		***	/		/	***

The model A columns show the significance of the term; the model B column shows the significance of the term after controlling for education, an adulthood privilege. The cells with a slash indicate the model was not tested as it is expected to be insignificant.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Parental privileges have a strong direct influence on individuals' cultural engagement, symbolic exclusion, and classical highbrow cultural capital. Parental privileges include the father's occupational class, social capital, as well as political capital, which strongly influences the environment of upbringing and childhood privileges enjoyed by the respondents. Being brought to live events and raised as active cultural participants at an early age strongly influence the level of cultural engagement later in life, as this required comprehensive parental privileges, in both having the income to support such activities (reflected through parental class), as well as the parental cultural capital (reflected through parental education) to recognize the value in cultural engagement. The notion of symbolic exclusion—distaste for the cultures of the underclasses—is also planted early in individual's lives. The act of distancing from local culture can be traced to the exposure to foreign and Hk/Taiwan culture occurred since the early days of the Reform and Opening of China (Carrier, 1995; Davis, 2000b; Tsang, 2014; Yan, 2000) and thus was a taste rooted in parental privileges. Interest in classical highbrow is also rooted in the parental privileges of parental party membership, which conferred powerful advantages during the early years of Reform and opening, as well as for the ideological promotion of patriotic national culture, described in the earlier section.

Childhood privileges are inculcated into the habitus during upbringing, influencing the development of cultural capital. Childhood privileges include urban hukou and music lessons during childhood. This research asks for respondents' hukou at age 18 to reflect the hukou during the person's upbringing, before any potential conversion of hukou through the person's own achievements later in life. Learning how to play an instrument during childhood also reflects the parental emphasis on culture and parental wealth. Childhood urban hukou is directly influential on emerging cultural capital, symbolic exclusion, and cultural engagement, further supporting Bourdieu that cultural capital is inculcated during upbringing. Emerging cultural capital is not traceable to parental privileges but is strongly associated with childhood urban hukou.

This is potentially because emerging cultural capital had been rare in the parental generation. Historically, legitimate culture had been an institutionalized and educated culture, without an emphasis on individual critique as the basis of quality (Yan, 2010). The shift toward emerging cultural capital, therefore, occurred during the privileged childhood of the current generation of Chinese, during which quality education and the promotion of individual *sushi* (cultivating internal qualities) started to gain traction (Jacka, 2009; Lin, 2011). The influence of childhood music lesson on traditional highbrow and cultural engagement is unsurprising because having parents with the cultural capital to be interested in music and the ability to afford music lessons are both signs of privileges in upbringing, while learning music instruments is strongly associated with traditional music and the habit of attending music concerts.

The level of education is also a strong indicator of cultural capital, not necessarily because of the extent that cultural knowledge is "taught" in universities, but because all forms of parental and childhood privileges which promote the development cultural capital also lead to higher chances of receiving higher education, as the educational opportunities in China have become increasingly narrow for underprivileged children (Walder, 2006; Woronov, 2013; Zhou et al., 1998). The fact that parental and childhood privileges are influential on cultural capital even after controlling for education illustrates the extent of parental endowments. The rapid expansion of opportunities for higher education in the 1990s has offered those without a privileged primary socialization the chance to catch up, but parental and childhood privileges have been influential even after controlling for education, therefore education alone is not able to overcome the deficit. Furthermore, people from privileged families are more likely to receive higher education themselves. Education opportunities are better for top-tier cities over secondary cities, and for urban over the rural, through different admission quotas as well as educational fees. The result is that educational opportunity is slanted toward those from privileged families—those with a better family social origin, in higher-tier cities over lower-tier cities, as well as urban households (Wu and Zhang, 2010; Zhou et al., 1998). The direct effect of parental education on children's years of education is found to be salient in many studies using large scale data (Sato and Shi, 2007; Walder and Hu, 2009; Xiang and Shen, 2009; Zhou et al., 1998). Education attainment is also found to encompass other forms of inequality in China, such as parental socioeconomic status and the urban-rural divide (Wu, 2010; Wu and Zhang, 2010; Zhou et al., 1998), and the province-based quota system in university admissions which favors urban residents particularly those in big metropolises (Liu et al., 2009). There are also differences in the quality and reputation of institutions within the same level of education which favors privileged groups (Du, 2013, pp. 168–169).

Finally, experience living abroad does not influence classical highbrow cultural capital or symbolic exclusion, which points to the limited influence of adulthood experiences in influencing cultural taste. Experience living abroad only increases cultural engagement, but this is due to higher income, and the bias that those who are culturally engaged enough to seek a foreign experience are unlikely to be culturally disengaged.

Overall, these findings provide convincing evidence on the existence of cultural capital which is consistent with Bourdieu's theory. Intergenerational inequality—privileges from parents and during childhood—has led to clear differences in music taste. Symbolic exclusion and cultural engagement are particularly traceable to parental influence. Traditional cultural capital is influenced by parental party membership, which in the past

was as important as political capital. Emerging cultural capital is traced to childhood privileges. All of these demonstrate that inequality in China has led to divergences in the cultures of those raised in different environments.

Chapter 7. The habitus of the new generation—the formation of cultural capital in China

7.1 Rise of social distinction in Chinese society

Amidst the widely researched social inequality and the prevalence of social stigma against the underclasses in China, inequalities in cultural capital have largely been overlooked in China. This chapter takes on a historical perspective to argue how cultural capital developed in China from non-existence to its current prevalence in the 40 years of Reform and Opening.

Rapid economic growth after Reform and Opening has led to the rise of economic inequalities and differences in lifestyle, which have been widely researched. However, the existing accounts have overlooked the influences of those inequalities on the development of the child. Those in privileged families had better physical access to foreign media, better equipped to consume foreign media with their English education, better opportunity for music literacy, and better opportunities for higher education, which itself further solidifies a highbrow taste. My argument is that intensifying inequalities in the four decades since Reform and Opening has not only enabled social distinction based on economic and status, but has also allowed a generation of Chinese to grow up in divergent environments, giving rise to a new generation of Chinese with increasingly distinguishable tastes—the rise of cultural capital.

Cultural capital is a concept that has been theorized by Bourdieu to be a structuring mechanism that perpetuates intergenerational inequality through culture (Bourdieu, 1984). Many pieces of research have discussed its relevance in various countries. However, most studies are based in Western societies (e.g. Bennett et al., 2009; Coulangeon, 2015; Harrits et al., 2010; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Prieur et al., 2008). It is questionable how cultural capital differs in other societies. Inequality and cultural capital in its current form developed from ground zero since Reform and Opening, providing a rare case that allows us to see the process of formation of cultural capital. Existing research has described the rise of high art, particularly when it spread from Europe to America, from the perspective of institutionalization and consecration of the art forms (DiMaggio, 1982b; Gans, 1974). This research describes the rise of cultural capital in the Chinese local context.

This research draws from the review of existing literature as well as 20 interviews in Shanghai and Beijing on the formation of music taste with people from various backgrounds. The semi-structured interviews lasted an average of one hour. Interviewees were recruited broadly from people willing to participate in a study on their music preferences. Those from privileged backgrounds are over-sampled because those with highest levels of cultural capital are most revealing of distinction in practice, but they comprise of only small percentages in the society to be picked up in representative surveys. Interviews present an opportunity to understand them.

(1) Distinction and cultural consumption prior to Reform and Opening

The first wave of modern consumerism started in the late Qing dynastic from the 1800s till the 1940s. The end of the imperial dynasty, along with the demise of the traditional path and symbols of power, saw consumerism becoming the site of competition for social status and nationalism during the Republican period (Gerth, 2003). After the Communist revolution in 1949, the state socialist order was created which pursued egalitarian policies to eliminate class. Private ownership in the means of production was abolished, removing economic inequalities in the population. Prior to Reform and Opening, Chinese society was egalitarian for the vast majority of the population. A pillar stone of equality and the lack of distinction is the replacement of free market with the *danwei* system—self-contained work units which provided full benefits including pensions, insurance, housing, medical care, education, and recreational facilities. The *danwei*, assigned by the state and essentially permanent, had enormous control over individuals (Andreas, 2016; Lu and Perry, 1997; Walder, 1986). Wages were low but social equality was for high for most people, due to the lack of private property and limited cultural consumption. Professionals and blue-collars had similar homes, mode of transportation, apparel, and leisure activities. Any residual differences were more attributed to allocated resources of the particular *danwei* than to personal wealth (Davis, 2000a: 5). Culturally, the government had tight control of media, forbidding the consumption of popular music and resulted in largely uniform tastes for everyone (Ho and Law, 2012: 403). This culminated in the Cultural Revolution when those with higher education or higher ranking professions were "leveled down" to eliminate distinctions, through efforts such as sending intellectuals into agricultural labor, and the promotion of a unisex style of dress that obscures status (Parish, 1984; Whyte, 1981, 2010: 21).

(2) From basic necessities to material distinctions

After Reform and Opening, inequality in economic wealth widened. The first wave of distinction was largely based on objectified consumption—the rise of consumerist distinction. The early rich used their increased income on spending on material goods (Chao and Myers, 1998). At the onset of Reform and Opening, television was a luxury beyond the reach of most families. By the 1990s, television was common in main cities and penetrating the rural (Xiaoping, 1991). Along with increasing television penetration, the number of channels also greatly expanded. Differentiation expanded from consumer durables to a greater diversity of consumer goods. Electronics expanded to VCD players, pagers, and fax machines. The ownership of consumer durables was the first way for people to show off their achievement and status, famously the "four goods" of color televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, and stereos (Latham et al., 2006: 1).

Economic capital enables distinction through conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 2007). Material ownership upgraded from household appliances, electronics, to motorcycles, then automobiles. Automobile ownership is a widespread aspiration—automobile ownership increases with income whereas motorcycle ownership decreases (Cartier, 2013: 36). Ownership of real estate also started to become a status symbol of successes in life. Homeownership reached 80% for natives in Shanghai which is higher than the US average (Davis, 2005: 705). Whether through the purchase of extravagant goods or cultural objects, the display demonstrates one's position in society. For Bourdieu, economic capital differs from cultural capital in relation to cultural

consumption, as it is associated with exuberance but lacking in the refined tastes of the cultured class. Economic capital also relates to objectified cultural capital for display (Bourdieu, 1986).

(3) Distinction through "middle class" and showy lifestyles

Although differentiation first started in material ownership, where ownership of certain material goods is a sign of status and achievement, the differences soon spread to more cultural realms. The sustained level of economic inequality led to the emergence of increased differences in lifestyles. Popular entertainment and consumer society gradually penetrated China, providing the cultural material that enables cultural distinction to be drawn based on differentiated lifestyles (Davis, 2005; Latham et al., 2006; Tsang, 2014). The affluent started to experience distinctions in lifestyle and leisure (Chao and Myers, 1998). The washing machines and fridges reduced time on chores, and television provided a new form of media exposure. Leisure activities also expanded to movie theaters, snooker, dancing, bowling, and dining out (Davis, 2000a: 20). Economic-based distinctions expanded to observable immaterial differences in lifestyles. The exorbitant price of bowling alley became an example enclave of luxury for entrepreneurs to lubricate relationship with bureaucrats—where elites restrict access to items through law or prices to maintain identity (Appadurai, 1988; Gan, 2000). A campaign in Beijing called "Civilization Contract with Residents" promoted cultural activities such as visiting museums, libraries, and concerts, and taking driving and computer lessons to "become a modern and civilized" Beijinger, which promoted high-cultures for those with the time and income (Wang, 2001). The participation in "high-culture," however, was initially dominated by the new rich as a new fashion to be consumed. Compared to the historical high culture which was legitimized by elite gentry and through government institutions, high-culture was at risk of being commercialized by the new rich, with state opera houses renamed after rich sponsors, and a prominent bookstore being merged with a high-end restaurant (Wang, 2001: 86).

Mobility and the demand for traveling also increased rapidly since Reform and Opening. Traveling in the 1980s was rare, restricted to visiting relatives in Hong Kong and Macau under supervised tours. Outbound tourism only began in 1995 with a formal tourism policy that allowed people to travel to approved countries in organized groups (Lee et al., 2013: 21–22). Tourism from China has grown rapidly over the decades to allow Chinese tourists to become the top outbound spenders in 2018 at US $277 billion, compared to American tourists in the second place with $144.2 billion and German tourists in the third place with $94.2 billion (UNWTO, 2019). Yet 53% of the people in the top 8 cities in China have never traveled by air before in 2004 (50%, 53%, 37%, 51% in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chengdu respectively), and only 6% of those who have had ever flown outside of mainland China (Garner, 2005: 245–246). Although the dated data prevent an exact comparison, there's a glaring disparity in mobility and spending in China with little sign that the inequality has narrowed since then.

The emergence of a consumerist lifestyle is described by some as the rise of the "middle class," an increasing number of people in cities whose aspirations are clearly differentiated from the have-nots in China. The rise of consumer identity replaced the traditional Communist identity based on occupation (Tsang, 2014: 28). The life of the consumerist Chinese shifted "from production, work and comrade-worker to consumption, lifestyle, and the consumer" (EJ Croll, 2006: 23). The distinction by lifestyle emerged with the rise of

disposable income, the official encouragement of the shift toward market individualism by Deng Xiaoping's famous line "to get rich was glorious" and associated policies like the reduction of workweek to 5 days in 1995 and what to do for leisure in the "double-leisure day" (*shuang xiu ri*) (Davis, 2000a: 12; Wang, 2001: 74). The disparity in material spending became visible in many areas. Those in poverty were deficient in protein, depending on grain for 15.45% of diet but only 4.7% for the rich (Solinger, 2013: 63–64). Meanwhile, the rich are buying from imported supermarkets, gorging and wasting food in restaurants, and consuming exotic delicacies such as ostriches, snakes, and porcupines as symbols of diet-sophistication (Hanser, 2008; Veeck, 2000; Veeck et al., 2010; Veeck and Burns, 2005; Veeck and Veeck, 2000; Zhan, 2005, 2008). "If you want to be regarded as middle class, you must own and do these things, which, constructed as they may be, become objectified as hallmarks of the middle class" (Guo, 2008: 47).

On top of that are the new rich in China, described by terms such as *xingui* (the new rich), *xinfu* (new wealth), *dakuan* (big spender), *baofahu* (parvenu: the nouveau riche, for the unrefined rich people), *furen jieceng (*the rich stratum), and *shangliu shehui* ("high society") (Goodman, 2008b; Lei, 2003; Miao, 2016: 24; Osburg, 2013: 11). Osburg studied the new rich in China to discover their exuberant consumption. Their activities include "entertaining spaces (such as nightclubs and saunas) and participating in activities (drinking, gambling, and sex consumption)" (Osburg, 2013: 38). "the whole purpose of consumption is to make one's economic, social, and cultural capital as transparent and legible as possible to the widest audience... the primary goal of consumption for the new rich—to let everyone know they're wealthy and well-connected (even if they're not)." (Osburg, 2013: 118).

