

Discourses of Creativity in Shanghai

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Declaration of authorship

I, Andi Burris, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT

Creativity is celebrated for its ability to generate economic growth, but despite the strong GDP growth in China in the last two decades, Chinese workers are often assessed as less creative than their Western counterparts. This lesser level of creativity is usually attributed by observers to the influence of culture, education, and political history. However, these influences are not static in China's rapidly changing economic landscape and neither do Chinese workers uniformly accept the assessment of themselves as less creative. Furthermore the thriving cultural industries in China's cities demonstrate a profusion of indigenous creativity, yet the idea that Chinese people are less creative seems to be an enduring one amongst critics. This thesis investigates the meanings associated with creativity, with a view to understanding the Chinese workers are perceived as less creative than Westerners. Based on ethnographic work carried out in Shanghai, this thesis argues that the creativity discourses are deployed as a means to mobilise the workforce and transform workers into self-governing employees and obedient corporate subjects (Foucault, 1999).

Psychologists and management academics have largely approached creativity through a logical positivist lens, and in the processes, turned creativity studies into a science, although some qualitative methods have been applied in the area of innovation research (Crossan *et al.*, 1996; Lanzara, 1999).

Increasingly the study of creativity has become focused on the production of creative outputs and tied to economic objectives. This thesis develops existing knowledge on creativity by untangling the concept from productivity discourses. It focuses on two primary sites of investigation, namely the software engineering and fashion design sectors of the creative industries. I examine the meanings associated with creativity and how particular personality traits, processes, places, and products come to be considered more creative than others. I then explore the strategies applied by indigenous workers, students, and parents in responding to the dominant creativity discourses. I also make a further theoretical contribution to creativity scholarship by introducing an alternate way of conceptualising creativity that includes multiple perspectives.

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GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS

徐家 □ XuJiaHui	Shopping District in Shanghai specialising in electronic goods and services.
道 Dao	Taoist
佛 Fu	Buddhist
儒 Ru	Confucianist
盘古 Pan Gu	Mythical figure from a creation story
阴 Yin	Dark/ Feminine
阳 Yang	Light/ Masculine
君子 Jun Zi	Gentlemen
四大 □ 明 Si Da Fa Ming	Four Great Inventions
关系 Guan Xi	Relationship
父母官 Fu Mu Guan	Parentalistic government
单位 Dan Wei	Work unit
大 □ □ Da Guo Fan	Iron rice bowl
麻 □ Ma Fan	Troublesome
没有 Mei You	We don't have it
没 □ 法 Mei Ban Fa	We cannot do anything about it
没关系 Mei Guan Xi	It doesn't matter
好 学 心 Hao Xue Xin	Heart and Mind for wanting to learn
创 造 心 Chuang Zao Xin	Creativity in the sense of having an innate talent or desire to innovate
创 造 力 Chuang Zao Li	Capacity for creativity
造 Zao	'To build' usually used in the context of the production of something material
创 意 Chuang Yi.	'Creativity'
创 Chuang	Breakthrough
天 才 Tian Cai	Talent bestowed from heaven
才 能 Cai Neng	Outstanding ability
天 □ Tian Zi	Heavenly endowment
艺 术 Yi Shu	Artistry
毕 竟 我 们 都 是 自 己 人	After all, you are one of us
Bi Jing Wo Men Dou Shi Zi Ji Ren	
海 □ Hai Gui	Sea turtles (returned emigrants)
师 父 Shi Fu	Master
徒 弟 Tu Di	Disciple
闯 Chuang	Be pioneering
拱 手 Gong Shou	Traditional greeting where the right palm covers the left fist.
好 □ Hao Ma	Alright?
枪 打 出 头 鸟	The outstanding bird will be shot
Qiang Da Chu Tou Naio	
鬼 佬 Gui Lao	Foreign Devil
拍 □ 屁 Pai Ma Pi	Literally – smacking a horse's rear: the implication is that insincere flattery is being used as a means to an end
自 己 人 Zi Ji Ren	One of us
看 透 Kan Tou	See through
螺 □ □ Luo Si Ding	Screw – 'cog in a wheel'. Someone who holds a

七零后 Qi Ling Hou	minor but necessary position in the organisation
八零后 Ba Ling Hou	Post 1970
九零后 Jiu Ling Hou	Post 1980
将来 Jiang Lai	Post 1990
将来 Jiang Lai	The future
小聪明 Xiao Cong Ming	Literally: Petty Cleverness

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Shanghai in 2009 was characterised by stark contrasts; immense high rises sprang up rapidly next to old dilapidated *hutongs*, expensive looking banqueting restaurants alongside street side food stalls, and bicycles stacked up implausibly with heavy goods next to fancy, imported, fast cars. In 徐家匯 (XuJiaHui), the main shopping district for hi-tech consumer goods, electronic billboards displaying images of technology clad models appealed to the consumer through lifestyle marketing, promising to deliver coolness to the targeted youth. These images towering above the crowds presented a disparity against the chaos of the streets below. In contrast to the billboard advertisements where a few happy, young models in various carefree looking poses were spread out in spacious backgrounds, the pavements were filled with people of all ages and income brackets, some selling, some buying, and all jostling for space. The city's residents displayed their creativity in the ways they adapted to the rapidly changing conditions. Amidst all this, the preparations for the World Expo 2010 also showcased the creative talent of its public relations professionals. Yet despite or perhaps as a consequence of this ubiquitous creativity in Shanghai, I was preoccupied by the question of why Chinese people were perceived by expatriates as less creative than Westerners.

Growing up in an expatriate household in Singapore in the 70s, I often encountered expatriates' criticisms of indigenous workers as uncreative, inflexible, and lacking in initiative. I do not recall any adult ever challenging this assertion. As my mother is a second generation Singaporean from China, my father an Indonesian, and my step-father a British Australian, I straddled both local and expatriate identities, which provoked both a sense of discomfort of being judged as less creative, as well as empathy with the frustrations of the expatriates. Adding to my confusion was that all the adults from the 'local' side of my family were employed in occupations that are conventionally thought to be creative. Several of my uncles were chefs who presented intricately sculpture of ice, butter, and vegetables at our grand family dinners each Chinese New Year and two of my aunts, my mother, and my grandmother, were skilled seamstresses. Both my father, and my step-father on the other hand, were bankers, an occupation that even at a young age, I did not

associate with creativity. As my parents' work took us to other parts of Asia and the Pacific, I noted that the criticism that 'local people are not very creative' was a common one amongst expatriates, whichever country we lived in. It seemed then that there was a double standard applied to expatriates and the indigenous population. I was reminded of this irregularity when, as an adult expatriate working in the development sector in Manila and southern Africa, I met other expatriates who expressed their frustration at indigenous workers' lack of creativity. Hence I began to suspect that creativity is a politically loaded value judgement. I became increasingly interested in creativity as a subject in general and Chinese creativity in particular because Confucianism and rote learning were often faulted for 'killing' creativity. When I sought out companies based in China for my fieldwork in 2009, my question was whether the Chinese truly are less creative than Westerners.

That creativity is celebrated in contemporary society is evident in the numerous advertisements for modern technological goods that claim to help 'unleash' consumers' creativity (Durand & VanHuss, 1992). Corporations from various industries are also increasingly demanding that their employees employ creativity in their work (Nobel, 2011; Berkhout, *et al.*, 2011), whilst educational institutions are searching for the best ways of 'teaching' creativity to their students (Elliot & Mikulas, 2012). The Imagination Foundation (2012) declares 'The world is changing at a fantastic speed. The future requires people who can problem-solve, adapt and communicate in workplaces and environments that are increasingly complex. Creativity creates jobs, drives economic growth and provides answers to societal needs. And it also maximizes human potential.'

Policies aimed at stimulating economic growth through the creative industries have been implemented across various scales, from municipalities to national and multilateral trading regions (Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2005). Kong *et al.* (2006:173) pointed out that a normative policy script has emerged, endorsing broader notions of creative economies which urges policy makers to 'implement particular initiatives: encourage creative industry clusters, incubate learning and knowledge economies, maximise networks with other successful places and companies, value and reward innovation and aggressively campaign to attract the "creative class" as residents' so as compete in the new

creative economy. Within China, the changing economic market from its manufacturing base to one that is more reliant on indigenous innovation, puts the focus on how Chinese citizens can become more creative in order to sustain national efforts to 'catch up' to the West (O'Connor & Xin, 2006).

Yet the precise meanings of creativity remain unclear and seem to vary across industries and cultures. For example, is the creativity of a child learning its first language and piecing together the grammatical rules the same as the creativity of the artisan who has spent years perfecting their skills to create masterpieces? Can creativity be intrinsically valuable rather than as a means of producing a result? Are some people more creative than others?

Current creativity research is beginning to recognise that creativity is more than just invention and discovery (Runco, 2014), but as the 2014 issues of the **Creativity Research Journal** illustrate, scholarship remains dominated by psychologists and managers. Alternative perspectives are few and far between, and little attention is given to the marginalising effects of the dominant discourses of creativity (Peck, 2005) as well as the national and cultural anxieties that the call to be creative provokes (Lovell, 2006). The purpose of my research is therefore to uncover the complexities within the dominant creativity discourses, and facilitate an understanding of how individuals respond to and engage in these discourses. By undertaking a critical analysis of how particular meanings have come to be associated with creativity, and challenging many of the usual assumptions made around the notion, I have sought to discover new knowledge about how creativity manifests itself outside of the mainstream focus of the 'creative industries' discourses and how particular creativity discourses are mobilised in different contexts.

Following from that, I propose that common understandings of creativity should be broadened to include those characteristics that are neglected in the mainstream Western discourses that are informed by psychological research and driven by economic impetus. Like Fuchs and Sandoval (2014) who argued that broadening the meaning of 'digital labour' to include the production of material aspects of digital products such the miners of cassiterite can 'inform political solidarity', I propose a broadening of our understanding of creativity

and informing political solidarity for workers who apply creativity to their work whether or not it is recognised by their managers as being creative. Furthermore a broader definition recognises the contribution of those who work in what is seen as the periphery of the creative industries (Peck, 2005).

In the light of this, Chapter 2 begins by drawing from the work of Foucault in a discussion of how the construction of knowledge around particular subjects reinforces existing power structures and introducing the lineage of dominant Western discourses; establishing the relationship between creativity and economic progress. Following from that, I discuss the orientalist perspectives in relation to Chinese creativity and introduce the historical Chinese context of creativity up to the Mao era as well as perceived difficulties for Chinese creativity in the post-Mao period. I then present an outline of the academic foundations of creativity studies and critiquing the dominance of the psychology and management disciplines in codifying creativity and establishing creativity studies as a science has led to a disproportionate focus on individual self-improvement in order to satisfy greater economic objectives. Whilst innovation studies have explored group creativity (Moorman & Miner, 1998; Hatch, 1999), this has not been carried over to creativity studies. This chapter illuminates the relationship between political climate, economic regimes, the establishment of creativity as a science and highlights some of the reasons that are thought to inhibit creativity amongst Chinese people.

In the methodology chapter, Chapter 3, I explain the means that I used to disentangle the multiple complexities embedded in the creativity discourses encountered in the field, particularly in cross-cultural contexts. This chapter contains a discussion of the setting, difficulties in gaining access to various institutions, and the ways in which I reached out to respondents. I also explain the ethnographic methods that were applied throughout the fieldwork and elaborate on the practical and ethical issues that arose.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of five key discourses of creativity found within a corporate setting in Shanghai's IT sector. It focuses on the ways in which creativity is associated with particular behaviours and actions of the employee and how these discourses are used to mobilise the corporate subject. The empirical material for this chapter is mainly drawn from the multi-national

company, headquartered in the US, that allowed me to observe their software teams. In Chapter 5, I examine some of the broader discourses of creativity, extending the discussion to the design sector. This chapter explores the strategies employed by indigenous workers, students, and their parents to respond to the creative industries' demands on their personal resourcefulness.

Chapter 6 combines the discussions of the dominant discourses of creativity in the previous empirical chapters, and argues for an alternate way of conceptualising how various forms of creativity may co-exist and relate to one another. It makes the argument that economic motives, political intent, and epistemological climate are all crucial factors that influence ideas of what is or is not creative. Following these three empirical chapters, Chapter 7 concludes this thesis by bringing the arguments together, assessing the implications of my research, and suggesting areas for further investigation.

Some clarification regarding the use of the terms 'innovation' and 'creativity' must be made at this point, given that they are closely related and a major concern of my research. In this thesis, I am applying the definitions provided by Amabile *et al.* (1996: 2) who propose that creativity is 'the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain' and innovation is 'the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization'. Although at times, respondents seem to use them interchangeably, there was an understanding that innovation applied to tangible, novel changes to a process or a product whilst creativity refers more to the ideas and inspiration. Nevertheless, there is agreement that creativity is necessary for innovation to occur. As Amabile (2004: 1) pointed out: 'no innovation is possible without the creative processes that mark the front end of the process: identifying important problems and opportunities, gathering information, generating new ideas, and exploring the validity of those ideas'. As this research has been concerned primarily with discourses of creativity and their resulting governmentalities in a postcolonial context, the focus of my discussions will be on how meanings associated with creativity are produced and performed by subjects rather than on how innovations occur within organisations, although some reference will be made to innovation studies.

A final point of clarification concerns the terms 'expatriate', 'Western', and

'indigenous'. As Hall (1992:185) pointed out: 'We have to use short-hand generalizations, like "West" and "western," but we need to remember that they represent very complex ideas and have no simple or single meaning.' These identities in this research were found to be non-straightforward, especially given that many of the expatriate respondents were themselves 'third culture individuals' whose nationality could not be easily pinned down. Although many expatriates straddle these identities, I shall define them broadly here. I use the term 'expatriates' mainly to refer to residents in China who do not hold citizenship of the country and may come from any country outside China. The expatriate respondents in this research were all in paid employment when I interviewed them. Some were entrepreneurs who had set up their own businesses in China. Western respondents are, a subset of the expatriate category, those who had spent a significant amount of their formative years in Europe or the USA. Western discourses refer to those originating from Greek, Latin and Judeo-Christian history as well as modern US culture, but there was also a clear overlap between Western and expatriate discourses. Indigenous workers in this thesis mean Chinese employees. Most of the interviewees in this research who fall into the 'indigenous worker' category came from other parts of China, although the Shanghainese referred to them as foreign.

It is by categorising these complex identities in broad terms that I am able to approach the key research question of why the Chinese are perceived as less creative than their Western counterparts. Since these judgements are reliant upon cultural and national differences, it is necessary to articulate them along the lines of Western, expatriate, and indigenous identities. Furthermore, as creativity discourses are embedded in national agendas in China that separate its citizens from foreigners, these distinctions not only allow one to focus on the role that local creativity is seen to play in the country's economic development, but also enables an understanding of whether one's perception of China's economic future, particularly in the sectors that call for originality, may depend on the type of connection one has to the country. The pressure for China to be seen as creative is evident in the most recent five year plan (Casey & Koleski, 2011) which contains targets for higher quality growth, high end manufacturing, greater domestic spending, all of which depend to some extent on the creative industries.

CHAPTER 2: CREATIVITY THEN AND NOW – LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the complexities of the concept of creativity. This research explores how the production of meanings of creativity through particular performances in multinational institutions and organisations reflects the objectives behind the dominant creativity discourses. I am concerned with how the incorporation of creativity into educational, economic, and political objectives, which sets up Western institutions and organisations as authorities on the concept, champions particular identities that are distinguished by the norms of organisational practices and global market objectives. Since ‘diffusion spaces are not “blank” or “even” but rather inherited and mutable,’ (Kong *et al.*, 2006: 176) I shall also focus on how pre-existing Chinese discourses of harmony and duty respond and interact with these new ways of thinking about creativity.

I begin with a discussion of why Foucault's concept of discourse is appropriate for the study of creativity in Section 2.2 before moving on in Section 2.3 to highlight key periods in history that provided the lineage of ideas which influenced the meanings associated with contemporary conceptualisations of creativity. This brief historical summary of the rise of creativity in the Western world highlights particular events that influenced the meanings that have come to be associated with the term. In Section 2.4, ‘Creativity in China’, I illuminate the Chinese historical context of creativity. Despite drawing out distinctions between Western and Chinese understandings of creativity, these are complex and non-straightforward dichotomies, but are used as shorthand to refer to the broad scope of ideas commonly associated with being Western or Chinese. Moreover, although participants in my research also used these terms broadly, they did not go unchallenged, since many people came from multi-national, multi-cultural backgrounds. These two sections are deliberately juxtaposed to underscore the main differences between Western and Chinese understandings of creativity. They are not a comprehensive historical account of creativity, which writers such as Mason (2003) and Pope (2005) have

already done, but instead give a broad illustration of how particular ideas came to be embedded in the concept of creativity. In Section 2.5, I outline arguments that claim the Chinese are less creative because of differences in their cultural practices, economic systems, political ideology, and educational aspirations. The concern here is not just with the causal relationship between these factors that are thought to affect creativity, but rather about how creativity is understood as an end result of a set of circumstances and environments that can be manipulated to produce favourable outcomes for a particular kind of economic progress. Finally in Section 2.6, I draw on key literature from across disciplines to provide a critique of approaches that scholars have taken in examining the ways that creativity studies reinforce particularly rigid views of creativity.

2.2 POWER, DISCOURSE, AND CREATIVITY

Psychologists and managers have become the authorities of creativity, but rather than producing knowledge that enables individuals to be more creative as they claim to do, their discoveries about creativity have in many ways disenfranchised workers by excluding forms of creativity that are not economically tangible. The creativity that is studied in the field of psychology is increasingly focused on the production of creative products, problem solving for greater convenience and efficiency, and how the mentally ill can become 'productive' through the expression of their creativity (Runco, 2014). Lesser creativities such as those of mothers in responding to challenging behaviour from their children and street vendors plying their wares are largely absent from these studies. That academics and policy makers have produced and reinforced a narrow and particular idea about creativity illustrates how knowledge can reinforce existing power structures rather than undermine them.

Foucault rejected the 'repressive hypothesis' and argues instead that power is a positive force that produces rather than represses. 'We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. That is, rather than enforcement that represses, power reinforces its canons through by producing particular knowledges that reaffirm its position.

The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him [sic] belong to this production' (1991:194). Foucault further argues that institutional pursuit of knowledge supports and legitimises this power, proposing that rather than revealing a truth that liberates subjects from oppression, particular intellectual efforts such as those stemming from psychology, medicine and criminology are accomplices of power by their authority in defining behavioural norms and deviances. This research uncovers the ways in which established 'knowledge' about creativity has led to the objectification of indigenous workers and works towards transforming them into self-regulating corporate subjects.

Foucault (1982) put forward three modes of objectification of the subject, division, classification, and subjectification, which transforms human beings into objects rather than subjects. In the first mode, division, people are separated from themselves and others. This is evident within the creative industries in the separation of the 'creative classes' (Florida, 2002) from the non-creative. In the second mode, classification, the work of psychologists in codifying creativity objectifies human subjects by treating them as a means of production. By focusing predominantly on their potential contribution as creative workers, their humanity is sidelined despite the fact that it is their very human, complex, individuality that makes creative thinking possible. The final mode, subjectification, involves the self-government of creative corporate subjects through their internalisation of their employers' values. Persuaded by their employers to be creative in a way that serves corporate objectives, employees adopt interests that are aligned to corporate ideals. Furthermore, corporate training programmes drawing on these findings from psychology instil employees with a sense of duty and obligation towards their colleagues, which they believe serve their own career prospects, so that they begin to self regulate their behaviour through their desire to be more productive.

Foucault (1982: 210-211) suggests 'another way to go further towards a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice... consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. Rather than analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analysing power through the antagonism of strategies. For example, to find out what our society means

by sanity, perhaps we should investigate what is happening in the field of insanity, and what we mean by legality in the field of illegality...' In a similar vein, by examining the purportedly uncreative Chinese workers, the power relations within dominant Western creativity discourses may be revealed. The investigation of why the Chinese are perceived as uncreative might not lead to the finding that they are not creative nor that there is an absence of creativity in China, but rather uncover why Chinese creativity 'does not count' in the dominant discourses. In turn, the power relations between expatriate, Western managers and indigenous employees, workers, and students could unfold when these discourses come under scrutiny.

Appropriating creativity as their domain, academic experts participate in power relations of corporate productivity discourses, but missing from this 'discursive unity' (Foucault, 1972) is the forms of creativity that characterise the 'non-productive'. How then do these discourses operate to exclude these creativities? By employing an ethnographic approach, this research captures how some of the creativity discourses are enacted in the everyday performances of workers in the creative industries. Observational participation for an extended period of time in the field may reveal the normative devices that are used to persuade workers that they need to conduct themselves in particular ways in order to prove their creativity. Beyond asking how creativity came to be represented for example as aggressive, expressive, and productive, and how Chinese workers come to be represented as less creative, this thesis seeks to discover how these representations are reproduced and reinforced in the interactions amongst participants of particular sectors of the creative industries, namely, software engineering and fashion design.

2.3 WESTERN CREATIVITY DISCOURSES

This section provides an overview of how discourses of creativity evolved out of economic, political, and epistemological changes since the Renaissance, following which they became established during the Age of Reason, and were imbued with Western capitalist values. I argue that contemporary Western businesses and policy makers, regardless of where in the world they are working, rely on these foundations in assigning meaning to the term 'creativity', which limits participation in these creativity discourses to a particular elite. I

begin in Section 2.2.1 by describing the historical context within which creativity became a desirable trait before elaborating on how themes of competition are embedded in modern Western discourses of creativity.

