Proposal of a theoretical model for the iconic global brands consumption in high-class economic power with high and low cultural capital

Proposição de um modelo teórico para o consumo de marcas icônicas globais na classe de alto poder econômico com alto e baixo capital cultural

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ABSTRACT

Consumption is used as a way of acquiring status and, thereby, as social borders path (Bourdieu, 1979; Veblen, [1899] 1988, Simmel, 1904). The cultural capital acts as a determining factor in the consumption of status (Holt, 1998; Bourdieu, 1979). The iconic global brands provide individuals from less developed countries the possibility of association with lifestyles of the more advanced economies, that is, to the myth of the "modern and global citizen" (Holt, Quelch, & Taylor, 2004). The purpose of this article is to present a proposition of theoretical model of the iconic global brands consumption as market resources that assist consumers of high economic power, with high and low cultural capital, the building and its signaling identities. The proposed model contributes to a better understanding of the consumer relationship with iconic global brands, in sociocultural contexts.

KEYWORDS: Consumption; Global brands; Cultural capital; Identity; Globalization.

RESUMO

O consumo é utilizado como uma forma de aquisição de *status* e, desse modo, como demarcador de fronteiras sociais (Bourdieu, 1979; Veblen, [1899] 1988, Simmel, 1904). O capital cultural atua como fator determinante no consumo de *status* (Holt, 1998; Bourdieu, 1979). As marcas icônicas globais fornecem aos indivíduos de países menos desenvolvidos a possibilidade de associação aos estilos de vida das economias mais avançadas, isto é, ao mito do "cidadão moderno e global" (Holt, Quelch, & Taylor, 2004). O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar uma proposição de modelo teórico do consumo de marcas icônicas globais, como recursos de mercado que auxiliam os consumidores de alto poder econômico, com alto e baixo capital cultural, a construírem e sinalizarem suas identidades. O modelo proposto contribui para a melhor compreensão do relacionamento dos consumidores com marcas icônicas globais, em contextos socioculturais menos desenvolvidos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Consumo; Marcas globais; Capital cultural; Identidade; Globalização.

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1   INTRODUCTION

In emerging countries such as Brazil, there is a strong aspiration to consume the status symbols of the more developed countries, especially the United States and the European nations (Üstüner & Holt, 2010; O'Dougherty, 2002; Diniz, Atwal, & Bryson, Holt et al., 2004). Many social scientists researching consumption in less developed countries show that, in these contexts, there is great emulation by the consumption patterns of the social classes of industrialized countries (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). In this perspective, global iconic brands are market resources that consumers use to build their identities and present themselves to others. Consumers choose brands based on the congruence between brand associations and associations with individuals' self-image (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005). Üstüner and Holt (2010) studied status consumption in Turkey, a developing country, and found that the possession of high or low cultural capital strongly influences global brand choices.

The objective of this article was to construct and present a theoretical model, referring to the consumption of global iconic brands in the high economic class with low cultural capital, in a less developed country context. Such research aims to contribute to the expansion of knowledge frontiers in understanding how consumers in less developed countries appropriate these brands to build and signal their identities.

2   GLOBAL CONTEXT

The phenomenon of the globalization of culture exerts a marked influence on consumer practices. According to Appadurai (1990), "national" cultures are increasingly penetrated by elements from other cultures. Consequently, there is a strong movement of cultural hybridization, of cultural pluralism. With the increase of this cultural interpenetration, artifacts, symbols, and rituals associated with an ethnicity / country become less visible and less easily identifiable.

This cultural globalization acts to reproduce the market, making the lifestyles, products and global brands of more developed countries consumed worldwide (Firat, 1997; Holt et al., 2004). Although globalization leads to homogenization, there are incompatibilities of assimilation of some global iconic symbols and, thus, cultural fragmentations arise from lifestyles and experiences that do not fit together (Firat, 1997). It is noted that in the various markets, local alternatives of reappropriation, resignification and even rejection of the meanings associated with global products and brands may also arise.