7.2 The development of cultural capital through privileged upbringing

The previous section traced the rise of social distinction since Reform and Opening. Although social boundary was growing between adults, driven by diverging differences in wealth, people in that era were more homogenous in terms of cultural capital. Respondents' parents had modest levels of education, typically no more than high school. Respondents typically recall a childhood with parents who liked the popular music of their era. For the parents of older interviewees, it was typically traditional opera, Communist singers, and some popular singers from HK or Taiwan. Pop music did not exist in Mao's period in China, when music was tightly controlled, and people listened to revolutionary music. Parents of younger interviewees typically preferred HK or Taiwan singers. Although not a formal comparison in this study, the degree of distinction in their parents appears far weaker than the sophisticated distinctions today. While there were early signs of stratification in their parents' tastes—particularly the degree of interest music from HK or Taiwan—the number of artists in that era was more limited, compared to the endless number of selective music items in their playlists. More importantly, the parents of the respondents represent inequality *across* China—spread among urban and rural parts of China, whereas the wider differences in music taste between the respondents are based on interviewees *within* Beijing and Shanghai, the most developed regions in China.

Even though the disparity in cultural and economic capital was much narrower in the early years of Reform and Opening, an even bigger chasm was developing between children from different social backgrounds. The

passage of music taste from parents to children was not direct—many of the respondents' favorite music items are contemporary fashions, and they rarely like the same songs as their parents. What the parents passed on were not direct music preferences, but cultural resources and exposures which influenced their interests in pop culture as well as traditional music. The parents of today's HCCs were willing and able to spend increasing divergent amounts of money on their children's cultural education, and to ensure that they inherit a privileged social position. This is the point of divergence in my argument, which is that while inequality and distinction were growing between the adults, a generation of Chinese has grown up under increasing differences in upbringing which developed into cultural capital. Cultural capital in China consists of higher interest in traditional highbrow music, higher engagement in live music, as well as the attitude toward pop-culture—the preference for selective foreign music and the distaste for local music (see Chapter 6). Each of these will be discussed in a separate section below.

Aspirations toward foreign culture since Reform and Opening

Ever since Reform and Opening, Chinese people have looked to Western culture as signs of modernity. Consumption of Western culture carries symbolic values of status. The rise of the middle-class, centered on the idealized images of Western consumerism, as they look for standards of proper fashion and taste. The main point of contact with the imagined West is through China's economic entry into international trade, where the influx of foreign investment since Reform and Opening brought many Western brands and products to Chinese consumers (Pun, 2005). In this period, items started to be consumed beyond their material values but for their symbolic values (Featherstone, 1990). As much of the new lifestyles was introduced from foreign companies, in the 80s and 90s a modern taste was directly equated with foreignness. In the first 10 years of reform, the sudden portrayal of the West of plentiful, color, variety, style—of superiority. Foreignness was attributed positively such as *haokan* (better looking), *you yisi* (novel), and *xiandai* (modern) compared to Chinese counterparts (Bayne, 2006: 157). Foreign brands entered China to attract Chinese consumers, who aspire for foreign brands over local brands to distinguish from the bad taste "the rest of the Chinese have in the eyes of foreigners – and the undertone of 'village provincialism' (*tuganjue*) (Tsang, 2014: 96). Urbanization, modernization, Westernization, and globalization became aspirations and symbols of distinction in Chinese cities (Ma, 2011; Ma and Wu, 2005; Tsang, 2014: 86). "Consumption is the easiest indicator for the new class to represent its status, its wealth and its social reputation in post-reform China. Consumption is deliberately used as a contrasting device to distinguish the present day from pre-reform times, when only production existed but no consumption" (Tsang, 2014: 14). Western festivals were increasingly celebrated with Christmas lights, cards, and Easter rabbits, along with cultural consumptions from Barbies to NBA superstars (EJ Croll, 2006: 23; Rosen, 2003) Luxury and imported retail also entered China in the 1990s with apparel, perfume, and jewelry, opening shops in metropolises and spreading to other middle-tiered cities (EJ Croll, 2006: 97; Garner, 2005: 209). Aside from material consumption, Western lifestyles of golf, night clubs, and gyms also spread among the privileged in China (EJ Croll, 2006; Davis, 2000b; Solinger, 2013: 66). The class dimension of this is increasingly evident, as those who can reach Western aspirations are the middle classes with the affluence for a consumerist lifestyle. This has also been reflected in consumption, where middle-class families "opt out" of local products to practice gated consumption (Hanser and Li, 2015).

Scholars are keen to point out that the aspirations for the West in China reflect *imaginaries* of the West—a phenomenon called occidentalism, the counterpart of orientalism—rather than an accurate representation of the West (Carrier, 1995; Chen, 1992, 2002). One example was the initial high-status of fast-food restaurants, which did not have a high-status in the West. KFC opened in China on October 6, 1987, followed by McDonald's on April 23, 1992, in the most upscale part of Beijing, which became an attraction for Chinese tourists to have a taste of American culture (Yan, 2000: 204). Fast food restaurants attained celebrity status, for their nutritious ingredients and scientific cooking (Yan, 2000: 212). "Eating something interesting' became synonymous with eating Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonalds' hamburgers" (EJ Croll, 2006: 32). With an increasing number of Western restaurants accessible and affordable by Chinese consumers, KFC and McDonald's are no longer "highbrow" today, but this demonstrates how highbrow in China could differ from that in the West. Similarly, the image of modernity is not exclusive to the geographic "West" but also includes association with the modernity of Hong Kong and Taiwan (Gangtai). Because of a shared Sinic culture, the cultural influence from Hong Kong and Taiwan is much more influential in the realm of popular culture such as TV dramas and music (Gold, 1993), which was seen as an approximation of the Western world (Fung, 2008).

Fostering interest in selective foreign music and "upgrading" their tastes

In a society of popular culture, distinction is not a relatively clear division between classical snobs and slobs, but are more drawn through a complex web of selective niche items. While it is easy to understand the simple contour that foreign music is higher status than local music, actual distinction on the ground is a far from straightforward—an entangled complexity understood by HCCs but not LCCs. It is the high degree of internal stratification within music categories that enables the HCCs to use music for social distinction. HCCs are able to discern the quality of music, because of their embodied cultural capital. HCC draws on their discerning appreciation to research, critique, and appreciate which is deployed through selective, non-mainstream items. This is further demonstrated in the "upgrading" tastes.

Although popular music is heavily marked by differences in age, the changes in popularity and the differences in music across generations mask the stratification that continues to occur in every age group. Studies have found age to be a strong distinction in popular culture (Bennett et al., 2009; Savage, 2006; Van Eijck and Knulst, 2005). Yet underlying different trends across age groups, researchers have found a distinction between tastes for old and contemporary styles across the division between highbrow and lowbrow (Bellavance, 2008; Berghman and van Eijck, 2009). This has been argued to be attempts by the new generation to both conform to existing standards of distinction, yet also stake their own claim to aesthetic uniqueness by accruing "optimal distinctiveness" (Lizardo and Skiles, 2015). In China, "old" does not necessarily mean highbrow and new does not necessarily mean lowbrow, due to its rapid development and the recent rise in access to higher education, which sometimes links the taste of the old with backwardness and low levels of education. I argue that HCCs in China navigate through the changing popularity by "upgrading" their tastes in popular culture. In contrast to the highbrow status of classical music, which remains timelessly highbrow for long periods, popularity in pop music is elusive and changing. Trendy music is always changing, with music entering from the West, Japan, and Korea, as well as new artists and new

content-delivery platforms. HCCs responded by constantly "upgrading" their tastes as music become mainstream as they continue to seek out selective music, as they continue to gain knowledge and critical judgment.

HCCs describe of themselves moving from mainstream Hong Kong and Taiwan music, toward Western pop, and then toward selective indies music as Western pop became mainstream in China. Music from Hong Kong and Taiwan carried symbols of "foreignness" in the 1980s but increasingly penetrated the market to become mainstream. In the 90s, pop music from the West was preferred by selective listeners, but as they too become mainstream, HCCs continued to seek more selective music such as indies. The status hierarchy continues to get updated as new music enters the field. The same goes for low-status music, as new artists and technologies emerge—such as the "popular Internet songs"—they are drawn into the flight for distinction. A cohort effect can be seen depending on what was popular and selective in the period.

(1) Foreign exposure through parental privileges

All the parents of HCCs have helped them attain high fluency in English. This emphasis on the English language has been widespread in China for many years. English has become an international language of the world due to British and American hegemony in the globalizing world (Pennycook, 2017). The dominance of Western languages and cultural practices as global standards are well recognized by privileged parents, who strived for their children to align with the global standard as much as possible, ultimately attaining a degree abroad. Adherent inequality exists because the "local" educations of those who grew up in the West "are simultaneously regarded to be global by people in the non-West…Thus, due to the hierarchical structure of the global field, people in the West can begin to accrue their advantages over people in the non-West already at the levels of primary and secondary education, prior to their entry into higher education." (Igarashi and Saito, 2014: 228). The better ability of privileged children to pursue quality education in order to embrace the desirable foreign lifestyle and enhance class position resulted in the reproduction of global hegemony in China (Kim, 2011). Since Reform and Opening, English language education has become again a key in modernization and development as it enables access to Western advances for national revitalization (Hu, 2005). Beijing, for example, had been pushing children to learn English in anticipation of the 2008 Beijing Olympics (Ho, 2016b: 159). English proficiency is recognized to be a cultural capital that leads to better education and career opportunities. Due to differences in parental and educational resources, proficiency in English is unequal in China, skewing to more affluent areas and more affluent parents (Lee et al., 2013: 27). Therefore, proficiency in English is an important sign of being raised in privilege family in contemporary China.

Aspiring parents emphasize English instruction for their children, which in turn removes a barrier in their children's access to foreign culture. HCC's developing fluency in English opened them to a different world. Their interest in foreign culture is enabled by a stronger emphasis on international exposure including English fluency, preparation for foreign education, and general openness to foreign culture. Learning English also exposed them to English pop songs, films and dramas early in life (see also Rupke and Blank, 2009). Wenju (CC6) remembers having interesting English classes which watched the "Cats" musical—which kindled her lifelong interest in musical and live theatre. She remembers a very Westernized teacher who

played music and movies in class, explaining the stories behind each piece of art, which introduced her to the discerning consumption of Western culture. Dingjiao's (CC6) English proficiency allowed her to consume Western movies, music, and TV series from an early age. HCCs have a much stronger a habit of consuming foreign culture, as their parents encouraged and empowered their children to have more exposure to foreign culture, which led to their higher interest and tastes in culture. In contrast, LCCs and often MCCs say they struggled with English and did not independently access Western culture, often consuming local culture and the voiced-over Western culture over mainstream media.

Affluent parents provided children other resources which had the effect of influencing exposure to foreign music and culture. This includes physical access to imported music, purchasing music and magazines in stores, and earlier access to foreign media and the Internet. Chenyue (CC7) remembers that when she was in kindergarten, her parents brought home a vinyl player from Russia and classical music and music from Taiwan and the West. The vinyl age had already passed when popular music appeared in China after Reform and Opening, therefore vinyl records were imported and a sign of rarity. Dingjiao (CC6) was able to go Xinhua bookstore weekly to buy books and music. She remembered buying cassettes of Stefanie Sun (Singaporean singer, songwriter) and Backstreet Boys (American vocal group), and later CDs of pop music. This is notable because media at Xinhua bookstore are legitimate copies, whereas most Chinese were still buying pirated music off the street. She also subscribed to music magazines, which introduces readers to the latest foreign music trends as well as music critiques.

HCCs speak of being initially exposed to foreign media through education and at their homes, including foreign records, access to foreign stations such as HBO through satellite dishes. These childhood privileges were not available to the ordinary Chinese. As they enter high school and university, online access to foreign media became more prevalent. The lack of copyright enforcement in China has fostered the popularity of Western media, giving agency to those with the ability and eagerness to seek out Western culture. The rise of the Internet in China since the 2000s allowed users to download foreign media from the Internet. Nowadays, consumption of foreign media is more accessible due to teams of volunteer fans who organized themselves to subtitle and distribute pirated foreign movies and sitcoms (Gao, 2018; Liu and de Seta, 2014; Meng, 2012). However, the HCCs I interviewed did not benefit from the later rise of subtitled pirated media from these fan groups, as they can consume them without the need for subtitles. In fact, the HCCs interviewed have the ability to subtitle foreign media themselves, but by today their passion in mainstream media has already passed. The availability of subtitled media has turned them into mainstream culture, whereas HCCs are interested in live musicals, selective independent music, or turned away from pop culture altogether.

For "middlebrow" forms, one respondent also speaks of his university period as a time when he formed a rock band with others and performed. Although opportunities for music development in universities were open to all students, they primarily benefit students who were already have pre-established interest in those types of music in childhood. Those from underprivileged backgrounds with little exposure to music are unaware and uninterested in taking part in these opportunities. The university provided the setting to develop the interest into deeper knowledge for more selective appreciation.

Whereas LCCs consume from local broadcasts and later local media and music apps, which foster their interest primarily in mainstream, trendy and local music, HCCs have long been accessing foreign media through grey channels—satellite TV, downloading, or expensive direct imports, through their own agency. These introduced them to foreign music before they have become more accessible in mainstream media, fostering their interest and enabling their access to Hk/Taiwan and then upgrading to selective foreign music (see Chapter 5), as well as distancing them from mainstream and local music (see Chapter 6). Their parents are also more likely to have taken them to live music events during childhood, fostering their interest in live music.

(2) Upgrading through Hk/Taiwan music

Hk/Taiwan music was the early favorites of the HCCs before it became so popular that the HCCs "upgraded" toward Western pop to further differentiate themselves. Currently it is the mainstream music generally liked by everyone except the LCCs. Music from Hong Kong and Taiwan was the first "foreign" music to enter Mainland China. Many HCCs engaged with Hk/Taiwan music since the early teens. All but the youngest HCCs recall liking pop singers from Hong Kong and Taiwan at a young age as one of their earliest exposure to pop music. Chenyue (CC6) listened to the Hong Kong "Four Heavenly Kings" when young (a term coined in 1992 to refer to 4 male Hong Kong superstars—Jacky Cheung (M13), Andy Lau, Aaron Kwok, and Leon Lai), and Yiyin (CC6) remembers purchasing cassette tapes of Jay Chou (Pop singer from Taiwan).

However, with their increased exposure and resources to access Western media, HCCs' preferences progressed from the Hong Kong Taiwan pop toward more selective Western pop, particularly those in coastal regions. The torch of selective "foreignness" has passed to foreign pop-music. As some Western pop started to become mainstream in China, the HCCs further distanced away from the mass Western pop and favored increasingly selective and selective Western pop. Hk/Taiwan music is still generally well-liked by the HCCs, particularly the slighter older ones. Their retained their interest in the Hk/Taiwan songs in their collection but ceased to follow new artists in that category, shifting to Western pop instead. Because of the early influence of Hk/Taiwan music, HCCs also refer to them as "classic oldies" (经典音乐). Because LCC's understanding of different types of music is vague and are generally unaware of the music hierarchy, their perception of music will be discussed together in a later section.