2.3.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historians (Albert & Runco, 1999; Weiner, 2000; Pope, 2005; Pang, 2012) place the origins of the concept of creativity in Greek and Hebraic traditions, claiming that the term was initially used as an attribute exclusively belonging to deities, as humans were not thought to be capable of ‘making something from nothing’. Pang (2012: 31) points out that creativity changed from being ‘solely owned by God’, to something that was ‘given to the artist through his or her spiritual communion with nature’ during the advent of modernity, and ‘by the twentieth century anyone could be creative’. During its evolution, characteristics such as individuality, risk taking, competition, and freedom – some of them contradictory – became embedded in the concept of creativity.

Mason (2003) proposes that human creativity was originally deemed a challenge to the deities and therefore not desirable; those that facilitated human knowledge, such as the snake in Genesis and Prometheus in Greek theology, were punished. Although human creativity in the Judeo-Christian creation story did exist, for instance where Adam was told to ‘replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth’ (Genesis 1:28), scholars such as Mason (2003) who try to trace the origins of the concept of creativity appear to focus on its discordant aspects. During the European Renaissance (c. 1300 – 1600 AD), human creativity became acceptable, but was conceived as either a conduit for the divine or mimicry of God’s creations, and tied to morality, godliness, and goodness (Mason, 2003). It was not until the Age of Reason (c. 1700s) that humans were thought capable of creativity that did not originate from the God(s) (Albert & Runco, 1999; Mason, 2003; Niu & Sternberg, 2006). Although current creativity research usually takes place in a secular context, the association with challenging a higher authority and defying superiors remains embedded in much contemporary scholarship (Sternberg, 2007; Tinsley *et al.*, 2013). Sternberg (2007) for example, pointed out that children’s creativity and obedience to authority are often incompatible, whilst Tinsley (2013) proposed

that hip hop music provides a creative outlet that is associated amongst the youth with rebellion against authority.

According to Wen (2011) the growing exposure to foreign concepts and goods, along with the trade expansion and exploration of the Age of Reason, increased the demand for technological advancement in order to conquer unknown domains and expand commercial interests. Mason (2003: 82) citing Hume also proposes that contact with foreigners inspired people to work harder and aspire to greater material wealth and comfort, which in turn stimulated their creativity. Although he also points out Hume's notion of finding reward in 'the occupation itself' (Mason, 2003: 81), which presents an opportunity to discuss how the concept of intrinsic motivation first became linked to creativity in Western philosophy, Mason chooses to focus on its relationship to commercial activity. The emerging relationship between invention and commercial activity gave rise to creativity discourses that are centred on industrial development and economic growth, which writers like Mason continue to perpetuate. Innovation is still thought to give early adopters an advantage over trade competitors and the free market was believed to be the most efficient means of determining which innovations should be adopted (Mokyr, 2003). In this discourse, the European Industrial Revolution became a victory for human creativity and a vindication of the free market, supplanting the patronage system and sidestepping the reality that success often comes after numerous failures.

Mokyr (2003) argues that the institutional 'progress' of the Enlightenment, in the form of property rights and government relinquishment and decentralisation of innovation processes, played a greater part than mercantilism in facilitating the adoption of new technologies. He also writes that 'rhetoric – played an important role in the emergence and shaping of the institutions that shaped and supported material progress' (Mokyr, 2003: 7-8). However, he fails to point out that this 'rhetoric' ties creativity to the profit motive, despite quoting The British Society of the Arts, founded in 1754, in their stated purpose: 'to embolden enterprise, to enlarge science, to refine art, to improve manufacture and to extend our commerce' (Mokyr, 2003: 31). Mokyr's use of the term rhetoric also suggests a more deliberate effort by institutions at marrying the concepts of creativity and 'material progress' than

the unfolding of discourses which works in subtler ways.

Albert and Runco (1999) put forward that the Industrial Revolution (c. 1800s) embraced freedom of thought in the individual for the purpose of economic growth, whilst also pitting creativity against social order through the displacement of rural workers by technological advancements. Recognising this 'creativity conundrum' where invention causes the destruction of existing social structures and technologies, Schumpeter (1950) formulated the concept of 'creative destruction', adapting Marx's theory that capitalism leads to its own demise. The forerunners of 'technological utopianism' (Segal, 1995) present this destruction as an inevitability that can be resolved with further human creativity.

According to the above accounts, it appears that the Western evolution of creativity discourses have their bases in defiance against authority and social order and in the individual's willingness to make personal sacrifices. The focus on the individual links creativity to competitive rather than collaborative actions, and, as argued in Section 2.3, is more aggressive than Chinese discourses of creativity. During the Age of Reason, creativity became a cerebral experience that involved skill and rationality, even in the aesthetics which had to be talked about in terms of enterprise and science (Mokyr, 2003). As Pang (2012: 35) argues, 'The Western modernity project is also characterised by an epistemological drive to unearth, and therefore control, the "truth" of art.' Although Pang (2012) also points out that Western philosophers such as Schelling, Deleuze, Jameson, and Doane have also attempted to keep the arts free from 'epistemological control', nevertheless their philosophies adhere to the belief that creativity is a function of freedom. This idea of creativity being 'free' is embedded in many of the Western discourses; which I argue fuels the tension between Western and Chinese understandings of creativity.

2.3.2 THE MODERN CREATIVITY DISCOURSE

The **Oxford Companion to the Mind** links the rise of creativity research in the 1950s to the space race (Hudson, 1987). Other writers, such as Wallner (1995), refer to 'post-sputnik creativity studies', indicating a strong relationship between Cold War politics and the rise of studies in creativity in psychology departments in US universities. Many writers (Barron & Harrington, 1981;

Mayer, 1999; Kurtzberg & Amabile, 2001; Lubart, 2001) point to JP Guilford's (1950) presidential address to the American Psychological Association as the beginning of creativity studies, when he stressed the importance of creativity in education, urging scholars to undertake empirical research on creativity. This became more urgent after the launch of Sputnik during the Cold War, when the outcome of the ideological battle between capitalism and communism seemed to depend on the display of military might. Wallner (1995: 265) argues that the 'sensitising effect of Sputnik shock... [stimulated] the actual boom in sociopsychological and sociological creativity studies in the 1960's.'

Creativity research in this context is limited to the type of creativity which is couched within a drive for competitive advantage. Although Milgram (1990: 215) claims that creativity is important because it 'enhances the quality of solutions to life's problems', the search for creative products, persons, places and processes seems to be much more ambitious. Much of the published research is focused on finding a formula for an extraordinary type of creativity that will radically change a particular field, the economy or society, neglecting the 'ordinary' creativity that many workers demonstrate in their daily work. In fact, the automation of manufacturing might be said to have diminished the creativity of workers, but studies aimed at producing large scale, breakthrough creativities do not address this issue.

Critiques of this association between creativity, productivity, and commercial efforts have pointed to the marginalising effects of these creativity discourses and how they serve to control or mollify the populace (Peck, 2005; Gibson & Klocker, 2005; Pang, 2012). Osborne (2005) on the other hand argues that creativity has become doctrine, couched in a type of morality, with potentially 'moronic consequences'. He writes:

'to say that the ethos of creativity simply answers to structural needs would be to ignore the fact that the creativity explosion is also a product of human agency and the machinations of experts and – loosely speaking – of workers of the intellect. It is, then, as much a matter of our governmentality as of ideology. Two kinds of expertise have been especially important in establishing the image of a veritable doctrine of creativity: psychologists and managers. These are really our contemporary ideologues of

creativity.' (Osborne, 2005: 508)

Governments that selectively adopt the creativity discourses that have their basis in free-market enterprise must grapple with their uneasiness around issues of individual freedom, whilst cultures like those based on Confucianism that have traditionally placed an emphasis on harmony and hierarchy must reconcile their desire for 'progress' with the aversion to ideas of aggressive competition. Luckman *et al.* (2009: 71-72) point out that 'Increasingly, researchers have focused on the manner in which theories about creativity in the economy have been authored, distributed and received in divergent ways around the world', arguing that the interest in the movement and mutation of creative economy ideas stems from how they might relate to particular neoliberal governmental strategies that seek to produce more economically productive creative subjects. Kong *et al.* (2006: 176) also point out that the diffusion of ideas about the creative industries does not take place in a vacuum, but in spaces that already have their own politics, international relations and 'particular geographies of formal and informal communications networks' with 'sets of linkages and flows between actors, institutions and industries'. They call for 'subsequent ethnographic research that is intended to follow [their] work [which] will further flesh out the detail and complexity of how various actors... embody new ideas and act upon them in their professional lives within such networks' (Kong *et al.*, 2006: 176). My research aims to fill this ethnographic gap by addressing the interaction between Western and Chinese discourses of creativity in two of Shanghai's creative sectors: software programming and fashion design.

2.4 CREATIVITY IN CHINA

O'Connor and Xin (2006) suggested that China's participation in the creative industries is a progression which follows modernisation projects of the past where successes have been judged in relation to the West's economic superiority. This perpetuates a Western-centric perspective which represents Chinese creative workers as relative latecomers to a new industrial sector. Discussions of 'Chinese creativity' (Ng, 2001; Rudowicz, 2004) are situated on the periphery of a new discipline called 'Creativity Studies', that is centred on Western organisations and institutions, neglecting Chinese origins of the concept.

'Explanations' of why Chinese people are less creative than their Western counterparts tend to reflect the 'West and the Rest' (Hall, 1992) discourse that underlies much stereotyping of the other. Hall (1992: 215) identifies four discursive strategies at work, all of which can be seen in the reasons cited for the lack of creativity amongst the Chinese. The first two: 'idealization; the projection of fantasies of desire and degradation; are evident in Joseph Needham's (2013: 176), remark that 'Chinese civilisation has the overpowering beauty of the wholly other, and only the wholly other can inspire the deepest love and the profoundest desire to learn' and subsequent speculation over the 'Needham Puzzle' (see section 2.3.1). Discussions of 'Chinese creativity', often adopt the next two stereotyping strategies that Hall drew attention to: 'the failure to recognize and respect difference; and the tendency to impose European categories and norms, to see difference through the modes of perception and representation of the West.' Academic studies of Creativity of 'other cultures' for instance neglect to consider differences and subtleties in the translation of the term to 'the other's' language (see section 2.4.5), Instead treating creativity as a universal concept and attributing the word 'Creative' to a broad range of characteristics that apply to a wide variety of people, activities, objects, places, and scales; when it is in fact a term that has been constructed within a specific political and historical milieu (see section (2.2.2). A result is the failure to recognise culturally and geographically specific instances of creativity; and an imposition of Western values upon the understanding of what creativity means.

Hancock (1997: 115) points to 'the claim of lexical impoverishment as control' through which the absence of particular words in a language are taken as evidence that the concept does not exist within that culture, which is then represented as not possessing that quality. Whilst there have not been any outright claims that 'The Chinese do not have a word for creativity,' scholars, such as Ng (2001) and Rudowicz (2004), have mostly failed to disentangle linguistic differences, taking for granted that the English form and its associated meanings is universal. This enables the construction of 'the West' as optimally creative, since it possesses authority on the subject, and 'the rest' as less creative.

Said (2003: xvi) observed that 'Every single empire in its official discourse has said that...it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy.' Orientalist discourses have often served to justify Western intervention. However, China's growing presence in international business, particularly when faced with the increase in recent years in Chinese acquisitions of Western companies, challenges Western hegemony and its moral duty to develop the rest of the world. One strategy to reassert superiority may be to denigrate the achievements of the rising powers by declaring that they still lack certain qualities that the West embodies. In the case of China, proclamations that it lacks creativity, since its growth has so far depended on manufacturing, copying, and acquisitions of existing companies, support the claim that it still lags behind the West.

Whilst it is no longer acceptable to attribute a biological cause for Chinese inferiority (Anderson, 1988:138), dominant creativity discourses may still rely on differences in culture, economics, politics, and the education system to account for the West's alleged superiority. These explanations often suggest that in order for China and the Chinese to become creative and begin the next stage in its development, they need to 'evolve' culturally, economically, politically, and pedagogically to Western levels. Hall (1992:221) argues that this model of the West as 'the prototype, and the measure of social progress' depends on the discursive figures of the 'noble vs ignoble savage,' and of 'rude and refined nations', which 'had been formulated in the discourse of "the West and the Rest".' This racialisation of Chinese people as less creative reveals a theoretical underpinning which according to Hall (1992: 220) ascribes social evolution to material causes; proposes that history (or development) occurs along a single continuum, divided into a series of stages; and that a group's 'mode of subsistence' which corresponds to their 'ideas and institutions, customs, manners, and morals' (Meek, 1976:2) may reveal their present stage of development or progress.

Said (2003) argues that representations are embedded in the language, culture, institutions, and politics of the representer rather than a reflection of the represented. Following from Said's approach, my research proposes that representations of the Chinese and China as being less creative within dominant Western discourses of creativity, is embedded in capitalist anxiety

around innovation, pioneerism, and economic growth, rather than a reflection of Chinese creativity. The reasons given by Westerners for China's lack of creativity appear to undermine its traditions and cultures, yet rather than providing a critique of these beliefs or developing an interpretation of contemporary creativity that builds on their ancient traditions, Chinese scholars have largely internalised this message and tried to address ways through which Chinese people can be more creative (Ng, 2001; Rudowicz & Yue, 2002).

Just as Anderson, (1988:145) demonstrated 'how the microorder of cognitive representation... informed the macrostructure of European hegemony in a thoroughly reciprocal dynamic', this research examines how cognitive representations of Chinese workers as lacking in creativity informs European hegemony. In the following section, I uncover how Chinese understandings of creativity may differ from dominant Western ones by tracing the Chinese lineage of the concept and examining the historical context in which it has been applied before considering in the next section some of the factors that are popularly held accountable for China's creativity shortfall, based largely on Western interpretations. Framed as causes of an endemic problem, these 'rationalisations' urge Chinese workers to consider adapting their culture, abandoning their history, modernising, and westernising so as to fulfil their own desire to become more creative.

2.4.1 ORIGINS OF CREATIVITY IN CHINESE CULTURE

In contrast to Western foundations, the Chinese origins of the concept of creativity, which stem from 道 (Taoist)¹, 佛 (Buddhist), and 儒 (Confucianist) traditions, do not put human creativity in opposition to the divine. In the creation myth that is part of the traditional Chinese canon of fairy tales, the world emerged from an egg which contained a giant named 盘古 (Pangu). When the egg split open, the light objects floated up and became heaven, and heavy objects descended and became the earth. As Pangu grew, so the heavens and earth were pushed apart. When he died, his last breath became the clouds and winds, his eyes became the sun and the moon, his body turned

¹. There are two systems of anglicising Chinese words, the Wades-Giles system, which is used in Taiwan and older English texts, and the Pinyin system, used in Mainland China, Singapore and increasingly in contemporary English texts. In this thesis, I use the Pinyin system and when it first occurs, the simplified character in brackets.

into the mountains, his blood the rivers, his hair the stars, his skin the flora and his sweat the rain. The world was not created by one individual, but by the natural forces of 阴 (yin – light) and 阳 (yang – darkness) that even the deities cannot control (Niu & Sternberg, 2006). There is a balance and indifferent forces in nature that cannot be overcome by people. An act against this balance will be counteracted by nature, which is always moving to maintain this balance. As humans are part of nature, their creativity cannot escape the ‘laws’ of nature.

There has been no explicit separation of morality from traditional Chinese conceptualisations of creativity (Rudowicz & Yue, 2002; Niu & Sternberg, 2006). In Taoist tradition, creativity is the result of movement between the natural forces of yin and yang, and the highest state of creativity comes from the realisation of nothingness, which is achieved through meditation (Feng & English, 1972; Niu & Sternberg, 2006). In Confucianist tradition, creativity is achieved through personal cultivation and effort (Niu & Sternberg, 2006). Both traditions emphasise harmony with nature and in personal relationships over individual expression. For instance, portrayals of the 君子 (Junzi - gentlemen) verbally sparring in ad-lib poetry contests is a popular device used by directors of Chinese period films to illustrate the congeniality and sophistication of the hero – the message being that a hero’s courage must be accompanied by refinement.

Although there were numerous inventions that led to improvement in agriculture and the development of commerce in pre-modern China (c. 221 BC to 1800 AD) (Elvin, 1973; Needham & Ronan, 1978; Tang, 1979; Chao, 1986), this did not result in a push for creativity that parallels the Age of Reason in Europe. This is often referred to as the ‘Needham Puzzle’, named after the sinologist who suggested that the lack of an industrial revolution in China is due to the absence of mercantilist development. Although there is evidence that something resembling a market economy did exist in ancient China (pre 246 BC) (Chao, 1986), many authors eagerly attribute blame for the Needham Puzzle to unfavourable economic climates of the past (Lin, 1995; Temple, 2002; Wen, 2011). Deng (2003) accounts for this absence by claiming that the powerful peasantry had an interest in maintaining agricultural dominance in the economy at the expense of industry. Whilst these arguments appear plausible,

they rely on the questionable assumption that invention depends on mercantile dominance. They also fail to explain how the 四大发明 (Four Great Inventions) of paper, printing, gunpowder, and the compass, came about despite the absence of mercantilism.

Lin (1995) proposes another reason for which one can still find evidence in contemporary China. He argues that talented people in imperial China had their energies diverted to completion of the civil services exams, leaving no time for the pursuit of personal intellectual interests, unlike the great scientists of the West whose radical discoveries led to the invention of new technologies. These imperial exams required scholars to memorise the 431,286 characters in the Confucian classics, as well as study the commentaries, philosophical, historical, and literary works. Having passed the exams, their time would then be taken up by official duties and pressure from their family to rise up the ranks. Subordination to the texts and imperial dictate reduced opportunities for innovation. This appears the most plausible hypothesis given the continued importance of duty towards one's family in modern Chinese culture. A talented person who refuses to take the imperial exams in order to pursue his own interests would have been considered selfish as Confucian morality requires that this person brings honour to the family by gaining a high position in the imperial court, as a matter of gratitude to his ancestors for bringing him into existence (Ho & Ho, 2008; Rudowicz, 2004). Zuo (1991: 105-6) brings these arguments together, saying that:

'Lack of development in capitalism means a lack of industrialisation. For hundreds of years China has remained primarily agricultural, with a low level of economic production and a concomitant underdevelopment in the natural sciences, which has left the society vulnerable to nature in agricultural production. This vulnerability is associated with reliance on supernatural powers for explanations and solutions. The backward technology was also in line with an overall low level of education. Particularly in the imperial era, this meant not only that only a small proportion of the population received an education but also that the natural sciences were neglected. The curriculum consisted mainly of Confucian ethics, literature, and writing skills.

Competition among prebendary and degree-hunting literati was concentrated on getting into the ruling stratum.'

In contrast, Wen (2011) attributes the technological creativity of the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279) to the flourishing of trade and commerce, and the humility of its rulers at the time. He argues that in later periods, the Chinese acquired a sense of superiority and refused to learn from foreigners. Furthermore, increased land obtained through territorial conquests, which led to people using more land-intensive rather than labour-intensive industries, did not provide motivation to pursue technological advancements.

In pondering the Needham Puzzle, these scholars highlight the contemporary Chinese anxiety surrounding the fall of a great civilisation and the defeat against the West. This humiliation, used by the government as a mobilising strategy through the modern Chinese press and curriculum, often leads Chinese people to ask why they have gone from being one of the greatest civilisations in the history of the world to one that has been 'bullied' by the Western powers (Cohen, 2002). Although contemporary China now possesses great economic and military power, the idea of being 'a victim' of Western imperialism serves the interests of the government and the populace because it helps to justify unpopular policies and ways of conducting business (Gries, 2003).

Scholars who accept that China lacked creativity after the Song Dynasty perpetuate a narrow discourse of creativity focused on commercial activity. Each subsequent dynasty after the Song contributed advancements in medicine, astronomy, architecture and the arts, (Temple & Needham, 1986) but these appear to have been largely overlooked. Astronomy, the calendar, medicine and architecture, acupuncture, pulse-feeling diagnosis, gynecology, obstetrics and the preservation of corpses are amongst the discoveries made during the Liao Dynasties (916-1125), whilst the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) made progress in architecture and literature flourished during this time. Observatories were founded during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Despite this, the greater part of the academic literature appears to focus on addressing prima facie claims about Chinese creativity that form the basis of the Needham Puzzle. My concern is why such later instances of creativity

have not been considered in the analyses of China's descent from being a great civilisation.

2.4.2 CREATIVITY IN MAOIST CHINA

Some scholars have tried to draw a correlation between political factors and individual creativity in an attempt to argue that repressive regimes inhibit creativity (Simonton, 1975; Andersson, 1985). However, the events of the Mao era, such as the Hundred Flowers Movement and the Great Leap Forward, have names that denote growth, innovation, and creativity even though repression during this time is well known. It appears that this was the first time in the modern era that the Chinese government engaged in its own creativity discourse to mobilise the masses. In this section, I discuss how this mobilisation unfolded.