Brands should be seen as markers of symbolic differences that, in a given cultural context, act in the construction and signaling of social identities (Cayla & Arnould, 2008). Brands are market resources that people use in order to build personal meanings and lifestyle guidelines. This construction takes place through symbolic resources provided by a set of marks (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) that enables individuals to express their aspirations of identity. Brands provide symbolisms that consumers use as a form of self expression.

Due to the intensification of the globalization of culture, important issues emerge regarding the consumption of global iconic brands, in contexts different from those of the most developed countries, where a large part of them originates. Would global iconic brands in fact have relevance in less developed countries and would be appropriate in the same way that they are in their original contexts? Would such brands be appropriated just as they are within social strata of individuals with high and low cultural capital? Even more relevant, within the same stratum with high and / or low cultural capital, could there be fractions that would separate distinctly from the global iconic brands?

In order to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of the consumption of global iconic brands, in different socio-cultural contexts, we seek the construction of a theoretical model guided by the appropriate theoretical propositions and hypotheses.

According to this study object, Üstüner and Holt (2010) explain that many social scientists researching consumption in semiperipheral countries - developing - (Arrighi, 1985) show that, in these contexts, there is a great demand for the emulation of consumption patterns of the social classes of the industrialized countries, since those nations seek in the western products symbols of status.

According to the model known as the global trickle-down (Üstüner & Holt, 2010), global iconic products and brands operate as powerful symbols of global status that citizens of semiperipheral nations eagerly want to consume. There would then be a sociocultural structuring of global consumption, in which upper-middle income consumers would seek to reproduce the consumption patterns of the same class of central countries, failing to emulate the upper-class national consumers. In this perspective, there would be a field of global consumption (Üstüner & Holt, 2010).

According to Bourdieu (1979), consumption functions as a competition that seeks the distinction within a certain social hierarchy. By consuming brands that symbolize aspirations for a social identity, consumers would be vying for status and a position in the social continuum. Thus, it is important to investigate the particular mechanisms for competition for status in semiperipheral countries, such as Brazil. Bourdieu (1979) also explains that different social classes use different strategies of status consumption, which are in line with the composition of their respective economic and cultural capitals. Due to differences in cultural capital - high or low - different consumption practices represent a dispute for distinction between and within the different social strata. The consumption of global iconic brands is fundamental for the construction of the status strategies, however the acquisition, the consumption and, especially, the mode of use may be different, due to the possession of more or less cultural capital.

Based on insights from Bourdieu's (1979) theory of consumption of status and the theory of the globalization of culture, a theoretical model is proposed for the consumption of iconic brands in semiperipheral countries and, through it, speculation is made about possible social class variations due to the different levels of cultural capital, as shown in Figure 1.
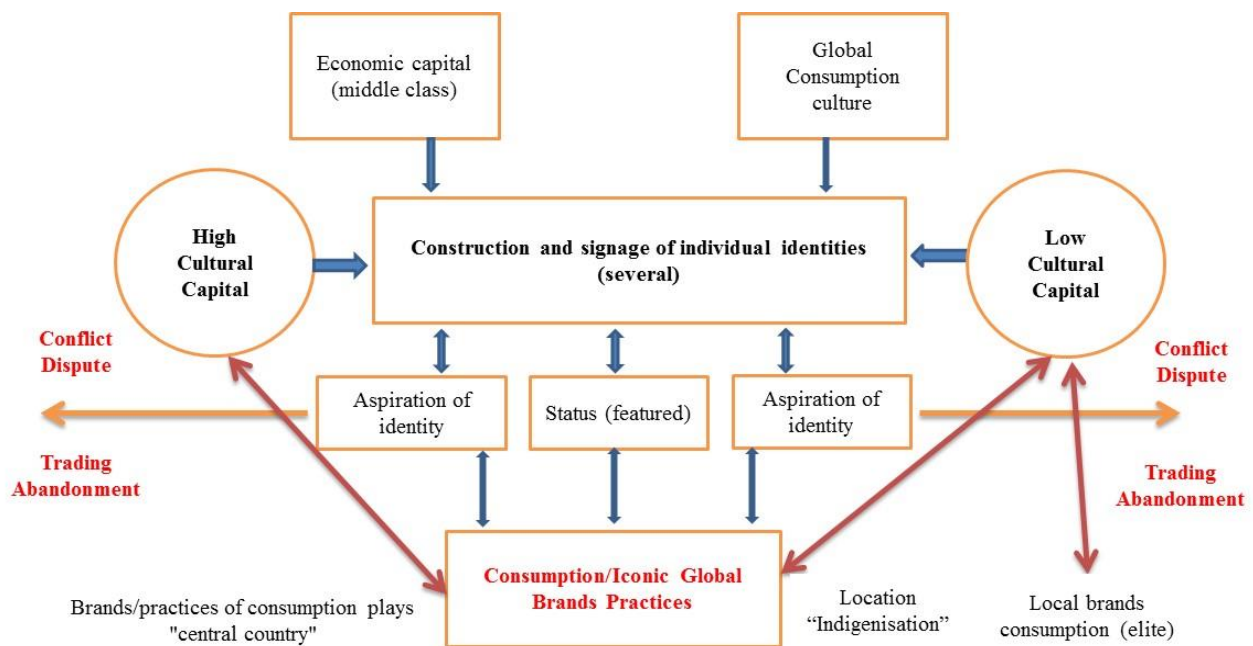