(3) Upgrading through foreign music

The path taken by foreign music is quite similar to the earlier trajectory of Hk/Taiwan music—foreign music used to be the music for the HCC, but as it gained popularity, HCCs increasingly upgraded to selective types, leaving trendy foreign as the mainstream variant. Notably, LCCs are unable to differentiate the two, exposing themselves to cultural distinction. HCCs from the coastal regions are rather Westernized in their tastes, often following Western pop since their teenage years, thanks to their early access to Western culture through English learning, schooling, and media access. The Hk/Taiwan music liked by HCC tends to concentrate around a few artists such as the frequently mentioned Jay Chou (Taiwanese singer and songwriter born in 1979), their favorites in Western pop is more diverse. Since high-status pop music is selective, this increases

the difficulty for high-status pop music to be picked up in large scale surveys. Western pop liked by the HCCs includes a diversity of genres, which includes R&B, musicals, alternative and independent music.

The path toward increasing selective Western pop can be seen in the music trajectory of Dingjiao (CC6). She started watching American movies and drama series since her teenage years, through set-top boxes at home which included foreign channels like HBO and pirate online streaming. During middle school, already liked foreign pop such as Radiohead (British rock band formed in 1985), Amy Winehouse (British singer 1983-2011), and Cold Play (formed in 1996). HCC's taste for Western pop is driven by a desire for selective quality, rather than mainstream popularity. Dingjiao (CC6) says she preferred what is today's mainstream Western pop when it was still non-mainstream. As Western pop spread to China, Dingjiao shifted to what she calls alternative Western pop, such as Amy Winehouse (British singer 1983-2011) and Karen Ann (singer and songwriter based in Paris, Tel Aviv, and New York City, born 1974) to distant from the mainstream. Western music that became increasingly recognized in China is shunned by HCCs.

(4) Decreased interest in pop as mature adults, but the persistence of high culture

The teenage years are strongly linked with interest in the trendy music of the period. Before the university period, HCCs generally also follow the latest popular songs of that era, just like their cohort of youths, except that they also pursue their high-status music in addition, whereas those with low cultural capital only follow popular music. However, after the university period, those with high cultural capital lack the time and energy to be omnivorous in music acquisition and listening—by which they predominantly consume high-status music. Those who like foreign pop follows the new songs of only selected artists; for the traditional lovers, they continue to uncover selective pieces.

The linkage between teenage and pop culture has also been explained as transitional and compensatory "secondary attachments" as part of the process in the transition from parental identification toward autonomy (Giles and Maltby, 2004; Greene and Adams-Price, 1990; Raviv et al., 1996; Stever, 2011; Yue and Cheung, 2000). Interests in traditional music, however, do not stop with age. Some HCCs lost the passion for the latest pop music quite early, after their teenage years, but continue to develop an interest in highbrow traditional art forms such as Western classical or certain Chinese traditional music, whereas LCCs continued with mainstream tastes. In both cases, they continue to pursue high-status music as a lifelong interest and wish their children can also learn to distinguish the art from the vulgar. This is also witnessed in quantitative finding in the older mean age of those who like the operas.

The complexity of the scene gives the impression of the freedom of people to consume as they please and the lack of rigid structure. However, the HCCs navigate those changes to maintain their "high-status" tastes, whereas LCCs continued to follow a different path. For many of the respondents interviewed, the peak of the fervor in pop was in their teenage years. Respondents' interest in pop culture is heavily related to age—most active during their teenage years, but declined after graduating from the university and starting work, when work then family life occupy their attention. The favorite pop music of the respondents also readily gives away their age. Many stopped following new artists, only listening to the old songs they were already familiar with and passively following new songs from their favorite artists. However, a visible distinction for HCCs is

that their love for traditional music sustains or even grows with age, while their interest in pop music subdued. HCCs tends to be introduced to highbrow music no later than their teenage years. The favorite music of HCCs who have left their teenage years is usually traditional music, which they still actively research and consume in concert halls, theatres, or videos, compared to the relatively passive listening of pop music.

Developing interest and knowledge in traditional highbrow culture

(1) The environment for cultural education

Wealthier parents place importance in extra-curricular lessons such as calligraphy, martial arts, swimming, and music lessons (Davis and Sensenbrenner, 2000). A clear sign of affluence in childhood is to have had parents who encouraged children to learn a musical instrument, of which piano has been the most recognized symbol of "middle-class ambition" (Kraus, 1989). It is revered in China as the pillar of Western music, an instrument which requires money and space. The high status of the piano has a long history in China, with the English company Moutrie establishing a branch in China in 1843 and later produced pianos in Shanghai (Lau, 2008: 94–97). The idea that foreign music and foreign culture as superior have been ingrained since childhood. Those who learned a Western instrument develops a clear taste for classical music and the habit of attending concerts later in life. They recall parents who know little about music, but believed that music is a fancy and cultured thing that they want their children to learn. The parents relied on exams as a way of gauging the children's musical development. The level of proficiency falls in extremes—while there are some who learned several instruments for several months, quite a number of respondents learned and passed exams all the way to grade-10 the highest level. Dingjiao's (CC6) father sent her to take piano lessons when she was about 5 years old. She remembered that it was a Korean teacher who gave lessons through an interpreter, quite a fancy way to take music lessons. Similarly, Changti's (CC5) parents made her learn the electronic keyboard when she was 5. "My father wished that his child can play music. The electronic keyboard was considered cultured and fashionable at the time." Music lesson is a sign of both cultural interest as well as affluence, as instrument and lessons are not afforded by every family. This is not to say that all the HCCs become accomplished musicians. Chenyue (CC7), for example, says she lacked the talent to stay with her piano lessons till grade 10. But nonetheless, the exposure to music helped the HCCs understand and appreciate Western classical music, allowing it to become an important distinction among the HCCs.

(2) The influence of formal education on highbrow music

In turn, the improved access to quality education and higher education of children in privileged families, in turn, reinforces their highbrow tastes and erected barriers against children from underprivileged families. As the qualities in education across China are different, better schools also better prepare children in various cultural lessons, which introduced HCCs to legitimate culture. The HCCs recall music lessons in pianos, learning "music appreciation" in a diversity of music forms, including Western classical music. Wenju (CC6) enrolled in private middle and high-schools, the top 2 schools in her city, which differentiated themselves through comprehensive development of children and interest-based learning over the rote-memorization and exam-focused education of typical schools. She was introduced to Western music and musicals through her English class, learning dances like Rumba, Cha-cha, Samba, and Waltz which she fell in love with. In her

music class, she listened to symphonies, learned about pieces, troupes, and identified instruments. These experiences shaped her strong interest in Western culture—classical music, musicals, and Western-pop. Similarly, Dingjiao (CC6) had been introduced to music appreciation during high school in the Northeast, when her teacher introduced her to Italian opera Turandot by Giacomo Puccini, which encouraged her further interest in Western high culture. She attended classes on classical music, studied composers and conductors online, and followed music critics on weibo (Twitter equivalent in China).

For those with rural childhood, music classes are drastically different. Puchao (CC1), for example, only learned some patriotic songs from cassette players in his middle school in rural China. He never learned any English songs throughout his schooling. Furthermore, he never attended any music class after primary school, as his middle school lack resources for holistic development, and focused on memorization and exam prep. Ironically, his chances of admittance to high school and subsequently university are low under those educational tracks.

University is a further enabler of engagement with high-status music. For those with the most critical music tastes, the period at the university was the period in which their taste matured. In a top university in China, posters promoted interests in various "highbrow elegant art" (高雅艺) (figure 1-4), effectively legitimizing those cultural forms. University provided classes to further develop their knowledge, and clubs to engage with others with shared hobbies (figure 6). Many speak of attending "music appreciation" classes as a general elective. Prestigious universities also organize student performances as well as invite troupes to perform on campus (figure 5). Dongkun (CC5) and Ziguo (CC5) both joined university's clubs and classes on Chinese opera, where they further deepened their knowledge and taste in those art forms. Unsurprisingly, these activities surround traditional highbrow music and exclude pop music, so the university is an enabler of tastes for what eventually becomes highbrow music forms.

Figure 7-1. Promotion of high culture in an elite university

Billboard 1 - "How to appreciate Chinese painting"	Billboard 2 - "How to appreciate traditional folk music"

Billboard 3 - "How to appreciate Chinese painting"	Billboard 4 - "How to appreciate traditional folk music"
Billboard 5 - "Swan Lake" to be performed in the university	Billboard 6 - Promoting Peking Opera appreciation in the university

The consumption of highbrow music

HCCs describe their process of learning and "upgrading" from mainstream pop music consumers who are novices on highbrow, to become more confident critics of highbrow music. HCCs preference for highbrow art is built upon years of effort in researching, studying, and understanding the deepness of the art form. Items of culture are stratified because cultural content has educational requirements for appreciation, such as the range from comic strip to poetry, where aesthetic standards need to be taught at home and school (Gans, 1974: 95). This applies to HCC's discerning appreciation as it requires extensive cultivation to develop into the habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Many of them have specifically taken lessons on highbrow art. HCC's discerning appreciation and the music they like exist in a symbiotic relationship. They prefer music that can be appreciated critically, and the music they are the ones that allow them to deploy their embodied cultural capital. This similarity is shared by lovers of both Western and Chinese highbrow music. This section illustrates the highbrow music liked by the HCCs.

The preferences for different types of traditional highbrow music is largely separated by two main dimensions: those who like Western highbrow versus Chinese highbrow, and those who like instrumentals versus theatrical music drama. Based on the intensity and frequency of respondents' interest expressed during the interviews, the Western traditional music liked by HCCs tends to be classical music rather than

opera, whereas for Chinese traditional music it tends to be *Jingkun*. The difference is largely due to personal preferences for pure music or dramatic music and the investment needed to appreciate those art forms, rather than any expressed difference in status. Western opera is seldom mentioned, due to a language barrier in understanding non-English opera, as foreign language education in China is primarily English. In place of Western opera, Western musicals are also often mentioned by the HCCs who enjoy theatrical music drama.

Table 7-1. Types of highbrow music

	Western	Chinese
Instrumentals	**Western classical**	Chinese instrumentals
Theatrical music drama	Western opera Musical	**Jingkun** **(Peking or Kunqu opera)**

The highbrow music most favored by the interviewees are in bold

The difference between HCC's preference for Western or Chinese is more related to geographic origin and family influence, although the impression that Western is highbrow is stronger among those interviewed. However, mutual respect is seen by the lovers of each side. Dingjiao (CC6), a lover of Western classical, says she sees Peking opera as a respectable form of art, just that she does not understand it, due to the lack of contact with it and the lack of knowledgeable friends who can introduce her to it. Similarly, the Beijinger Chenyue (CC7) says even her parents are lovers of Western classical, so she had never had contact with Peking opera when growing up, which is quite distant for her. It would have to be her grandparents born before the Communist revolution who like Chinese operas. On the opposite side, Ziguo (CC5) had contacts with Chinese operas rather than Western classical since young. He respects and has attended Western classical concerts to breadthen his knowledge, though his interest is still in Peking opera. Yiyin (CC6) is an HCC who is a fan of theatrical music who crosses the East-West boundary to appreciate the artistry in both Western musical and Kunqu opera.

Although mutual respect is seen between HCCs from the two camps, those who favor Western classical tend to have higher socioeconomic standing. Fans of Western traditional tend to be raised in coastal regions, which is a privilege in itself, due to the higher level of economic development. Those with the privilege of living abroad also tend to favor Westernized tastes. Chinese traditional is also tarnished by the often-mentioned association with the older population and older family members. Chinese traditional used to be popular entertainment for the older generation, whereas Western classical and opera were never popular entertainment and more distinctively highbrow. Yet the government has been keen to promote traditional culture to foster national pride, so traditional Chinese opera is also generally well respected. The global standard of Western classical, in fact, Western culture more broadly, is more dominating among the HCCs who were raised in megacities more closely connected to the international world.

(1) Western classical

Enjoyment of Western classical displays a combination of knowledge as well as a disinterested emotional connection. Emotionally, a disinterested disposition is often engaged in HCC's description of their favorite music. They describe of response from the music that should not be spontaneous ephemeral emotions, but with emotional distance, which creates deeper meanings that persist. HCCs look down upon music that

provides instant gratification but lacking in meaning or depth. Dingjiao (CC6) plays the piano at home and used to read the Philharmonic magazine (see image below). She used to be more fervent about foreign pop, but is now more into Western classical, regularly attending live classical performances such as the China Philharmonic Orchestra (中国爱乐乐团) as well as many other performances of Western orchestras that tours in Beijing, though she is quite selective about what she attends. Before performances, Dingjiao would research about the pieces, conductors, compositions to prepare herself for the performance. "My favorites are Seiji Ozawa, Mitsuko Uchida, and Claudio Abbado, and the London, Berlin, and San Francisco Philharmonic Orchestra. Frankly, I prefer works or renditions that are more classical, with a grand narrative, more rational and less romantic, neat and crisp, with high vitality and exuberance." She describes of a recent concert in Nov 2018 conducted by Daniel Barenboim (born in 1942), which excited her as it was a rare and might be the last time to see the aging conductor in Beijing, "I like Barenboim's rendering because it is more German and Austrian, with less Romanticism and emotionality—more colloquially this means it's more rational and philosophical," she explains.

Chenyue (CC7) listens for skillful musical techniques of the performer, and the personal emotions of the composer embedded into the music. "Every music movement reminds me of the emotions of the composer when the music was created." She'd listen to good music repeatedly to immerse herself in music appreciation. A similar discerning appreciation is also seen in Wenju (CC6), who says "I care about the conductor. In a concert, I need to understand the composers' emotions which they embed into the music, and interpret the emotions they are trying to convey. In contrast, I cannot find the aesthetic value in some students' recitals." She listens carefully during classical music concerts. A quality performance to her is one that is seamlessly coherent and like the sound of nature, whereas poorer ones show bugs that she can discern. While she considers the critical opinion of others, she is confident of her own aesthetic judgment, as everyone has their own interpretations.

