Making the Space of Creativity in China: The Lens of Creative Capital

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Abstract

There is a great need for rethinking the relationship between culture and future urbanism in the age of sustainable development. Existing discourses of creative cities have been dominated by a neoliberal agenda regarding culture as an engine of growth and an industrial policy for global competition. This chapter asks how a genuine appreciation of cultural economy, including the social construction of aesthetic meanings, the social structure and spatiality, can enable a new rationale of urbanism in Chinese context. We believe this inquiry is at the heart of the *New Urban Agenda* which regards culture as the central thesis to address sustainability challenges. We develop a multi-level framework of "creative capital" and attempt to use this framework to uncover the potential of Beijing as a creative city with rich historical cultural heritage, especially the Chinese discourses on modernity and the associated aesthetic values. We then draw lessons from such analysis in China and show ways of contributing to the creative cities theories by deploying the creative capital framework into more structured research projects in future.

1. Introduction

It becomes almost a cliché to suggest that cities provide favourable conditions for the cultural and creative economy. The thesis of "creative cities" (Markusen, 2006; Stolarick and Florida, 2006; Florida, Mellander and Stolarick, 2008), for instance, taking creativity at the centre of the urban networks for entrepreneurship, regeneration, and economic competitiveness, has long been the focus of scholarly and public policy discussions (Hall and Hubbard, 1998; Florida, 2002; Throsby, 2010; Cunningham, 2012; UNCTAD, 2016). However, inquiries on the other side of this urbanity-culture relationship, particularly the question of "how does a genuine appreciation of cultural productions and the associated local communities (networks) enable an alternative imagination of urban future?", are rare and far from being well-understood (Bingham-Hall and Kassa, 2017).

In the *Global Report on Culture For Sustainable Urban Future* (UNESCO, 2016), UNESCO calls for policy-makers, business community, urban planners, and academics to place heritage and creativity at the centre of sustainable urban future, particularly the communities of creative entrepreneurs. In a similar vein, *The Quito Papers 2016: A Manifesto For Urban Planning in the 21st Century,* by UN HABITAT III (UN-Habitat, 2016; Sennett, Burdett and Sassen, 2018), calls for an approach to design and making urban space that not only facilitates cultural productions and cultural institutions, but also itself promotes a culture of openness, local improvisation (messy-ness), and public realm. This new agenda, aiming to articulate the reciprocal, more-balanced, two-way relationship between urbanity and culture, marks a paradigm shift of knowledge from one of a mixture of neoliberalism, industrial nationalism, and global projection of soft power, to a new one that unlocks the potential of meaningful interaction between traditionality and modernity, harmony and wellbeing, the East and the West.

For more than a decade, China has been promoting the cultural and creative industries as a new engine of growth and urbanisation (O'Connor and Xin, 2006; Keane, 2013; Xiang and Walker, 2014). The impressive growth of cultural and creative industries has been widely celebrated, albeit with mixed perceptions and judgements. This is in the context of a wider reflection upon the development since 1978 (the era of Reform and Opening-up, 改革开放), as well as the historical pitfalls of this period (notably, the environmental disasters, erosion of interpersonal trust and social morality, loss of faith, epidemic corruption). China nowadays mobilises great efforts and resources in search for a future of sustainability, in which the economy, the environment, and the society can work for each other in harmony, instead of consuming at the cost of each other. Such transformation cannot be realised without a greater emphasis upon — and a more ambitious expectation of — cultural change and social progress. Cultural and creative entrepreneurship is the pivotal point of such ambitious expectations. The changing demographic, economic, and social patterns of cities urgently require contemporary, new approaches on the planning, provision, and regeneration of urban space, in which the practices of architecture, music and museums, performance arts not only play a part, but more importantly supply new ideas and ideals, new rationale of design and regulatory rules that help reshape the imagination of future sustainable cities (UN-Habitat, 2016; UNESCO, 2016; Bingham-Hall and Kassa, 2017; Sennett, Burdett and Sassen, 2018).

This chapter addresses this challenge of the theoretical gap connecting the cultural and creative economy with future cities by theorizing the notion of "creative capital". We introduce the meaning of 'capital' from the studies in economic sociology, in particular Pierre Bourdieu's work on the analysis of relational and cultural embeddedness in the

cultural production sectors (Bourdieu, 1983, 1993, 1995). The theoretical discussions on "capital", as a critical theory, are expanded in section two. We then provide a detailed account on the theoretical framework of creative capital, highlighting the possibilities of discussing the spatiality of creative capital. The following section provides a case study of Beijing as the city is transforming itself by following the creative cities agenda. And then final section concludes.

Understanding Creative Capital

"The class of practice whose explicit purpose is to maximize monetary purpose cannot be defined as such without producing the purposeless finality of cultural or artistic practices and their products; the world of bourgeois man, with his double-entry accounting, cannot be invented without producing the pure, perfect universe of the artist and the intellectual and the gratuitous activities of art-for-art's sake and pure theory"

Pierre Bourdieu, 1986, "The Forms of Capital"

In his analysis of the Parisian circles of poetry, painting, and theatre performances of France in late 19th century, Bourdieu reinvented the notions of 'competition', 'advantages', and 'power' in terms of the relational, cultural, and symbolic resources (Bourdieu, 1993). He used the concept of "field" in order to make sense of the games of power struggle between actors aiming for "the same goals". His analysis suggested that there can be plural power structures co-existing in a field of cultural productions (artistic theories vs. economic rationalities) providing meanings and justifications of various aesthetic perspectives as well as different ways of valuation. Relative advantages can be converted and transferred

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between relational, cultural, and symbolic resources, and between non-economic and economic resources. Certain social structures, for example, the cascades of patronage-clientele, are often effective in facilitating such conversion and transfer, and therefore are the common patterns of social structure in creative and artistic communities. Bourdieu's work revealed that economic reasoning and artistic pursuit represent two opposite poles of the purpose rationality which permeates through every aspect of social life. For Bourdieu, all economic activities are part of cultural economy, while all artistic activities can be seen through the lens of agency as strategic reasoning. This insight constitutes the theoretical foundation of 'capital'.