Rahman (1993) claims that Mao facilitated China's development by skilfully appealing to the creative spirit of the people rather than highlighting their poverty. He argues that Mao's call to the Red Guards to 'break paths unexplored and scale heights yet unclimbed' (Rahman, 1993: 175) was a positive and challenging invocation resulting in a sustained process of self-reliant development of China, in the course of which material poverty of the people was also reduced significantly. Yet Rahman fails to mention the famine that was brought about by the Great Leap Forward. Citing Turner (1969), Yang (2000) argues that the liminality of the Cultural Revolution fostered Chinese creativity as 'the suspension of normal structural constraints'... allowed for greater freedom, egalitarianism, communion, and creativity amongst the Red Guards, who traveled to the countryside during the Great Linkup to work amongst the peasants and demonstrate that they fully embraced communism and the revolutionary class struggle. As an example of creativity, Yang notes their resourcefulness in surviving these journeys, which he argues stimulated their imaginations and generated new ways of thinking that resulted from the 'unprecedented opportunities of seeing the world' (Yang, 2000: 394). Here the themes of freedom, individuality, and progress become subsumed in Chinese discourses of creativity, but the competitive ideal remained excluded in favour of collectivism.

Although Yang (2000: 384) recognises that 'the freedom of liminality, when

carried to an extreme, may lead to despotism, overbureaucratisation, or structural rigidity', he chooses to focus on the emotionally uplifting aspects of the Cultural Revolution. Traditionally, scholars writing about this period are much more critical of this aspect of China's history, preferring to highlight the negative effects on creativity and portraying the Red Guards as mindless youths who were easily manipulated (Tsou, 1969). The anti-intellectual acts of the Red Guards and the persecution of artists whose works were considered bourgeois or anti-socialist indicate that the celebration of creativity was limited to that which was in line with official policy. In principle, the Cultural Revolution encouraged people to be expressive and speak out against the authorities, but fear and suspicion amongst the citizenry led to a culture of self-censorship. Tsou (1969) argues that this is because the Cultural Revolution was in fact Mao's anti-individual, anti-capitalist response to the Great Leap Forward, a manipulation by the supreme leader of the proletariat against the establishment.

According to the dominant Western creativity discourses, which advocate freedom, individuality, and diversity for the benefit of creativity, the destruction of artifacts from the past, persecution of religious followers, and strict control over cultural production should have stymied creativity during the Mao era. However, propaganda posters (figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) are sometimes taken as a testament to the widespread creativity of the time (Evans & Donald, 1999; Cushing & Tompkins, 2007).

Just as the application of particular creativity discourses in contemporary times serves to promote the interests of Western ideals (Florida, 2003) the creativity of the Mao era is seen to have fed into the imagination of the people for a communist ideal (Yang, 2000). In this case, creativity is not, as contemporary psychologists and management experts propose (Olssen & Peters, 2005), a result or a cause of free market dynamics, but a tool applied to mass mobilisation.

毛主席給我們的幸福生活

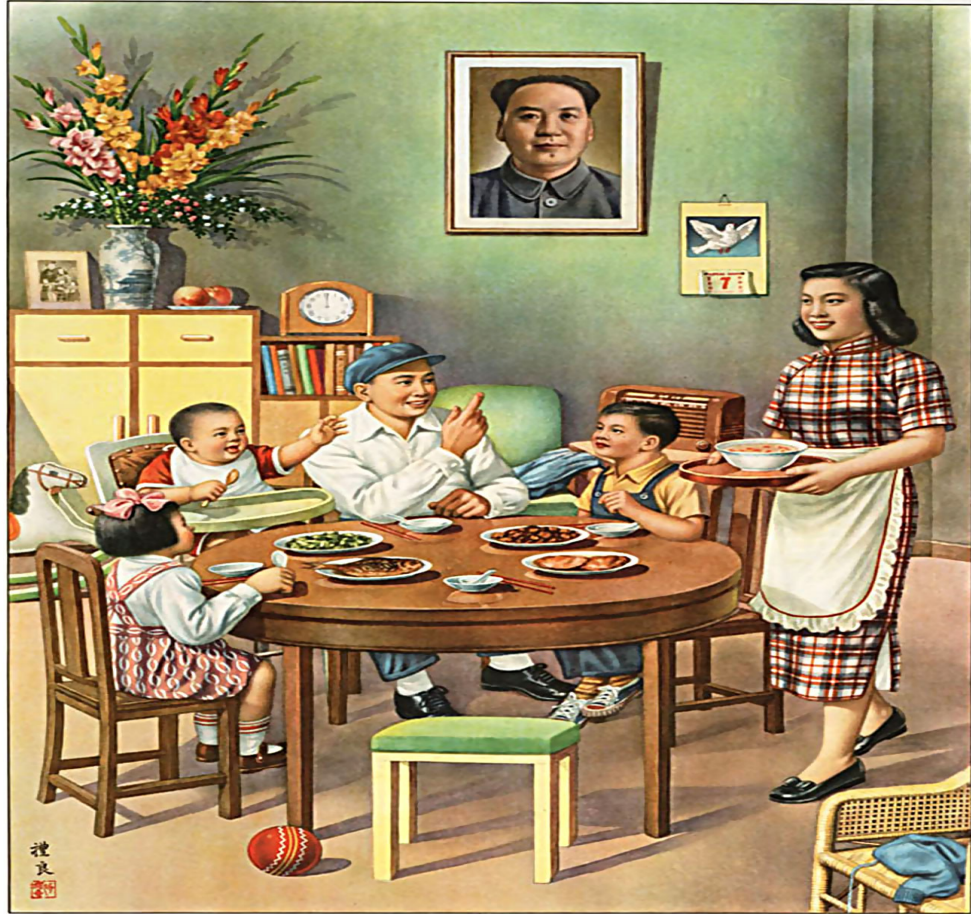


Figure 2.1 Mao Gave Us Our Happy Life

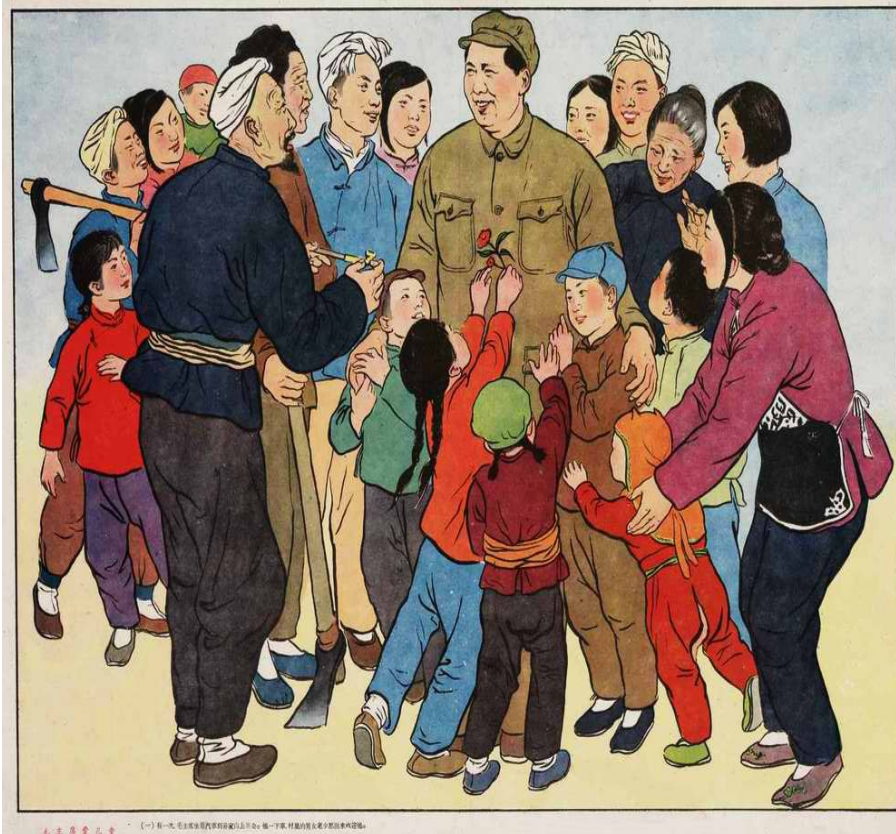


Figure 2.2 Mao Loves Children



Figure 2.3 Happy Faces Amidst A Raging Storm

As China gradually opened up to the West in the post-Mao era, it also steadily adopted some of the meanings and associations attached to the concept of creativity in dominant Western discourses, particularly its use for commercial

benefit. Even the creativity of the Mao era is now being drawn upon by artists and media professionals who seek to mystify the 'Red Economy' despite its anti-capitalist messages, to exploit its cultural value for commercial purposes. Although it may be ironic that creative artifacts from the Mao era have been subsumed within the current market economy, Jing (2006) argues that it allows the Chinese to reconcile their past with their present participation in globalisation. She maintains that 'their appropriation illustrates the potential for creativity, not only in the business strategies of commercial culture, but also in the social imagination and design for a new China' (Jing, 2006: 360).

2.4.3 CREATIVITY DISCOURSES POST MAO

Mao died in 1976, but it was not until two years later, during the 'Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee' that the Party officially adopted a policy of reform and opening up. Although 'innovation and creativity were rarely used as strategic terminologies in the most important official documents' (Pang & Plucker, 2012: 248), some of the scholarly writing on China's creative industries traces its inception to this point in time (O'Connor & Xin, 2006; Pang, 2012; Keane, 2013), when the Chinese government started 'The reform of the cultural system' (Keane, 2013:29). In these analyses, culture is embedded within the creative industry discourses, although some tension exists between the two concepts (O'Connor & Xin, 2006). Pang (2012) marked a shift from culture as political instrument to culture as a form of entertainment and consumption at this juncture, whilst Keane (2013) suggests that the use of the term 'culture' rather than 'creativity' allows for greater political control, as it does not carry the same implications of individualism, dogmatism, and rebellion against authority. He observed that: 'the potential for critical protests to emerge from within artistic and intellectual communities is never far from the minds of policy makers.' and focuses his discussions of Chinese creativity on cultural development instead, distinguishing it from technological innovation. O'Connor and Xin (2006) argue that the change in terminology from "cultural" to "creative" 'allows precisely the right shift in the range of connotations available for the production of cultural commodities. It allows a renegotiation of the divisions of responsibility from a public sector dominated, ideologically and politically charged 'culture' to a more private sector, market-led field of leisure and entertainment consumption.'

Development of China's creative industries has also been presented as an economic necessity and a prerequisite for catching up with the West (Hutton & Desai, 2007). The transition from manufacturing to service economy is believed to be vital, especially given rising labour costs. Keane (2013:64) presents a somewhat Eurocentric model in the 'Cultural Innovation Timeline' which charts the stages in the 'catch up' strategies of Chinese organisations. Divided into six stages: standardised production, imitation, collaboration, trade, clusters, and creative communities; he argues that 'while many of China's arts, media, design and cultural businesses are moving up the value chain, most policies are still directed at low-value segments, which [can be] characterize[d] as standardized production and imitation...' Keane (2013) points to 2004 as the year in which the creative industries arrived in China, when Li Wuwei, then Research Director of the Industrial Economics Unit at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences proposed that it should be listed as one of the strategic pillar industries in Shanghai's new round of development (Li, 2011). The model followed the ones adopted in the UK, US, Singapore, and Hong Kong, where creative industries are defined as: 'Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'(DCMS, 1998:4). Li's (2011: 100-101) measure of China's creative success is set against the standards of the West as he claims that, 'Internationally, creative industries have entered the creative economy phase; indeed, many nations are already at the doorstep of the creative society. Currently, China is evolving from creative industries to the creative economy... locked in the industrial phase'. His ambition for China's creative industries is for them to evolve into a creative economy and ultimately a 'creative society' which is modelled on Florida's creative class (2002). Keane (2011: ix) argues that 'creativity society' is a 'more specific indicator of cultural progress than harmonious society', but does not explain this notion of 'cultural progress'.

As China's economic engagement with the West has seen a myriad of contradictory representations in relation to the West as threat or opportunity, and subaltern or world power, the cultural and creative economy discourses also allow the Chinese government to assuage Western anxiety about its global ambitions by presenting this 'soft power' as an alternative to colonial and imperialist ways of exerting influence internationally (Wang, 2008).

Criticisms from the largely Western media, particularly regarding China's human rights record and intolerance of political critics are often lamented by Chinese nationals as a failure to understand China (Ma, 2007). Soft power, in the form of cultural exports, is believed to help present a more benevolent image. The Confucius Institutes which have been set up around the world to promote the learning of Chinese language and culture are an attempt to bring about a greater understanding. Pang and Plucker (2013) draw attention to the rise in words related to innovation and creativity in presidential reports from 1992 to 2007 and in Five Year Plans from 1991 to 2011. The 12th Five Year Plan, released in 2011 (Casey & Koleski, 2011), called for greater indigenous innovation. Although its main focus is on scientific development, it also calls for the encouragement of 'cultural production to increase China's soft power' – 提升国家软实力 (Ti Sheng Guo Jia Ruan Shi Li) as one of its major objectives.

However, Keane (2006:294) has argued that, 'there is also a need to draw upon the emerging talent base' and that 'creative processes need to be deeply embedded in the education system' in order for China to address more deep-seated problems arising from political control and intellectual property violations. In their analysis of China's recent economic, social, and education policies to promote innovation and creativity, Pang and Plucker (2013) trace the beginnings of creativity as part of educational reforms to 2001, when the 10th Five Year Plan called for educational policies that 'Cultivate Students' spirit of creativity', which in the 12th Five year Plan, was extended to: 'Getting innovative with educational methods, highlighting the development of students' scientific spirit, creative thinking and innovation abilities.' From 2004 onwards, national education policies for developing creativity were implemented at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, albeit with an emphasis on science and technology. The aims of these policies were to encourage independent thinking, creative, and practical abilities amongst students through various changes in areas including instructional methodology, learning environments, and extracurricular activities. However, despite these efforts, there remains strong resistance against these top down policies amongst educators for reasons that will be teased out in the next section and in the empirical chapters.

2.5 CHINA'S PERCEIVED CREATIVITY

INHIBITORS

'Explanations' for China's creativity shortfall rely firstly on Western centric creativity discourses that endorse particular behaviours associated with creative individuals, and secondly on representations of Chinese people as docile and obedient relative to westerners. Having previously discussed the western foundations of the meanings associated with creativity, this section elucidates some of the reasons that are said to account for why China is less creative than the West. Namely macro objectives of past and present governments that have created a culture of reverence and a submissive population whose creativity is stifled. Wan (2015: 457) pointed to 'records describing how Feudal emperors used norm to legitimize and stabilize their authority early back to the Warring States (third century BC–first century BC)' as evidence of 'government's practices and policies designed to engender people's internalized desire to adhere to social norm.' A form of Foucauldian governmentality has thus existed in China since its rulers first 'used a series of population policies, spatial designing approaches and philosophies to maintain a hierarchical social order, [and] cultivated citizens to respect the social order and regulate themselves' (Wan, 2015: 456). These governing technologies have had an enduring impact on the Chinese across different geographies and educational settings (Wu & Singh, 2004), as well economic systems and political milieus (Rofel, 1992). The rulers in China are thought to have so successfully shaped collective subjectivities that contemporary Chinese workers and students are represented in the creativity discourses as being too conformist and fearful of their individuality to produce truly creative ideas. In the following sub-sections, I will examine some of these subjectifying forces.

2.5.1 CULTURAL FACTORS

In this section, I examine the argument that Chinese hierarchical structures inhibit creativity. I propose that arguments concerning hierarchical aspects of Chinese culture are based on a particular understanding of creativity that overrates divergence and downplays skill development.

The connection between creativity and rebellion against authority in dominant Western discourses suggest that being submissive and agreeable somehow

makes individuals less creative (Ng, 2001; Kim, 2004). In a study of creativity through an ethno-psychological approach, Therivel (1995) argues that societies ruled for long periods of time under a single, unified source of power produce insular personalities, as the knowledge that there is no escape from the absolute ruler means they must not exhibit unhappiness or a desire to revolt. Therivel (1995: 180) also claims that 'Insular people are less creative because they are subject to a single truth linked intrinsically to one single power'. Referencing Nelson (1986), he points out that patience, dissimulation, silence, and accommodation are strongly engraved in the mental scripts of these 'insular' people. He proposes that since each power holder in such a society has a tyrant above him or her in a chain that leads eventually to the ultimate power holder – whose position is tenuous due to the competition for that power – it becomes necessary to extol the virtues of loyalty, knowing one's place, and complete obedience and love. The family becomes the most important source of support for the individual in a society where competition for the authoritarian's approval determines one's continued existence. The patriarch, especially, requires total fidelity and obedience from his family to ensure the family's survival. The demand for absolute obedience to tradition thus represses the new and eradicates the need for the existing societal structure to adapt to innovation; it also inhibits creativity.

Many scholars have effectively reconceptualised attributes that are traditionally valued as positive character traits by the Chinese into defects that inhibit creativity (Nelson, 1986; Therivel, 1995; Ng, 2001; Kim, 2004). Within these discourses, creativity is portrayed as an aggressive and individualistic force, which cannot flourish under conditions where divergence from authority and non-conformity is not tolerated. Kim (2004: 74), for example, uses Chen and Chung's (1994) definition of Confucian teaching to include an emphasis on education, family system, hierarchical relationships, and benevolence, and then goes on to explain in detail why each of these principles is detrimental to individual creativity. He argues, for instance, that 'belief in hard work and a devaluing of play' (Kim (2004: 75) stifles imagination and hence, creativity. Kim (2004: 76) also claims that 'Filial piety and strict obedience in a family reduce autonomy and independence, discourage divergence, and thus, inhibit creativity', and that the 'principle of benevolence has brought about negative consequences to creativity due to suppression of emotion, minimisation of

verbal interaction, and conformity' (Kim (2004: 77). Ng (2001) devoted an entire book to 'explaining' **Why Asians are Less Creative than Westerners** because of their culture, psychological make-up, and their approach towards interpersonal interactions. Missing from the literature is an exploration into the possibility that conformists channel their creative energies in more subtle, private ways that do not involve ostensible threats to the norms.

Whilst Confucianism does emphasise conformity, and generally the Chinese do appear quieter and less forthright in their actions relative to Westerners, these claims that it inhibits creativity appears to be built upon a very narrow definition of what it means to be creative. Furthermore, there are many instances of introverted, outwardly conforming cultures whose creativity is taken for granted; the British for instance are stereotyped as being 'stiff upper lipped', yet their creativity is not disputed on that basis. In using Confucianism to account for their lack of creativity, particularly towards innovation, the Chinese are often treated as a one-dimensional, homogeneous race of people who are somewhat passive recipients of culture.

Another aspect of Chinese culture that is perceived to inhibit creativity, particularly in business, is 关系 (Guanxi), a system of personal connections that underpins many business and professional relationships. Traditional Chinese approaches to Guanxi value the harmony of the relationship over competition, and this emphasis on harmony may be detrimental to the development of individual creativity, not just because it limits self-expression, but also because those without Guanxi may not have the opportunity to prove their creativity. The focus on individuality in dominant creativity discourses is at odds with Guanxi, which emphasises relationships. However, more recent studies (see for example Chen, 2009) have found that creative performance in project teams is heightened when intra-team Guanxi networks are fostered. Chen (2009: 276) proposes that project managers should 'be aware that Chinese culture regards people as members of colonies, not as individuals, so building a cohesive project team through Guanxi networks can be achieved by a closer social interaction, feeling and trust between team members'. Phan *et al.* (2010) argue that Guanxi is beneficial because of the social obligations tied to business transactions. Despite this, there is an apprehensive approach to Guanxi where creativity is considered in terms of entrepreneurship and

business innovation. Li and Atuahene-Gima (2001), for example, believe that in China, smooth transactions with the bureaucracy are too dependent on having contacts with party cadres working in the right departments.

The criticism that Chinese culture inhibits creativity can be seen as distaste for risk aversion and conformity. Obedience to authority, piety, conformity, the emphasis on harmonious relationships, and Guanxi are all characteristics of Chinese culture that seem contrary to risk taking behaviours as any deviance could lead to the ostracism of the individual. Dominant Western discourses of creativity celebrate risk taking in the belief it can lead to substantial rewards (Beck, 1992; Dewett, 2007); in doing so, risk aversion becomes associated with non-creativity. However, a consideration of ways in which exploration, discovery, and imagination can take place without risk taking might reveal that its association with creativity is a tenuous one.

2.5.2 ECONOMIC SYSTEM

China's economic rise to its current status as a world economic power could be said to have begun when it launched its Open Door Policy in 1978, welcoming foreign direct investment from the West (Chen *et al.*, 1995). This was partly due to a desire to benefit from Western innovations. Article Five of the Sino Foreign Equity Joint Venture Law (Communist Party of China, 1979) insisted that advanced technology and equipment that suit China's needs must be used in foreign joint ventures, and companies that intentionally use backward technology and equipment will be liable for losses. As the government gradually relaxed its ownership laws over the decades, a growing number of foreign investors who were attracted by cheap labour established operations in the coastal trading zones, and transformed China into 'The World's Factory' (Chen *et al.* 1995). As these coastal trading zones become more affluent and labour costs rise, it has become more expensive for manufacturers to run their factories there and many are moving inland or to other parts of the world such as South East Asia and Africa. As a result, critics argue that China needs to become more innovative in order to sustain economic growth (Simon & Rehn, 1988; Krugman, 1994; Keane, 2003; Gassmann & Han, 2004). Krugman (1994) goes so far as to claim that China's economic power is an illusion, since it is a result of the mobilisation of resources rather than an efficient use of technology. Growth, he argues,

needs to be measured per unit of input, such as machinery, capital, and labour, and not per capita.