Figure 7-2. A respondent's exposure to highbrow music

| The Philharmonic magazine | Daniel Barenboim in Beijing Nov 2018 |
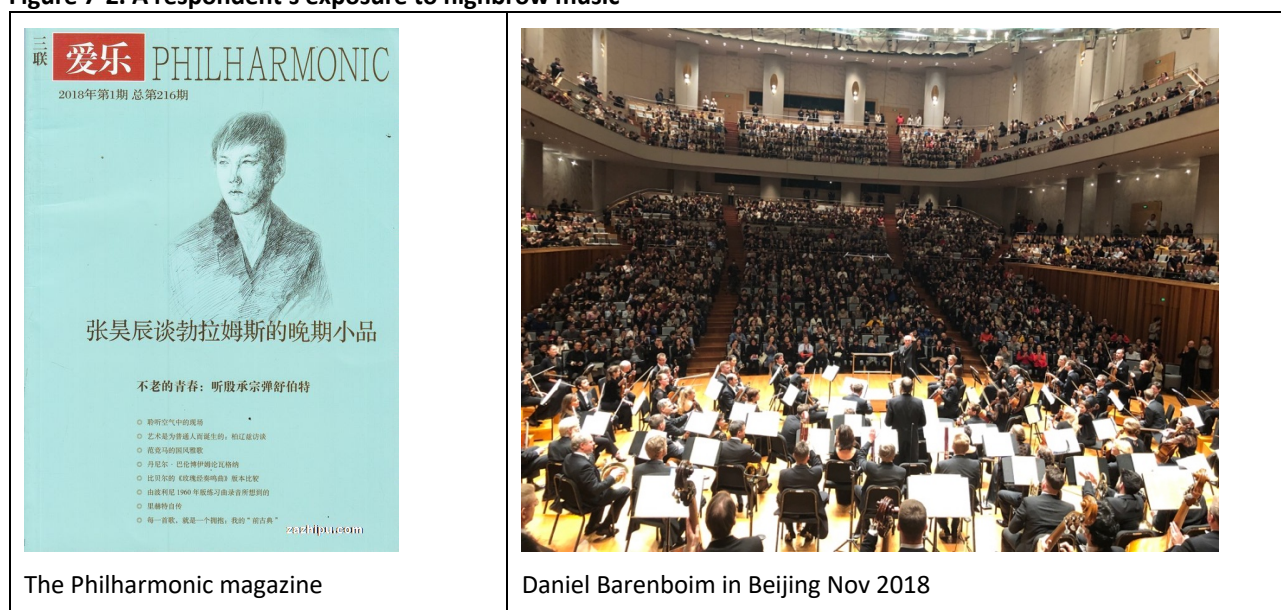
(2) Kunqu and Peking opera

A similar discerning appreciation can be seen with the Chinese highbrows. Compared to the elusive emotional appreciation of classical music, Dongkun's (CC5) appreciation of Kunqu draws on his hefty knowledge of classical Chinese poetry, linguistics, and phonetics. He thinks "Kunqu is a holistic form of art—one needs to appreciate the beauty of classical poetry, understand the allusions in the ancient text, and hear the beauty in pronunciations and articulation of the language." He elaborates that authentic Kunqu is based on Suzhou speech, and he considers the Shanghai Kunqu troupe less authentic in the articulation, as they adjusted the pronunciation. He says he can tell minute differences in pronunciation from his understanding of ancient Chinese phonology, as authentic Suzhou dialect has 8 tones. Also, traditional Kunqu songs only denote the main contours in the music composition, and the singers can flexibly decorate the tunes (修饰小腔). He watches different actors perform the same opera to appreciate the differences in interpretation. Some of his favorite Kunqu artists are Gong Yinlei (龚隐雷) of the Jiangsu Kunqu Opera Troupe, as well as the masters Liang Guyin (梁谷音) and Zhang Jiqing (张继青). When he listens to Kunqu, he "evaluates whether the singing is authentic. Kunqu has a slower tempo but is full of emotions. Peking opera is faster, but Kunqu is more elegant (文雅)."

Ziguo (CC5) has taken opera appreciation classes and singing lessons during his bachelor's and master's. He finds traditional opera particularly touching. An example he mentioned was the 1956 Peking opera film "Barren Tears" (荒山泪) by Cheng Yanqiu. Even though the master actor has aged and was filmed 2 years before his death, he can truly appreciate the beautiful and touching singing. He says that "Appreciating *xiqu* requires a threshold—you either get it or you don't. Those who don't get it thinks the facial make-up is like phantoms in horror films, with stiff sculpture-like movements, and singing that sounds the same. Those who get it can appreciate the intricate skills of the art form (看门道) rather than merely following the plot." He thinks traditional opera is "higher" and more beautiful, with an aesthetic that is more abstracted from reality, which demonstrates the disinterested appreciation that HCCs displays in their consumption of highbrow art.

The appreciation of live music

Another aspect that demonstrates the discerning appreciation of HCCs is their consecration of **live music**. This is especially relevant for traditional highbrow art forms including Chinese operas and Western classical but also musicals, in which live performance is a core of the art form. Interest in live music is related to childhood experiences in attending concerts or theatre performances, which in the past was limited to those from more affluent families in coastal megacities, as they used to be less common in smaller cities. Those grown up in the most developed cities, particularly Beijing or Shanghai, had the advantage of having parents who have brought them to **live concerts**, which led to a lifelong habit of valuing and attending live performances. Live concerts were also rare in the past, and available only in the largest cities. Dingjiao (CC6) and Chenyue (CC7) had parents who brought them to live music concerts, Western symphony, ballets, or galas that included a variety of patriotic songs. Chenyue vividly remembers attending a classical concert conducted by the conductor Yang Hongnian (杨鸿年, born 1934) and being asked to present flowers. For

Yiyin, her experiences attending lots of live concerts shaped her discerning interest in "live" music later in life.

HCCs described how a live performance truly distinguishes a top orchestra from a mediocre one, which makes the presence in live fundamentally different from listening to recordings. Many HCCs describe that a quality live performance must add its own interpretations to the original creation. They have the habit of watching multiple renditions of the same piece of music or opera by different troupes or artists, and speak of the ability to discern differences in the renditions. Dingjiao (CC6), for example, attends and holds high expectations for classical concerts. "Many performances are just popular music, scrambling together the most popular pieces, lacking musical merit. There is no room for the conductors to add or showcase their own understanding of the piece." She prefers performances with some novelty and freshness compared to music recordings, such as performing music that is more niche and less popular, new arrangements, by world-renowned orchestras or conductors, and ideally in intimate settings with a smaller audience. Similarly, Yiyin (CC6) is a fan of theatrical musical drama, which includes both Western musicals, Kunqu opera, and Peking opera. She thinks only live music allows the emotions to be conveyed from the actor to the audience directly in the performance. She first saw live Kunqu prior to high school and was hugely impressed. She has already seen the performances of many different actors, so now she only attends those by the best actors, such as Wang Peiyu (王佩瑜). She believes that the judgment of music resides inside her, and is made from her accumulated judgment over the years. She does a lot of research on the performances and says that "the way to improve artistic appreciation is to attend a lot of performances. Then you develop the sense to judge what is good or bad." She thinks many local musical actors are quite bad, singing songs that do not fit them, or lacking stage experience. Many HCCs also speak of the copious amounts of low-quality orchestras from the West trying to sell expensive tickets to undiscerning audiences, as they have been disappointed by my many poor performances in China sold to undiscerning audiences.

In contrast, those with LCC never thought of attending live events. LCCs have no interest in live music and seeing no difference between live and recordings, preferring to consume on mobile phones. Affordability is not the main issue, as their concern is their lack of interest in live, given the extra time, transportation cost, and energy required, and rely on mobile phones as their source of music. Unable to recognize the aesthetics of a live performance described by the HCCs, LCCs do not see the merit of live to worth the hassle of attending. Mining (CC1) says, "I don't see the difference between listening to live and listening from the mobile phone." She recalls the only time she attended a symphony which she fell asleep with a friend, saying she would not attend again. The same attitude is shared by Puchao (CC1), who also has never attended live performances or concerts. "I wouldn't go even if they were free. What a hassle. I prefer to lie in my bed at home and play with my mobile phone." Thus, in terms of participation, the LCCs are indeed disengaged relative to the HCCs and MCCs.

7.3 Solidifying cultural differences into cultural capital

Intergenerational transfer of privileges

I have described how cultural tastes diverged between children in privileged and underprivileged families. For the taste of privileged children to turn into cultural capital, they must also remain in a relatively advantaged position in society, which is far from guaranteed. For example, the children of landlords had tastes for traditional high culture, but as the landlords fell in power after the Communist revolution, their tastes were denigrated as bourgeoise and subject to persecution—hardly a form of cultural capital that confer advantages. But in contemporary China, privileged parents were able to provide their children with exposure to a cultural environment with more exposure to foreign and musical culture, which is expensive, and difficult to access. That culture becomes the "high culture" of the privileged class because their children can continue to attain a high social standing.

As the entry into university is highly competitive, the pathway is to get into the best schools at each level of the educational funnel. Quite typical of HCCs, Dingjiao's (CC6) parents afforded after school private tutoring for her on subjects such as English and math (奥数). These helped her gain admission into the best high school in her city. She said about 500 students were admitted through merit-based examination, but also roughly 50 students paid their way in through rich parents. Getting into a key school is important in rising chances to enter the university. Changti (CC5) observed that most classmates from her elementary school had average backgrounds and mostly stayed behind, whereas many of her classmates from the key schools— many of whom came from privileged families such as cadres, small business owners, intellectuals, or work in government-affiliated institutions (事业单位)—were on an upward trajectory that ended up in Beijing, just as she eventually did. The ranking of the city is also an influential factor in the chances of getting into higher education, due to quotas that advantage students from affluent cities. Overall, more advantaged parents are better able to help their children obtain a higher education through the competitive educational funnel.

Many parents of HCCs prepared them to study abroad eventually, which offered them a different educational track compared to most of the Chinese. The opportunity to study abroad became at least a backstop which frees the students from the cutthroat competition in China, as even if they can continue an education in the West even if they fail to achieve the best grades (Waters, 2005, 2006). Many affluent parents aspired or even anticipated sending their children for foreign education. In 2018, students from China comprise the largest group of international students in the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (Institute of International Education, 2018). Dingjiao's (CC6) parents sent her to take lessons in English schools which used foreign textbooks, as they long planned to send her abroad for education. She eventually obtained a master's education in the UK. Even more privileged is Chenyue (CC7), a native of Beijing—a city tremendously advantaged in educational opportunities. Her parents were able to send her abroad to New Zealand in her second year of high school. A foreign education helps institutionalize a cosmopolitan outlook as cultural capital, such as providing instruction in a "world language," enabling exposure to a "cosmopolitan education" outside their home countries (Igarashi and Saito, 2014). Foreign education is an expression of the parental agency to prepare their children for a globalizing world (Weenink, 2008).

Educational opportunities in China are stratified and advantages wealthier parents, who can afford tutoring lessons, using connections and donations to get into key schools, purchase homes in areas with better schools, or even a foreign education (E Croll, 2006; Solinger, 2013; Tang, 2013). Privileges parents are also better positioned to feed their children into better education and higher education, in some cases a foreign education abroad (Du, 2013). The better ability of privileged children to pursue higher education in order to enhance their class position and embrace the desirable foreign lifestyle resulted in the reproduction of global hegemony in China through internalizing it into the habitus of privileged children (Kim, 2011). The intergenerational transfer of privileges has already been supported by many pieces of research.

Intensifying hierarchy in the next generation

Although the interviews were conducted with people age 23-44, from the discussions of their parents, themselves, and their children, cultural capital is increasingly important from generation to generation. The older respondents interviewed had less interest in music, with high similarities in music taste in their teenage years, generally liking Hong Kong and Taiwan popular music. The taste of younger respondents had already started to diversify, with the HCCs "upgrading" from popular Hong Kong and Taiwan to selective Western pop, and seeking knowledge in traditional music. Many HCCs have friends or relatives who are highly concerned with developing taste in their children.

The increasing stratification of music taste from generation to generation can be seen in Muyao, who plays rocks music but hope his children can upgrade to classical. Muyao (CC4), a fan of rock and metal in his teenage years, also respects the higher status and sophistication of Western classical, admiring that "classical is impressive (厉害) because of the sheer number of instruments, with instruments that are difficult to play, the intricate relationship between the musical parts, and the skillful use of notes and tones to create emotions." He admits to not understanding and not listening to Western classical or Chinese traditional music and hopes his children will have higher aspirations than his interest in rock, mentioning the self-deprecating humor that "Those who don't work hard when young are the ones who grow up playing rock music" ("少壮不努力，长大玩摇滚").

Another example can be seen from the story of Yeqin. Yeqin (CC5) is particularly worried about the bad influence of popular music on her daughter. "There are many saliva songs out there, which I don't know how to appreciate. There are many adult saliva songs like 'Small Apple' and Phoenix Legend (M22), which is not real music. I am quite worried about my child's ability to discern and appreciate music." Since she is knowledgeable about the piano, she is making her daughter learn the piano so that she can share with her how to appreciate music. She hopes that music will not just be a technical exam to pass, which is her experience from her parents, but instead she hopes her daughter will develop a "lifelong appreciation of music." When she travels with Airbnb, she tries to book rooms with a piano so that her daughter can keep on practicing. "I hope music will become a part of her daily life. She can play the piano when she is having a bad day, or to listen to music concerts." She deliberates whether her daughter should also learn the violin, because it can be easily carried every day as they travel, so her daughter can continue to practice. She brings her to music summer camps, where she learned about classical guitars, with a teacher who attempts to

modernize classical guitar with new compositions. She also brings her daughter to attend many live performances, such as to listen to Ave Maria composed by Franz Schubert in 1825, and to discuss their impressions. She also brought her daughter to watch Flamingo, and dress her up in Flamingo dresses to give her deeper involvement with a "sense of ritual."

7.4 Discussion

After more than 40 years after Reform and Opening, a whole generation has grown up under diverging upbringing. Cultural capital developed from the new generation of Chinese that was raised in increasingly divergent environments since Reform and Opening. In this chapter, I developed my argument is that social distinction in China today is not only based on current inequalities in wealth or achievement of the individual, but is increasingly based on cultural differences rooted in the past—i.e. cultural capital. Upbringing in privileged conditions shapes the habitus and leads to differentiated taste, attitudes, and dispositions, which is drawn for distinction and discrimination. Cultural capital is displayed through differences in attitudes and behaviors, some of which include the prejudiced stereotypes of smell, appearance, or behavior, but a more useful angle to examine cultural capital is music taste. Bourdieu demonstrated how elites' penchant for highbrow art like Western classical music and Western opera is used toward social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Recent studies in various countries continue to discover the stratification of cultural taste along social lines (Bennett et al., 2009; Van Eijck, 1997), and culture is seen as an important basis of divisions between social strata (Atkinson, 2016; Crompton, 2008; Devine et al., 2005; Savage et al., 2013). In China, music taste is used as a sign of high culture as well as to stigmatize the "vulgar" tastes of the underclass in China. The previous chapters have shown a sophisticated hierarchy and method of taste distinction through various types of music. Those with high cultural capital prefers highbrow traditional music as well as selective, non-mainstream Western popular music. In turn, they, along with the MCCs, look down upon the local tastes of the LCCs. However, those tastes were formed much earlier in life, and the people with high cultural capital benefitted from a privileged background.

Whereas the previous chapters argued for the existence of distinction in China, this chapter argues that the rise of cultural capital can be traced back to inequalities in earlier times. Cultural distinction in China is frequently described from the economic perspective—as a distinction based on the rise in economic inequality and Middle-class consumption. Many pieces of research have described how rising economic inequality led to the rise of the middle class and consumerist distinction. My research accepts that argument but further argues that inequality in contemporary China has led to a new generation of Chinese who grew up with segregated privileges that led to the creation of deeper distinctions in the form of cultural capital. This research demonstrates that cultural capital has been re-created in society, which resulted in distinction in tastes between social groups, rigidifying social boundaries.