Figure 1 – Theoretical Model Iconic Global Brands Consumption - Socio-cultural structure configures the countries recent industrialization context
Source: Elaborated by the author.

2.1 Context sociocultural structure

It is emphasized that consumer culture theory shows that a contextual approach is often more accurate and brings more robust arguments towards the development of theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Research on cultural globalization has warned about the distinct characteristics of consumption in countries of recent industrialization, compared with central countries such as the United States and European nations (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). In each national context, there are differences in sociocultural structures that impact consumer practices. The structure of social classes

plays a fundamental role in relation to consumption, especially by the possession of economic, social and cultural capital that allows individuals to participate meaningfully in consumption in a country (Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Social stratification, therefore, influences the consumption of brands.

The choice of brands occurs based on the congruence between associations of users of brands and associations that individuals make in relation to their self-images (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Brands are valuable to people as they serve, in social interactions, as a symbolic resource of their definition of themselves and others (Leão, 2007). Brands work as signs of the aspirations of identity that people want to build and signal to others. However, the consumption and appropriation of global iconic brands is impacted by the sociocultural context involved. Askegaard and Linnet (2011) explain that in order to understand consumer identity designs, it is necessary to consider and understand the mythological and ideological forces producing the consumer subjectivities as well as the 'forms of power' that circumscribe their agency.

In this perspective, it is fundamental to understand the "context of context". It is perceived that the consumer agency is limited, given that it is also forged and shaped by the power imposed by the dominant forces of the market. Foucault (1980) explains that social action is, to a large extent, controlled by the most powerful actors in a society. In line, Bourdieu (1993) shows that culture is defined in terms of power, decreed to a large extent by economic means.

2.2 Culture of global consumption

The culture of global consumption thrives and celebrates cultural difference. In contemporary, "modern" and globalized society, global flows (Appadurai, 1990), especially communicational ones, cause national cultures to be interpenetrated and mixed by the global, resulting in a hybrid culture. In this context, people are impacted by the emptying of the sense of social and cultural unity. From the point of view of consumption, this allows them greater freedom to choose products, services and brands related to the different lifestyles that they can assume in order to express themselves. In this way, it is verified that the identity processes become, more and more, the fruit of a self-construction; consumerism has become a mark of contemporaneity (Bauman, 2008); individuals begin to consume far beyond their basic needs. By consuming products and brands that carry strong symbolic meaning, individuals construct their individual and group identities.