We take the term 'capital' as a concept referring to the potentiality of cultural entrepreneurs in mobilising the relational, institutional, and cultural 'assets' to transform artistic ideas into ventures of either sociocultural transformation or business development, or both. The theoretical root of this definition can be traced to the literature of economic sociology (Polanyi, 1957; Fligstein and McAdam, 2012; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013; Granovetter and Swedberg, 2018). The fundamental premise of 'creative capital' is that cultural entrepreneurs, situated in the dense networks of artists, educators and art critiques, appraisal agency, collectors, and market-makers, governments, public audience and media etc., manage to accumulate certain non-economic resources available to them as they become embedded in a space of creative networks. Such non-economic resources (i.e. reputation, trust, aesthetic understandings, and cultural taste and cultural identity) provide the meanings with which the cultural entrepreneurs justify and communicate their 'elite' status of being a member of an exclusive social club, and can be further strengthened (reproduced) by continuously interacting with other members of society.

There are three generic categories of non-economic capital that function as equivalents of the economic capital — as well as complements to the functions of economic capital: the relational, the symbolic, and the cultural. The relational capital refers to the capability that actors gain by being well-connected in clusters of social ties, to the extent that they can leverage the positions of high centrality, connectivity (transitivity), or "structural holes" as means to achieve certain ends — the behaviour Fligstein and McAdam (2012) referred to as the "strategic agency" (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). The propensity to gain power and influence is high when actors occupy key *positions* in social networks, which can be seen by applying structural analysis (for example, by the network graph theories or complex network theories). While the modelling of tie structures is straightforward, given a universal definition of tie, the determination of key positions can be complicated and tricky in real-world social analysis, because the meanings of ties vary in different contexts and are notoriously hard to define on measurable terms.

The benefits of relational capital can be materialized by two categories of social mechanisms that are almost universal across cultural contexts: interpersonal trust, and cross-sectional synergy. The former is the basic condition for the formation of any social community. Relational capital in the form of interpersonal trust is accumulated and preserved on the basis of everyday life as community members share the same space of social interaction, work, and living struggles. The benefit of such capital is usually translated into a consensus of embedded 'solidarity', which protects the community from opportunism, malfeasance, or other anti-social behaviour or external shock. From this perspective, the conditions for cultural and creative economy in contemporary cities should enable the development of relational capital of the society in the sense that modern cities shall strive to become a space for "solidarity", the opposite of which is "class distinction",

inequality and segregation. The latter refers to the process of "dis-embedding" in the sense that actors who manage to broker across different clans of social networks are often capable of facilitating innovations that draw upon the multi-disciplinarity of ideas, talents, and trust (also referred to as the *Medici Effect*). Relation capital can be generated and reinforced by both categories of social mechanisms.

In the Chinese context, the studies of "guanxi" highlighted the complicated, subtle, situated interpretations of ties in Chinese society, which are impossible to be reduced to universal definitions and thus subject to structural analysis (Luo, 2008; Redding, 2013). The measures of centrality or connectivity in structural analysis, while useful in indicating the existence of relational resources, have never been trusted in the fashion of causality to explain social dynamics in guanxi cultures. The identification of relational resources can help researchers find those key positions that are associated with power and influence. However, we have not yet seen many research endeavours that manage to reveal how actors move between these power positions in the fields of cultural production by strategically making, maintaining, and leveraging ties or guanxi with others in the field. Few exceptions include a study of American film industries 1895-1929 by Mezias and Kuperman (2001). This study discovered and explained the pivotal roles of social networks formed in an entrepreneurial community of Hollywood, and revealed how the success of risky film ventures depend on the combination of the quality of artistic creations and management of "value chains", both of which are highly embedded in close-knit social networks.

The cultural capital refers to the capability of individuals or organizations to interpret and communicate the meanings of aesthetic experience on sophisticated and theoretical levels. The definition of cultural capital stresses the tacit capabilities of people, organizations, and

communities living in the urban space, which, in a different way from the economists' understandings[i] (Throsby, 2010), is not about any tangible or intangible asset to directly generate values of any kind. Possessing cultural capital means that the cultural entrepreneurs are able to a) discover those opportunities of new or refreshed aesthetic perspectives that was invisible to those lacking such cognitive capabilities; b) develop a coherent and convincing account of art theories (article, talk, interview, lecture etc) that help others partake in this novel and transcendental experience of aesthetics. Cultural capital can be in the form of natural talent or human knowledge learnable and transferrable across time and space, and is best (co-)produced and shared in a close-knit community of artists, educators, critiques, public audiences that develop a common identity of aesthetic movement. Like tacit knowledge or craftsmanship, the development of cultural capital takes time, patience, and most importantly, the space for everyday practice and interaction with people of the same worldview and sense of belonging.

Gaining cultural capital is a tacit, interactive, social learning process. It is common sense that when some ideas emerge from the creative landscape (writing genres, filming styles, musical performances etc.), the importance of theories and cultural theorists (gurus) is evident since it is necessary, for the sake of capitalist market logic, to explain what is going on, how to appreciate the creative value, and how to capture and reproduce the discovered values in appropriate manners. Such necessity and demand further drives the reuse and re-creation of cultural values (i.e. the effect of standing on the giants' shoulders), which in turn generate more opportunities for business development (i.e. the periphery effect of cultural products, the network effects, the long tail etc.). Cultural capital is an important resource of creative entrepreneurship which is simultaneously existing on the level of individuals, the level of communities, and the level of regions (cities). Cultural capital is

accumulated as there is a dynamic social process of teaching and researching, networking, relationship-building, and tacit knowledge sharing. None of these social process is possible without the existence of appropriate spatial conditions that accommodate the social life of actors and institutions in these interactive networks. Inquiries on the spatial conditions that make possible such a dynamic process of cultural capital accumulation — the conditions of possibility — are not new in the manufacturing and technological innovation sectors (Amin and Robins, 1990; Saxenian, 1994; Cooke, Gomez Uranga and Etxebarria, 1997). Recent discussions on "creative cities" also shed lights on the spatiality of cultural entrepreneurship, particularly the US cities (Stolarick and Florida, 2006; Throsby, 2014). Little is known on the spatial conditions of creativity in the Chinese context.