Economic stratification ended after the Communist takeover. Prior to Reform and Opening, the homology between socioeconomic status and cultural taste was weak under socialist planning with full government control of media. The earlier generation who grew up in Mao's times had similar upbringings, and early periods of Reform and Opening had a high level of social mobility. In the 1980s, early signs of consumerism

reemerged in China. The stratification of Chinese society was initially observed economically and gradually spread into other realms. People who grew up in the 80s and 90s were the first generation who grew up in diverging family environments, demarcating the first generation of Chinese with the opportunity to accumulate different amounts of cultural capital. Parents with marginally better resources were able to provide their children with additional cultural resources. These differences were magnified in the generation who spent their childhood after Reform and Opening, creating differences that now constitute cultural capital. Cultural capital—consisting of various forms of knowledge, attitude, and preferences, and studied through music taste in this study—was created in the respondents through exposure and the opportunity to seek and learn of foreign culture and music, opportunities which were not available in non-privileged families. Privileged parents fostered high aspirations for foreign culture, promoted the consumption of foreign culture, and inculcated knowledge in music and culture for their children. This group of privileged children, with their distinctive cultural preferences, benefitted from inequalities in educational attainment. They leveraged their better quality of education, easier access to key schools, and lower barrier to higher education, to attain high educational status, causing their distinctive culture to be the culture of the elites. HCCs navigate the increasingly subtle distinction by "upgrading" their tastes through the change, consuming selective items at the fringes of the popular mainstream. By the time they enter the university, the difference between HCC and LCC have widened considerably. Furthermore, the university is also an institution that continued to promote tastes in high culture. This entire process is the creation of cultural capital. By comparing the experiences of the culture of the interviewee with their parents and their children, the inequality in cultural capital is shown to be rising.

The significance of the finding is not only relevant to music, but also in its ramifications for social stratification in China. Many pieces of research have raised the extent of stigmatization of the underclass in China. Frequently targeted are the migrant workers and those from underprivileged backgrounds frequently who face discrimination in the cities. However, those accounts have not fully addressed how social exclusion is rooted in inequalities in the past. For example, distinctions based on consumerism can be afforded by anyone with higher income, but distinctions based on taste cannot be bridged by money alone. The differences in the cultural tastes of the interviewees are rooted in differences in their circumstances of upbringing. To address the increasing boundaries between social groups requires an understanding of the causes of the formation of symbolic violence. The concept of a lack of *suzhi* prevalent in China is shown to intricately connect with Bourdieu's notion of an upbringing inculcating in the *habitus*. By drawing from Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, this chapter shows how social stigmatization is rooted in more intrinsic differences, providing an explanation of the cultural distinction described in earlier chapters--the causes and process of the formation of cultural capital.

Part IV. CONCLUSION

Chapter 8. Distinction and cultural capital in China

8.1 Introduction

The core theoretical debate engaged by my thesis is the issue of distinction in contemporary societies. The debates in cultural capital have been divided into advocates for cultural capital and the persistence of social distinction (see Bennett et al., 2009; Hanquinet and Savage, 2015; Holt, 1997; Prieur and Savage, 2013) as well as their strongest critics (see Chan, 2019; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Goldthorpe, 2007). One side supports a cultural hierarchy based on highbrow and lowbrow forms of art (Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio, 1982a; Gans, 2008; Veblen, 2007). Pierre Bourdieu is the most notable proponent, with his comprehensive theory of cultural capital that describes the inequality based on cultural distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). But with the rise of contemporary cultural forms, other scholars have argued instead for the rise of cultural omnivores – individuals who consume a diversity of music, beyond those exclusive to their social positions (Peterson and Kern, 1996). Similar findings have been found across different countries, such as the US (Lamont, 1992), Scandinavian countries (Prieur et al., 2008), in the UK (Bennett et al., 2009; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b) and Australia (Bennett et al., 1999). Peterson and Kern, however, did not advocate the omnivores as a refutation of Bourdieu or the end of cultural distinction, but instead discussed multiple possibilities which include the rise of tolerance and a change in social norms (Peterson and Kern, 1996). In response to theories of the cultural omnivore, other researchers argued that quantitative research might have overlooked cultural distinction with their broad labels of cultural types, and drew attention to Bourdieu's notion of embodied cultural capital—as distinction is not only based on what is consumed but also how they are consumed (Coulangeon, 2017; Friedman, 2011; Holt, 1997; Ollivier, 2008; Warde et al., 2007). Scholars have also advocated new divisions in popular culture as emerging forms of cultural capital, replacing the traditional highbrow and lowbrow division, as Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital can persist under different forms of culture (Coulangeon, 2017; Prieur and Savage, 2013).

I will offer my responses to this debate by using the case of China. Firstly, I argue that although cultural omnivores are observed on the surface through mainstream pop music, it overlooks distinction that is occurring through more specific forms of music. Furthermore, the view that sees cultural omnivores as a sign of tolerance is problematic due to the flaws in its definition. Instead, I argue how emerging forms of cultural capital represent a new form of cultural capital under globalized cultural consumption. Finally, I explore the meaning of cultural capital in China, particularly its development and the development of the habitus in the current generation of privileged Chinese.

8.2 The issues with cultural omnivores

On the surface, the evidence of cultural omnivores as found in other studies is also observed in my study. The elites are indeed more eclectic in their consumption, even under a very detailed questionnaire on music. The eclecticism of the elites is verified to a large extent by various definitions. Various definitions of elites—consumers of Western highbrow, consumers of both Chinese and Western highbrow, those with high education, party membership, and high income, and various definitions of eclecticism—by the number of items aware, liked, and the number of live music events participated in the past year, all point to the taste eclectism of the elites. In fact, my qualitative research also appears to support the tolerance of elites on the surface. While speaking with me—a privileged individual studying in the West with extensive years of living in the West, none of the respondents openly denigrate others' poor tastes. Elites also mention social connections with people from different backgrounds and the need to maintain cordial relations, despite not agreeing with their tastes. In that shallow sense of taste eclecticism and tolerance, cultural omnivores seem to be observed in Chinese megacities.

The tolerance of cultural omnivores?

While the division of music is China is clearly not one only based on a legitimate highbrow vs lowbrow, there are issues with the interpretation that cultural eclecticism means tolerance and the end of distinction. Firstly, the operationalization of the concept of cultural omnivores is contingent on the type of cultural items asked. Many pieces of research that find cultural omnivores used only a very limited number of items, which are broad cultural labels that overlook subtype distinctions. For example, Chan and Goldthorpe claim cultural omnivores based on the 4 music types of opera, classical, jazz and pop/rock (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b). This operationalization of the concept of cultural omnivores only means the privileged are more eclectic about those specific genres, rather than more omnivorous in "cultural consumption." Using a limited number of cultural items risks overlooking the actual cultural hierarchy—which in the West has been shown to be distinctions in cultural subcategories and the attitudes of consumption rather than objects of consumption—jumping to a premature conclusion of cultural tolerance.

We must also be aware of the limitation of the concept of cultural omnivores and claims of tolerance. The discovery of cultural omnivores is taken to mean that "elites" are consuming both high-status culture as well as low-status culture, whereas those with lower status are confined within low-status culture (Peterson and Kern, 1996). However, the very concept of cultural omnivore is presumes a preexisting hierarchy. The concept of "elites" rests on a preexisting stratification of people. The concept of "high-status" and "low-status" culture also assumes a preexisting stratification—either an *a priori* definition provided by the researcher explicitly, or a hierarchy assumed by the researcher unknowingly. With an *a priori* definition of highbrow and lowbrow, cultural omnivores became a narrow examination of whether elites are crossing from classical to pop music. Without that *a priori* definition, the concept of eclecticism would be dependent on the set of items asked by the researcher. The operationalization of cultural omnivores is heavily dependent on *a priori* definitions and item choice. If the researcher asked a set of items in which half cater to the privileged and half cater to the underprivileged, neither group would be more omnivorous than the other. It is even

possible to flip the argument by considering a set of cultural items for which the underprivileged consume more widely, claiming it is they who are now climbing upward and toward-middlebrow art. My research shows that the underprivileged like more items of local music whereas the privileged like more items of foreign music. In the case of China, the underprivileged can be claimed to be consuming a "diversity" of Chinese (local) pop, folk music, dance music, Internet songs, Communist and revolutionary music, along with Western genres like rock and techno. If the questionnaire contains more items of music from China—a seemingly innocuous decision focus on "Chinese music" for "Chinese respondents"—the underprivileged would actually appear to be cultural omnivores.

It is not meaningful to say that elites are consuming more items of "culture" in the abstract, as without certain presumptions about the hierarchy, the concept fails to stand alone. The claims of omnivore cannot escape researchers' *a priori* definitions—either definitions of highbrow and lowbrow, or the researcher's imagination of the "cultural space" that predefined the set of items necessary to be considered eclectic. To view cultural omnivores as benign tolerance already presupposes a hierarchy of culture, or, an elitist presumption on the standard of cultural knowledge. In both cases, the concept of cultural omnivores assumes an elitist viewpoint. The claims of tolerance have been challenged by many pieces of research (Coulangeon, 2017; Ollivier, 2008; Warde et al., 2007).

Cultural omnivores as repertoire of the elites

Although the evidence from my research could have been used to support the cultural omnivore thesis (as other researchers have), I do not endorse that approach because of the heavily problematic and presumptive nature of the concept. Instead, I argue that it is more meaningful to abandon the concept to examine the pattern of consumption more carefully, to understand what "cultural eclecticism" entails. I argue that, once stripped of assumptions of hierarchy, eclectic consumption implies neither the boundary-crossing nor the tolerance of "cultural omnivores," but the "repertoire of the elites." The appearance of taste eclecticism reflects the elites' command of a range of cultural repertoires that can be used toward distinction.

As it is problematic to apply the Western definition of highbrow and lowbrow in China, the study of music hierarchy in China precludes the application of *a priori* definitions of highbrow and lowbrow, which forces the concept to examination in China. Based on the 6 music types from MIRT, which represent the main divisions in the music scene, the privileged are more likely to have a taste for traditional music (traditional legitimate cultural capital), selective foreign music (emerging cultural capital), as well as higher attendance in live music events (cultural engagement). By not presuming what is "highbrow", it is no longer possible to apply the cultural omnivore explanation that elites have crossed over from "highbrow" to popular art. The argument for tolerance is also untenable, as none of those can be considered music of the mass in the past. Instead, I offer the opposite explanation that there are multiple types of music in which the elites can utilize as signals of status, using mechanisms that have been explained in previous researches. The higher taste for traditional music is the penchant for legitimate culture described by Bourdieu. Selective foreign music represents an emerging form of cultural capital (Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2014). The higher participation in music events demonstrates the divide between cultural engagement versus cultural disengagement (Bennett et al., 2009). Furthermore, the strong distaste for local music represents a symbolic exclusion of the culture

of the underclasses (Bryson, 1996; Lizardo and Skiles, 2015). Different music tastes are thus music repertoires of which the elites are more equipped to leverage for distinction.

The claims of openness and tolerance, however, is indeed observed through a main group of mainstream trendy music. Popular trendy music is widely consumed across social divides. When questionnaires focus on a limited number of items consisting of broad categories, they merely reveal the unstratified nature of mainstream pop music—which is consumed by both the privileged and underprivileged. Here again, it is the questionnaire design that determines the extent of tolerance in the findings. The cultural omnivore's argument only shows that elites are consuming mainstream culture *in addition* to the many items that can be drawn for distinction. Cultural omnivore is an artifact of researcher's music selection, and the exclusion of LCCs from various forms of high-status music.

Thus, the conception of cultural omnivore is tautological and self-contradicting. The claim that elites are consuming both high-status culture as well as low-status culture (Peterson and Kern, 1996) questions the definition of cultural status. If the elites are consuming lower-status culture, how is it lower-status (aside from the *a priori* definition that is slipped in)? If the eclecticism of elites is a sign of tolerance (Chan, 2019), toward which low-status music are they tolerant (aside from a pre-defined lowbrow)? Alternatively, by showing the large number of music types that are stratified, I argue they are music repertoires that have the potential for status signaling. The more eclectically the elites consume items that are stratified, the more repertoires that can be used as signals. Mainstream trendy music is not stratified, and thus is not part of the repertoires for elite distinction.

8.3 The changing forms of cultural capital

In the classic study by Pierre Bourdieu, he identified that the key dimension of cultural inequality is differences in the volumes of economic and cultural capital—based on a society divided between the new rich and the cultured elites (Bourdieu, 1984). A major contribution of Bourdieu is his conception that social inequality is not only economic, but also includes inequality in other forms of capital, a central one being cultural capital. Cultural capital, like economic capital, can be passed from privileged families to their children, and is a currency which can be converted back to economic capital. However, critics say Bourdieu's theory is French-centric, and might have lost relevance in contemporary societies under the profusion of popular culture. My research responds to the debate demonstrating how cultural capital has taken form in China. First, I outline the methodological contributions of this research on cultural capital. Secondly, I show how cultural capital in traditional highbrow forms is relevant in China. Then I argue how emerging forms of cultural capital developed in China as a result of the differential penetration of the globalization of culture, and how it differs from traditional institutionalized forms of cultural capital. Finally, I explain how selective foreign music emerging forms of cultural capital is enabled by the development embodied cultural capital in China.

Methodological contributions to quantitative research on cultural capital

My research also makes methodological contributions to the study of distinction. Quantitative research has increasingly found evidence for cultural omnivores, which led to calls for qualitative or mixed-methods researches (Coulangeon, 2017; Friedman, 2011; Holt, 1997; Ollivier, 2008; Warde et al., 2007). Distinction is more readily found in sub-genre segmentation and niche subtypes of cultural activities, which are typically missed by mainstream quantitative researches (Friedman, 2011; Hanquinet et al., 2019). Holt in his article titled "Recovering Bourdieu's theory of tastes from its critics" criticizes the primarily quantitative approach of omnivore-studies for overlooking embodied forms of taste, arguing for measuring cultural objects specific enough to measure embodied tastes (1997). Quantitative approaches are traditionally limited by the specificity of the questions, lacking the depth and open-ended inquiry of qualitative researches. Surveys have been criticized to be constrained in the range of music to favor art forms of dominant groups, while overlooking how cultural values are meaningfully engaged in practice (Miles, 2013).

This research, although also based on mixed methods, demonstrates how an improved questionnaire design and analysis can overcome these shortcomings to uncover the underlying dimensions of taste and the hierarchy in cultural consumption. This research innovates in the use of a detailed questionnaire and MIRT which reveals the hierarchy of cultural consumption that would be overlooked by traditional quantitative techniques. In China, distinction is drawn not by mainstream genres, but is drawn through music subtypes— such as region of origin and even more specific subtypes. I have shown that different types of music play different roles in social distinctions. Starting from the 6 latent traits on music, this dissertation used ANOVA to examine how individuals in different social subgroups differ. Popular music is found to be stratified according to its regional origin. I have demonstrated the distinction between stratifying and trendy types of music. Stratifying music, which includes traditional, and selective foreign, have reemerged as cultural capital today. Furthermore, popular music does not necessarily occupy middlebrow or lowbrow positions, as selective foreign music has been elevated to become the new highbrow of popular music. My findings demonstrate that the most popular music types are less stratifying, whereas stratifying music types are all relatively niche. This allows me to show the persistence of distinction, the subtleties of distinction, and how the elites can draw from their eclectic repertoire of music for distinction, yet also navigate social relations through shared interests in mainstream popular music.