In this perspective, Sklair (2010, p.136) mentions that there is an ideology of consumerism, which he defines as "a set of beliefs and values of the globalized capitalist system, which are articulated to make people believe that human dignity and happiness is achieved in terms of consumption and possessions", in such a way that the culture of consumption influences the formation and signaling of social identities. The consumption mechanisms and their social consequences, as well as the use of consumption as a way to acquire status, have been the subject of theoretical studies for many years (Bourdieu, 1979, Veblen, [1899] (1988)). The consumption of global iconic brands is used to express the social position of the individual within a given society (Bourdieu, 1979, Üstüner & Holt, 2010).

2.3 Global iconic brands and social identity

In the contemporary world of consumer culture, consumers rework and transform codified meanings into products and brands in order to construct and display their identity designs and lifestyles (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Holt, 2002). Brands serve as powerful repositories of meaning, purposely employed in the foundation and in the creation of concepts of their own. The contemporary trend of consumer culture is premised on the search for personal sovereignty through brands (Holt, 2002). It can be seen that, both individually and collectively, people's lives are mediated by products/brands. Brandini (2007) emphasizes that, in a sociocultural logic of economic rationality, brands represent the totems of complex societies, what the individual wants to represent, because it has social significance, because the brand attributes to the subjects the characteristics they want Tue. The same author says that the true social functionality of the brand is to represent hierarchical positions among social actors in postmodernity.

According to Holt (2003), some brands have become icons. They forged a deep connection with culture. For the author, these brands compete for "parcel of culture" and this type of fierce competition occurs in "lifestyle" categories such as food, clothing, beverages and automobiles. In these sectors, the name of the game is symbolism and the strategic focus is on what the brand means and not on the performance of the brand. Icons are valuable because through them people can experience powerful myths. Myths provide ideals by which people live and work to solve the most disturbing issues in life. Put differently, people use such marks in order to mitigate contradictions relevant to their identities. Some of these brand icons are Nike, Harley-Davidson, Apple, Absolut and Volkswagen (Holt, 2003). Other global iconic brands are Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Barilla, Gap, Marlboro, Levi's, Dove, Toyota and Louis Vuitton due to their strong presence in global markets.

It has been found that by consuming global iconic brands, consumers actually own and consume status symbols used to demarcate their respective positions in the social hierarchy. The consumption of iconic brands is therefore to be considered a fundamental component for the understanding of the identities of individuals and groups, which communicate and construct themselves through the meanings attributed to their possessions (Belk, 1988). Brands can help consumers to associate with others; to feel different from others, based on individual characteristics; to feel different from others, based on their status. Thus, they serve as an instrument of self-expression and/or demonstration of prestige and social recognition. They play a strong role as signposts and differentiators both among social strata, that is, in vertical differentiation, as in horizontal differentiation, that is, within the same stratum. As global luxury iconic brands are positioned around a segment of high economic power, individuals who exhibit ownership of these brands convey an image of high social status (Berger & Ward, 2010).

For Campbell (2006) through consumption, individuals confirm or even create their identities. The social identities of individuals are constructed in a process of rejection of differences and recognition of the similarities between people. In the context of contemporary society, identity is a virtual reference point, being individual and social, identifying and uniting and / or distancing a particular group through symbolic elements. As Thompson and Haytko (1997) point out, personal identity does not reflect a stable set of essential characteristics, but is continually negotiated in a dynamic field of social relations.

As for the consumption of status, Veblen ([1899], 1988) already pointed to the issue of "conspicuous consumption", a concept that determines that one is not consumed to show oneself "but for others', in order to reproduce and demarcate class boundaries. The construction of the identity project of an individual is related to the type or the possession of the consumer, which explains the consumption practices within a determined social hierarchy. In this vein, identity is relational, as it can be categorized in terms of the comparison that can be established between the different social contexts. The construction of identity is not a static but dynamic phenomenon, fruit of the incessant interaction between a given community and its relational space.