Symbolic capital refers to the capabilities of individuals and organizations to create or re-discover new associations between symbols and cultural meanings, to the extent that such associations become widely-unchallenged, almost taken-for-granted, even ritual (if not completely religious), things of the mundane yet taken-for-granted among members of communities. Anthropologists have long established the argument that the cognitive capability of creating and interpreting symbols is human nature, and that human society is constituted by historical layers of symbolic meanings (belief, ritual, language, art etc). In cultural production, symbolic significance such as reputation, fashion brands, schools of art/thoughts, academies or universities, is often of paramount importance to various actors operating in the fields. On one hand, the symbolic capital can help keep the fields of cultural production economically efficient and open enough to outsiders, because one does not always need to fully understand or appreciate the meanings of culture (or quality of cultural products) before making decisions to participate, invest one's time or money, or collaborate with others. Symbolic capital, in many cases, are functionally instruments to indicate the

quality, the trustworthiness, the risks, the considerations of which are essential to business decision-making. On the individual and organization level, the accumulation of symbolic capital can bring benefits to the brand values and positive recognitions of the society. On the regional level, such benefits can be in the forms of cultural heritage and cultural identity.

On the other hand, symbolic capital can become too self-referential, a vicious circle of inflationary self-promotion (or distinction of social class, according to Bourdieu 1984), to the point that the symbolic message becomes detached from the substantial meanings it claims to represent [ii]. Symbolic capital is not something cultural entrepreneurs create out of thin air, but instead is rooted in the social, cultural, and political structures where problems, conflicts, and contradictions are perceived and debated. Critical theorists have long used the concept of 'symbolic violence' to discern the injustice in modern society (whether in gender and feminism issue, the religious freedom issue, or Marxist class-struggles), where schemes of cognitive categorisation, dominated and controlled by a certain group or class of social elites, are used to justify the dominance of their social power. It can be equally argued that those social groups of little power, the underdogs, can also strategically deploy symbolic means to shape the cognitive schemes of society, in order to achieve social justice, as many Marxist literatures tend to suggest (Harvey, 1992, 2013). In cultural and creative landscape, this can be seen when cultural entrepreneurs or artists use means of aesthetic experiences (writing, drama, film, painting, photographer) and novel business models (digital media, social enterprise, for example) to publicise the alternative ways of cognitively understanding reality, to create new social movements that address contemporary problems of injustice (for example, the movement of street graffiti artists often exemplified by the work of Banksy). In summary, symbolic capital is closely associated with the hierarchies of social power and how actors consciously struggle to

resist symbolic dominance and create alternative ways of cognitive understandings. The production of symbolic capital means cultural entrepreneurs and artists are fully engaged in the power struggle of their societies and the ability to offer alternative means of interpretation.

On the Spatiality of Creative Capital: A Multilevel Framework

If the accumulation of creative capital as non-economic resources requires the social conditions of cohesive social networks (relational), communities of social learning and thought-leadership (cultural), and the spirit of theorizing art for social progress (symbolic), the immediate questions following this line of theorizing can be: where can one find such creative capital of cultural and creative industries, where synergies between various kinds of creative capital become a fruitful environment for the development of creative entrepreneurship? or, how to characterize the features of a space of creativity, where all three components of creative capital can mutually support the development of each other — in other words, does the theory of creative capital help us re-conceptualize the idea of the 'creative city', which till today has been dominated by the neoliberal, market-oriented agenda? To address these theoretical yet fundamental questions, we shall consider the spatial dimensions of creative capital, just as the geographers have long reflected upon the spatial conditions of capital and production in modern capitalism, and the spatial consequences of modern capitalism (Harvey, 1992; Castells, 2004). To handle the level of complexity of theorizing, given the large amount of literature in geography and sociology on the subject of urbanity and capitalism, we believe it is sensible to limit the culture-urbanity relationship on three levels of analysis: namely, the space of everyday practice, the space of institutional arrangement, and the space of intellectual milieu.

The level of everyday practice asks how the urban space enables or limits the process of cultural entrepreneurship by accommodating the mundane activities of networking, learning, and symbolic construction. Such inquiries are focused on the possibilities and potentials of urban space in facilitating the occurrence of everyday practice of cultural entrepreneurs. One basic example of such possibility is to examine how easy it is for the local networks of creative-minded people to socialise (i.e. forming interest groups, surveying who's who, making collective initiatives), exchange information, and co-work in the proximate locations. The importance of this possibility is evident because regular, frequent face-to-face meetings (especially those meetings of casualty, spontaneity, and serendipity), the 'trade secret' which the financial industries understand masterfully, are the most effective ways of building trust, developing mutual understandings, and managing expectations and risks of partners. In a future economy where creativity is projected to take the central role, the urban space needs to be re-designed in order to adapt to the unique requirement of the creative economy.