My research reaches these conclusions through innovations that resolve some of the methodological shortcomings in existing research. Music hierarchy is more easily obscured by typical surveys that only ask a limited number of items, consisting of broad, generic, and mainstream labels, as "past research into musical preferences has been constrained because it has conceptualized preferences into broad and illusive genres or styles" (Greenberg et al., 2016: 597). My research demonstrates how quantitative research can be improved to cover a larger set of 53 items, more specific items, and less recognizable items. Asking less recognizable items presents a problem for traditional quantitative methods, as respondents generate plenty of non-responses. This is resolved through MIRT, which treats the "unaware" responses as an actual response which also reveals information on taste.

The persistence of traditional highbrows

Although China has a different trajectory of development that led to the denigration of traditional legitimate culture, the high status of traditional highbrow is still observed today. This is supported by the stratified consumption of traditional highbrow music, which parallels the high status of traditional music in Bourdieusian France. However, legitimate culture takes on different meanings in China, where its recent rise differs from the society which forms Bourdieu's theory on cultural capital. Unlike European societies where legitimate culture has remained within the Western classical and opera canon, China has redefined legitimate culture repeatedly in history, changing from "elegant music," Kunqu opera, Peking opera, and Red music, and most recently Western classical. Particularly under the cultural revolution, traditional culture of all types was purged for their "feudal" and "bourgeois" nature, incompatible with the goals of Communism, leading to the torture and death of many artists and performers. This demonstrates a strong linkage between power and the use of changing legitimate culture to subvert the power of old elites. The status of traditional culture was revived after Reform and Opening. Rising wealth and the revival of inequality has led to the reestablishment of cultural institutions and the rise of high culture. Within a generation, traditional highbrows have regained their status as high art in China.

My data shows that traditional music is favored by the educated in the megacities, particularly so for specific highbrow forms. Traditional music encompasses Western and Chinese variants, with a hierarchy of status contained within the variants of Chinese traditional music. While Western classical has taken hold among the educated in the most affluent coastal regions in China, Chinese traditional music is declining in popularity particularly among the young in coastal regions (Ho, 2016b: 159), yet it is attaining highbrow status, with Jingkun opera favored by the educated but more strongly by those who were raised in the non-coastal regions. The HCCs accumulated their knowledge in traditional highbrow music through many years of learning. Many of them are also favorable about pop but some of them abstained from popular culture. All of them demonstrate a discerning mode of appreciation through the way they discuss and enjoy the highbrow arts. Distinction is vividly seen through the attitudes and dispositions of the HCCs, demonstrating a clear difference from the LCCs.

High culture, rather than in decline as in the West, is being reinstated in China. Traditional highbrow music, encompassing Chinese and the more recent Western tradition, has been promoted institutionally through state funding of performances, the educational curriculum, along with the construction of highbrow symbols such as grandiose performing venues. The global highbrow music of Western classical has become influential in China, and traditional operas have been re-legitimized as worthy cultural heritages. The competition between the different forms of highbrow is still ongoing, but at the moment Western classical—the symbol of Westernization and the carrier of the global standard of cultural capital—is leading the race. The rise of a new group of highly educated privileged who benefitted from the economic development and educational opportunities of the era, coincided with the rise of Western classical as a form of cultural capital.

Pop culture—the development of emerging cultural capital under cultural globalization

This research also further supports the theories of emerging cultural capital, as China shows how cultural globalization is received differently by different segments of society, turning foreign culture into a form of cultural capital (Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2014). The argument for emerging forms of cultural capital came from the argument that Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital does not limit itself to certain forms of culture. Despite the decline of legitimate culture, new forms of culture have risen to become high-status, which are news forms of cultural capital in the contemporary world. Scholars point to the increasing distinction between global and local, as well as "knowing" forms of appreciation as new forms of cultural capital. The global and local distinction is particularly relevant to China, as the music hierarchy places foreign music in the highest position, music from Hong Kong and Taiwan in the middle, and local culture in the lowest position. This relates to the relative hierarchy of dominance in the regions of origin under the globalization of culture. Western popular culture entered developing countries in positions of dominance. Instead of popular music eroding the dominance of elite highbrow culture, the entry of Western music into China has found the opposite effect of increasing segregation between the "modern" Western tastes against the "backward" local tastes of the underclasses. Cultural globalization is mediated by local inequalities, which allows globally dominant forms of culture to become an emerging cultural capital in different countries.

Emerging cultural capital needs to be understood alongside the process of cultural globalization. Several theories on the globalization of culture highlight the homogenization effects of globalization, but they all studied at the level of nations which overlook inequalities within nations. Following the end of colonialization and building on the critical postcolonial work of the time, observers recognized the end of imperialism and colonialism, but argued that they reemerged in a postcolonial empire based on the economic and cultural influence of the West. Wallerstein describes a world system where the core sustained its advantage through underdevelopment of the peripheries, as surplus from trade was pocketed by the core instead of being reinvested into local development (Wallerstein, 2004). Schiller's work on cultural imperialism can be seen as part of the movement on global inequality, which sees the spread of Western culture as the of spread pro-Western values such as capitalism, consumerism, and lifestyle which duped the periphery into accepting underdevelopment (Laing, 1986; Schiller, 1976). Related theories include media imperialism, Westernization, Americanization, and cultural homogenization. Media imperialism focuses more specifically on the dominance of Western mass media, arguing how the export US media in broadcasting, film, and music was unidirectional and had a dominating influence on the cultures and values of the world (Boyd-Barrett, 2014). The Westernization thesis claims that Western ideology and values—such as language, capitalism, and consumerist culture—are dominating global culture(Latouche, 1996). It argues that cities around the world are increasingly similar, dominated by the same global brands and entertainment from the same media companies. The small number of multinational giants is feared to be leading to homogenized viewing patterns across the world, eroding local cultures and traditions around the world (Mirrlees, 2013). Albrow also offered a view of globalization that highlights the effect of homogenization— "globalisation refers to all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society," (Albrow, 1990: 9). However, the problem with those accounts is that they overlook that people in different countries do not act as a single unit, but are internally

stratified. Those accounts evaluate the influence on global culture on other countries at the unit of nation-states, treating nations as if they are homogenous within, emphasizing international inequalities but overlooks intranational inequalities. The impact of global culture can be sharply different on different segments of society. The theory of cultural capital is very helpful in understanding the relationship between culture and the inequalities that exist between segments of society.

The deployment of global culture as cultural capital has been discussed in recent studies (Bühlmann et al., 2013; Igarashi and Saito, 2014; Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2014; Weenink, 2008). It is crucial to examine existing inequalities within societies to understand the influence of cultural encroachment on the localities—where the unequal adoption of foreign culture turns it into a signal of distinction and a form of cultural capital. The entry of global culture is not uniform across the recipient country, as it concentrates among the privileged classes. My study on cultural capital in China presents a case that shows that rather than being homogenized in the Western culture uniformly, the adoption of foreign culture is uneven in China, penetrating the privileged youths but not the underprivileged. This includes the high-status of selective foreign music, as well as Western classical and opera which has a higher status than traditional Chinese music. This was seen even in Europe with the rise of a local versus global distinction, where upper strata are drawn toward foreign culture while those in the lower strata prefer primarily local art (Heikkilä and Rahkonen, 2011; Kahma and Toikka, 2012; Meuleman and Lubbers, 2014; Meuleman and Savage, 2013; Prieur et al., 2008; Rössel and Schroedter, 2015; Woodward et al., 2008). Cultural globalization cannot be explained simply as the "local culture" in the singular being homogenized by global culture, but rather, globalization provides new cultural objects for cultural stratification locally, producing a stratification of local cultures that reflects the global cultural hegemony. Global culture has taken on new meanings as a form of cultural capital, where its status in recipient countries is in homology with the global cultural hegemony. Global culture is shaped by local inequalities as it spreads, and is weaponized in competition for hierarchy and distinction. The cause of this transformation of global culture into a cultural capital is strongly linked to the differential access to foreign culture which advantaged those who grew up in privileged families.

This demonstrates how the form of cultural capital in each country is not fixed but is mediated by local inequalities—which are different in different societies. In Bourdieusian French society of the 1960s and 1970s, a relatively rigid elite culture with popular culture in the nascent is reflected in the exclusive consumption of highbrow by the elites (snobs) and the lack of consumption by the dominated groups (slobs) (using the vocabulary of Peterson and Kern, 1996). In the USA, without an entrenched and exclusionary elite art culture, race has been a more contentious division in the US as "symbolic racism" has been identified as a basis for divisions in taste (Bryson, 1996). More recent studies in other countries also point to the weakening of legitimate cultures, such as a pattern of engagement versus disengagement, and the opposition between emergent and established cultural forms in the UK (Le Roux et al., 2008). In Communist and post-Communist countries, political status has been a structuring force of inequality (Bukodi, 2007a). The influence of political capital is observed in China, but we also see the large unequal opportunities between the rural and the urban reflected in tastes (Goodman, 2014). These differences in underlying social inequality give rise to different structures of taste patterns, therefore Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital based on traditional highbrow culture does not necessarily apply across social contexts.

Researchers should avoid blindly testing whether the patterns that Bourdieu discovered is replicated in other countries because cultural capital depends on the local cultural context and existing inequalities in societies. Bourdieu showed us a particular form of inequality in the society he studied, but his insight is still useful in helping us understand social inequality in other countries, which is not fixed in the pattern of culture nor in the pattern of social hierarchy.

Consecration of popular culture is not formally institutionalized

Aside from the differences in music type, emerging cultural capital also differs in the sources of hierarchy. Traditional highbrow cultural capital has traditionally been regarded to be a project of institutionalized effort—consecration by the government, legitimized through education, and other institutions of dominating social groups. The emerging form of cultural capital (Prieur and Savage, 2013) defies the traditional understanding of cultural capital because they are not legitimized from the top-down institutionally. This also speaks to the weakness of traditional accounts of cultural capital that has trouble explaining the hierarchy in popular music, as they are fleeting and not rigidly institutionalized by the government or in education, unlike traditional classical music.

In China, the pursuit of selective foreign music by the privileged was not formally institutionalized. There are no foreign pop music academics, troupes, concert halls, museums, or music classes. In the early years, foreign pop culture was not even promoted by resourceful record labels nor was it profit-driven. Institutions play more indirect roles, such as in the increased emphasis on English language learning in well-resourced schools. Interests in selective foreign music were enabled through embodied cultural capital of the elites. The status came from the effort of fans with high fluency and interest in foreign culture to seek out selective Western artists. They were driven by demands from the bottom-up rather than promoted top-down (Gans, 2008: 13–21). Those with privileged childhood were encouraged and empowered to pursue Western culture, with a disposition for non-mainstream foreign music. The consecration of selective Western music was led by the agency of young individuals who, with the resources and ability to consume foreign culture, reach out for music of distinction and contributed to the spread and distribution of foreign music in China, rather than the traditional globalization accounts of imperial powers entering to promote their hegemonic music.

The "glocalization" theory says "globalization has involved the reconstruction of 'home', 'community', and 'locality'" (Robertson, 1995: 30). The status of music also takes on new meaning in China, following a process of simultaneous globalization with indigenization. The status of foreign popular music became redefined as it entered China, rather than imposed top-down by the globally dominant. The most popular music in the West weakly relates to the most popular Western music in China (Rupke and Blank, 2009). Western pop culture, which might not be high-status in the West, picked up new local values and status as cultural capital as they become adopted by the privileged in China. Selective foreign music, not necessarily highbrow in their nations of origin, are received as high status in China when interpreted by local elites pursuing the non-mainstream for differentiation. The unequal adoption of global culture, concentrated in the privileged segments of society, has turned it into a local form of cultural capital—an emerging form of cultural capital.

Objectified and embodied form of cultural capital

As a response to criticisms that Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital has become irrelevant under the decline of high culture (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007b; Goldthorpe, 2007; Peterson and Kern, 1996), some scholars turn to the distinction between objectified and embodied forms of capital, which suggests that distinction can also be drawn through the attitudes and modes of consumption, rather than only through the objects of consumption (Bourdieu, 1986; Friedman, 2011; Holt, 1997). My survey attempts to understand attitudes and more subtle differences in consumption. The questionnaire does so by asking preferences in music—a reflection of internal attitude—rather than the objectified ownership of cultural objects or participation. It used a latent trait method to derive the tastes that underlie and explain the surfaced differences in music preference, which is another attempt to examine more deeply beyond the objectified display of status signals. The quantitative findings discover differences in the stratification within foreign music, and to a lesser extent, in Chinese music as well. Selective foreign music, but not trendy foreign music, is an emerging form of cultural capital in China. They are specific items of foreign music that are not the most popular but are heavily stratified by cultural capital. The differences between selective foreign music and trendy foreign music are not obvious, and Western scholars have noted the popularity of foreign songs in China can be unrelated to their popularity in the West (Rupke and Blank, 2009). The surprising finding of a division within foreign music, and the ability of those with cultural capital to distinguish them while others cannot, is a distinction that relies on embodied forms of cultural capital in China to tell distinguish "quality." It is not enough to simply claim to like all kinds of foreign music—the privileged distinguish between the superior selective music and the inferior mass.

Qualitative interviews further explain how embodied cultural capital enables differentiation within the different subtypes foreign music, which is due to the different attitudes toward music between the HCCs and LCCs. The HCCs show a discerning appreciation of quality which is based on research, knowledge, and judgment. They pursue the non-mainstream items of their era, and "upgraded" their repertoire to increasingly selective items as the mainstream landscape shifted toward Hk/Taiwan and eventually mainstream Western pop. In contrast, the LCCs primarily pursue popularity—regarding popularity to be likable. Lowbrow music, or sometimes even popular music in general, is looked down upon by the HCCs as tasteless and undesirable. Embodied cultural capital is relevant not only to *how* culture is consumed, but also turns around to influence *what* specific items are consumed. Those with embodied cultural capital claim to be able to discern what specific music is of high quality, and this is reflected in what they consume—provided that the questionnaire has the granularity to discern them.

8.4 The meaning of cultural capital in China

The development of cultural capital

The concept of *habitus* is central to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, as it describes how differences in cultural capital are rooted in early upbringings and relatively fixed later in life. *Habitus* is defined as "a system of durably acquired schemes of perception, thought and action, engendered by objective conditions

but tending to persist even after an alteration of those conditions" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979: 12). It refers to dispositions that are inculcated by the social environment, which influences values, behavior, and taste (Bourdieu, 1984). My research affirms that view, as differences in taste are heavily influenced by differences in upbringings in the past.