2.4 Intraclass identity and consumers of high and low cultural capital

It is relevant to consider that the class structure assumes a certain reality in relation to the behavior of groups within the same social stratum that, at the same time, brings its members closer together through shared values - due to the consumption of global iconic brands, and distinguishes them from members of other social groups. The ability to recognize the signs of the brands (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010), the mode of use and the whole of the person, ie how the consumer uses and behaves with the global iconic brands, are the driving force of the distinction (Strehlau, 2004; Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). The distinction is generated by the consumer's habitus (Bourdieu, 1979). Differences in behavior, consumption and appropriation of global iconic brands are essential to explain the distinctions between and within the social stratum.

The ownership and consumption of brands leads to comparisons and distinctions between and within social groups. According to Bourdieu (1979), with regard to the sociocultural structuring of consumption, there are three basic pillars: cultural capital, habitus and social field. The habitus acts

as a search for the distinction in the social hierarchy, that is, it is configured as a social representation. The habitus is, at the same time, structuring of actions and representations, organizing the practices and their perceptions, and structured by the past social means, ordering the perception of the social world. Habitus is social, since it is shared by those who have undergone similar conditioning (national culture, class, gender, etc.), and is also individual, as each person, having a unique trajectory in the world, internalizes a combination unparalleled schematics. It is emphasized that, for Bourdieu (1979), taste, as an expression of the habitus, functions as a marker of class differences. As regards the social field, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, pp. 16-17) explain that the field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition, in which the participants compete to establish a monopoly in certain species of capital. For example, cultural authority in the artistic field; scientific authority in the scientific field; power to decree hierarchy and all forms of conversion in the field of power. The field of consumption is a very significant social domain, because it indicates the level of cultural capital that consumers possess, reproducing, symbolically, the distinctions of social class (Holt, 1998).

According to the fundamental idea of Bourdieu (1987), there is contrast within the social strata, because there is a significant difference between economic capital and cultural capital. According to the same author, economic capital refers to the financial resources of an individual. Cultural capital is the sum of the elements of social origin and the formal education of the subject; what has been accumulated and transmitted by the family and especially by education. Cultural capital functions as a legitimizing element of everyday practices of appropriation, and the tastes of individuals approach or differentiate themselves from others through consumption. Individuals may have more or less cultural capital depending on their formal education, relationship networks, and other sociological factors that have a lasting influence on the social and aesthetic predispositions of the subjects and, generally, on the social media, leading them to feel familiar (Allen, 2002).

In this perspective, within the same social stratum, consumers of high and low cultural capital use the use of brands to compete for the achievement of symbols related to the aspirations of individual and group identity. In this competition for identity signals, especially those linked to status and the corresponding social position, a series of relations of dispute, conflict, antagonism, contradiction and negotiation are established. Arsel and Thompson (2011) argue that the myth of a brand is a cultural resource, configuring itself as a source to signal an identity. However, when "undesirable" people start to appropriate a brand, due to market imposition, driven especially by advertising, they trivialize the authentic and legitimate values built by core consumers over time through a series of actions and investments related to an aspiration of identity. In this way, the brand loses its "symbolism of myth," becoming vulgar. Formerly considered cool / innovative, it comes to be seen by core users as a fad, that is, a caricature that expresses unwanted meanings.

Consumers use brands to signal their identities to distinguish them from others, but if "undesirable people / classes" adopt such brands, they may lose the ability to signal an "innovative" identity (Berger & Heath, 2007). In this situation, disputes, conflicts and possible negotiations arise that may even cause those consumers who have invested in the construction of their identities through a brand to abandon their ownership and use. Arsel and Thompson (2011) explain that consumers with high cultural capital who believe in the authenticity of a brand seek to "demythologize" it in order to maintain it as a sign of identity, avoiding its devaluation and defending its investments in identity. Consequently, they do not abandon the use of that brand.