The body of literature post-1978 from the management field addressing the lack of creativity among Chinese people, which comes mainly from Western academia, points predominantly to concerns that China will remain stuck in the low technology industries (Lockett, 1988; Shelton & Adams, 1990; Martinsons & Hempel, 1995; Martinsons & Martinsons, 1996). The concepts of 父母官 (fu mu guan - parental government), 单位 (dan wei - work unit), and 大锅饭 (da guo fan - iron rice bowl), which were founded before liberalisation in 1978, are often used to explain particular mentalities amongst Chinese workers that foreign managers find frustrating (Chen *et al.*, 1995). Some foreign expatriates parody the 'Four Modernisations' (agriculture, industry, defense, and technology), with their own four M's: 麻烦 (ma fan - troublesome), 没有 (mei you – we don't have it), 没办法 (mei ban fa – we cannot do anything about it), and 没关系 (mei guan xi – it doesn't matter) to illustrate the apathy of the Chinese workers thought to stem from the Mao era (Chen *et al.*, 1995). Under Mao, the Chinese government put harsh penalties on mistakes and provided few rewards for good work, so workers were averse to risk taking (Redding, 1980; Lockett, 1988; Simon & Rehn, 1988). In a study of the Shanghai semiconductor industry for example, Simon and Rehn (1988) claim that the inefficiency of the communist system of production is caused by the bureaucratic structure of state planning, which provided no financial incentives for factory workers to acquire new skills and made managers reluctant to train their staff for fear that they might be seconded to other operations. Arguments that a lack of rewards and financial incentives led to an uncreative workforce are difficult to reconcile with popular conceptualisations of creative people as intrinsically motivated (Amabile, 1996), yet they are accepted within this body of literature as reasons for the lack of creativity amongst Chinese people. Moreover, the reluctance to train employees in case they are seconded away may always apply in present times to employees who seek better opportunities and pay in competing companies.

The iron rice bowl is also seen by some scholars to have provided excessive job and wage security, coddling the labour force to the extent that their resultant laziness and complacency slowed economic growth (Howard, 1991).

According to these arguments, the compliance of the workers under the Chinese nanny state makes them non-compliant under expatriate managers. Human Resource Management (HRM) specialists in China are presently concerned with turning the workers' danwei mind set into something more suited to the global market (Warner, 2004; Ong, 2006), where the emphasis on acquiring market share is associated with a more entrepreneurial, innovative spirit.

The effects of state control in the past are also seen to be responsible for inhibiting Chinese business creativity (Perkins, 1988) and there remains a perception that businesses in China are ineffective in meeting consumer demand (Midler, 2010). Under the command economy of the Mao era, the state dictated consumption and production. Knowledge of the market was concentrated at the top of the hierarchy where central planners decided on the best way to allocate resources and set production quotas for the work units (Perkins, 1988) who were thought to have merely followed orders, along with consumers who were told what to buy. Under this centralised, top-down system of economic planning, communication flows were obstructed by bureaucratic systems of reporting with appointed cadres at each end of work units who acted as gatekeepers. Capitalism, in contrast, is regarded by some theorists as an ongoing process of creative discovery (Kirzner, 1997) which presents a milieu in which market participants can take advantage of newly discovered or created possibilities (Felice, 2000). As Chinese manufacturers were first told what to produce by the state, then by the foreign investors, it becomes easy to envision them and their workers as part of the production machinery, lacking in agency or self-determinism, particularly as economic analyses rarely present the 'human face' of market forces. As their sentience is taken out of the economic discourse, so is the creativity of the workers and business people. These discourses of China's transformation contribute to the representation of Chinese people as unthinking, uncreative production line workers who suddenly snapped out of a subsistence lifestyle to participate in a dynamic world economy as consumers and competitors.

This transformation of the representation of Chinese citizens from workers to consumers happened gradually, as China's technology caught up and foreign joint venture partnerships decreased from 90% of FDI projects in 1979 to less

than 20% by 1990 (Wu, 2000). As China's domestic market began to open up to the sale of imports in the 1980s, the Chinese people's purchasing power turned them into an untapped market for Western products. Where indigenous manufacturers previously had almost no competition, they now had to improve the quality of their products, lower production costs and increase variety to keep their operations viable. In becoming competitors and consumers of Western products and services, the Chinese were also subsumed into the creativity discourses of the West, although this was accompanied by initial concerns about 'the rise of a bourgeois ideology through the growth of a new capitalist class of exporters' (Kamath, 1994: 422).

2.5.3 POLITICAL SYSTEM

China's perceived lack of creativity is also sometimes attributed to its political ideology (Chen *et al.*, 1995; Therivel, 1995; Keane, 2007). State paternalism in East Asian countries is often blamed for their workers' perceived lack of creativity in comparison to the West (Ng, 2001; Ho & Ho, 2008), and China is no exception. In addition to the ideological authoritarianism of the Chinese government, which imposes strict censorship laws that limit diversity, paternalistic policies in East Asia are generally seen as being a disincentive for creativity (Lee & Lim, 2004). The Chinese government's concerns about territorial integrity and the ideological commitment of its people (Chen *et al.*, 1995), which moves them to enforce tight controls on the media, is at odds with the access to diversity that is seen in the dominant Western creativity discourses as crucial to the generation of creative ideas. Yet 'Schumpeter's Gale', or creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1950; Cowen, 2002), which addresses how invention leads to the destruction of existing social structures, indicates a reason for the government's caution in embracing creativity wholeheartedly. Keane (2007: 22) points out that government structures designed to 'regulate national development, manage populations and normalise habits of thought' are often held accountable for China's stalled innovations processes relative to the West. Individual creativity, from which the innovative spirit is thought to stem, seems to be incompatible with a culture that demands loyalty, and in which people are trained from a young age to conform through the development of a highly sensitive sense of pride. Landes (2006: 11) argues that China's cultural triumphalism has made it a very bad learner and that the 'rejection of the strange and foreign was the more anxious

for the very force of arrogance that justified it'.

2.5.4 EDUCATION

The education system is one of the earliest experiences of integration into state institutions. In the command economy, Chinese citizens could seamlessly move from formal education into a work unit provided by the state under communist rule, where paternalistic structures remained similar to those of the educational settings. In the post-liberalisation period, however, Chinese students may have difficulty adapting to workplaces that call for more independence from their employees. The education system has been slow to promote the type of individuality or critical thinking considered a threat to classroom order and hierarchical structures inherent to Confucian based cultures, but deemed necessary for personal creativity.

The Chinese education system is often treated both as evidence and cause for Chinese workers' lack of creativity (Martinsons & Martinsons, 1996; Chan, 1996). In opposition to ideas that exemplary teachers who encourage student independence play a key role in fostering the latter's creativity (Chambers, 1973), Chinese teachers tend to be portrayed as strict, authoritarian figures who impose the curriculum on the class (Hofstede, 1986). Critics of Chinese educational institutions commonly perpetuate an image of students as rote learners who regurgitate knowledge imparted by authoritative teachers, without any independent thinking, so as to pass standardised tests (Chan, 1996). The image constructed is of overly paranoid parents who put pressure on children as young as three (Wingrove, 1993) to sit formal entrance exams for admission to the right kindergarten, because they believe it will set the course for their entire future. The widespread representation of Chinese parents as pushy, authoritative figures who pressure their children to invest more time in getting better grades at the expense of extra-curricular activities (Huntsinger *et al.*, 1998; Li, 2009) reached a climax in the popular Western media in 2011 with the publication of Harvard law professor Amy Chua's book on Asian Parenting, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Hsieh, 2011). Whilst the focus on academic success pushes Chinese students to achieve better grades than their peers in other countries and cultures (Salili *et al.*, 2001), there is also an implication that a general mediocrity results from a lack of intrinsic motivation. Chou (1996), for instance, argues that excessive academic pressure in the

Chinese education system could deprive society of a first rate musician and instead create a surplus of third or fourth rate engineers and accountants.

In analysing the relative lack of creativity in Confucian based societies in comparison to the West, some scholars choose to highlight the incompatibility between collectivist values and particular traits associated with creative personalities (Chan, 1996; Li, 2002; Rudowicz & Yue, 2002). For instance, Chan (1996) claims that originality, fluency and flexibility are not emphasised in the Chinese education system as they are not valued within the culture. Nevertheless, a strong sense of motivation for academic success tends to come from a desire to please the community or family rather than for individual glory (Li, 2002). Rudowicz and Yue (2002) go so far as to imply that there is a general acceptance by the Chinese that creativity is not compatible with the 'Chinese personality'. Their survey of 451 Chinese university students from Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Taipei found that personality traits like discipline or dutifulness, and obedience or social acceptance are valued above intellectual abilities and social style, whilst traits associated with creativity, such as being innovative or dynamic, are strongly correlated to what participants identified as Western. Niu and Sternberg (2003) suggest that Chinese teachers associate creative children with socially undesirable traits such as arrogance, attention-seeking behaviour, being opinionated, rebelliousness, and self-centredness, which might be indicative of an unwillingness to give students autonomy in Chinese classrooms. It thus appears from these findings that Chinese teachers also associate creativity with individualism, which these scholars suggest is frowned upon in Chinese society. However, in a study of Chinese students' attitudes towards learning, Li (2002) refers to the concept of 好學心 (Hao Xue Xin - Heart and Mind for wanting to learn), whereby learning has to do with aspirations towards sage-like perfection, which is an individualistic endeavour.

Scholars who have challenged the passive learner representation of Chinese students (Kember, 2000; Cooper, 2004) argue that rote learning is not incompatible with deeper forms of learning, as memorisation does not preclude understanding. Kember (2000) found that Asian students can and do adjust to active forms of learning if given the opportunity. Even in mainland China, students have the intention both to understand and to memorise (Marton *et al.*,

1996). Kember (2000) argues it would be better to characterise learning approaches as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy of deep and surface approaches. The representation of Chinese students as passive, inadaptably regurgitators of information contributes to the representation of Chinese workers who have been through the education system as uncreative automatons, who are extrinsically motivated by status and pay rather than their work (Jackson & Bak, 1998; Luthans *et al.*, 2005). However, Kember's (2000) studies of Chinese students show that although students are commonly thought to be motivated by exam scores, they are also aware of career implications and want their subjects to be interesting. Some (Ho, 1981; Stevenson & Lee, 1996; Salili *et al.*, 1996) have argued that Chinese people are often perceived to be less creative from a Western perspective because their strong sense of collectivism means they often see their academic success as a source of pride for the family and social group and they are generally thought to place a strong value on education for social advancement although the same could also be said about Westerners without this sense of collectivism. As Banaji (2011) argues, the positioning of academic effort in opposition to creativity is a caricature that mobilises parental concerns around a false dichotomy of play and real learning, and is deeply problematic for students' overall learning.

2.5.5 DISCUSSION

Given these assessments of Chinese creativity, it appears that the key factors –political, economic, institutional and cultural – are dependent on particular concepts of creativity that are tied to the Western liberal democratic ideals of individualism, diversity, and capitalist motives of economic growth, and profit. Westerners' judgements on Chinese creativity could be construed as a reflection of anxiety about threats to their economic supremacy and the need for innovation as well as political ideology.

A more serious consideration is the infantilisation carried out in the process of labelling a culture non-creative (Ericsson, 2003). The design of many studies into Chinese creativity and their language (Niu & Sternberg, 2003; Rudowicz & Yue, 2002) tends to point to submissive attitudes among participants. The most common evidence cited for this lack of creativity is that people's aspirations are dictated by a higher authority. This labelling process by

scholars is also common amongst managers in organisations where the 'ones to be enculturated do not share the views of the ones already enculturated' (Ericsson, 2003: 14). The cultural 'recipients' are treated by those in authority as children who must be taught how to be good participating members of the global economy, and not as grown up individuals capable of self-learning. This becomes self-fulfilling as the recipient culture willingly adopts this analysis due to evidence in the form of innovative products, new ideas and development models that have originated in the West dominating their markets and influencing their social structures (Ericsson, 2003). History, wealth, and access to raw materials are taken not as factors that contribute to Western superiority in innovation, but as evidence of this superiority. Where enterprising behaviour from the recipient culture is displayed, such as in souvenir markets where vendors find various ways of coaxing a higher price out of Western tourists, it is treated with contempt and seen as unfair and dishonest. Orientalist discourse (Said, 2003) applies in these interpretations that represent Chinese people as less creative in relation to Westerners, positioning the latter as the standard to which Chinese workers must aspire to.

Ericsson (2003) and Osborne (2003) reject contemporary Western creativity discourses as cosmetic attempts by managers and policy makers to improve the performance of workers. Other scholars, such as Gibson and Klocker (2005) and Peck (2005), prefer to point to other forms of creativity ignored in business culture and government policies aimed at promoting creative industries. In this thesis, I propose that both these arguments hold true, and that a framework encompassing the various meanings associated with the concept would enable a better understanding of how creativity is used in relation to the mobilisation of the global workforce, particularly in China.

When scholars (Cusumano & Kemerer, 1990; Ng, 2001; Tangchuang, 2002) point out the general lack of creativity in cultures in the developing world they unquestionably take the stand that creativity and entrepreneurship are intrinsically good, present day necessities. However, as Ericsson (2003) argues, they are a mythological expression guided more by 'objectivated common sense' than by theoretical considerations. Creativity is treated by the experts (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) as an individual phenomenon, although it is socially constructed and transformed into a virtue

within dominant Western discourses. Within this transformation lies a contradiction that makes a case for individual uniqueness which also tries to persuade consumers to pursue the same material aspirations. In consumer cultures where participants are persuaded to acquire the same products and pursue the same ideals and narrow definitions of success are based on material wealth, originality has given way to consumer demand as the defining factor for creativity (Horn & Salvendy, 2006; Yeh & Lin, 2011; Zeng & Chen, 2013). Ericsson (2003: 10) argues that 'creativity and entrepreneurship...are man made variable constructions that are ossified into un-variable givens by socialisation and institutionalisation. As such they are closed for interpretation, as well as for [criticism]'. This hints at the way in which capitalist discourses of creativity have seeped unchallenged, into the behaviours and beliefs of participants in particular market economies.

If China's creativity is deemed lesser because its people's lives and aspirations are dictated by their elders, managers, and governments, then this warrants consideration of the extent to which the lives of people in Western societies are self-determined, since their claim to greater creativity seems to depend on this premise. The preoccupation with consumerism in Western markets has lingered well beyond the Cold War, when free market ideals presented 'consumer sovereignty' (Hutt, 1940) as characteristic of a liberal, progressive society, as opposed to command economies where limited consumer choice was portrayed by Western economists as something akin to repression (Money & Colton, 2000). The rise of 'lifestyle marketing' (Englis & Solomon, 1995), however, where consumers are persuaded through ubiquitous advertising to acquire particular products in order to assert their identities, begs the question of whether consumers' choices originate authentically from their own desires and needs rather than from sophisticated advertising campaigns. To this extent, the individuality and creativity of Western and Westernised individuals should also be questioned in the same way as Chinese creativity.

Although Shields and Shields (1992) propose that in engaging in acts of consumption, individuals exert powers, construct diverse subjectivities and enact sociality in a creative and innovative manner, Ger and Belk (1999) assert that materialism arises from insecurity; in their view, excessive consumption

leads to a state of being dominated by things and to harmful competition for status through possession and valuation of things over people. Rather than celebrating the uniqueness and creativity of individuals, the consumer society gives rise to an 'atomised, manipulated mass who participate in an ersatz mass-produced commodity culture targeted at the lowest common denominator' (Featherstone, 1991: 14) and as such may only be fulfilling a notional or at best narrow element of the total scope of creativity.

Some management scholars have written about novel process changes arising from improvisation and the generation of original ideas through bricolage in a way that appears to celebrate the intrinsic value of collaborative innovation (Barrett, 1998; Hatch, 1999). However, the emphasis in dominant creativity discourses on commercial over intrinsic value, results over process, and novelty instead of originality (Hausman, 1985; Mayer, 1999) still leads to a disproportionate focus on particular types of creativity in the management and psychology literature. Furthermore, the logical positivist traditions which form the theoretical basis of these enquiries tend to neglect forms of creativity that are not measurable. In the next section, I explore how creativity 'experts' from psychology and management have defined it, before presenting a framework in Section 2.6 that accommodates such different understandings of creativity.

The body of literature which tries to distinguish differences in Chinese conceptualisations of creativity has consistently failed to explain linguistic translation issues in its methodology (Rudowicz & Yue, 2002; Chan & Chan, 1999; Niu and Sternberg, 2003). This is important because of the way Chinese words are constructed by composites of different words. No uniformity exists in the various English to Chinese dictionaries consulted for this research regarding the translation of the words 'creative' or 'creativity'. The Chinese word for 'creative' takes several forms depending on the context in which it is being used. Whereas 创造心 (Chuang Zao Xin) means creativity in the sense of having an innate talent or desire to innovate, 创造力 (Chuang Zao Li) refers to having the skill or strength to make something original. The word 造 (Zao) is usually used in the context of the production of something material. Taken on its own, 造 (Zao) means 'to build'. The closest word in Chinese to 'creativity' is 创意 (Chuang Yi). The English equivalent for 意 (Yi) in this context would be 'ism' or 'ivity'. However, the key word, '创 (Chuang),

which is consistently used in definitions of creativity, has its roots in production and industry rather than in ideas and the arts. On its own, it means to cut or to wound. The translation and use of the character ‘创’ implies a breakthrough in the work. This may seem like an appropriate definition at first, but a closer look at the contexts in which the word 创 may be used will reveal some differences from the word ‘creative’ as it is used in English.

Where creativity refers to artistic talents, the word 创 is usually absent. Instead, it is more appropriate to use the words 天才 (Tian Cai - talent bestowed from heaven), 才能 (Cai Neng – outstanding ability), 天资 (Tian Zi - heavenly endowment) or 艺术 (Yi Shu – artistry). The use of the word ‘creativity’ in English reveals a crossover between industry and the arts in the English usage that is not immediately obvious in the Chinese translation. This could explain in part the frustrations in nurturing Chinese creativity. If Chinese workers and students think of creativity only in terms of 创造力/意 (Chuang Zao/ Li/ Yi - build, strength, -ism, respectively) this may inhibit their talents according to the definitions implied in the etymology.

2.6 CREATIVITY STUDIES

In this section, I consider the ways in which creativity is given particular meanings and associations in Western traditions through the specific creativity scholarship. The structure of this section follows Rhodes’s (1961) concept of the four Ps: person, process, press, and products; this is frequently cited in attempts to define creativity (Parkhurst, 1999; Howard *et al.*, Sawyer, 2006; 2008; Kaufman *et al.*, 2008). As studies of creativity tend to fall into at least one of these categories, its use enables conciseness. Furthermore, as it is widely used in current creativity research and well recognised by creativity researchers, its application here will facilitate engagement with the creativity research community and contribute to broadening interdisciplinarity.

Rhodes (1961: 310) made an appeal for the emergent field of creativity studies to be analysed and organised so as to bring order and legitimacy to the subject. Although some theoretical models of creativity manage to reconcile the contradictions brought about by the broad scope of creativity studies, most have a specialised focus on one particular aspect at the expense of other questions presented when defining creativity. Until Banaji (2011) wrote about

the rhetoric of creativity, there had been an absence of attempts simultaneously to reconcile the paradoxes that creativity research has revealed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), account for the differences between 'great' and 'ordinary' creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009), and address multivariate manifestations of creativity (Simonton, 1975). Amabile's (1983) Componential Model proposes that creativity is a result of four components: intrinsic motivation, domain expertise, skill in creative thinking, and environmental support. However, as a Harvard Business School professor, her work is heavily influenced by enterprise-based discourses that dominate that institution, with a strong focus on business management. She does not address other forms of creativity such as those displayed by children.

There are two key recurring concepts in discussions of the meaning of creativity: novelty and value (Parkhurst, 1999). The meaning of creativity with regards to novelty and value is open to debate. The problem concerning novelty can be conceived as a threefold one: proportion, originality, and scale. The proportion problem concerns the extent to which the creative product is novel. For example, is it creative when a new use is found for an existing product or when improvements are made to it (Gilson & Madjar, 2011)? The originality problem is well illustrated by Csikszentmihalyi's (1996: 32) description of the rediscovery of how to build a dome during the Renaissance, after the knowledge had been 'lost' during the so-called Dark Ages. Although the rediscovery may be regarded as a highly creative enterprise, if the idea of a dome had already been around, perhaps it is not very creative. The problem of *scale* questions the number of people an idea or product has to be novel to in order for it to be considered creative (Kneller, 1967; Mead, 1959; Parkhurst, 1999; Runco, 2004). For example, is it creative when a child discovers Euclid's geometry all on his/her own without being taught, since it is novel to him but not to others?

Disagreements about value, the other condition of creativity, can be seen as falling into three different categories: utility, scale, and scope. Utility demands that an idea may be valued only when it is transmitted into a product such as a painting, or solves a problem (Besemer & Treffinger, 1981). This raises the question of whether a creative idea can be intrinsically valuable without being useful. The problem of scale refers to the number of people who recognise the

utility of the product. A new product such as a piece of heavy metal music may be valued by a small sub-culture yet be rejected by the mainstream. Those who enjoy the music may argue that it is valuable because it helps them express an aspect of themselves that would otherwise be inhibited, whilst others may argue that far from being valuable, it destroys other valuable things such as ambience. To those who value the music, each new heavy metal composition is a creative product, whilst those who do not understand it will not see it as valuable. Csikszentmihalyi (1990: 199) addresses the problem of scope by taking into account the role of the domain and field when defining creativity. According to his argument, the creativity of a product depends on the domain, a set of symbolic roles and procedures, and the field, which consists of experts who act as gatekeepers to a domain. A domain can be broad, as in 'Art', or narrow, as in 'Oil Painting'. In addition to novelty and value, some authors demand other criteria for creativity, such as elegance, simplicity or potential for further creativity (Ekvall, 1997).