Cities of efficient communication (transportation) infrastructure, less barriers to the flow of talents, ideas, or network-building across organizations, public space, or social hierarchies, tend to perform better in translating creativity into socioeconomic progress (Saxenian, 1994; Florida, 2002). This is especially true to those globally successful cities that dominate contemporary discourses on the meanings of "good life", where the success of their culture and creative industries only re-enforce the advantages in setting the benchmark of what 'good life' means. In a nutshell, the level of everyday practice enables the researchers to address the question of whether the urban space provides an easy-to-live-and-fit-in, open social environment in which actors share a common space, have ample opportunities of

being exposed to new inspirations, new networks, and new collaborators. Cities that host the high-quality, functionally participative public space such as museums, public universities, artistically productive theatres or music events, may turn out to be much more attractive locations to cultural economy than the urban space dominated by large corporations and their office blocks[iii].
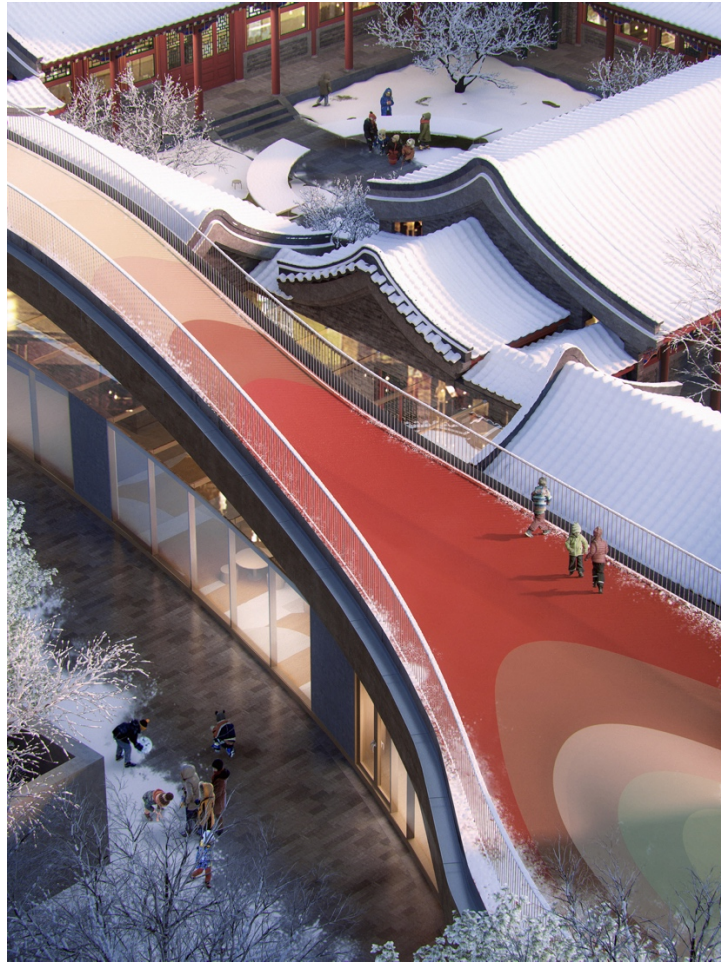
A notable example of such space of creativity is the emerging trend of urban and architectural design for the purpose of 'walkability', combining social housing with mental wellbeing, and modularization of office space ('co-work') in context of contemporary cities. Among this new school of design rationale, architects, city governments, cultural entrepreneurs work together to find solutions to a) reduce the time and efforts of citizens in moving between locations on foot while they work or enjoy leisure time, especially the urban commuters with poverty conditions; b) increase the chances of spontaneous and serendipitous moments of interaction, landscape appreciation, or simply being with oneself. These urban spatial projects prioritize the challenges of addressing poverty & slums (inclusivity and solidarity), wellbeing, and environment resilience over the economic desire of building the highly-gentrified 'growth poles', (so-called CBDs and high-end shopping complexes). These efforts actively promote a new urban vision that is wellbeing-oriented, community-building focused, and actively seeking harmony with the natural ecosystem (Assessment, 2005; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2006; Tzoulas *et al.*, 2007).

The vision is associated with the rise of a contemporary aesthetic perspective that aims to integrate architecture, community space, and cultural economy by taking a critical perspective of modernism and its urban consequences, of which slum and poverty, the preservation of cultural heritage are essential concerns. For example, Alejandra Aravena's design theory (Figure 1) of building "half a house" for the social housing projects in Chile

represents a new aesthetic proposition that is more about the process and temporality of change, the plurality of situated solutions, the bricolage, improvisation and resilience of everyday living. These are important actualities of urban life traditionally ignored by modernist theories, either in the situation of poverty and slums, or in the situation of everyday living cultural heritage (i.e. Figure 2). One can find such aesthetic proposition represents a substantial departure from 'orthodox' modernist aesthetics in urban space design which is often characterized as the authority of 'expert' solutions, the rigidity for system design, the bureaucracy of means-ends alignment, and the '*homo economicus*' rationality of utility-maximization. Similar propositions can be seen in the idea of ephemeral urbanism of Kumbh Mehla in India (Mehrotra, 2015), where the combination of geo-climate conditions and the Indian spirit of local improvisation and community-building constitute an essentially postmodernist aesthetics.

Figure 1 Aravena's aesthetics of "half a house" for the urban poor Image Source: Dazeen (https://www.dezeen.com/2016/04/06/alejandro-aravena-elemental-social-housing-designs-architecture-open-source-pritzker/)

Figure 2 A kindergarten with rooftop playground in Beijing's cultural heritage space. Image credit: Dazeen, MAD Architects (https://www.dezeen.com/2018/11/29/mad-architects-courtyard-kindergarten-beijing-china/)