The quantitative part of my research shows that taste—analyzed as classical highbrow, emerging cultural capital, symbolic exclusion, and cultural engagement—is related not only to the measurement of privileges in adulthood such as education and foreign living experiences, but also privileges during childhood—such as the hukou during childhood, music lesson, as well as parental privileges. This strongly supports that taste is not only a reflection of today's status but arises from knowledge and values developed from the past. This view is also supported by my qualitative research, where respondents describe their past from which we can observe the sources of their taste. Their interest in highbrow music relates to the childhood concerts attended, early music lessons, and an education system that introduced them to such music. The LCCs describe their lack of such extracurricular development in their upbringing, but instead an education that emphasizes rote learning and exams (which ironically, despite the educational focus on college and university entrance exams, still failed to allow them to gain entry into better-ranked universities). This resulted in differences in the level of interest in the different forms of music, and their different criteria for what is considered quality music—one pursues the popular and the hit, while the other strives for selectivity and intrinsic quality. The influence of their background leaves an unmistakable influence on their taste.

Their differences, however, can be traced to the inequalities in earlier periods of China. Inequality in China can be viewed in terms of inequalities in economic, cultural, and political capital—which can be explained through the social development in recent Chinese history that sharply differed from that in the West. In the past century, the Chinese social structure experienced abrupt changes every generation. Traditional high art and the old gentry class fell along with the fall of the imperial Qing dynasty in 1911, suffering brutal treatment particularly during the Cultural revolution. The Communist revolution in 1949 established socialism, with the purge of traditional and popular music for Red music. Cultural capital as elite reproduction as portrayed by Bourdieu is not evident given the discontinuous social hierarchy in modern China. Cultural capital, portrayed as the distinctive traits of the French aristocracy—the style, eloquence, gestures, and mentality passed down in elite families, is hard to be found in modern China. The old Chinese imperial elites, with their taste for classical high culture, had their properties confiscated and status deprived after the socialist revolution. Political capital was the only capital during socialist China and the dominant form of social hierarchy in that period. Under socialism, the new elites were the party members and cadres, who were often able to privilege themselves and their family members in access to resources by holding government positions themselves, or through their connection with other party members who do.

Reform and opening in 1978 led to the current market economy, rising inequality, along with the influx of music from outside of mainland China. Much of the current social hierarchy today is built only after reform and opening. Political capital was converted into economic and cultural capital but soon declined in the market economy, aside from the most elite bureaucrat families who remain in the top echelon of power (Goodman, 2014). Yet the privilege of party membership is still observable, as they and their children are

more likely to have a better education or to have played an instrument when young. Economic inequality rose after Reform and Opening as the country shifts from socialist to market economy, but economic income is found to have comparatively less influence on taste. The influence of economic capital is limited to cultural engagement in live events.

Unlike the multigenerational transfer of privileges described by Bourdieu, cultural capital in today's form—selective foreign music and traditional highbrow—is less rigid and more recent in China, arising from divergent childhood environments since Reform and Opening. The past generation experienced tremendous opportunity from political reforms, economic development, and massive expansion of opportunities for higher education—resulting in a fluid society with an expansion of opportunities for different segments for society. However, Chinese society is also marked by widening divisions. The initial inequalities enlarged from differences in ownership of material goods to differences in lifestyles. Differences in cultural capital, which includes mentalities and attitudes, started to be planted in the diverging environments of people raised in different families. Cultural capital developed from the seeds of intergenerational inequality that were planted during the early years of Reform and Opening, through the slight but enlarging inequality in that period.

This research has shown that people's tastes are influenced by parental, childhood, as well as adulthood privileges. Parental privileges such as parental occupational class, cultural and political capital all exert influences in children's music taste. Growing up in rural versus urban China also leaves differences in taste that are visible despite the level of education. Because different forms of privileges reinforce each other, those with privileged parents and childhood are also more likely to attain high levels of education. However, advantages from early in life continue to leave influences even after controlling for education. Furthermore, qualitative interviews also traced the development of cultural capital from the interviewees to show how those from privileged families had higher aspirations for Western culture, and had much better access to education, music education, and foreign media—which led to their discerning tastes and their ability to differentiate the tasteful from the distasteful.

The habitus and suzhi

Various notions related to internal development can be observed in China. Bourdieu's view that distinction draws on differences in internalized resources residing in the habitus can help us understand those notions in China, where there is a culture that focuses on education and internal aspects of development. Bourdieu attributes having proper taste to his theories on cultural capital. The notion of "taste" (品味 *pinwei*) is also used in China, but there several related terms that are frequently used to denigrate those with lower social standings in China. "Lacking culture" (*meiyou wenhua*) has a traditional context that education brings knowledge and proper behavior necessary to become a cultured person (Goodman, 2013: 205). Lacking *qizhi* can be described as a deficiency in "disposition – the air with which one holds one-self" (Miao, 2016: 24). *Suzhi* (quality) is perhaps the best example of a discourse that discriminates against the lack of internal quality.

Suzhi means internal qualities, akin to the lack of culture, which is frequently used to "measure" and berate others (Kipnis, 2006; Murphy, 2004). In everyday usage, *suzhi* is frequently used as a stigmatizing discourse

against lower social groups. The discourse frequently employed in China is the lack of *suzhi*—the lack of "culture" or literally the lack of innate qualities of those below them. Low suzhi is used against the underclass to disparage a range of "deficiencies" such as lack of education, low literacy, poor hygiene, and manners, or poor taste (Anagnost, 2008; Jacka, 2009; Kipnis, 2006, 2007; Sun, 2009b). Those with low *suzhi* are portrayed in popular media with anxiety, fascination, and fear, with a need to be controlled and undergo further civilizing (Sun, 2009a; Zhao, 2002). The *suzhi* discourse is used to label, justify, and discriminate different social groups as if the differences are innate. "Suzhi enables transcoding of economic value into a system of social distinctions that achieves its fullest expression in the newly interiorized space of civilized urban domesticity and its production of affective value" (Anagnost, 2004: 192). "Using the language of lacking suzhi becomes a natural form of insulting those whom one wishes to castigate, especially if they appear to be poor, of a rural background or have relatively low levels of education... The term "*suzhi*" is often taken to imply a ranked form of overall human quality and potential, a type of quality that is totalizing measure of one's intellect, morality, physical conditioning and character...*suzhi* discourse justifies social and political hierarchies in China. A person who is insulted by insinuations that his or her *suzhi* is low is castigated in a number of ways. His or her moral, intellectual and physical qualities are simultaneously questioned. Moreover, because *suzhi* is understood as a form of potential, she or he is considered beyond hope—without the potential for future development and not worthy of the effort of investing additional training resources" (Kipnis, 2013: 119)

The logic of suzhi has been traced to Confucian value-judgments (Jacka, 2009; Sun, 2013). Confucian values believe that to be fully a human requires a lifelong process of self-cultivation that aims to achieve *ren*, the state of supreme virtue (Tu, 1985). *Suzhi* justifies inequality through the notion that one is socially marginalized due to lack of *suzhi*; to improve oneself, one needs to improve *suzhi* through self-development such as education. Similarly, Confucian morality places importance on cultivation, though not necessarily education for the sake of certificate, but rather for the self-cultivation that leads to changes in *suzhi*. The cultivated individuals can be trusted to lead, and education is the path to upward status. The belief in the internal change in behavior and manner has Confucian roots in *li*, the proper conduct of society, and what it means to be a *junzi* (gentleman). Confucianism has long valued scholars above merchants and education above wealth, valuing contributions to others over private gains. Superior social status comes from a holistic internal change which "requires also substantial changes in one's cognitive outlook" (Miao, 2016: 24).

In China, it is the privileged who are doing whatever they can to improve their and their children's *suzhi*. In contrast, there is little that the disadvantaged can do to "improve" their *suzhi*. The deficit of education, development, and employment opportunities prevent the disadvantaged from "improving themselves." Scholars have criticized the *suzhi* discourse as a justification for the deprived outcome of certain social groups as their personal deficiency in intrinsic "quality," which reinforces and reproduces their social exclusion (Kipnis, 2006; Murphy, 2004). The privileged, for fear of their child falling behind, increasingly putting their children through musical and other extra-curricular education to improve their internal dispositions. The focus on children's education had both roots on the Confucian emphasis on education, and also the one-child policy since 1979 that caused 2 parents and 4 grandparents to devote all their resources and anxieties onto the development of the "little emperor" or "empress" (Davis and Sensenbrenner, 2000:

59). Privileged parents believe "the norm for someone with their socioeconomic status is to rectify the inadequacies in the official school system by providing supplementary education using their socioeconomic and cultural capital," otherwise, as a parent says, "your child ends up looking around and realizing that everyone can do this puzzle while he can't, it will undermine him." (Miao, 2016: 114). On the top, resourceful parents educate their children to be competitive in globalizing China. Children of the privileged strata are proficient in English and hope to pursue education abroad to see the world (Miao, 2016: 114; Tsang, 2014: 85).

Bourdieu attributes social distinction to underlying cultural inequality in the social hierarchy, which he conceptualizes as cultural capital. He believes that the privileged distinguish themselves through legitimate culture, which includes not only knowledge but also mindset and dispositions inculcated into the *habitus*. Both *suzhi* and Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* view internal dispositions as fundamental to differences in personal cultivation. *Habitus* enables people to have an instinctive grasp of the "rules of the game," whereas Confucianism similarly attributes human development as an internal quality which is reflected in behavior. The theory of taste and *suzhi* both attribute social differences to internals, which is reflected in outward behavior, and used as a justification for exclusion. Although the development of economic inequality in China is only recent, the notion of cultural distinction has traditional roots that need no reinvention. Social distinction has been attributed to indicators that "is often 'felt' more than 'seen', a sense of belonging and accordant behavior rather than a checklist." A quote from a respondent illustrates this succinctly: "I would never identify with another person, or think of them as middle class, simply because of their occupation or income. That has to come from something else – the way they behave, their mannerisms, their ways of thought." (Miao, 2016: 24). The perception of internalized differences has reemerged to draw social boundaries in China.

Despite the different cultural contexts between China and the Western societies where Bourdieu formulated his theories, there are coherences in Bourdieu's concepts and social distinction in China in the attribution to internal characteristics for distinction. However, the use of *suzhi* in China is frequently normative—to call for the need to further develop oneself, which in social contexts is applied as a negative label to discredit others and justify discriminating outcomes (Anagnost, 2008; Jacka, 2009; Kipnis, 2006, 2007; Sun, 2009b). As such, its use is frequently a form of symbolic violence, but habitus is used only as an academic term to describe the concept neutrally. One can say that "someone lacks *suzhi*" but not for habitus, as *suzhi* is a unit of measurement. The use of *suzhi* in China literally means "quality," a more unapologetic word for the notion of "taste" or "level of culture."

Conceptually, while both *suzhi* and habitus refer to intrinsic cultivation, in the context of his theory of taste, habitus is used by Bourdieu to describe the undesirable mechanism for elites to apply symbolic violence to advantage themselves. The context of the *suzhi* discourse in China—which also applies to the Confucian notion of cultivation—sees it positively as desirable. The *suzhi* discourse is used by the state as a neo-liberal discourse to urge the disadvantaged to improve their own *suzhi*, a transformation that helps the migrant workers adapt to the city and improve the quality of the population. However, it is the privileged who are

benefitting from this strive to improve themselves, which is well described by Bourdieu's view that cultural capital is an intergenerational inequality.

Under Bourdieu's account, the castigation of bad tastes is openly done between social groups, whereas the appearance of natural talent due to childhood inculcation is beneath the surface—unknown to the oppressed. In China, pointing out others' lack of *suzhi* is more open and acceptable, in fact publicly used in educational and government discourse, perhaps because the concept of using education to strive for inner cultivation of virtues is deeply rooted in Confucian culture (Thrasher, 1981; Tu, 1985). The ideals of increasing openness and tolerance described by many accounts in the West are not readily seen in China (Beck, 2006; Peterson and Kern, 1996). The underprivileged are both criticized based on taste and behavior, but also directly on the lack of *suzhi*. The underprivileged have themselves been so convinced that they "lack *suzhi*" that they sometimes believe they *deserve* the hardship they are facing, attributing their experience of "eating bitterness" (hardship)—such as hardship, humiliations, and loneliness—to their lack of *suzhi* (Sun, 2013). Thus, the *suzhi* discourse also justifies unequal outcome based on an innate deficiency, and functions as a preserver of an unequal social structure like cultural capital (Anagnost, 2004; Jacka, 2009; Kipnis, 2006, 2007; Lin, 2011; Sun, 2009b; Yan, 2003).

The implications for cultural inequality

Firstly, my research is one of the few that examines cultural consumption and cultural capital in China. My research shows that distinction in cultural consumption exists in contemporary Chinese megacities. In contrast to existing research in China that covered various aspects of cultural distinction as a sub-cultural phenomenon or isolated instances of symbolic violence (BBC News, 2018; Li, 2018; Quackenbush and Chen, 2018; Shen, 2018; Zuo, 2018), I have comprehensively examined distinction in music to analyze the patterns of division. My research shows that not only is distinction observed, it can be traced to the circumstance of the individual and also their upbringing. Thus, the deployment of taste for symbolic violence is systematic and widespread. Rather than the end of relevance of Bourdieu, the stratification of culture is present, and cannot be dismissed simply as tolerance of the individuals – which we know from other research in China that stigmatization of the underclasses is still prevalent (such as Chen, 2013; Chen et al., 2011; Gan, 2014; Guan, 2011; Kuang and Liu, 2012; Li et al., 2007; Solinger, 1999; Zhang, 2001; Zhang et al., 2009; Zhang and Wu, 2017). My research thus draws attention to the importance of cultural distinction in China as a cultural capital as a research topic, which has been overlooked in researches in China.

Secondly, my research shows the importance of the cultural angle in understanding inequality in China, drawing attention to the often-overlooked relationship between cultural consumption, distinction, and inequality in China. Existing researches on inequalities in China have focused on economic inequality and the rural and urban divide, at the current point in time. My research shows that cultural dimensions and influences from the past also persist into inequalities today. While my case is on music, my research points to wider issues of the prevalence and the deeper causes of cultural distinction. Discrimination in China has been prevalent, both against the underclasses in absolute terms, and against anyone in a lower social position. In contrast to studies that address distinction based on current economic and status disparity, I investigated

cultural inequality through Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. This research suggests that discrimination is far beyond objectifiable material differences. Distinction in China is based on internalized differences, rooted in inequalities of the past, seeded in decades of diverging upbringing. The differences are measurable not just in terms of material ownership, economic wealth, or even level of education. These differences can be measured in terms of cultural taste, which points to drastic cultural and perceptional differences in society. Furthermore, although differences in music taste are known to be influenced by many individual factors such as psychology, personality, or mood, they are found to be associated not only with differences in education, class, and cosmopolitanism, they were even traceable to parental factors.

Bourdieu's cultural capital is the best concept that can make sense of this linkage. Cultural capital helps reveal the deeper causes of discrimination through the lens of cultural inequality and intergenerational inequality. As we have seen, different trajectories of upbringing are deep causes of the different mentalities, perceptions, and attitudes that are recognizable and hard to change later in life. Scholars of inequality in China are encouraged to realize that, while economic differences and rural-urban differences in the current point in time is an important inequality, frequently the causes of differences are more deeply rooted, since childhood environment and parental inequalities. My research shows that cultural capital is a useful concept to understand how inequalities sustain itself through early upbringing.