Although considerations of novelty and value in relation to the concept of creativity are complex and open to debate, scholars writing about how to develop creativity often neglect to discuss the multiple facets of the concept (Sternberg, 1999). The interest in creativity studies in the Western industrialised world seems to be centred primarily on finding a formula for greater productivity, including artistic production (Amabile *et al.*, 1990; Feldhusen & Goh, 1995; Isaksen *et al.*, 2001). Ericsson (2003: 12) provides a succinct account of how studies of workforce creativity are typically structured:

'I probably begin by asking how on earth the CEO and the copywriter could come up with such a cool idea as the Green Book? You try to find out what inherent qualities these two men possess; you run creativity tests on them to identify what differentiates them from others, you interrogate their motivational structures, and you ask them how they did complement each other in the creative and entrepreneurial process. Then you probably follow up by asking why the company, despite the righteous managerial leadership, didn't change a bit. You distribute questionnaires to all employees at Busslink to measure whether the climate is creative, or not; and you make inquiries

Figure 2.4. Microsoft Creative Employees Protocol (Florida, 2002: 131)

1.Hire smart people who think. The company's interview process is designed to separate the people who think from those who simply perform tasks... At Microsoft, the interviewing and final approval of job candidates is always done by the group that is doing the hiring. The most telling questions that Microsoft managers ask are highly unusual. Why are manholes round? Microsoft isn't actually interested in the correct answers. They want to see how the candidate goes about solving a problem. Example: Manholes are round so the covers cannot fall through the holes and so the covers, which are very heavy, can be rolled aside easily.

2.Expect employees to fail. If you work in an environment in which the best route to job security is by working to outdo the company's competition, you focus your energy on developing new products and new ways to solve problems.

3.Keep repercussions small when conquest-oriented employees make mistakes. You don't want them to feel as though their careers at the company or that their happiness is riding on just one mistake. At Microsoft, failure is expected. If employees don't fail, they are not taking enough risks. In some cases they've even been promoted because of what they learned from their failures.

4.Create an us versus them mentality. Microsoft employees are constantly reminded that their competition is other companies, not colleagues. Emphasise the company's goals, but let each individual figure out how to get there.

5.Sustain the company's start-up mentality. In a start-up company, there's an ever-present sense of urgency that the business must succeed. Make it everyone's responsibility to watch costs. There are no secretaries at Microsoft. And if a job needs five people to complete it, four are assigned. Frugality keeps employees from becoming too comfortable or lazy.

6.Make the office feel like home. Create a work environment that is as nice or nicer than home, and employees will want to be there. At Microsoft, everyone has his own office and there's no dress code. Employees can walk around barefoot – except in the cafeteria. There's

into the organisational structures to see whether the Green Book has managed to unfreeze the existing ones, or not. Finally you ask: what happens next? Or rather, as your ambition is to make the future more predictable when it comes to creative and entrepreneurial actions, you come up with some normative and teleological advice: do creativity and entrepreneurship and creativity and entrepreneurship will happen'.

This approach to creativity, which has come a long way from its origins in the Judeo-Christian tradition, evades the question of whether creativity is even desirable. The assumption that creativity is good because it is productive remains entrenched in much of the psychology and management literature, even though Schumpeter (1950) had already pointed to the destruction that creativity can cause to existing systems and social structures. Creativity scholarship has led to some companies taking on prescriptive methods of producing creativity. Florida (2002: 131) cites the way Microsoft uses creative employees to sustain its lead against competitors (see Figure 2.4).

2.6.1 PERSON

In his breakdown of creativity studies into the four Ps, Rhodes (1961: 307)

includes within the category of person: 'information about the personality, intellect, temperament, physique, traits, habits, attitudes, self-concept, value systems, defense mechanisms, and behavior'. The most cited contemporary scholars on creativity across multiple disciplines, Amabile (Taggar, 2002; Florida *et al.*, 2010; Zurstiege, 2011; Spencer, 2012; Chen, 2012) and Csikszentmihalyi (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003; Drake, 2003; Gaut, 2010; Simandan, 2011; Chen, 2012), tend to focus on the creativity of individuals, particularly their personality traits. However, there is a circular logic to this method. Are persons seen as creative because of their traits, or have they demonstrated their creativity and their traits subsequently identified? Studies of implicit theories of creativity (Chan & Chan, 1999; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Johnson *et al.*, 2003) attempt to overcome this problem by asking participants to identify creative people and discuss their personality traits, but their methods remain firmly rooted in the belief that it is the individual that drives creativity.

Whilst Amabile (1982, 1983, 1996) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1999) have also written extensively on environmental and social factors, these authors tend to focus on how to manipulate these in order to turn individual agents into creative workers. Although Amabile (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) both stress the importance of social factors in nurturing individual creativity, their work, like many of those from the same disciplines, is entrenched in the myth of the creative hero (Montuori & Purser, 1995; Gallucci *et al.*, 2000). As Glăveanu (2010) rightly points out, discussion of social factors tends to be limited to those that nurture the creativity of individuals (Amabile *et al.*, 1990), but group creativity is largely neglected except in considerations of how group dynamics affect individuals and vice versa (Kurtzberg & Amabile, 2001; Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

In psychology, the fixation on individuals as extraordinary agents responsible for creative outcomes often relies on 'heroic theories of invention' (Hunter, 1973; Casson, 1990; Becker, 1995), neglecting the complexity of the phenomena (Drakopoulou-Dodd & Anderson, 2007). Although Amabile's Componential Model (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) Systems Model try to contextualise creativity, there remains a preoccupation with creativity as a manifestation of individual disposition in both the psychology and management

literature (Barron & Harrington, 1981; Glăveanu, 2010).

Whilst it may be useful in practice for businesses, educational institutions, and governments to know what makes individuals creative, a disproportionate focus on persons as creative agents risks elitism and marginalisation of those deemed less creative, as well as missing opportunities for other forms of creativity to manifest. For example, the Torrance Test, which continues to be used in schools in various parts of the world as a predictor of student performance (Kohl & Kuo, 2011), can cause 'false research outcomes and unreliable and invalid decisions in such arenas as admission to gifted–talented programs' (Baer, 2011: 312). Furthermore, in trying to identify the creative person by correlating personality traits with their achievements, scholars fail to acknowledge that creative personalities can vary across different disciplines. For instance, a creative scientist may be introverted and focused (Simonton, 2003) whilst a creative performer may be extroverted and have many interests (Wang & Horng, 2002). The paradoxes in the literature on this aspect of creativity studies are difficult to reconcile, although Csikszentmihalyi (1996) has tried; he lists ten paradoxical traits of the creative personality, which I paraphrase here as energetic but quiet, smart but naïve, playful but disciplined, imaginative but realistic, extroverted and introverted, humble and proud, passionate but objective about their work, rebellious and conservative, happy and miserable, and escaping gender stereotyping because they are both male and female in their psychological make up. However, such an all-encompassing description of the creative person manages to be simultaneously reductionist and vague. Each of the ten paradoxical traits seem to be part of the human experience, which individuals may go through at different points in their life, depending on luck and circumstances. By listing these ten paradoxical traits as one, under the heading of creativity, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) appears to be setting up an argument for the construction of particular environments or circumstances under which all of them can occur simultaneously to produce a creative individual.

Dominant studies of creative persons (Eysenck, 1993), exemplified in the approaches of Csikszentmihalyi and Amabile, focus on a particular type of creativity that stems mainly from Western ideas of economic productivity. Whilst such a conceptualisation of creative personality may arguably benefit

workers and business interests in the West, it needs to be considered within the greater context of the debates around development when applied to non-Western societies in order to avoid a kind of cultural imperialism that may prove harmful to non-natives of free market, democratic ideology. The judgement of workers in less developed countries as less creative by Western expatriates (Bennett & Brewster, 2009) demonstrates a normalisation of creativity as a productive force, which studies that focus on creative persons as productive individuals perpetuate.

2.6.2 PROCESSES

In Rhodes's (1961) definitive article, he limits the definition of process to mental ones, stating that:

'The term process applies to motivation, perception, learning, thinking, and communicating. Essential questions about process include: What causes some individuals to strive for original answers to questions while the majority are satisfied with conventional answers? What are the stages of the thinking process? Are the processes identical for problem solving and for creative thinking? If not, how do they differ? Can the creative thinking process be taught?' (Rhodes, 1961: 308)

For psychologists, the arrival at an idea holds as much, if not more fascination as the individual who came up with the idea (Ghiselin, 1985). As other disciplines such as economics (Higgs *et al.*, 2008; Hills *et al.*, 1999), management studies (Cunha & Gomes, 2003), design studies (Bruce, & Cooper, 2000) and engineering (Howard *et al.*, 2008) started to recognise the role of creativity in their areas, the definition of creative process has broadened to include physical, action based as well as mental processes.

Studies of creative processes include both the personal and organisational level of invention and discovery (Simonton, 2003; Howard *et al.*, 2008; Gilson & Madjar, 2011; Chen, 2012). Those at the personal level include both mental and physical processes. Studies of creative mental process often include a form of divergent thinking test such as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1974), which pose problem-solving tasks to a subject who is scored

on fluency (number of relevant responses), flexibility (number of different categories of responses), originality and elaboration. The argument that divergent thinking is an indication of individual creativity rests on the premise that creative individuals are better able to link seemingly unrelated ideas to form innovative solutions. Studies of the physical process try to produce linear maps that attempt to explain the process of creativity. Wallas (1976) thus proposed dividing the creative process into what has become known as the classic model which include four phases: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification.

There have been numerous attempts by creativity scholars to codify the creative process in a way that will encompass all stages of this phenomenon, often with a rigid linearity (Smith & Carlsson, 1990; Amabile, 1996; Hills *et al.*, 1999), the most common being the four stage model or one of its variations as summarised by Lubart (2001). According to the classic model, the preparation phase includes problem finding and articulation (Wallas, 1976), research, training and the accumulation of knowledge. To this end, it is not clear where the creative process begins and there is little written about this specific issue. For example, does a child's accumulation of knowledge from his/her first science lessons count as the beginning of his/her creative process if s/he goes on to become an eminent inventor? If so, this has great implications for education policies around the world. The incubation stage is where the creator(s) subconsciously work(s) on the solution or the idea. Whilst most creativity scholars writing about processes agree that such a phase exists (Amabile, 1998; Simonton, 1999; Paulus & Yang, 2000), the difficulty in studying it limits understanding. The next phase, illumination, involves what is commonly known as the 'aha!' moment, which can happen at any time, in any place (Bilton & Leary, 2002), and is described by many authors as a sudden flash of insight (Cross, 1997). The final phase in the classic model, verification, includes development, testing, verifying, evaluating, and refining the idea.

Debates about creative processes concern whether they are sequential, cyclical, or random (Hermann, 1991; Basadur *et al.*, 2000; Cunha & Gomes, 2003); whether particular phases are necessary or sufficient (Amabile, 1996); and whether there are micro processes within each stage and what they might

be (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Suggestions for alternatives to the four stage classic model tend to be either a variation of it or focus on a specific stage (Lubart, 2001), but all creativity models are essentially trying to answer two basic questions: 'How does one get an idea?', and 'How does one get from idea to product?'. These studies tend to rely on introspection by test subjects and on historical, personal, and anecdotal accounts of how a creative product came about. They are also isolated from studies of persons, which ignores the possibility that particular processes may yield more creativity for some than for others.

There is a tendency for scholars to draw a false dichotomy between process and product (Goffin & Allen, 2008) when they approach creative processes as a means to an end. There are two possible ways to consider the relationship between processes and creativity: first, creativity as a result of process, and second, process as creativity. The first of these dominates research on creative processes in the preoccupation with how to achieve creativity. Although creativity is embedded in each step of Wallas's classic model – preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification – the literature rarely addresses how this creativity manifests itself, focusing instead on what events take place within these and how they lead to a creative outcome (Lubart, 2001). The notion of processes as a product appears to be directed towards the invention or discovery of new ways of achieving a result, as in the case of the Japanese invention of 'just-in-time' production processes which heralded the Post-Fordist era (Jessop, 2008). However, a question arises as to whether a process that is unoriginal can be considered creative beyond its first application. The second consideration, process as creativity, appears to be rarer. Kleinman (2008: 213), writing about creative processes in education, discusses the possibility of processes 'that are not necessarily linked to any outcome', pointing out that this approach 'recognises that creativity sometimes requires an acceptance of a lack of structure and direction, e.g. "playing for the sake of playing"'. Jackson (2002: 1) meanwhile points out the value of creative processes that do not necessarily lead to tangible results: 'Creativity involves first imagining something (to cause to come into existence) and then doing something with this imagination (creating something that is new and useful to you). It's a very personal act and it gives you a sense of satisfaction and achievement when you've done it.' Yet this form of creative process has

largely been unexplored in the literature. In the Creativity Framework (Section 2.6), I attempt to account for process as creativity in order to draw a more comprehensive picture of the concept.

2.6.3 PLACE

When Rhodes wrote about the four Ps, he used the word 'press' to refer 'to the relationship between human beings and their environment' (Rhodes, 1961: 308), but did not specify what was actually meant by environment. Feldhusen and Goh (1995) suggest it is merely for elegance that the word 'press' was used, as 'The Four Ps' sound a lot better than '3Ps and an E'. It has also been suggested that press could be short for 'pressure' to perform (Runco & Pagnani, 2011), in the sense of motivation that originates from the environment. However, whilst one's work environment may affect the outcome of one's work, it is not clear that this is a source of pressure to be creative. Simonton (1991) included another P, representing the ability to 'persuade' others of the value of one's work. The word press could also be construed in terms of 'press conference', incorporating Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) argument that the domain determines whether a product is creative or not (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), as well as Simonton's fifth P. That is, an idea that is 'ahead of its time' may not be recognised as creative until a group of 'experts' are persuaded that it merits acknowledgment.

I have decided to use 'Place' for the third 'P' in this thesis because the word incorporates the social and physical spaces that writers on creative environments (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1989) have addressed. Furthermore, places are administered by particular political systems that have in recent years been driving policies to create specific environments to attract and nurture workers from the so called 'creative class' (Florida, 2002; Kotkin & Siegel, 2004; Peck, 2005; Hoyman & Faircy, 2009).

Studies of place fall into two categories: how environmental factors influence individual creativity, and how the environment affects what is considered creative. Most of the literature on place focuses predominantly on how environmental factors influence creative activities and behaviour (Amabile, 1983; Gruber, 1988; Lubart & Sternberg, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Dallman *et al.*, 2005). Although Csikszentmihalyi discusses place in terms of

the subjectivity of the term creative in relation to the domain and field, current social climate, politics, economics and culture, this subjectivity is rarely addressed when considering the role of place in facilitating creativity. I focus here on how the politics and economic aspects of place are seen to impact on individual creativity, as these are taken to be key factors when considering why particular cultures are seen as less creative than others. I then discuss how the smaller scale of office spaces is seen to contribute to worker creativity and productivity.

2.6.3.1 Social and political aspects of place and creativity

Simonton (1975, 1990) has tried to establish a connection between political climate and the creativity of individuals without coming up with a strong case that any one type of political milieu is best for nurturing creativity. His historiometric studies attempt to relate factors such as cultural diversity and availability of role models, political fragmentation, and war or cultural persecution to creativity at the individual level, by counting the number of eminently creative people who have lived through political changes.

Simonton's (1975, 1990) findings imply that different forms of government are conducive to different types of creativity at different times in history and in the individual's life. Although some authors have tried to establish that repressive societies may stop individuals from developing their creativity (Sternberg, 1997; Meusburger *et al.*, 2009) the rising popularity of Chinese artists such as Ai Wei Wei shows that political oppression can be a catalyst for the artistically creative minded to produce thought provoking work. Hence, political milieus appear to play a greater role in deciding what is creative rather than how much creativity is produced. This fits in with Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) argument that creativity is largely determined by the domain. For example, in certain historical situations, such as the Cultural Revolution in China and the Spanish Inquisition, when the authorities decided for the public what was creative, depending on whether it fitted the political agenda, so creativity in these instances was not recognised until the regime ended. Furthermore, it might no longer make sense to speak of particular citizens as less creative because of local politics, or indeed culture, in the network society where innovation often takes place collaboratively across different countries (Castells, 2000).

2.6.3.2 Economic aspects of place and creativity

Since the development of new ideas and products often requires substantial

financial backing, it seems intuitive that economic stability is a necessary condition for creativity. Whilst many writers (Florida, 2002; Mokyr, 1990; DCMS, 1998; DCMS, 2001) are eager to support the theory that creativity leads to economic growth, there is little written about the economic conditions that lead to the growth of creativity. This approach to creativity as a means to an economic end rather than an end in itself conveniently ignores creativity displayed by those who do not participate in the mainstream economy (Peck, 2005; Banaji & Burn, 2007; Luckman *et al.*, 2009). Where creativity is treated as intrinsically valuable, this is presented as a result of economic prosperity, as in Maslow's hierarchy of needs illustrates (1974) (See Figure 2.5). Although contemporary scholars have proposed an update to the original hierarchy (Kenrick *et al.*, 2010), the placement of creativity remains firmly at the top, under 'self-actualisation'. The concept of creativity thus becomes an elitist one which fails to account for creativity in more practical areas of life.

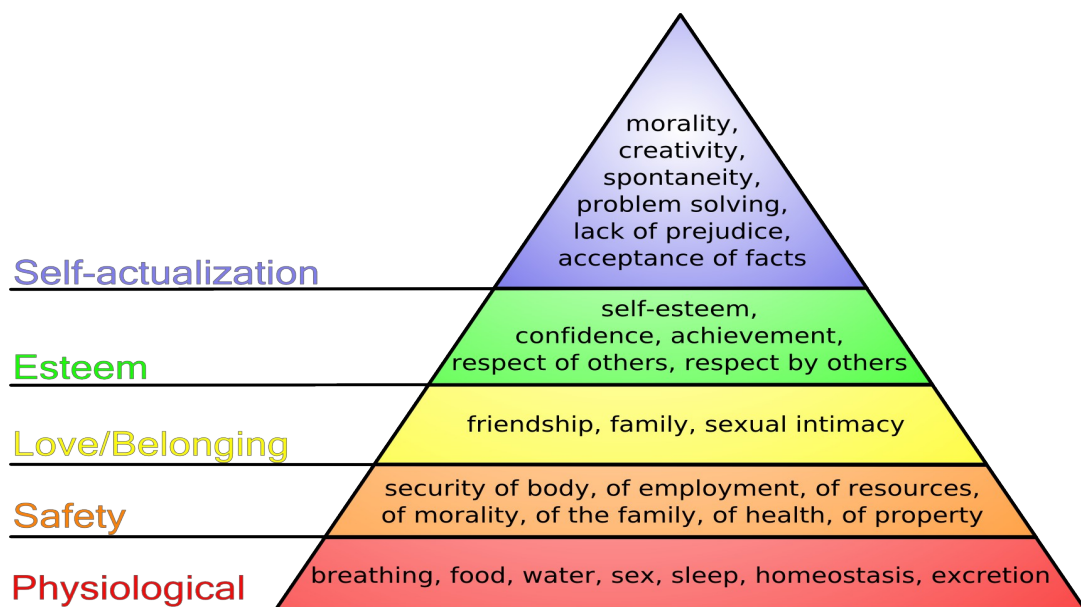


Figure 2.5 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as illustrated by Finkelstein (2006)

2.6.3.3 Office spaces, workplaces, and creativity

There is a growing body of literature on how office spaces influence employee productivity through the stimulation they provide and their conduciveness to social interaction (Kristensen, 2004; Sundstrom *et al.*, 1982; Haner, 2005; Ceylan *et al.*, 2008). Rather than disputing the proposition that work environments have an impact on creativity, these scholars tend to address how to 'formulate the right kind of environment' (Bunnell & Cole, 2001: 581).

Kristensen (2004), for instance, argues that something as simple as whether an employee is given autonomy over their own office space can affect performance, stating that 'The idea of sharing workspace and leaving a clean desk with no personal belongings seems to create a sterile environment that inhibits imagination' (Kristensen, 2004: 93). This suggests that employees with a sense of autonomy, as indicated in their freedom to decorate their workspace, whilst also receiving support from their superiors, are believed to perform better than those who are micro-managed and who feel that their superiors do not trust them.

Augustin and Brand (2009) advocate less tidy environments as a means to achieve creative ends. The belief that fun in the workplace encourages employees to be creative (Miller 2005) has led many companies to include objects that are not directly relevant to the business in their offices, such as a games room (Desouza, 2003). Office spaces that are conducive to social exchange are also thought to be better for promoting employee creativity. For instance, Sundstrom *et al.* (1982) argue that office layouts with narrow corridors reduce interaction and fewer exchanges of ideas can occur as a result. In a more open layout, there is a greater sense of collaboration as team members are more aware that they are working towards a common purpose. The approach to creativity amongst scholars writing about office environments tends to follow the same logic as those writing about persons and processes: the physical space is viewed as a set of controllable conditions that can be manipulated to produce creativity, the end result. The type of creativity which forms the objective of these manipulations of workplace is either vaguely defined or not at all, yet a narrow definition is implied by the use of the word in these articles to refer to what may actually mean productivity. Their arguments may well be valid, as long as these authors are writing very specifically about a particular type of creativity in workplaces in the Western world. However, when applied to other contexts, such as workplaces in the East, one needs to consider other factors that contribute to work creativity, like differing life priorities, methods of socialising, and understandings of creativity. Otherwise there is a risk that the ineffectiveness of the 'established' ways of planning office space might lead to a false conclusion that non-Western workers are less creative. As Lubart (1999: 347) points out, 'The Western definition of creativity as a product-oriented, originality-based phenomenon can be

compared with an Eastern view of creativity as a phenomenon of expressing an inner truth in a new way or of self-growth.'