The level of institutional practice invites researchers to focus on the synergistic effects of institutional nexus surrounding creative economy. Some economic geographers referred to such synergies as the 'regime of accumulation'. The level of institutional practice asks the question of how creative capital is formed, accumulated, and re-generated in the emerging networks of institutional 'regimes of accumulation' (Markusen, 2006). In the studies of innovation clusters, the institutional arrangements that make possible the coordination between market institutions, governments, and universities in co-producing and sharing the risks of technological knowledge and commercial ventures, have been widely indicated as the key driver of regional development, i.e. the thesis of 'the triple-helix',

the national system of innovation, the innovative milieu etc. The structure of production in creative economy — in Manual Castells' terminology with conscious reference to Marx, the mode of production — is different from that of the industrial economy or the its post-industrial development, when cities were predominantly designed for the purpose of accommodating corporate buildings and the managerial class. Cultural and creative economy is typically characterized by the dominance of small or micro-sized, agency-type organizations net-worked with each other, as well as a few large corporations operating in a dynamic environment of voluntary labour, short-term projects, and temporary employment. The turnover of human resources and capital are much faster as talents are working simultaneously for more personal ambitions and more social-collective ideals (i.e. the betterment of society), which, either way, means little motivation or moral justification to serve one specific business organization [iv]. As result, the personal life space of creative workers is substantially different from the managerial class, in the sense that the creative workers prefer to living in the city centre being proximate to work and leisure places as well as constantly mixing life and work, spatially and chronically. This transformation of institutional structures in city space means a substantial departure of urban ideals from the late 20th century modernist view of post-industrial city (car-friendly road networks connecting suburbs with CBD, spatially and chronically separating work from life), towards a postmodern paradigm of future city with physical and cultural infrastructure for the 'space of flows' (Castells, 2004).

Table 1. A Research Framework of Creative Capital

A Research Framework of Creative Capital			
Levels of Space	Relational Capital	Cultural Capital	Symbolic Capital
Everyday Practice **(Micro-Level, Ethnographic)**	*Social Embeddedness:* • How are the creative networks geographically distributed? How is the interpersonal trust facilitated? • What is the future urban space like where it is easy to meet and network with each other? • And what does it mean to both public space (museum, university, street and traffic places, neighborhood etc.) and private space (office buildings, residential area, and family activity)? • What's the mode of connection between the public and the private space?	*Cultural Embeddedness:* • The target is to have a well-educated, well-informed public in city, from which a creative class emerge. • What are the places where people share ideas and learn from each other? Where and what art forms do creative people get inspirations from? • How to design a public space where new ideas are encouraged to be communicated and learning activities are rewarding? (public library, bookshop, universities, museums etc.)	*Cognitive Embeddedness:* • Is there a system of belief, mythology, narrative about the city's cultural life? How do cities establish and maintain a connection between its production of symbols and a unique cultural identity? • How do the cities spatially arrange socioeconomic interactions through the heritage, tradition, and a specific way of framing 'good life' can be embodied? • How do the spatial arrangements address the socioeconomic challenges facing the city? i.e. migration and integration, inequality, elderly/child care, leisure, environmental hazards etc.
Institutional Practice **(Meso-Level, Ecosystemic)**	*Institutions as Mechanisms*: • What is the cultural infrastructure? Is there a structural equivalent of Triple-Helix model creative ecosystems (Government - University - Industry)?	*Institutions of Knowledge*: • What are the roles of pivotal cultural institutions that function as the nexus of cultural production? • How do people learn the cultural capital and share the insights? How	*Institutions as Identity and Heritage:* • What are the important cultural organizations, cultural events, or heritage places that give the city a distinctive identity (a city brand)? • How do the experience of living and working in the relevant networks of the city give a

	• How do cities facilitate the interactions between key institutional players? The government, the cultural institutions, and the business community? (G-Art-B?) • What's the nature of institutional collaboration in this city? • What are key interests and motivations that enable or limit the interactions and collaboration between these institutions?	do the particular meanings of cultural tastes take shape, become influential, and eventually become the cultural legacy of the city? • How do the cultural institutions provide educational functions to the society in art and aesthetics? • What are the role of the governments in promoting art and aesthetics education? • How do business community, benefiting from the rise of creative class and art-friendly urban environment, support the activities of cultural organizations?	distinctive symbolic value to the individuals or organizations? i.e. a university degree wide recognized and recommended. • How do the cities create a unique, local solutions to address the fundamental challenges of development? i.e. civil rights and social justice, environmental hazard, caring for the elderly and children etc. • Generally, how do the social and economic injustice influence the spatial reality of the city? Are there any alternative solutions/suggestions that might address these challenges?
Modernity and Aesthetics **(Macro-Level, Historical)**	*Contemporaneity of Art Schools:* • How do creative entrepreneurs understand and practice the notion of 'modernity' and 'good life' as aesthetic standard? • What are the spatial distribution of creative networks? How do creative entrepreneurs communicate, share, and co-create new styles of art creation? • How do cultural entrepreneurs practice the idea of tradition and heritage in modern daily life?	*Forums of (Post-)Modernity:* • What are the core theoretical debates on modernity, contemporary art, and heritage? • What are the main framework of ethics, justice, and social values that the society is striving to achieve or maintain? • What are the discourses of social critique, or art critique?	*Modernity as Orthodox:* • Are there theoretical authorities setting the tones of modernity and contemporary art development? How do the cultural authorities become orthodox? (historical perspective) How do the authorities exert their symbolic power? • How do the theoretical debates between different schools impact on the ways creative entrepreneurs gain brands and credentials in their networks? • What are the emerging consensus on "culture for sustainability"? Who are the main actors in this area? How do they become influential?

Beijing as a Creative City

In recent years, Beijing has set ambitious targets to become a global city with focus on the cultural and creative economy. In the contemporary era of Reform and Open-Up, the city has extensively urbanised itself and sprawled into rural peripheries. Today the capital is the biggest metropolis in China — leading the table of so-called Tier1 cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen). Such growth however has placed enormous pressure on the urban fabric of living space, cultural heritage, wellbeing and health, and environment (especially, under the threats of dessert expansion, extreme weather, water shortage, and air quality). In order to cope with the urbanisation challenges, the municipal government of Beijing has been campaigning for more support resources (capital investment, water reservoir and canals, infrastructure and building space etc.), including legislative measures to control the influx of migration. These efforts were largely counterproductive and produced serious moral and constitutional backlashes.