Regarding the analysis of the consumption practices of global iconic brands, Bellezza and Keinan (2014) examined the behavior of core consumers of exclusive brands, in order to understand the reactions that occur when non-core users gain access to the brand. Contrary to the view that non-core consumers pose a threat to the brand, when they are not perceived as claiming the status of group members (ie, when they are assumed to be branded tourists), they serve as proof of the brand's value, the more aspirational, without compromising its accessibility. However, when non-core people claim the status of belonging to the core group - that is, that of branded immigrants - they pose a threat because they dilute the brand image.

2.5 Consumption of global iconic brands in less developed countries

Regarding the consumption of global iconic brands in countries of recent (less developed) industrialization, the global trickle-down model (Üstüner & Holt, 2010) suggests that there is great demand for products and brands from "central" Western countries of Europe) that are status symbols. According to this model, in countries of recent industrialization, such as Brazil, Russia, Mexico, India, China and Turkey - classified as semi-peripheral (Arrighi, 1985; Myers & Kent, 2004), instead of consumers emulating consumption of the upper classes of their respective countries, they imitate the consumers of the same class of central countries, effectively having a social structuring of global consumption (Holt et al., 2004). Following this model, Western iconic products and brands operate as powerful symbols of global status that the citizens of semiperipheral countries want to consume. The research on globalization shows that, in countries of recent industrialization, there is the construction of a myth through a discourse referring to the Western way of life, that is, the construction of the myth of the "good life" through consumerism; of the ability to consume in the American style (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, 2010). O'Dougherty's (2002) research in the Brazilian middle class of São Paulo confirms the view that global iconic products and brands play a central role as status symbols. In this sense, research on cultural globalization focuses on how people in low-income countries engage with the culture of Western consumption (Belk, 1988).

There is a vast literature that provides consistent evidence (eg Miller, 1998) that consumers in their home markets use localization / adaptation processes in response to the Western / global consumer culture. Localization or "indigenization" causes Western products and brands to be routinely subjected to reinterpretation and collective adaptation to obtain "local sense." There is an articulation with local ideologies and practices, which leads to ownership and use occurring differently. In the various markets, local alternatives of reappropriation, resignification and even rejection of global meanings may also arise. Consequently, according to Bourdieu (1979) and Holt (1997), the same object can be consumed in various ways, according to the disposition and with the different appropriations made by individuals in diverse social contexts.

The global trickle-down model assumes that all individuals, in the semiperipheral countries, compete using the same consumption strategy. This perspective ignores Bourdieu's (1979) view that the different class fractions use diferente status, which are aligned with the composition of their economic and cultural capital, that is, the transmission of status does not proceed homogeneously (Bourdieu, 1979; Holt, 1998). Within the same social strata, therefore, there are distinct groups, that is, consumers with high and low cultural capital, and there may be differences within the same fraction with high and / or low cultural capital. The different groups within the same social stratum would distinguish themselves by the question related, especially, to the form of use of a certain possession.

Üstüner and Holt (2010) carried out research with the upper middle class in Turkey, which revealed that consumers with low cultural capital 'indigenized' consumption, that is, they buy and consume global products and brands recognized by the Turkish upper class (celebrities) however they value local origin brands. The dispute over class distinction takes place in the local context, that is, for consumers with low cultural capital, the field of consumption is local. Consumers with high cultural capital reproduce Western consumption patterns, importing Western cultural capital, ratifying the model of globalization of consumption. In the Turkish context, there is a series of disputes, conflicts and contradictions in the process of seeking the distinction through the acquisition of social status. It is important to consider that identity is a discursive articulation that individuals employ when determining their consumption choices in order to make sense and frame such choices (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Between and within the social strata, consumers can use, among other mythical and ideological antagonisms, the rhetoric of "moderate" consumption versus consumerism; the moral containment of consumption versus conspicuous consumption, especially in different sociocultural contexts (Luedicke, Thompson, & Giesler, 2010).