2.6.4 PRODUCT

Two aspects of the creative product are common to its definition (Rhodes, 1961). The first is that products can either be ideas or physical objects, and the second is that they must be both novel and useful (Besemer & O'Quin, 1999). Besemer and O'Quin (1999) added a third 'factor' (sic) of elaboration and synthesis, which includes consideration of the style and elegance in the product. Hennessey and Amabile (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) point out that to qualify as creative, a product must be deemed so by people qualified to make the judgement. These definitions take the criteria for creativity as absolutes, not accounting for the reality that these concepts are usually applied on a spectrum. Whether a product is physical or an idea for example, can be unclear, as in the case of 'the Internet', which is both an idea and a series of physical objects. Similarly, there are degrees of novelty and usefulness. Some creative products are more obviously novel than others; a creative product might also be a new combination of old products, as in 'fusion', a new combination of new products, or a new combination of new and old products. Functionality also exists on a scale that is dependent on the user, as individuals may each experience their own unique sense of gratification through their encounter with particular creative products. In recent years, the word 'novel' is sometimes substituted by 'original' (Hsu *et al.*, 2013), although the concept of novelty appears to be firmly entrenched in studies of creative products (Sullivan & Ford, 2010).

Studies of creative products are few compared to studies of creative persons, processes, and places. Many of the studies that do exist attempt to define creativity by eliciting responses from groups of people about particular products (Besemer, 1998; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Horn & Salvendy, 2006) using versions of the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT), developed by Amabile (1982) in combination with a scaling system or matrix such as the Creative Products Semantic Scale (Besemer & O'Quin, 1986). However, they seem to say more about the assessors' values and background than about the actual creativity of the products (Caroff & Besançon, 2008).

Despite acknowledging that creative products can either be physical or mental, the literature appears to be caught up primarily with the material aspect of the concept. Even where ideas as creative products are studied, these rely on physical objects such as print advertising (White *et al.*, 2002). Personal taste is rarely accounted for and there is a strong commercial focus in attempts to define creative products (Horn & Salvendy, 2006; Yeh & Lin, 2011; Zeng & Chen, 2013). Horn and Salvendy (2006) for instance use their study of students' assessments of product creativity to predict customer satisfaction and purchasability.

The strong market focus in dominant creativity discourses considers creativity mainly in terms of profit making and cost saving; even culturally creative products are viewed under an economic lens (Hsu *et al.*, 2013). As Yeh and Lin (2011: 114) point out, 'worldwide commercial competition has brought about the emergence of cultural creative industries'. The predominance of these studies may stem from the fact that creative products that can be commodified are easier to measure and therefore study. However, there needs to be more research that explores creative products, not merely as wealth generating instruments, but also as a means of self-expression and problem solving. Furthermore, creative products do not always lead to a better quality of life and happiness – they can often cause harm (Cropley *et al.*, 2008).

2.7 CONCLUSION

Given the variability with which the notion of creativity is applied and manifested, my research explores the meanings associated with creativity when applied on an interpersonal level in the 'creative industries'. The primary concern in my research is why Chinese workers are perceived to be less creative than their Western counterparts. The objective is to understand why particular meanings of creativity have been adopted in specific sectors of the creative industries, how these lead to the way expatriates and indigenous workers in China enact discourses of creativity, and how Chinese workers are represented within these discourses. In doing so, I have considered what creativity means by tracing the lineage of some of the key ideas leading to the association between creativity and productivity. The urgency in the West to produce a creative labour force, which was sparked by the Cold War, added a

level of aggression to the discourses. When such discourses are superimposed upon a group of people who place less value on competition, individuality, and aggressiveness, the latter can appear less creative. The meanings and associations tied to dominant Western discourses of creativity must therefore come under scrutiny, so that types of creativity that are neglected in the rush for productivity can be identified. My research uses an ethnographic approach to examine the ways in which the enactment of these discourses shapes ideas about creativity and their impact on individuals' identity, beliefs, and behaviours. It may also be helpful to identify potential benefits that organisations are missing by their failure to recognise other forms of creativity.

The social, political, economic, and historical conditions reasons commonly cited for the supposed lack of creativity amongst the Chinese, present them as a people who are bound to traditions that undermine their agency. Yet it is unclear that workers in the West have more agency, given that many of the aspirations are governed by normative influences of class and social acceptability. This warrants an examination of themes of power and agency within the creativity discourses, which I shall do in Chapters 4 and 5.

Finally, the narrow focus so far on results oriented understandings of creativity by eminent scholars writing on the subject need to be challenged given that creativity manifests in many other ways apart from the results oriented ones that dominant current scholarship. In Chapter 6, I will bring together the results of the research, discussing creativity in Shanghai in terms of the four Ps: people, processes, place, and products, and suggest a way of reconciling the variety of differences in which creativity is understood. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology used in this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCHING CREATIVITY – STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Much creativity research has been carried out through controlled studies using tests and surveys of individuals in specific settings such as schools and offices. Ethnographic approaches as a means of understanding creativity are still a growing academic area. In this chapter, I address the methodological approaches applied my research. I begin by describing the processes and context in which the research settings were selected. I then expand on the ethnographic methods I used whilst in the field, namely participant observation and in-depth interviews carried out over six months in China, from February to August 2009. I discuss the considerable ethical concerns in the research, as well as how my positionality as an ethnically Chinese foreigner from a social science background was taken into account, and describe the practical ways in which I gathered the data and the limitations that presented themselves. I also discuss the language and translation issues which arose before elucidating how the analysis was carried out. I then discuss the web survey, which informed the research and contributed key ideas, but was not used in great detail in the analysis within this thesis.

3.2 THE SETTING

The main priority in choosing the site for the ethnographic study was that it should provide a relevant context for the theoretical objectives set out in the research. However, there were also some limitations imposed by the ethnographic nature of the study and the creative industries' concern with the protection of intellectual property. As part of my preliminary work, I had attended the Create in China conference at the British Museum in 2008, where I met industry practitioners with whom I piloted my interview questions. These meetings also informed the development of the research, as they drew out many of the issues that later emerged as being contentious. Whilst many people I spoke with were interested in my approach to the topic, they were also cautious about inviting a researcher into their offices to observe their

employees. After several false starts, I secured a placement in a multinational IT company with origins in the US (hereafter USCo). I have deliberately anonymised the name of this company, and throughout the thesis have done all that I can to ensure that its identity is protected. This has sometimes caused real challenges in how I present my interpretations, but it is important that I maintain the integrity of my research. During my time in China, I also extended my research into several smaller local start-ups and a university; this provided me with opportunities to investigate how far ideas about creativity emerging in the IT company context were specific to that sector and company, and so contribute to my overall aim of developing a broad understanding of the diversity of creativity in the Chinese context.

3.2.1 SELECTING THE ORGANISATION

Since my main concern was why Chinese people are perceived as being less creative than Westerners, and these original perceptions came mainly from Western expatriates working in China, I sought to carry out my work where there was a mix of Western expatriates and indigenous Chinese working together as colleagues on a regular basis. In order to gain a better understanding of the origins of this belief, I sought to become an observer-participant within a team that included both foreigners and indigenous workers. By becoming a part of the team, I thought that I would attain greater insight into how cross-cultural interactions influence perceptions of employee creativity. For example, in my pilot interviews with people who had worked in China and returned to the UK, I was led to believe that much of the misunderstanding about Chinese people's creativity stems from communication gaps and different approaches to problem identification and problem solving. By observing how expatriates and indigenous workers and students interact, I would be better able to understand why and how these cognitive differences arise, the impact they have on relationships in the workplace, the productivity of the team and the resulting impressions and beliefs formed in the minds of the actors.

I kept an open mind about the proportion of expatriates to locals in the sample, being aware that in most instances there would be a smaller number of expatriates in relatively senior positions managing a greater number of indigenous employees. I was also aware that given the difficulties of gaining

access, I might have to 'settle' for whatever was offered. I narrowed my sights on the IT sector for two main reasons. First, the industry's emphasis on innovation and creativity meant that my subject would be of concern any company trying to produce new technologies or improve on existing ones. It was a common complaint in the preliminary interviews I conducted with former expatriates before embarking on the fieldwork that Chinese IT workers are less creative. A number of reasons were given, such as needing a lot of personal guidance from their managers and lacking in initiative. I was interested in observing the interactions that led to these judgements, as well as gathering responses from indigenous Chinese workers.

Another reason for choosing the IT sector was to fit in with the theoretical basis of this study. Whilst it has been argued that modern information technologies are raising standards of living around the world and bringing about a diminution of hierarchies (Castells, 2000), the division of labour and the global distribution of wealth in this sector remain vastly uneven. Whilst the design of new technologies seems to be concentrated mainly in the West, workers in economies that joined the digital economy later risk being trapped in less challenging roles such as coding, replicating the work of inventors in the richer countries, on the basis that they are less creative. There is some debate amongst international economic theorists about whether technological progress follows commercial innovation (for example, Coe & Helpman, 1995; Guloglu, *et al.*, 2012), but the politics and ideologies behind these largely technocentric perspectives have yet to be investigated from an ethnographic point of view. The role of an observer-participant in the IT sector enabled me to examine the interactions between the expatriates and indigenous employees in the workplace that informed beliefs about Chinese workers' creativity. By using an ethnographic approach, I was able to understand the factors that help and hinder Chinese innovation and therefore gain a deeper insight into the emergence of China as a participant in the creative industries. I use the term 'observer-participant', rather than the more usual 'participant-observer' as I was treated primarily as an observer rather than a participant. There were two main reasons for this. First, I did not possess the expertise required fully to participate in the complex work of the teams I was observing, and second, administrative issues prevented me from becoming a full member of the teams.

3.2.2 GAINING ACCESS

Having established that I would use ethnographic methods for my research, the next step was to convince an organisation to allow me access to their staff for this purpose. A number of scholars have written about the barriers to accessing ethnographic settings (Harrington, 2003; DeVerteuil, 2004; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and I also found this challenging. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out, the difficulties in obtaining access can also provide insight into the social organisation of the setting. Over almost a year of repeated disappointment and false starts, I drew considerable insight into the power relationships within the workplace before eventually joining a team that welcomed me. I managed however to use this time to refine my methodology by piloting my interview questions with people I had met through various events that I attended.

The concern around intellectual property proved to be the greatest barrier. In an industry where profits depend heavily on protecting one's ideas, IT companies are understandably nervous about letting outsiders 'in'. Where I had 'cold called' a company or department, I either received a standard 'thanks but no thanks' response or none at all. In the follow up correspondence where I either emailed or phoned them if there was no response, some cited their concern over the confidentiality of their work, saying that it is not just their products that need to be guarded, but also their creative processes. One person I spoke with believed that they would lose their competitive advantage if it was made known how they nurtured their employees' creativity. Another respondent also told me that in his previous company, visitors were required to leave all their electronic gadgets at the door and if they needed to take their laptops with them, the staff would seal all the ports on the laptop before allowing it to be taken on site. The company I became attached to for my fieldwork had a policy of no camera phones. This prevented me from taking photos of the site, which made it harder to gather evidence to support the findings on creative office spaces. In the writing up and analysis phase of the research, I depended on descriptive accounts from my diary entries rather than visual records for this aspect of the findings.

Coming from a non-IT background provided me with an advantage amidst the cautiousness around intellectual property. My lack of technical expertise

meant that expatriate managers were more willing to talk to me, confident that I did not possess the technical expertise to steal their intellectual property, despite the possibility that I could reveal the methods that they used to motivate their employees to 'produce intellectual property'. Once they had understood my motivation and the purpose of my research, many were keen to have me observe their teams, as they could identify with the anecdotes I cited about interactions between Westerners and Chinese workers in creative roles, and might actually learn from me.

Establishing industry contacts proved difficult. My supervisor had introduced me to industry practitioners and I had also attended numerous conferences related to my research, hoping to find an interested organisation. Many of these were promising at first, but fell through due to administrative issues and resistance from the colleagues of the initial contact person. The global economic downturn that began in 2008, just before I started approaching potential teams, also proved to be a setback. Many companies had put a freeze on headcount, which meant they were not issuing any passes for new 'employees'. I also suspect that in some cases, they were using this as a polite way of declining. In one instance, I had received approval from the head of operations in China, who was so enthusiastic about the research that he was contributing his ideas and making suggestions to how I might carry out my work. However, my participation was resisted by the head of the team I was to observe, who cited the freeze on headcount as a reason. In retrospect, this seems to be an instance where an individual used the bureaucracy to block an event instead of saying no directly. Further into my field research, I was told by various expatriates in China that seniority does not give one the final say in decision making, despite ostensible reverence towards authority.

Although I eventually found a placement through a personal contact I knew from my undergraduate degree whose work was unrelated to my research, I still had great difficulty finding the right official channels through which to organise the post. I arrived at the office only to find that the human resources and legal departments had not been consulted about my presence there. This seemed to aggravate one particular employee in the legal department who had not been consulted beforehand and resisted every proposal to grant me full access to the site, even when the head of operations for the entire site had

given approval. After over a month of negotiations, a memorandum of understanding was finally signed (see Appendix A); this appeased the dissatisfied employee. However, I still had the same limited level of access as before, and the only difference was that I got to keep my electronic guest pass rather than having to hand it in every day. After talking to various indigenous employees and expatriates about this incident, I came to understand that such passive aggressive behaviour was typical of those who feel they have not been shown respect.

3.2.3 SHANGHAI, CHINA

At the outset of my research, I had sought to conduct my fieldwork in a major Chinese city. Since such cities host a larger population of expatriates and foreign companies, I could talk to about 'Chinese creativity', as well as a larger variety of people from different parts of China. I had applied to several multinational IT corporations in both Beijing and Shanghai, with a preference for Beijing as the offices there tend to have larger, more strategic operations, where they could more easily negotiate contracts with the capital's government. However, the difficulty in gaining access narrowed my choice down to Shanghai.

3.2.4 BEYOND USCO

Focusing on Shanghai proved to be highly fruitful in not only giving me access to an IT company, but also to a contrasting creative space in the form of a local university, which might not have been possible in Beijing. This access, which was facilitated by a family friend, enabled me to observe the interaction between teachers and students at a design school, and I was able to shadow a student over a period of six months. I also gained brief access to two local start-ups where I observed and interviewed employees in the creative departments and made two trips to Beijing where I spoke with some expatriates and indigenous workers. Two factors contributed to the extension of the research beyond USCo. First, opportunities presented themselves through snowball sampling and as the people I spoke with discussed my research with others who were eager to speak with me. I took up these opportunities in order to ascertain whether there were common themes that cut across all creative work regardless of the size of the company, whether it was local or multi-national, and whether there was an expatriate presence or its

staff was solely composed of Chinese employees. Second, the initial findings of the research led me to explore other areas apart from the IT office environment. Although this meant less time at the primary site, I had already spent two months there on a full time basis and was familiar enough with the weekly schedules to know which days were the crucial ones when plans were being made and meetings were held. Furthermore, I was already splitting my time between observation-participation and interviewing employees at the primary site in exactly the same ratio. The opportunity to move beyond the IT office environment was an excellent one to obtain further insights to inform my understandings of creativity.

Once I was in China, it became much easier to gain access to various sites. As awareness of my research spread through my interviewees, some entrepreneurs and managers invited me to see their offices and talk to their staff in the hope of gaining a better understanding of how they might improve the quality of their work. At USCo, I managed these expectations by arranging a question and answer session in one of their conference rooms at the end of my stay, where I presented my preliminary findings. I also ran a SWOT workshop at a local start-up and presented a seminar in the university I observed. Many people were also eager to contribute to my research as they saw a need for more creativity in China. Furthermore, both the indigenous Chinese and expatriates believed that by inviting me to 'see for myself' what really happens in the creative workplace, they were giving voice to their concerns. In some cases, it was as if my research vindicated their grievances by putting an academic slant on it.

I also conducted part of my research at 'Design Institute' (DI), an independent college within a local university that is partnered with a foreign university. I found this to be a natural progression of the research, as all the indigenous people and some of the expatriates I had spoken with cited the education system as a major problem in nurturing Chinese creativity. I was fortunate to have met a family friend when I first arrived who was working as a lecturer in one of the top design schools in Shanghai. She invited me to observe her classes and talk to her students about my work. Through her, I met numerous other teachers who also invited me to speak with their students and participate in their classes. The fact that this school had predominantly foreign teachers

using different pedagogies than the students were used to enabled me to observe the different ways in which both teachers and students reconcile their differences in expectations. I would also like to have done some ethnographic research in a department or school solely run by indigenous workers. However, I failed to gain any useful contacts in this area. Although I spoke with one senior person who showed interest in the research, I was told that there were still party cadres in his department who would resist my presence. When I did speak to a party member, I was told that due to the nature of his job, he was not supposed to have any contact with foreigners and requested that I did not use any material from our conversation.

3.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

I chose to use ethnographic methods in my research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the way discourses of creativity are enacted in the field of software production. The use of such a 'subjective' method based in the humanities may seem at odds with the hard science of software engineering, but ethnography is a popular tool in the development of new technologies (Scacchi, 1982; Brooks, 1995). Software developers have long used ethnographic methods to study the impact and effectiveness of their products before launching them officially to their clients. However, whilst ethnography has been applied by many computer scientists to study their subjects or target consumers, its use in studying how new technology itself is created is less common. In Schultze's (2000) 'confessional account' of an ethnography of knowledge work, the scholar turns the microscope upon herself and writes about the development of technological advancements from an ethnographic perspective. In doing so, she goes beyond unraveling the mechanistic processes of knowledge work and uncovers how workers' emotions and beliefs affect knowledge production. I decided to use ethnographic methods, including keeping a daily diary and an ethnographic snapshot (see Section 3.3.4) as they allowed me to observe the politics that influence the interpersonal relationships between individuals and teams. Davenport *et al.* (1996: 8) argue that ethnographic methods fit well with knowledge work as they enable the analyst to 'get a good understanding of why work is done in a particular fashion'. Apart from the drive to achieve objectives and meet targets set out by their superiors, the performance of knowledge workers is also determined by their personal ambition, relationships with their colleagues and

personal interest in the work itself. In order to discover how these factors influence the way knowledge workers carry out their roles, I needed to observe and participate in their daily activities, as interviews would only provide a partial picture. I thus spent the first three days of each week at USCo, where I attended team meetings and interviewed its employees, and the remaining two days and some of the weekends at DI interviewing and observing lessons and interactions between its teachers and students.

3.3.1 MANAGEMENT OF ETHICAL CONCERNS

From my experience of working in various cross-cultural environments, I was aware that misunderstandings arising from differences in communication styles can lead to tensions that distress co-workers. I therefore set out with the intention to do no harm during the data collection, analysis, and writing up processes, by setting out clear guidelines for my conduct. The Research Services Team at Royal Holloway also has in place an approval process. USCo's legal team was also concerned about my presence on its premises, and I was bound by the agreement that RHUL and I signed with them, which amongst other things, stipulated that I must comply with USCo's rules, indemnify them against any liabilities, and protect the anonymity of the organisation and its employees.

I set out to be transparent in my interactions with all participants and informants, hoping that it would also encourage openness from them. There appeared to be some misunderstanding, though, regarding my research on the part of one of the two software teams I was observing at USCo. They had been led to believe that I was a psychology student there to 'study their creativity' and help them to be more creative. I clarified my academic background with them in our first group meeting, and again with each of the team members individually during the interviews so they had more realistic expectations about how they might benefit from my research. I also felt a need to 'give something back' to my hosts at USCo and did so by offering music lessons and English conversation classes during my time there. Some of these classes fed into the material that formed part of the analysis.

I extended the guarantee of anonymity that was in the agreement with RHUL and USCo to all participants and informants, including those who did not work

for USCo. Although some respondents said they did not mind being named, the events they talked about sometimes concerned people who might have wished to remain anonymous. The names of all respondents have been changed in this thesis, as well as the names of the teams, institutions, and organisations they work for or attend. I have also deliberately blurred identifying features such as respondents' country of origin and in some cases, broadened the description in the write up so they should not be able to be recognised. Stein (2010) has questioned whether this removes some of the sense of individuality, making respondents' accounts less compelling. Van den Hoonaard (2003: 141) also argues that it is the 'natural accretions of daily life, the under use of data, and the remoteness of place and time between the gathering-data stage and the eventual publications of findings' that maintain anonymity. Although in my research there is a substantial physical distance from the fieldwork setting, the availability of ICTs still warrants consideration that participants may be able to identify themselves. However, the time that has passed since the fieldwork was carried out may soften the impact of any discovery. Furthermore, the personal, unique, individual narratives were not the focus of my research; unlike Stein's (2010) research about sexuality in a small town in the USA, I was looking for more generalisable data about notions of creativity.