After the 18th CPC Congress in 2012, a series of pivotal, long-term decisions was made in the sense that Beijing, as the way it has always been, should be transformed from being an economic centre to a metropolis of culture and creativity. Under the grand strategy of President Xi, Beijing aims to distribute the economic and industrial functions into the periphery regions, in particular forging a closer economic partnership with the Tianjin City and the Hebei Province, the latter of which remains one of the least developed provinces in China ironically at a proximate distance to Beijing. In the context of wider sustainable development pledges and planning, the president's grand strategy for Beijing includes setting up a completely new future city outside Beijing (*Xiong'An*), with the aim to not just host the ministerial and state organs but also set the benchmark of what a sustainable, wellbeing-oriented future city should be. The grand strategy also includes the emigration

of Beijing's Municipal Government from inner city to the suburb towns (the re-defined Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Metropolis). According to the new plan of regional integration, The City of Beijing shall return to the status as the capital of culture, civilisation, and creativity, just as it has always been for many centuries.

Since Beijing is set to be the capital of culture and creativity, the business and investment of cultural and creative industries in the periphery regions — and indeed possibly the whole country — have become even more agglomerated and centralized in the new creative space in downtown of Beijing. Institutionally, Beijing's Capital Cultural Industry Association, and the counterparts of Tianjin and Hebei, are set to become more institutionally integrated from 2015, as the three agencies joined efforts in workshops and seminars, annual industrial expos. The new institutional arrangement of regional coordination provides policy and economic impetus to the growth of cultural and creative economy, mostly in the form of new industrial districts. The purpose of these institutional efforts is to creative a clear cultural identity for the metropolis region of Beijing.

Globally, Beijing provides a world-class infrastructure of cultural communication and exchange, in terms of its geographic proximity of pivotal cultural institutions (universities-museum-media), and the advantageous access to global connections. Hosting a rich list of public libraries, museums, theatres, architectural heritage, Beijing is globally recognized as the place of best exemplifying China's rich heritage of literature, music, architecture and craft, folk art. The city is listed by the UNESCO as a member of the Creative Cities Networks with a cultural identity of the "City of Design", recognizing the city's great potential in combining Chinese cultural heritage with the country's contemporary achievement in industrial manufacturing. After the Olympic Game 2008, Beijing has substantially

transformed its cultural landscape with an aspiration of becoming a truly global city for culture. Recent projects of urban space regeneration such as the Olympic Stadium Park (Bird's Nest and Water Cube), the Grand National Theatre, the 798 Art District, have added great value to the city's contemporary cultural identity. As China is making unprecedented commitments to globalization and sustainable development in recent years, the city is making great efforts to become the place of cultural exchange and global connections, especially as the meeting place for setting the global development agenda (i.e. the Belt and Road Summit, the UNESCO Centre for Creativity and Sustainability, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Creative Cities Network Summit etc.).

From Networks to Modernity: Encountering Creative Capital in Beijing

So how do we approach the 'creative capital' embedded in the potentials of Beijing as the city transforms itself towards a future of culture, harmony, and sustainability? With the lens of the multi-level framework, we find the incredible foundations of creative capital in the spatial and historical fabrics of the city. As the capital city of China for more than 800 years, Beijing remains one of the central places of Chinese civilisation for nearly ten centuries, displaying remarkable resilience against political disasters, waves of foreign invasion and cultural shock, migration and demographic change, climate and environmental deterioration. The contemporary spatial foundation of Beijing was master-planned and built between the Yuan and Ming dynasties (the 13th - the 14th century, AD). For nearly eight hundred years, the city has been designed, maintained, and used as an imperial capital, not just of a nation but of a central place of civilisation which accommodate different cultures, ethnicities and religions, while conforming to the *dao* of living (as modern Chinese decide to name the country, 中国 "Central State" or "the State of the Medium or the Middle-

Way"). The Chinese civilisation has consistently placed emphasis on the wisdom of harmony between human society and the nature (天人合一, from the Book of '*I Ching*', 1000-750 BC), which is symbolically shrined in rituals of "emperor" traditions and the imperial residential city. The city of Beijing is considered to be a living testament to such civilizational belief.

On the level of modernity and aesthetics theories, the fact that the city's historic resilience, as an imperial and intellectual capital of Chinese civilisation in defiance of dynastic change and foreign invasion, reveals many facets of heritage on the philosophical and aesthetic meanings of modern life in a Chinese city, and its mirrored projections in contemporary China. According to Confucianism, to take responsibility for the society (shè jì, "社稷") by serving in the civil service — hence, the emperor — is the priority of the educated members of society, commonly referred to as the "*shi*" (士), or gentleman class (*jün zi* 君子). Theorists of Confucianism and Daoism, both originating from the book of *I Ching*, established that the ruling legitimacy of the state comes from the ways the ruler (who is to be assisted by the cascading class of wise gentlemen) understands and practices the constant of the nature (tiān dào, the Dao of the Celestial, 天道). Confucianism does not define the class of gentleman by blood, property or wealth, instead on the depth of intellectual education and the capability of independent thinking, and that it is the ruler's responsibility to find and foster these capable men and to listen to their wisdoms with patience. Generations of Chinese intellectuals, rich or poor, lived and worked in this imperial city with deep sense of pride and self-esteem, most of whom were cherry-picked by the imperial court through a sophisticated, competitive examination system. It is clear that meritocracy and social mobility is deeply embedded in the heritage of Chinese society, and Beijing is the city where these miracles of social mobility actually take place. The imperial examination system is

itself a heritage institution that dates back to the Sui and Tang dynasties (the 7th century, AD), which ensures the authority and efficiency of the mandarin system of the empire. The backbones of this institutional heritage can be still seen today as the country's twin elite universities (Peking and Tsinghua, located next to each other) remain the place where the country's most-respected intellectuals and academically-elite students live and work. The north-west corner of the city, the district of Haidian today, where universities, academies, and research institutes are next door to each other, still maintain intimate relationships with the power centre of the country, in flows of ideas, politics, and intellectual labour.