Both high and low-cultural consumers in the Turkish upper middle class - especially in cultural elites - consume Western products and brands. However, social distinction, through consumption and their respective practices, is more legitimate for consumers with high cultural capital, when they

emulate 'foreign' standards than when linking to local culture. Consequently, the search for a better position in the social hierarchy necessarily follows a form of cultural capital alienated from the local culture, since the Western lifestyle is not part of the habitus of the consumers of high cultural capital. However, it is important to point out that there is a dispute over the consumption field, since for consumers with low cultural capital, it is local, and for those with high cultural capital, it is global and imposed by more developed countries. The research by Üstüner and Holt (2010), investigating the Turkish consumers, exemplifies how the structural conditions imposed on women of high and low capital is decisive on decisions, practices, discourses and meanings of consumption, which are aligned with the habitus, to the predispositions of these women.

2.6 Proposals for research in the Brazilian context

Observing the theoretical model presented in Figure 1, we speculate some research proposals to be investigated regarding the consumption of global iconic brands in the Brazilian upper class with low and high cultural capital, as shown in Figure 2.

As the research focus of the study is the Brazilian class with high economic power, it is expected that there will be a reversal of "indigenization" in relation to the field of consumption, identified in the upper middle income class as the behavior of low-income consumers cultural capital (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). By having the Brazilian high-income economic capital class to participate in the 'global consumption game', it is believed that both high and low-cultural consumers consume global iconic brands in order to achieve a prominent position in the social hierarchy. That is, the consumption field is global for consumers with both low and high cultural capital. Both groups - with high and low cultural capital - would consume global iconic brands as a way of building their identities and, more fundamentally, to "show themselves to others" (Veblen, [1899] 1988), that is, as a demonstration of status and social prestige. Brazilian society offers enormous historical, cultural, political and economic diversity that enables different forms of consumer expression. Especially due to the complex structuring of social classes in Brazil, where there are clear economic and social disparities, Ray and Vatan (2013) point out that the demand for global iconic brands (luxury) is even greater. For these authors, in societies with greater income inequality, the individual feels a more pronounced need to confirm their social status.
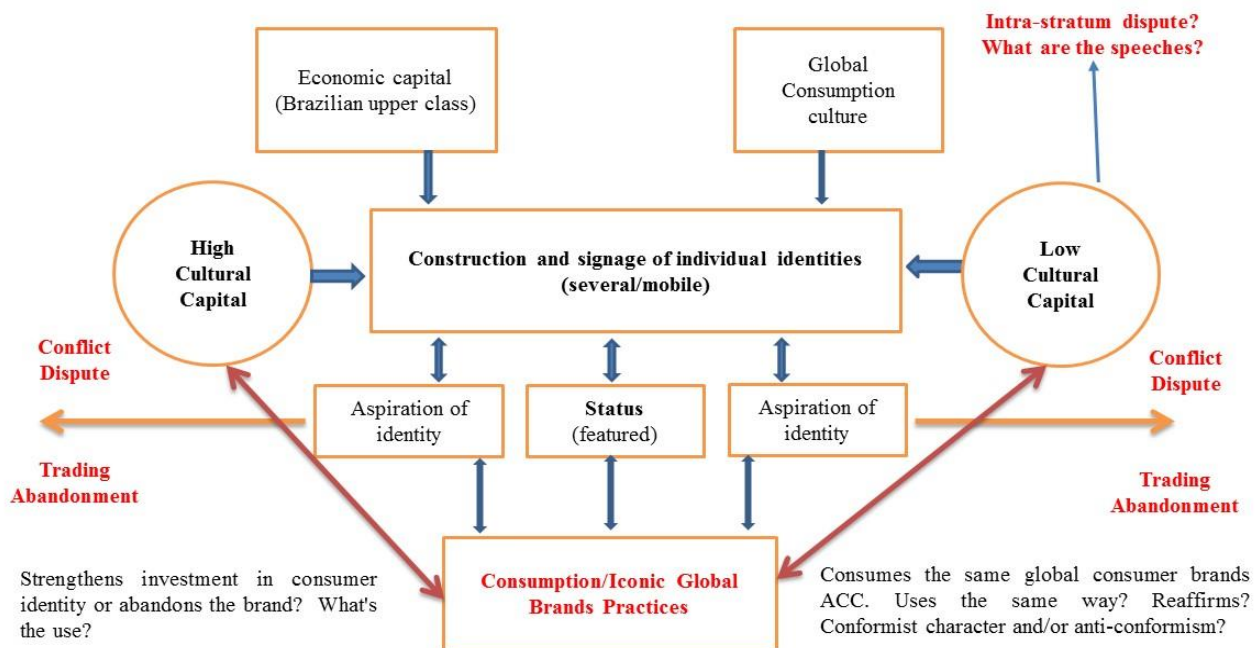