3.3.2 PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

I established close relationships with key indigenous informants in each of the main sites who would explain behaviours I could not understand. These friendships developed out of a shared outlook and common interests, which may have swayed the data had I not conscientiously expanded the number of respondents. Although I tried not to become too reliant on just one person to help me 'decipher' the field, a natural rapport with certain individuals meant that more time was spent with them than other informants. The managers of the teams I worked with in the primary site encouraged me to spend as much time with their team members as possible in order for them to practice their English. Although I had at least one session of one on one time with every member of each team, only four people took up my offer of extra time alone with me. The remaining team members were content with the weekly focus group discussions/conversation sessions.

At USCo, I spent more time with one employee than any others as we shared some common interests and sometimes saw each other during our commute to the office. During this time, I often turned to him for help when I was uncertain about the nuances and subtleties of Chinese conversation. I could also test my ideas on him for the weekly focus group discussions I conducted as part of the conversational English language classes that took place. He was there to explain why certain things did not work in the Chinese context, such as when I tried to run a SWOT workshop and all the participants remained resolutely silent throughout. The relationship was two-way in the sense that he also turned to me when he needed to voice his frustrations and I was grateful for his trust. He played a part in the design of my research. For example, some of my interview questions were included as a result of what he said about his relationship with his colleagues and managers.

At the university, I became close to an indigenous member of the administrative staff whose role included translating for the foreign teachers. The head of department welcomed me in the office where I was allowed to share her desk and observe the interaction amongst students and staff two days a week. The students and teachers seemed not to take much notice of my presence, although they were aware that I was there as an observer. Once they became aware that I was conducting research for a PhD about creativity in China, most teachers became eager to talk to me about their experience; I had to be careful to include all of them in my interviews as there was some rivalry and I did not want to contribute to the tension in the office. There was much less reticence here than at USCo about my presence, particularly regarding the protection of intellectual property. I did nevertheless follow the same ethical procedures as those in the memorandum of understanding that I had signed with USCo.

Much of the material in Chapter 5 is derived from my time in this office, listening to the teachers talk about their students when they are not there, watching discreetly as conflicts unfolded and were resolved, and listening to the conversations between the students and staff. Much of my time in the office, I worked on the design of the web survey on a 12 inch netbook, but would type notes into my diary where I noted an interesting development in events in the office. Where I did not understand the background or had

difficulty interpreting the events, the interpreter would inform me after work or over a meal. I also had regular social interaction with four of the teachers, two of whom I have remained in contact with. Our social interaction outside work hours provided much of the insight into the teachers' experience of the education system, their expectations, and those of the students, and their beliefs about the students and their creativity.

I took on a form of reflexivity, which I found common amongst ethnically Chinese respondents who had also grown up in predominantly Western environments. In the early days of my time in the setting, I found myself thinking 'I'm Eastern/ Western in that respect' in response to what I heard. However, I did not express this to the person I spoke with, nor consciously act differently as a result, although I made a mental note of it. At the start of the fieldwork, I caught myself privately agreeing or disagreeing with the respondent, depending on whether I saw myself as Chinese or Western, but this dissipated over time. The following entry from my field notes illustrates this: *'I have changed and I do not notice the same things I used to. I'm more stable emotionally and my opinions are no longer swayed by whoever I spoke to last'* (August, 2009). There was also a desire to gain the informant's trust, which sometimes influenced the direction of the conversations, particularly with indigenous respondents who were eager to talk about politics and how China is perceived by foreigners. In one instance, I let the respondent lead the conversation and arranged for another meeting to discuss creativity. In most interviews however, I was mindful of bringing the conversation back to the topic of creativity and became more skillful at this the longer I spent in the field. This was much easier with Western expatriates as we were speaking in English, the language I was more comfortable in.

3.3.3 SHADOWING

Following from Gill's (2011: 115) argument that shadowing uncovers 'intimate and private spaces of decision making and sense making', I had intended to shadow some of the employees at USCo, believing that it would enable me to observe creativity as it took place. Although I had gained permission to do so, this proved impractical and despite several attempts, I failed to gather much useful information. Initially, many of the engineers would explain what they were doing, and so it was difficult to observe them in their 'natural'

environment. As they got more used to me however, they carried on as if I was not present. However, as software coding is mentally intense but physically inactive work, it was difficult to gather much about their feelings and responses towards their work through pure observation. Much of the shadowing involved sitting awkwardly behind them at their work stations and watching them code, occasionally leaning forward or stretching from the discomfort of sitting for long periods. I concluded early on that there was not much that could be gained from doing this for seven hours a day and decided instead to focus on the observations of the interactions between colleagues and interviews as a way of gathering data on how respondents work creatively. Other scholars such as Barley and Kunda (2001) have also noted that traditional observation is usually inadequate to capture computer work, and they recommend a more sophisticated use of technical aids in such observations. Furthermore, Czarniawska (2008: 10) maintains that 'fieldwork knows no "method"; it relies on pragmatism, luck, and moral sensibility. The knowledge of a variety of techniques, and the will to innovate rather than follow static prescriptions of method books, remain central to the craft of fieldwork, as to all others'.

3.3.4 FIELD NOTES

A number of scholars have discussed keeping field notes as a crucial component of ethnographic research (Moser, 2008; Dummer *et al.*, 2008; Punch, 2012), as it helps to account for the researcher's reflexivity and positionality in relation to the data. Punch (2012) also argues that recording a field diary can serve as an outlet to help the researcher to articulate and cope with the more difficult and lonely aspects of fieldwork. Over the six months in Shanghai, I kept a daily diary and wrote a monthly ethnographic snapshot; I was interested not just in recording the events, but also in how my thoughts on particular aspects of the subject might change over time. Both of these followed a set structure, where the same themes and questions were answered each time. For the diary, I designed a table with nine different headings: location, chronology of the day's events, actors, my role in the events, what I learned, personal thoughts, questions, plans for tomorrow, and detailed description of particular events that seemed to stand out (see Appendix B). I included the location field for two reasons. First, I was interested in the physical spaces and their impact on creativity, particularly with

reference to Florida's (2002) work on creative environments. Second, as I was working with multiple teams across two different organisations, dividing my time between DI in downtown Shanghai and the technology park where USCo was located, I needed to write this down to avoid confusion during the analysis. Furthermore, by specifying the location for the day, I could more easily compare the behaviours and interactions across the different sites.

I thought it important to include a section on the chronology of the day's events, as I had planned on shadowing some of the participants and was interested in finding out if they worked to rigid structures and whether they were methodical in the way they carried out their tasks. I had believed that this might influence the perception of creativity amongst the workers at USCo. I had also predicted that certain events might have built up over the day which might have brought about later incidents. However, shadowing proved to be impractical at USCo, and consequential events tended to build up over months rather than a single day. I had included the next section, 'Actors', so that I could identify who was involved, their responses to particular situations and why they responded the way they did based on their background; this was supplemented by the interviews, which included a detailed description of each respondent's personal history.

I included the section called 'my role in the events' as I was aware that my presence as an observer might influence the behaviour of my colleagues. I had also anticipated that I might have an active role in some events. Although I had thought the latter less likely than the former, it turned out that I wrote more about events where I was one of the key players. This included a situation involving a delay with a parcel delivered to me at USCo and the administrative barriers that I discovered. Participants at meetings where I was permitted to attend as an observer seemed to be unaffected by my presence, which I put down to two reasons. First, many of these meetings required their full concentration and involved discussion about technically challenging issues to do with the software they were working on. Second, I found out later that they were used to people from other teams and organisations participating in their meetings without actively contributing. In fact, this seems to be a part of the culture of meetings which some expatriates found infuriating.

The next section, 'what I learned' was included so that I could identify themes and patterns that surfaced over time. I was also interested in how the day's events contributed to the changes in my perception and beliefs about 'Chinese creativity', whether these were in relation to people, objects or ideas, and any new knowledge that would emerge. I was particularly interested in how time spent with each team might influence the type of things I learned. I supplemented this section with the 'personal thoughts' section, where I planned to record my emotional and intellectual responses to the day's events. This section also enabled me to record behaviours and events that I had found confusing whilst they were still fresh and allowed me to process them in my mind. The act of writing down and recording particular events seemed to remove me from them to the extent that I could view them with a little distance and process them mentally. For instance, I had once given a workshop on communication where I had raised some issues that were sensitive to the participants and everybody remained resolutely silent. Their unresponsiveness provoked much anxiety within me as I began to worry about having offended my colleagues in the field. By going back to my desk and writing down the events and my thoughts and feelings about them, I managed to relieve the confusion and stress of the situation before 'debriefing' with each of the team members individually in a more comfortable, private space.

Under the section called 'questions', I sought to delve deeper into the reasons behind the way that my colleagues behaved and events that unfolded during the day. This sometimes became a checklist of information I needed to find out about the individuals, teams, and organisations I was working with, which fed into the next section, 'plans for tomorrow', where I could outline the tasks I set for the next day in response to the questions that arose from the day. I had also anticipated that during the analysis, I would be able to use this to assess my priorities during my research. In the final section, 'detailed description of particular events that seemed to stand out', I planned to write descriptive accounts of the day, paying attention to why those events had stood out for me and what it implied about mine and my colleagues' beliefs about creativity.

At the start of the field work, I sought to fill out every section of the diary. However, I quickly abandoned this and skipped sections as the daily record

began to take on the form of a narrative to enable a greater flow in my writing. However, I would still go over the sections to ensure that I did not miss anything, leaving sections blank that would have been duplicated. 'Location' for example, was often left empty as I was going to the same places and had already described them in previous entries. In this way, the earlier entries provided the details, whilst the later ones provided a greater sense of my thoughts and emotions about the events that took place. By the end of my field trip, I had written over 13,000 words in my diary entries.

A second part of the participant observation involved keeping a monthly ethnographic snapshot where I would answer the same questions around the same day each month (see Appendix B). These snapshots totaled more than 26,000 words over six months. This form of autoethnographic writing (Mizzi, 2010) enabled me to trace how my ideas evolved over the course of my fieldwork. The template consisted of four sections: relevance to the research topic, interaction with participants, self-positioning/monitoring, and reflections on generating data. Each section had between eight to 11 in-depth questions designed to make me consider the issues in a more profound analytical way than the diary allowed, as I dedicated a more concentrated amount of time to it each month. The first section, 'relevance' for instance, contained questions such as *'Why is it important for software designers to gain an understanding of the meanings associated with creativity?'* These questions provided a reminder of my purpose in the field and sensitised me to the impact of my research. In the second section, 'interaction with participants', I questioned my approach to my colleagues and other informants during the month as well as making assessments on their behaviour. The third section, 'self-positioning/monitoring' was included so that I would consider my various roles in the field and their potential impact on my judgements. The final section, 'reflections on generating data', called for me to consider my methodology for the past month.

Although it did not emerge until the analysis was undertaken, the snapshots provided an insight into the way my identity and experiences subtly changed my thoughts and beliefs about creativity. For example, over the six months, I came to see creativity less as a particular characteristic that can be assessed objectively and more as a fluid concept used in negotiations between manager and subordinate, teacher and student. By setting aside a full working day each

month to write the snapshot, I was also ensuring that I was not getting distracted and my research was not straying into other areas. However, the use of field notes was limited in the final write up as much of the material was very detailed and intimate in a way that would reveal the identities of the research participants. Instead I transposed these notes by using a more descriptive narrative to illustrate the events that are related to the thesis.

3.3.5 INTERVIEWS

I conducted semi-structured interviews since they are a good way to achieve one of the key objectives of my research, that is to understand the meanings associated with creativity for those who work in the creative industries. Taking into consideration Czarniawska's (2008: 9) point that 'Interview material is always material for studying the dominant discourse (and deviations from it),' participant observation and surveys alone would not have allowed me to capture beliefs, thoughts, and emotions to the extent that in-depth interviews could. By talking with respondents face to face and encouraging them to speak freely, I could gain 'insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important' (Bryman, 2004: 320); this enabled me to draw out the issues that were most important to the people I was working with. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 124) also suggest that by listening and asking questions, ethnographers can serve an advocating role by 'amplify[ing] the voices of those on the social margins...representing insider accounts in rhetorically powerful ways', and critiquing ideologies as they 'deconstruct accounts in order to understand how they were produced.'

Given that there seemed to be a dominant Western 'voice' that was set against less vociferous Chinese narratives, I was interested in exploring my capacity in this advocacy role. I was also intent on exploring the emergence of dominant discourses of creativity and challenging them as my theoretical explorations had already unveiled the multiplicity of meanings associated with the concept. The openness of the semi-structured interview format broadened discussion so that I could gain an insight into the various arguments for and against 'Chinese creativity' and the basis for these assertions. By listening to respondents speak freely, I was able to understand on a deeper level their values, anxieties, and the issues they feel most strongly about.

The list of open-ended questions used for the interviews evolved over the pilot interviews conducted in London and the first month of my stay in China (see Appendix C). The main question I wanted to answer was: 'What are the meanings associated with creativity and why?' I had entered the field with an initial list of questions, but within the first week realised that these had to be rephrased in order to cater to the sensitivities of the industry and the culture. The result was that my list of questions was used purely as a guide, and I phrased the questions differently depending on the situation and respondent.

The roles and experiences of expatriates in relation to indigenous workers and students tended to be fairly consistent, and the questions were aimed at revealing how their positions influence their understanding of creativity and their work environment. For example, I asked indigenous respondents 'Is it better to work for a foreign or Chinese company if you want to be creative?', but asked expatriates 'Why is the work given to local people limited to non-core operations?' and 'Why have operations in the PRC (People's Republic of China)?' when trying to find out about the type of creativity required of indigenous workers at USCo. Since many of the expatriates had not experienced working for a local company, they were unable to comment on the subject. Similarly, many indigenous respondents could not comment on the strategies of multinational companies for their Shanghai operations. However, where the indigenous worker held a senior position or appeared to know, or have an opinion on the matter, or if this issue came up whilst they were discussing another question, I would ask them for their thoughts regardless of whether they were expatriate or indigenous.

I was also careful not to persist in certain lines of questioning when interviewees appeared uncomfortable. The Cultural Revolution, for instance, arose repeatedly when discussing Chinese history and politics and their effects on creativity. Although some informants would mention it, it was clear that they were almost always unwilling to criticise the past government and the Mao regime. For example, one indigenous respondent bemoaned his parents' lack of education opportunities, but when probed, replied '*The Cultural Revolution is a sensitive topic in China*' and declined to discuss it any further. Although most of the interviews with indigenous respondents were conducted in Chinese, their list of questions was in English. This was due to particular

inconsistencies in the translation of key concepts like 'creativity' for which I sought each individual respondent's clarification before proceeding with the interview.

Apart from finding answers to the questions, I was also interested in the emotional and behavioural responses to them in relation to their positions. At the start of the interview, I would ask respondents about their background and work experience; after the interview, I would immediately find a quiet place to write as much as I could regarding their mannerisms, tone of voice, and any other behaviour that might also shed light on the way they felt about the topics we were discussing.

The interviews lasted between one to two hours, and in some cases, we would carry on over lunch or tea break. Most of the interviews with USCo employees took place in one of the meeting rooms on site. Interviews with non-USCo employees, on the other hand, had to take place wherever it was most convenient – sometimes in places that were too noisy to enable a clear audio recording to be taken. I took a flexible approach to the interview structure and allowed respondents to speak for as long as they wanted before asking the next question. In one interview, the respondent led the discussion and I followed this format in order to build trust. As he was curious about my work and had many questions for me, I did not get an opportunity to ask many questions and we had the interview over several sessions. This happened to a lesser degree with most of my colleagues at USCo and DI as the issues would also come up at different events and meetings. I also had sustained contact with many of the people I had established friendships with in the field, and we would talk via Skype and other VOIP, particularly when news items came up about China and creativity.

3.3.6 SAMPLING

For the most part, I relied on a combination of snowball sampling, targeting particular individuals based on their roles, and approaching people in various training sessions at USCo that I attended specifically so that I could meet other employees whom I would not otherwise have met. I interviewed 90 people in total, of which 30 were expatriates and 60 considered themselves indigenous Chinese. Where people straddled the two identities, I asked them which

category they preferred for the purpose of my research and recorded it accordingly, but also noted the complexity of their status in a separate column. I had initially set out to interview 60 people, 30 from each group. However, some of the respondents referred me to other people who, for the sake of politeness and fear of offending them, I decided to interview also. Figure 3.1 illustrates the split between types of respondents (See Appendix D for a more detailed table).

Figure 3.1 Interview Respondents

	IT	Design	Both	Total
Male Expatriate	15	7	3	25
Female Expatriate	2	3	0	5
Male Indigenous	33	5	3	41
Female Indigenous	8	5	6	19
Total	58	20	12	90

The small number of expatriate women working as paid employees in Shanghai as opposed to those accompanying their spouses is reflected in the sample. Although I had met more female expatriates working as lecturers at Design Institute, the difficulty in finding suitable quiet locations to conduct interviews meant that I was unable to speak with them. There were also no female expatriates who worked in both the design and IT sectors. Two of the three male expatriates straddling both sectors were entrepreneurs, whilst the third was a senior marketing manager. Three of the five indigenous workers who straddled both sectors worked as designers in the IT sector, whilst two worked as IT specialists in a design company. More interviews were conducted with practitioners in the IT sector than in design, with some crossover where respondents either worked in both or specialised in design aspects within the IT sector or vice versa. However, as I had shadowed a number of teachers and students in the design school closely, listening to their conversations in informal settings, the amount of data gathered made up for the smaller number of design respondents.

A group of people I had intended to interview, which was difficult to gain access to, were those who worked in government organisations and technology companies with a strong national identity, such as Huawei. Even the small number that I did meet informally requested that I do not use any of the data from our interaction as they were not supposed to speak to 'outsiders'.

These people are not included in Figure 3.1 and I did not use the data from our conversations, but did inform the research.

Once I had reached my target of 60, when I had also reached saturation point as the responses became overly familiar, I decided to experiment with another form of sampling where I got managers and teachers to choose the respondents for me. I would specify that I wanted to speak to three different types of employee or students, according to the Creativity Framework. Without telling them about the Creativity Framework, I asked for the senior person to choose the three different 'types' of employee or student: one who is good at ideas but not execution, one who is good at execution but took longer to have an idea, and one who is good at both. I requested that the senior person not tell me which person was which until after the interview, in order to see if I could 'guess' their 'creative personality type' from my impressions of them during our interview. My assessment matched the managers' and teachers' in seven out of nine instances.

3.3.7 LIMITS

As the interviews mostly took place in specific settings under restricted time allocations, it was sometimes difficult to go back to the respondent and ask for clarification, particularly if the respondent occupied a senior position and access could only be gained through a personal assistant. As I was working on the same site for six months, I had the opportunity to interview some people more than once, which enabled me to build rapport and gain a deeper understanding of the issues. Although I had a digital recorder, I only have a small number of recordings as the respondents mostly said that they would prefer not to be recorded. I also found that the presence of a recorder seemed to make some respondents uncomfortable and impeded free expression. Furthermore, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 187) point out: 'audio recording does not provide a perfect and comprehensive record.'

There was also a risk, in the interviews, of influencing the answers from respondents due to the way they were phrased; the way I carried myself might also have led them to tell me what they may have thought I wanted to hear. I was careful not to pose any leading questions during the design of the interview, and when testing it in the pilot, asked respondents if they felt the

questions were seeking particular responses or assumed a particular position on an issue. However, I was also aware that my status as a foreign researcher who is also ethnically Chinese may have influenced some of the responses. For example, although I did not want to reinforce the Western/Chinese divide, there were still a small number of instances where both indigenous and Western respondents assumed I was empathising with them. On one occasion, an indigenous respondent went so far as to say that ‘毕竟我们都是自己人’ (*after all, you are one of us*) when the conversation digressed into differences between Western and Chinese attitudes towards familial obligations.

3.3.8 LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

Temple and Young (2004) point to the methodological and epistemological challenges which arise from the recognition that people who use a different language may perceive things differently, arguing that there are implications associated with relative positions within language hierarchies when working with people who speak different languages. Temple (1997: 607) also argues that translation/ interpretation issues should not remain mainly a matter of concern to linguists as ‘language constructs as well as describes a society.’ It was partly an awareness of these issues that led me to decide to conduct the interviews with indigenous respondents in Mandarin. As many of the respondents have senior managers or teachers who used English as the working language, one reason I consciously chose to use Mandarin was to be ‘on the same level’ as them so as not to be associated with the people who were above them in the work or school hierarchy. Also, I believed that in using their own language, indigenous respondents would be more forthcoming with opinions and the interview would flow more smoothly, as some respondents were shy about speaking English. Although by using a different language, I was faced with the potential problem of trying to present perspectives that might not translate adequately into English, I persisted with this decision as I believe it is more important to establish a better rapport with the informants.

Another problem faced by the use of another language in the research involves the differences between translation, interpretation, and representation. This has been discussed by many scholars who have an interest in the use of multiple languages in qualitative research (Temple, 2005;

Müller, 2007; Gent, 2014). Traditionally, scholars prefer to apply 'translation' to the written product and 'interpretation' to the oral product (Nicholson, 1995). However, the difference between the two terms begins to blur when scholars start referring to 'oral translation' and 'literal interpretation' as distinct forms of interpretation, the choice of which may distort the intended meaning and disadvantage the speaker (Cioranu, 2007; Namakula, 2014). In more current usage, the difference between the two terms is more commonly understood as a cognitive one. A translation is often taken to mean a direct form of interpretation which confers only the words of the speaker or writer, whilst an interpretation is understood as something that results from questioning the meaning behind the speaker's or writer's words (Buhler, 2002).