It is important to note that the cultural heritage of Beijing, the spatial and institutional patterns of how intellectuals cope with the epochal change, breeds the ideal of modernity in the early 20th century that fundamentally re-shaped China as a modern state. After the 1911 Republican Revolution, Beijing becomes a city with an emperor still living in the forbidden city, stripped of political power yet with formidable symbolic power. Everything has changed yet nothing has been changed. So how is China taking on modernity? Open forums, public debates, private salons and academic seminars organized by the networks of intellectuals and students take place regularly and intensively within the campus of Peking University (Bêi Dà, 北大), or in proximate locations. These debates and continuous discussions, between the Confucian conservatism (the royalists), the republican, the social democrats, the neo-revolutionists (communists), and the anarchists etc., consequentially shape the discourses and re-construct the meta-narratives about China, Chinese civilisation, and Chinese modernity, when the military juntas and warlords take turns to preside over short-lived governments amid paralysed projects of political institutionalization.

The historical significance of such intellectual milieu of Beijing, in the cultural forms of lectures, books, proses, newspaper comments or other publications by scholars and public

intellectuals working for Peking, Tsinghua, and similar local institutions in the 1910s-1930s. remain the central points of intellectual debates in China today. Most of these debates focus on the subjects of cultural identity of China and its critique (Lû Xùn 鲁迅，Liáng Qichao 梁启超), history of Chinese philosophy (Feng Youlan 冯友兰, Jin Yuèlín 金岳霖), the civilisations and history of the West (Wang Guowei 王国维), social justice（Lî Dàzhāo 李大钊，Chén Dúxiu 陈独秀）, the art of poetry (Chen Yanque 陈寅恪) and painting (Feng Zikai 丰子恺), modern literature （Hú Shì 胡适）, and architecture （Liáng Sichéng 梁思成），university and education （Cai Yuánpéi 蔡元培）. The intellectual achievement of this period becomes the sources of ideas and ideals about Chinese modernity that drive the transformation of China in the 20th century [v].

Historians now refer to this period of Chinese culture and art movements as the "New Culture Movement", a major shift of Chinese cultural life marked by the replacement of classical proses by everyday mundane language (bái huà wén 白话文) in literature. A notable example is the periodical called *the New Youth* (新青年), edited by the then Peking professor Chen Dúxiù (also serving as the dean of the Humanities Faculty), created the communication space where students and scholars talk about art, philosophy, and political thoughts using everyday language that is accessible to the wider society. The periodical was later recognised as the focal communities of scholars and students who orchestrated the *May 4th Movement* in 1919 (五四运动), which eventually lead to the founding of the CPC in 1921, and subsequent events of historical magnitudes. Theories on contemporary art and aesthetics were gradually formed in this rich and diverse intellectual milieu of Beijing. These emerging aesthetic theories were built upon the concepts of progress, justice, self-esteem. These concepts, to various degrees, remain the foundation of contemporary Chinese aesthetic and modernity theories. Any imagination of Beijing's

future cities and its connection with cultural and creative economy is impossible without taking into account this rich intellectual legacy of Chinese modernity in the early 20th century. In other words, the creative capital is embedded, symbolically and culturally, in the ways people of Beijing interpret, embody, and mobilize these legacy thoughts in the everyday life of today's city life, which stresses the ideal of sustainability.

At the risk of simplifying this complex and dynamic historic period unfolding in the urban space of Beijing, the concept of modernity in China has come to somehow a rather *inconclusive* consensus, an ongoing project with open possibilities, the one that is about being open to and learning from the great examples of the Western civilisation, particularly the institutional structures and technical rationality, while remaining deeply divided over the Confucian heritage and its modern values. The latter became the antecedents of the Cultural Revolution in 1970s, when the politics of anti-Confucianism and anti-intellectualism peaked and wreaked havoc for ten years, which took its inspirations and initiatives from the student movements in Beijing's Tsinghua campus in 1966, the neighbour institution of Peking University. The point we try to make here is to highlight that the creative capital of Beijing must be approached by associations with the city's intellectual struggles between accommodating modernity and cultural heritage at the same time, which, by no means coincidently, touches the nerve centre of China's modernisation project, the *RealPolitik in* Zygmunt Bauman's sense (Bauman, 1988). In other words, the spatiality of Beijing, as it is changing today, carries great symbolic, cultural, and relational significance as it has the potential to (re-)define the meaning of Chinese modernity, which itself is the heritage concept from China's state-state-building experience in the 20th-century.

On a relational level, one can find the structural resemblance of creative and cultural networks in contemporary Beijing that characterized the city of the "New Cultural Movement" in 1910s-1930s. These creative and cultural networks are anchored by the

institutional ties in universities, cultural industries (media, publisher, film, antique, performance art etc.), museums and national academies. These creative networks share the more or less similar ideals of art standards which can be traced into a common sense on the question of "what is Chinese modernity" and how it is to be lived in contemporary city life. Artists, cultural entrepreneurs, students, mandarins are co-located in the same space where reviews and communication channels are made, cultural tastes are shaped and magnified by the business and political interests. Institutionally, the city hosts the clusters of universities, think tanks, international organizations, and the government research bodies which had developed sophisticated networks of information flows and knowledge sharing, to the extent that it has an indisputable regional identity as the modernised Chinese way of life, as the example of bringing a thick cultural heritage into modern life within the context of global connections. The recent establishment of UNESCO International Centre for Creativity and Sustainability in Beijing is just another endorsement on this regional identity of Heritage-Modernity, the East and the West.