This research also uses the most developed megacities in China to glimpse into what the future of China may look like as it continues to urbanize and develop. Inequality in China has considerably widened since the early years of Reform and Opening—the childhood years of the respondents. Inequality in China is largely a recent phenomenon that escalated since the 1990s and the 2000s, with studies that point to decreasing social mobility. This thesis has examined, through the lens of music, the current state of cultural capital in China to understand its relevance in structuring taste. Cultural capital was examined through both the cultural side as the role of music types in stratification, as well as through the social side on how they were accumulated in certain social groups. By tracing the reemergence of cultural distinction from material ownership to lifestyle and then differentiation in taste, I argue that cultural capital is regaining importance in China. After four decades of unequal development, inequalities that have now reached beyond economic differences to see the emergence of intergenerational cultural differences.

Yet, two aspects should be considered in interpreting this finding. Firstly, the quantitative data in this study is a snapshot in time, without the ability to isolate age from cohort effect, and thus not an evidence for trends. My argument for the rise of cultural capital is based on analysis of social development in China and reflections on intergenerational differences in the interviews, rather than empirical evidence based on longitudinal data on cultural preferences—a comparison which is more available in the West but essentially non-existent in China. Secondly, this data is based on megacities in China to show that high degrees of cultural inequality exists within the most developed regions of China. Megacities are where the most privileged individuals live in China. Nationally, the gaps between the taste of the privileged and underprivileged are expected to be even wider, as only the most fortunate individuals are able to reside in those megacities. Thus the degree that deficits in cultural capital can be overcome later in life is influenced by those who have successfully overcome it, who therefore reside in the city to be interviewed. Furthermore, if

societal inequality continues to increase and intergenerational mobility becomes stagnant, differences in cultural capital in the next generation of Chinese are expected to continue to enlarge. Since this is the first generation of widespread inequality in China, if upward opportunities become less plentiful in the future, the leverage of parental endowment, i.e. the influence of cultural capital, might become even more important in the future.

Part V. APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Supplementary Tables

Table-1: Basic profile of artists/music groups in the questionnaire

Questionnaire		Attributes (not revealed to respondents)			
Music Item	Artist Name	Gender	Year of Birth	Approx. Age in 2017	Region of origin
M6	Teresa TENG	F	1943	(Died 1995)	Taiwan
M7	Jonathan LEE	M	1959	58	Taiwan
M8	Coco LEE	F	1975	42	Taiwan / HK
M9	May Day (a band of 5)	All M	1973-1977	40-44	Taiwan
M10	Jolin TSAI	F	1980	37	Taiwan
M11	Alan TAM	M	1950	67	Hong Kong
M12	WONG Ka Kui	M	1962	(Died 1993)	Hong Kong
M13	Jacky CHEUNG	M	1961	56	Hong Kong
M14	Eason CHAN	M	1974	43	Hong Kong
M15	G.E.M.	F	1991	26	Hong Kong
M16	LIU Huan	M	1963	54	Mainland China
M17	LU Han	M	1990	27	Mainland China
M18	CUI Jian	M	1961	56	Mainland China
M19	Faye WONG	F	1969	48	Mainland China / HK
M20	Dao Lang	M	1961	56	Mainland China
M21	Chopstick Brothers (a duo)	All M	1969 & 1980	37 & 48	Mainland China
M22	Phoenix Legend (a duo)	M & F	1979 & 1980	37 & 38	Mainland China
M23	QU Wanting	F	1983	34	Mainland China
M24	LI Yuchun	F	1984	33	Mainland China
M25	YAN Weiwen	M	1957	60	Mainland China
M26	HAN Hong	F	1971	46	Mainland China
M27	LI Yundi	M	1982	35	Mainland China
M28	Wulantuya	F	1983	34	Mainland China
M29	Mai KURAKI	F	1982	35	Japan
M30	Psy	M	1977	40	Korea
M31	Adele	F	1988	29	UK
M32	Justin BIEBER	M	1994	24	Canada
M33	Lady Gaga	F	1986	31	US

Table-2. Welch T-test on differences in years of education between likes vs dislikes, and unaware vs aware

Music	Likes	Dislikes	t1	df1	p1	Unaware	Aware	t2	df2	p2
M01.PopWest	0.55	-1.02	5.84	198	***	-0.78	0.07	-2.91	103	**
M02.PopJK	0.30	-0.05	1.67	450	.	-0.64	0.08	-2.80	134	**
M03.PopCanto	0.13	-0.37	2.00	194	*	-0.57	0.03	-1.62	63	
M04.PopHkTw	0.03	0.02	0.04	156		0.08	0.00	0.20	42	
M05.PopMainland	-0.08	0.53	-2.36	102	*	-0.96	0.01	-1.43	12	
M06.TeresaT	-0.01	-0.06	0.15	95		-0.16	0.01	-0.39	40	
M07.JonLee	0.35	-0.74	4.29	187	***	-0.61	0.11	-3.24	205	**
M08.CocoLee	-0.08	0.02	-0.43	434		-0.31	0.06	-1.74	220	.
M09.MayDay	0.45	-0.40	4.11	368	***	-0.61	0.07	-2.60	134	*
M10.JolinT	0.07	-0.08	0.69	432		0.19	-0.01	0.61	56	
M11.AlanT	-0.16	0.12	-1.28	279		-0.21	0.03	-1.03	169	
M12.KKWong	0.13	-0.44	2.07	106	*	-0.60	0.04	-1.93	78	.
M13.JackyC	0.05	-0.13	0.50	58		-0.23	0.00	-0.38	21	
M14.EasonC	0.33	-0.81	3.73	81	***	-2.51	0.12	-6.68	48	***
M15.GEM	-0.12	0.02	-0.67	455		-0.33	0.04	-1.29	118	
M16.LiuH	-0.06	0.00	-0.31	504		-0.50	0.03	-1.35	53	
M17.LuH	-0.27	0.08	-1.58	361		-0.08	0.03	-0.63	518	
M18.CuiJ	0.33	-0.15	2.12	412	*	-0.39	0.10	-2.62	322	**
M19.FayeW	0.30	-0.43	2.99	172	**	-1.53	0.06	-3.12	38	**
M20.DaoL	-0.52	0.61	-5.53	548	***	-0.54	0.05	-2.46	114	*
M21.Chopstick	-0.13	0.31	-2.06	399	*	-0.67	0.04	-2.16	70	*
M22.Phoenix	-0.55	0.53	-5.46	549	***	-1.14	0.03	-2.39	29	*
M23.QuWt	0.25	-0.08	1.31	236		-0.49	0.15	-3.34	354	***
M24.LiYc	-0.24	0.07	-1.45	361		-0.56	0.06	-2.30	121	*
M25.YanWw	-0.37	0.04	-1.55	336		-0.14	0.09	-1.51	848	
M26.Hanh	-0.25	0.32	-2.76	355	**	-0.38	0.01	-0.90	24	
M27.LiYd	0.32	-0.23	2.37	378	*	-0.46	0.20	-4.00	561	***
M28.Wlty	-0.67	0.18	-3.05	297	**	0.16	-0.14	2.02	1031	*
M29.MaiKuraki	0.30	0.05	0.84	177		-0.08	0.10	-1.17	996	
M30.Psy	-0.08	0.27	-1.48	244		-0.69	0.12	-3.46	191	***
M31.Adele	0.87	-0.54	5.97	266	***	-0.61	0.38	-6.43	776	***
M32.Bieber	0.71	0.14	2.63	386	**	-0.81	0.39	-7.51	602	***
M33.Gaga	0.23	0.42	-0.95	506		-1.31	0.28	-7.44	241	***
M34.ClassicalWest	0.51	-0.67	4.86	323	***	-0.29	0.07	-1.87	309	.
M35.OperaWest	0.73	-0.63	5.85	260	***	-0.10	0.04	-0.81	494	
M36.Hiphop	0.10	-0.01	0.56	548		-0.81	0.08	-2.77	105	**
M37.Techno	-0.12	0.14	-1.22	487		-0.72	0.16	-4.11	249	***
M38.RnB	0.90	-0.62	7.05	389	***	-0.87	0.24	-5.78	330	***
M39.PlazaDance	-0.78	0.34	-4.89	214	***	-0.93	0.05	-2.54	60	*
M40.Rock	0.03	-0.31	1.50	310		-1.49	0.02	-1.95	14	.
M41.NetMusic	-0.56	0.57	-5.67	511	***	-0.20	0.01	-0.68	72	
M42.Red	-0.32	0.18	-2.39	549	*	-0.77	0.05	-2.33	65	*
M43.Folk	0.01	-0.07	0.38	349		-0.33	0.01	-0.77	35	
M44.TraditCn	0.29	-0.61	4.19	320	***	-0.82	0.06	-2.70	81	**
M45.OperaKun	0.18	-0.40	2.33	230	*	0.06	-0.03	0.53	566	
M46.OperaPek	0.10	-0.40	2.30	364	*	0.12	-0.02	0.60	177	
M47.OperaHM	-0.04	-0.23	0.91	549		0.14	-0.03	0.77	216	
M48.OperaLocal	0.08	-0.29	1.71	343	.	0.36	-0.10	2.53	350	*
M49.Pingtan	0.20	-0.35	2.13	211	*	0.01	-0.01	0.10	754	

The years of education have been mean-centered.
Significance: 10% ., 5% *, 1% **, 0.1% ***

Appendix 2. Questionnaire

Screening criteria

1. Your gender?	Male / Female
2. Your age?	___ ___ years

Music

(1) How much do you like the following types of music?

	Highly Like	Like	Neut-ral	Dis-like	Highly Dislike	Have not heard
3. Mandopop from Hong Kong and Taiwan	a	b	c	d	e	f
4. Mandopop from Mainland China	a	b	c	d	e	f
5. Cantopop from Hong Kong	a	b	c	d	e	f
6. Japanese and Korean Pop music	a	b	c	d	e	f
7. American and European Pop music	a	b	c	d	e	f

(2) How much do you like the music of these artists?

	Highly Like	Like	Neut-ral	Dis-like	Highly Dislike	Have not heard
8. Teresa Teng	a	b	c	d	e	f
9. Jonathan Lee	a	b	c	d	e	f
10. Coco Lee	a	b	c	d	e	f
11. May Day	a	b	c	d	e	f
12. Jolin Tsai	a	b	c	d	e	f
13. Alan Tam	a	b	c	d	e	f
14. Wong Ka Kui	a	b	c	d	e	f
15. Jackie Cheung	a	b	c	d	e	f
16. Eason Chan	a	b	c	d	e	f
17. G.E.M.	a	b	c	d	e	f
18. Liu Huan	a	b	c	d	e	f
19. Lu Han	a	b	c	d	e	f
20. Cui Jian	a	b	c	d	e	f
21. Faye Wong	a	b	c	d	e	f
22. Dao Lang	a	b	c	d	e	f
23. Chopstick Brothers	a	b	c	d	e	f
24. Phoenix Legend	a	b	c	d	e	f
25. Qu Wanting	a	b	c	d	e	f
26. Li Yuchun	a	b	c	d	e	f
27. Yan Weiwen	a	b	c	d	e	f
28. Han Hong	a	b	c	d	e	f
29. Li Yundi	a	b	c	d	e	f
30. Wulantuya	a	b	c	d	e	f
31. Mai Kuraki	a	b	c	d	e	f
32. Psy	a	b	c	d	e	f
33. Adele	a	b	c	d	e	f
34. Justin Bieber	a	b	c	d	e	f
35. Lady Gaga	a	b	c	d	e	f

(3) How much do you like these types of music?

	Highly Like	Like	Neut-ral	Dis-like	Highly Dislike	Have not heard
36. Western classical	a	b	c	d	e	f
37. Western opera	a	b	c	d	e	f
38. Hip-hop & rap	a	b	c	d	e	f
39. Techno	a	b	c	d	e	-f
40. Rhythm & Blues (R&B)	a	b	c	d	e	f
41. Plaza Dance Music	a	b	c	d	e	f
42. Rock	a	b	c	d	e	f
43. Trendy Net Music	a	b	c	d	e	f
44. Red/Communist	a	b	c	d	e	f
45. Chinese folk songs	a	b	c	d	e	f
46. Guqin (Chinese instrument)	a	b	c	d	e	f
47. Kunqu opera	a	b	c	d	e	f
48. Peking opera	a	b	c	d	e	f
49. Huangmei opera	a	b	c	d	e	f
50. [local] opera Bangzi opera (asked in BJ) Sichuan opera (asked in CD) Canton opera (asked in GZ) Shanghai opera (asked in SH)	a	b	c	d	e	f
51. Suzhou Pingtan	a	b	c	d	e	f

(4) Live venue attendance

52. In the most recent year, how many times have you attended a live venue for popular concert, music concert, or opera performances?	__ __ times

Socio-demographics

(5) Basic

53. How long have you lived in the current city? (accumulated)	__ __ years
54. How many cities have you lived in (for > 1 year)?	__ __

(6) Education (including degrees currently pursuing)

	Middle school or below	Middle Technical	High school	College	Bachelor's	Masters or above
55. Your level of education?	a	b	c	d	e	f
56. Your father's level of education?	a	b	c	d	e	f

(7) Occupation

57. What is your current (or last) occupation?	i. Occupation: _____ ii. Company type: a) state, b) state-affiliated, c) state-owned, d) foreign-owned, e) private, f) self iii. Role: a) employee, b) manager, c) owner
58. What is the current (or last) occupation of your farther?	i. Occupation: _____ ii. Company type: a) state, b) state-affiliated, c) state-owned, d) foreign-owned, e) private, f) self iii. Role: a) employee, b) manager, c) owner
59. What is (or was) the company type of your mother?	Company type: a) state, b) state-affiliated, c) state-owned, d) foreign-owned, e) private, f) self

(8) Additional Questions

	a)	b)
60. Have you learned to play instruments when young (learned for 1 year or more, under age 18)?	Yes	No
61. Have you lived abroad for 6 months or more? (outside of Mainland China)	Yes	No
62. Are you a member of the Communist Party?	Yes	No
63. Do you have any parent who is a member of the party?	Yes	No
64. What was your household registration (hukou) when you were 18?	Urban	Rural

(9) What is your average household monthly pre-tax earnings?[11]

	Below 5,000	5,001-8,000	8,000-12,000	12,000-18,000	18,000 – 30,000	More than 30,000
65.	a	b	c	d	e	f

(10) How many properties in [the current city] do you have ownership under your name? (including those under mortgage payment)[12]

	0	1	2	3-4	More than 4
66.	a	b	c	d	e

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[11] Household rather than personal income is used, because it accounts for those choose not to work for income and rely on the income of the household.

[12] Because of currency restrictions and the habit of accumulating savings in housing, the number of properties owned will be used as an indicator for wealth (Tomba, 2016). A numerical figure for asset is difficult to estimate and would be highly sensitive in China, especially from a call through random digit dialing. This is a way to get an indication of the level of assets one holds. Due to restrictions in property market, it is difficult for people to purchase property in a top tier city than their household registration

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(except the super-rich). Property prices in lower tier cities are drastically lower, so the question focus on the current city.

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