Figure 2 – Theoretical model iconic global brands consumption - Socio-cultural structure configures the countries recent industrialization context
Source: Elaborated by the author.

A relevant issue is the investigation that if consumers consumed the same global iconic brands, consumers with low cultural capital would use them in the same way as consumers with high cultural capital. It is believed that competition for distinction would occur in the form of ownership of global iconic brands. Strehlau (2004) explains that the ability to distinguish lies in the consumer as a whole and not in the simple possession of an overall iconic brand. For the author, it is not the iconic brand that generates the distinction but the habitus of the consumer (Bourdieu, 1979). In line with this view, Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000) point out that it is the mode of use that generates the distinction, that is, how the consumer uses global iconic brands and how they behave towards them.

Another proposal is that, in the Brazilian context, it would be high social class, with high cultural capital, that could adopt another type of behavior. It would be more likely to assume that it would be consumers with high cultural capital to seek to "indigenize" the consumption of global iconic brands. As a form of distinction, such consumers would not seek to emulate the Western standard, but would pursue truly different and authentic values (Bourdieu, 1979; Holt, 2002). They would seek to re-sign global iconic brands in order to signal differentiation and legitimacy in relation to global brands that are becoming more accessible to consumers worldwide. There is evidence that the high economic class with high cultural capital in Brazil has consumed local brands, as is the case in the fashion segment. For example, with regard to the brands involved in the fashion market, we note the impulse directed to the "domestic" originality that is leading Brazil to become a significant global player in the area. This fact allows the country to participate in the redefinition of the ideals of beauty and the constant change of the meanings of distinction (Ourahmoune, Figueiredo, & Rojas, 2014). In this context, local brands become prominent for some types of consumers, in segments such as beach fashion, becoming themselves iconic Brazilian brands. Brazilian brands like Rosa Chá tend to benefit from global iconic brands like Dolce & Gabbana. This is because these national brands are familiar with the local characteristics of Brazilian consumers, especially using the knowledge of the Brazilian aesthetic perception, that is, the tropicability purposely produced to avoid association with the lower classes (Ourahmoune et al. 2014). Another example is the Osklen, consumed as a symbol of lifestyle and associated with the constant capacity for innovation in design.

In addition to the previously mentioned proposals, the following are some relevant suggestions for research in the Brazilian context: 1. As the consumers classified as belonging to the Brazilian upper class - with high and low cultural capital - would behave in relation to the consumption of global iconic brands, goal of building and / or signaling a desired identity? 2. If consumers with low cultural capital were to consume certain global iconic brands, would these be defended by those with high cultural capital? Or would they be abandoned? 3. Could there be greater "indigenization" of consumption by this social class in certain product / brand fields? 4. Which global iconic brands signal, with greater intensity, the identity of the consumer? (Berger & Heath, 2007). What are these product / brand categories in Brazil? 5. In the contest and negotiation for identity symbols to construct and maintain class boundaries between consumers with high and low cultural capital, and even intrafract with high or low cultural capital, what discourses and narratives would be used in order to justify and legitimize such choices of global iconic brands? 6. Would consumers with high economic power and high cultural capital use strategies of global, subtle, iconic brands with the aim of demonstrating their "differentiated" habitus and thus associate with certain groups and move away from others?

The proposals listed open a series of avenues in relation to future research themes, aiming at a greater understanding of the phenomenon of the consumption of global iconic brands, in sociocultural contexts distinct from those of more developed countries.

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