Symbolically, the city is recognised as the place where ideas of Chinese modernisation are shared, debated and decisions are made, the open space where intellectuals, activists, political parties, foreign powers meet and share the same time and space for communication, debates, and association. The co-presence of elite universities, research institutes, think tanks, artistic and intellectual heavyweights, ministerial mandarins in the western and north-western part of the city create the high-level place with the support of cultural infrastructures to make ideas being articulated, mediated, and being listened to the people of influence. The city's institutions of memories, enshrined in the forbidden city, the museums, the libraries, the theatres, the academies, become the silent context and stage where new innovations of art forms and content can be proposed and put into practice. A detailed analysis of Beijing's creative capital can be expanded into the network structures

of creative ecosystems, and how these creative ecosystems can be supported or limited by the institutional structures that characterize the regional culture of Beijing.

Conclusion

How can we draw lessons from the analysis of Beijing's creative capital? A critical point is that a theory of creative capital is about the content and the forms of cultural production activities at the same time. The discussion on the content of artistic productions, such as the cultural/aesthetic meanings, the social values, the economic values etc., have been often separated by the forms of art (literature, film, painting, poetry, design, music etc.), which creates a constant dilemma for the theorizing project of art management — either to focus on the cultural meaning (pure theory, art-for-art's sake), or on the process of cultural production (the business management side, the industry, the intellectual property and its associated value chains, the ecosystems etc.). An analysis on the creative capital potential of Beijing reveals that the forms of artistic productions can be universally synthesised by understanding the philosophical core of what is modernity and how art expressions articulate such meanings of modernity in economic and industrial terms. Such synthesis should address the challenges of heritage and modernity that is enshrined in the daily life of creative cities. This analysis can only be achieved by developing a multi-level framework on the activities of cultural productions: the everyday practice, the institutional nexus, and the modernity reflections. Secondly, the development of creative city is not just about polices that incentivise cultural entrepreneurship or creating new industrial parks that contribute to the competitiveness of cities. Rather, the thesis of the creative city focuses strategically on the quality and wellbeing of city life, which is predominantly about the cultural progress of learning, networking community-building, and social movements,

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about how the future cities can provide infrastructure that is focused on the content of aesthetic meanings. The theory of creative capital provides an opportunity for urban planners, policy-makers, and practitioners a) to address the practical challenges of urban regeneration by tapping into the strength of art and aesthetics; b) to appreciate the historical legacy of the urban culture by bridging the past with the future.

The theoretical framework of creative capital can be regarded as the beginning of continuous research efforts to uncover the significance of creative cities for future cities. Future research should aim to address a number of important questions whose answers remain largely unclear. For example, we still know little about the patterns of social ties in the space of creativity in Chinese cities, and how such patterns of social networks are associated with the institutional structures in the Chinese space of creativity, and the Chinese ways of interpreting modernity. We know little about the corresponding relationships between the patterns and meanings of social ties (social relations), the institutional arrangements (regional systems of creativity?), and the abstract level aesthetic ideals of artistic and cultural productions, or whether such corresponding relationship can change across time and places, in China or in other countries. These theoretical curiosities shall be the future research agenda of creative capital and we look forwards to generating more insightful understandings of the space of creativity, and ways to contribute to the discourses on the contemporary critique of modernity.

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Endnote

[i] For example, a prominent cultural economist David Throsby (2010) defined cultural capital as "an asset, tangible or intangible, which embodies or yields cultural value in addition to whatever economic values it embodies or yields". We believe this definition of capital is a bit narrow in the sense that it is too much objectified perhaps in measurement of economic/monetary terms, to the extent that it overlooks the dynamic historic process of accumulation and the social structure that give rise to the particular potentiality of change (Bourdieu, 1986) that is the intrinsic value of capital.

[ii] In fact, the detachment of symbol from the meanings it claims to represent is exactly the point made explicit and artistically re-created by the postmodernist culture, which has no universal doctrine of aesthetic theories but are unified in criticizing the fallacy of "the project of modernity" and its associated "metanarratives" (Habermas, 1983; Bauman, 1988; Harvey, 1990). A further exploration on the impact of postmodernism on the formation and function of creative capital is relevant and highly interesting for understanding the relationship between culture and future cities, yet beyond the scope of this paper.

[iii] Prime examples of such entrepreneur-friendly, regenerated, and creative hub space include, London's Shoreditch-Silicon Alley-Kings Cross region, the Cultural Quarter of South Kensington – Brompton Road, Beijing's 798 Old Factory Art District, Hangzhou's West Lake Corridors, Lisbon's vibrant creative hubs, the Old Habana regeneration project by Eusebio Leal etc. Urban regeneration projects for creative entrepreneurship is an ongoing phenomenon that deserve a dedicated project of research summarizing the unique spatial-relational features, and its socioeconomic consequences. The authors are extremely grateful to Prof Patricia Walker Allmond for her comments, and sharing of ideas and case study examples.

[iv] In response, many business corporations nowadays are investing resources and efforts to become more mission-driven, instead of profit or share-shareholder driven. Corporations successful at retaining large pool of talents and human capital tend to be those elite groups that have clearly articulated their agenda of "changing the world into a better place"(The

Silicon Valley groups like Google, Facebook have been particularly strategic in combining such mission with business success). The trend can be interpreted as an adaptive tactic of the business world to accept the fact that in a future economy of innovation and creativity, corporate loyalty is in crisis unless the employees believe the value they create stretch far beyond the accounting books and stock market dynamics.

[v] It is notable that Mao Zedong worked as a librarian in the Peking University in 1910s, living and working at the heart of the intellectual milieu of the "New Cultural Movement". He was influenced by Li Dazhao, professor at PKU, the translator of '*Das Capital*' into Chinese, and the leading founder of CPC in 1921.