Although the act of interpretation cannot be isolated from translating (Buhler, 2002), I decided early on to focus on the accuracy of the words used, that is, on translation during the interviews rather than on interpretation, which I left for later in the analysis. Due to my limited literacy in written Chinese, I wrote my notes in English during the interview, with some use of 'hanyu pinyin' (anglicised Chinese) where I could not think of the English equivalent quickly enough. This process also meant that it was quicker to type up my notes in English, since I did not have to 'translate' a second time. Where there was confusion about the words during the interview, I would ask the respondent to write the Chinese character for me. This also enabled me to go back to the etymological roots of the terms if called for. As spoken Mandarin contains many homophones, I made sure that there was always clarification where I was uncertain. Furthermore, being from Singapore, the terms and words I use are sometimes different from those used in Shanghai. This disparity also exists between northern and southern China. In the final write up, I often went back to my field notes for clarification and sometimes would rephrase the sentence for clarity and correct grammar in English, but always ensured that the original meaning remained the same.

3.3.9 ANALYSIS

I began transcribing as soon as I arrived back in the UK. As the majority of interviewees did not want our conversation to be recorded, I only had 24 transcriptions from recordings. However, as some of them were in Chinese and some of them conducted in restaurants and bars, under noisy conditions,

the task took several months. I abandoned the transcription of two interviews because they could not be heard over the background noise, relying instead on hand written notes.

The notes from the interviews and transcripts were then inputted into an Excel spreadsheet under headings that corresponded to the guide questions (see Appendix C). I also included columns for each informant's employment details, names, pseudonyms, and identity codes, as well as their contact information and notes about the time and place of the interview. I added a section with notes about my impression of the informant and other contextual information such as their mannerisms and reactions to certain questions.

Rather than using formal qualitative software, I decided to use standard word processing software for my analysis. Condie (2012) lists the benefits of using Microsoft Word as follows: 'already familiar with it, transcribed data into it, no import/export issues, on every computer I work on', and 'writing up thesis on it'. Carney *et al.* (1997), Hahn (2008) and La Pelle (2004) also provide practical instructions on how one may use simple word processors to code qualitative data. I created a master document with all the interview notes, transcripts, diary entries, and ethnographic snapshots so that I could search for themes and keywords more easily. The consolidation of all the material into a single document enabled me to read the material in a better context as I could more easily see topics and subjects discussed prior to and following the specific topic I was addressing. Furthermore, I could also see the way my diary entries and ethnographic snapshots fitted into the experience I was having on a particular day or month. I then created additional documents that reflected the major categories using the standard 'ctrl F' search function on the consolidated Word document, pasting the results onto the new document and grouping answers together in their sub-categories. During the final write up, I regularly referred back to the spreadsheet where I had included a column about non-verbal aspects of the interview such as body language, hesitation, annoyance, or sarcasm in case there were aspects of their responses that I had missed or forgotten.

For example, I was interested in how perceptions of 'Chinese education' were related to judgements of indigenous workers and students as lacking in

creativity, so I began with a search for 'education' in the consolidated document and copied all the answers onto a new Word document. I also searched in the consolidated document for related words such as 'teach' and included them in the thematic document. This enabled me to focus on perceptions and criticism of 'teaching' as a sub-category, under the theme of 'education'. When reading through this, it emerged that indigenous students are seen to be too dependent on their teachers for guidance. I then searched for words that might have come up in relation to this, such as 'spoon' for 'spoonfeeding' or 'spoonfed', and 'rely', 'reliant', and 'depend'. This might then bring out themes such as risk aversion, fear of criticism, and lack of initiative. This method of organising the data enabled me to understand the context within which these associations between creativity and 'Chinese education' were reinforced, as well as the basis for which assertions about Chinese creativity were being made.

3.4 THE SURVEY

As part of the initial desire to construct a taxonomy of creativity and capture the different meanings associated with creativity, I designed and launched an online survey asking respondents for their opinions about creative persons, processes, places, and products. Although there were only 56 respondents, the survey informed Chapter 6, where I propose that types of creativity be conceptualised as sitting along a spectrum of chaos and order. The survey also drew out the link between creativity and observable behaviour, explaining why Chinese workers are sometimes perceived by their expatriate colleagues as being less creative than Westerners. In this section, I explain the use of a web survey as part of my methodology and discuss the process of designing the survey and the initial findings.

3.4.1 WEB SURVEY

A common argument for using web surveys is their ability to reach a large portion of the population (Schmidt, 1997; Cook *et al.*, 2000; Couper, 2000), particularly when the targeted respondents, such as creative industry workers, have easy access to the Internet. Given my limited time in the field, it would not have been feasible to administer the survey personally with each respondent. Interviewees were asked instead to take part in the survey so that additional questions did not take up extra time during my sessions with them.

Another benefit of using a web survey is that there is no need to then enter the data in a separate database later on. By using Survey Gizmo (<http://www.surveygizmo.co.uk/>), which provides a free online survey service, I was able to launch the survey without having my own server or needing to write my own software. The service also provided protection from duplicate responses by allowing only one response per IP address.

3.4.2 DESIGN AND PILOT

The survey evolved over two pilot versions before a final version was launched in October 2009, subsequent to my return from the field. I had begun designing the survey prior to my fieldwork with the intention of categorising radical, ordered and chaotic creativities through a series of questions reflecting the various and sometimes contradictory set of ideas associated with the notion of creativity. However, the three concepts are highly abstract and required a long explanation at the beginning of the survey, which were off-putting to respondents of the first pilot. Based on the feedback from the first pilot, I decided to simplify the survey by asking respondents about characteristics they associated with creativity. In the second pilot, all fields were compulsory and respondents were given a true/false selection. There was also a Chinese version linked to the English version. However, the response rate was very low and the high abandonment rates led me to work on a third, final version. I also decided to abandon the Chinese version as it yielded even lower response rates and many of the Chinese people chose to do the English version anyway.

The final survey (Appendix E) was split into two main sections. The first section had 14 questions about creativity and the second section had seven questions about the respondent's background. The first section concerned the four Ps: personality, process, place, and product. Respondents were asked to cite examples to stimulate their thinking about the subject and to provide a reference point; they were then asked to fill in a five point Likert scale table based on the most creative example they cited. The table offered 12 'characteristics' that were drawn from observations in the field, based on four themes. For each theme, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with three statements, each of which loosely related to radical, ordered or chaotic creativity. For example, Question Two asked respondents to rate the extent to

which they agree or disagree with each of the 12 characteristics of creative products listed in the table, which were based on four themes: origin, utility, breadth, and development. Under the theme of origin, they would agree or disagree with the following statements: “was the first of its kind”, “was an added improvement on an old product”, and “was an old product applied to a new use”.

I included an open question asking respondents to write about their opinion on the importance of creativity in order to determine the value they placed on it and whether they see it as intrinsically valuable or as a means to an end. I also included two questions asking respondents to give the words for creativity and innovation in their native language. I saw the need for this when I noticed that there were inconsistencies in the way that Chinese people interpreted the two concepts whilst I was in the field. It was difficult to find agreement as to what creativity and innovation translates to in Mandarin and I was interested in how the ranges of answers reflect the complexity of the concepts. In the final part of the first section, respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with statements about the relationship between creativity and innovation on a five point Likert scale. This was to establish whether they perceived a difference or any causal links between the two.

The second part of the survey asked respondents to answer questions about their employment, age and nationality so that I could see whether their background influenced their responses. The final question was about whether I had interviewed them in case their knowledge about my research influenced their ideas about creativity. I decided to limit the survey to a single web page in order to reduce dropout rates. The survey was kept live for six months from October 2008 to April 2009, and I closed it when the number of responses remained at 54 for a month. I had used social networking sites, word of mouth, and various human resources departments to recruit respondents and had exhausted my resources when I decided to take the survey off the Internet. There was a high rate of abandonment. 407 people dropped out of the survey, mainly due its length. In all there were 56 responses, two of which were incomplete.

I was interested in how respondents’ backgrounds might influence the

meanings associated with creativity and had predicted that respondents from 'ordered' backgrounds like China would have a bias towards answers that are characteristic of 'ordered' creativity. However, the high levels of variability in their backgrounds made it difficult to generate correlational data. The respondents came from a wide range of geographical backgrounds including Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe as well as industries such as education, finance, software, manufacturing and advertising. I did not completely abandon the survey, however, as the data generated from it was still useful in establishing the meanings associated with creativity.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed my choice of research methods and site selection in order to gain a deeper insight into why particular discourses of creativity are applied in the working relationships between expatriates and indigenous employees. I shed light on the difficulties in gaining access to particular organisations and the subsequent inclusion of a second institution. I also discussed the use of participant observation and the ways in which I documented my experiences; these allowed me an insight into the work of the IT professional and brought about an awareness of the changes in my own thoughts and beliefs about creativity that arose from my interactions with informants and participation in events. I also elaborated on the use of in-depth interviews, the design of my questions and the strategies I applied when interviewing people from different backgrounds whilst trying to keep the research consistent. I argued that although both these methods have their limitations, the combined use and the large sample helped to compensate. The use of Mandarin in interviews with indigenous informants brought up some concerns which I have also discussed. In the penultimate section, I discussed the use of the web survey, which informed the research, although it was not used in the final write up. The results of the analysis will be discussed in the remainder of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4: CORPORATE DISCOURSES OF CREATIVITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A long standing feud had arisen between Tom and his colleague, Jin, which started this way: Tom had believed that Jin would complete a certain task, because the latter had not said anything when given the job in the meeting. However, according to Jin, he did not agree to taking on the job. He had simply kept silent. Whilst Tom assumed that silence meant agreement, Jin also assumed that the absence of acknowledgement meant that he had not agreed to take on the role. When the time came to present their work, both Jin and Tom blamed each other for lack of clear communication. Jin sees this as an injustice, whilst Tom is confused and tries to attribute cultural reasons for Jin's silence in the meeting and refusal to do the job.

Jin, on the other hand, thinks that as it was not in his area, he should not be given the work. Furthermore, he did not agree with the decisions made in the meeting, but as he was not asked, he saw no reason to volunteer for something no one else wanted to do. Tom is annoyed at himself because he had not been specific, but feels he should not have had to be because it is obvious what needs to be done. He believes that this would not have happened in a US team and tells Jin that he is stupid. Jin takes offence and the next time they have a meeting, refuses to contribute. The cycle repeats itself.

The above is a composite account of separate events that were narrated by respondents from various companies, backgrounds, and ethnicities in the research. It illustrates how a small misunderstanding can escalate into a long-

term feud between colleagues. Whilst disagreements such as this one may be familiar to all teamwork settings, tensions arising from essentialist beliefs about 'The Foreign' and 'The Local' contribute a further layer of complexity within offshore operations.

Using USCo, a multinational IT company with software operations in Shanghai as my case study, I argue in this chapter that expatriates' expectations and aspirations play a key role in the construction of their ideas about the creative, and that these influence their perceptions of local creativity. I also examine responses to this by indigenous workers, shedding light on the use of creativity as both tool and currency in negotiations of power between individuals. I suggest that essentialist beliefs about creativity stem from cross-cultural misunderstandings that arise from the tensions of interacting with the 'other'. However, extended contact between seemingly straightforward dichotomous roles, such as manager and managed, expatriate and indigenous, produces anxieties within individuals trying to be 'useful' members of the creative workforce.

I present five discourses from Chinese and non-Chinese expatriates on 'Local Chinese' creativity, proposing that the roles they perform and their attempts and frustrations at producing self-governing, creative corporate subjects dictate their assessment of local creativity. These five different discourses by no means encompass all beliefs about creativity, but were selected because they emerged frequently from expatriates' responses when questioned about indigenous workers' perceived lack of creativity in comparison to their Western counterparts. During the fieldwork, ethnicity and management seniority emerged as the key determinants of expatriate experiences when interacting with indigenous workers, which in turn influenced their perceptions of the latter's perceived lack of creativity. Many of the respondents' comments reflect how personal experiences and expatriates' ideas of themselves contribute to the construction of their beliefs about Chinese creativity.

Ong (2006) points to the programme of 'reengineering the Chinese Soul' as a way of transforming educated indigenous employees into Western corporate subjects; she also highlights the practice amongst multinational corporations of hiring young graduates who can be easily moulded and integrated into the

company culture. There is however a management gap (Zedwitz, 2004) that multinational companies tend to fill with third country nationals or 海归 (hai gui - sea turtles) who have returned to China after a period of time overseas in more 'Westernised' countries, as they are thought to be better intermediaries between the foreign culture and indigenous workers. These ethnically Chinese expatriates, educated in more Westernised parts of Asia and the West, are seen by top management as being effective managers of local human resources; they are assumed to have a better understanding of 'local culture' whilst also being 'seasoned practitioners' of Western corporate culture.

By distinguishing Chinese expatriates from non-Chinese expatriates, I highlight how one's cultural background may influence the acceptance or rejection of particular dominant Western creativity discourses. I explore the discourses of creativity as articulated by ethnically Chinese expatriates and consider the experience of two expatriates, selected because they occupy positions in the same level as two of the three non-Chinese expatriates above. Chinese expatriates here refer to expatriates who identify themselves as Chinese. There was one ethnically Chinese expatriate who saw himself as completely 'Western'; he is not included in this category.

I use full pseudonyms in some instances, such as 'Richard Ma' and 'Chew Lee Yong' to reflect the practice amongst Chinese USCo employees of addressing Chinese people who are senior or have a reputation for their expertise by their full names as a sign of respect. The reason I mainly use expatriate narratives here is because their representation of indigenous workers as less creative reveals more about them than the workers they are trying to represent (Said, 2003), and also because my research concerns 'how particular groups of workers emerged as a conceivable object through various attempts to delineate, understand and govern them' (Prince & Dufty, 2009: 1747). This does not suggest that indigenous respondents passively accepted assessments by their foreign colleagues that they were less creative. Indeed, their complex responses, which are discussed throughout this chapter, reveal an uncertainty about their status, expected behaviours, and relationships with their managers and employers. Their objectification also appears to have a disorienting effect, making them more susceptible to inculcation into USCo values. I am interested in how this objectification is enacted within the five

discourses that are discussed here. Furthermore, expatriates were more vociferous about the perceived lack of creativity amongst indigenous employees than indigenous respondents.

In each section, I examine how tensions between Western discourses of creativity and 'Chinese values' are uncovered in the collision between different approaches to work, production and productivity, and relationships between colleagues. In doing so, I maintain Prince and Dufty's (2009: 1753) proposal that 'In the face of myriad interpretations, resistances, subversions, misunderstandings and game-playing, programmes of government may result in quite unexpected micro economic geographies that can be perceived through ethnographic methodologies'. In the remainder of this chapter I discuss the power flows within these 'micro economic geographies' in the USCo Shanghai site, which is organised to promote employee creativity by facilitating flexibility and easy exchange of ideas. However, I am unable to describe USCo's offices here as they had an official global policy regarding its office spaces which would reveal the identity of the organisation. I conclude this chapter by proposing that the governmentality project at USCo, particularly with regards to producing creative workers, is most effectively carried out within a romanticised, traditional Chinese context of the 师父 (shifu – master) – 徒弟 (tudi – disciple) relationship. However, this relationship requires a commitment to self-governance and transformation which intrudes into other non-work areas of corporate subjects' lives.

4.2 CREATIVITY AS CUSTOMER SERVICE

Gloria had held the most senior position in one of USCo's Shanghai operations for nearly three years before moving to a different company and returning to the West. She had travelled extensively, and lived and worked in many countries, but found that China was '*one of the hardest*'. Although she said she enjoyed living there, she was quick to point out that working was different. At the start of the interview, she proclaimed, '*I would not have chosen to have headquarters in PRC because I need people to be creative. Entrepreneurs and social enterprise dealing with the world need lots of creativity. We are customer oriented.*' Whilst she conceded that '*outside work, there's a lot of creativity*', she was frustrated by the indigenous employees' lack of initiative, which she believed is more common overseas:

'In Japan, they have good services and they value and prioritise the customer and take care of the customer experience. A sense of entitlement reigns here. They spent their whole lives being told [what to do] and people will opt out if given a choice. There's no paranoia here and no urgency or hunger to show value.'

At USCo, employees are urged to adopt the concept 'Internal Customers', popular in multinational companies. Gay and Salaman (1992) argue that such a culture of 'The Internal Customer', prevalent across restructured organisations across the US and UK, replaces bureaucratic regulation and stability with the constant uncertainties of the market, and requires enterprise from employees. It is within this context that indigenous employees at USCo are represented as 'uncreative'. Gloria is referring not just to consumers of USCo's products, but to any employee who has made a request to another colleague. For Gloria and many of the expatriates who provided similar responses about service quality when questioned about local creativity, the absence of 'customer care' is sufficient evidence that indigenous workers are not creative. Within this discourse, the satisfaction of the customer as 'sovereign consumer, co-producer, emotional vampire, aggressor, management accomplice' (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005: 685) is positioned as the objective of all work and creative endeavours. As the 'end user' the service customer becomes the final judge of quality. Workers who are unable or unwilling to adapt their roles to maximise customer satisfaction are portrayed as less creative, as they limit their service to their job specifications and cause customer discontent. Expatriate USCo engineer Sam, for example, claims that *'They don't like to waste brain cells on things not related to the task. They don't think about the bigger picture. It drives the service industry. There's no service ethic and background'*. Similarly, when I interviewed another USCo engineer, Terrance, in a restaurant, he pointed out:

'I think in places like this where it's mainly service people, they have a whole different attitude, like the girl over there who was in the middle of waiting on us and goes wanders away and is doing something else. In Western² culture you're dependent on a tip, you would never do such a thing and you know that your boss

². There was a tendency amongst USCo employees to use Western to mean the USA.

would fire you if he saw you do such a thing.'

Expatriates who engage in this discourse interpret poor customer service as the effect of an absence of motivation which would have generated creative ideas to help service workers adapt their performance to the customer's requirements. Clarence, an executive in a PR company declares: *'look at the waiters and waitresses in restaurants and sales assistants, look at their service attitude. They can't be bothered with you. I think these people basically got no drive, or rather they don't have much ambition'*. Even for indigenous USCo employees like Josephine, service reflects passion for the work, which is thought to be necessary for creative performance: *'Service occupations here are very bad. They are not respected and nor do people have a service mentality. They are just doing it for the short term so they don't care. There is no warmth or passion towards their jobs'*.

Training is often prescribed as the way to nurture creativity in China's service sectors. Indeed, when asked how one should nurture or hire creative employees, the term 'customer service' is often synonymous with 'creativity', despite the reality that such training often imposes a uniformity in employee behaviours towards the customer. As an example of creativity training for indigenous workers, expatriate Sam cited *'programmes in foreign companies like Starbucks [where] service is getting better'*. As the in-house trainer for indigenous USCo employees, Ben recommends that *'The best way to really do your manager the best service [is to] train that employee to go: "this is the strategy we should do. These are the tactics. Search [for myself how to do it in the best way possible]!"'* Such training often involves instilling the worker with a US-centric sense of corporate citizenship, under the guise of teaching indigenous workers how to be creative in order to serve the Chinese economy at large. This is articulated by expatriate manager Lee Yong, who said that *'[Creativity is important] in order to be more competitive in this international stage. Somehow China has to find a way to transform from the manufacturing oriented kind of business to more service oriented'*. The notions of 'customer service' and 'service oriented industry' are often conflated within the discourse of creativity as customer service. Although the indigenous employee might not be working in the service oriented industry, his or her unsatisfactory customer service is taken as an indication that the Chinese workforce has not yet fully

'progressed' from the manufacturing industry.

Embedded within the discourse of creativity as customer service is the representation of foreigners as customers to whom indigenous workers must provide satisfaction, cleaving the population into two separate categories of server and serviced within clear class based boundaries. In response to the question of where Chinese creativity stands in comparison to other countries for example, indigenous engineer Zhao Ke said: *'We are beginning to treat foreigners better too. We are developing a service mentality'*. It appears that the call for indigenous workers to be more creative is not to turn them into self-actualising Maslowians but a demand that they project their servitude towards the foreign consumer whose satisfaction partially represents the state's mandate for economic growth. Indeed, Chinese-looking expatriates like Clarence, Carol, and Ken complained about having to exaggerate their foreignness in public places in order to be given the service they are used to, since foreigners tend to receive preferential treatment (Petracca, 1990).

The performance of the role of 'sovereign consumer' (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005) is laden with unfulfilled, unrealistic expectations that even Western service workers have difficulty meeting, precisely because it is based upon an idealised, imagined script in which creative service workers draw upon all their resources in order to satisfy the deserving customer. As Bolton and Houlihan (2005: 698) point out: 'customer sovereignty is by and large, mythical, but most notably of all, that despite the powerful discourse of enterprise, neither producers nor consumers believe in the myth.... They are genuinely frustrated and fully aware that they are far from sovereign'. However, in a 'culture of enterprise' (Cremin, 2003) where consumers and producers share a common identity based on the 'enterprising self', agents willingly collaborate in their own exploitation (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005; Cremin, 2003; du Gay, 1996). Rather than passively accepting a position of servitude in the pursuit of foreigners' spending power, Chinese workers' participation in these performances suggests an adoption of particular scripts that portray them as enterprising and creative agents.

The representation of the indigenous worker who does not prioritise customer satisfaction opposite the ideal creative, risk taking, enterprising employee

seems to have been transmitted to the corporate USCo site mainly from expatriate experiences outside of their work, like dining out, retail shopping, and buying train tickets. This suggests that experiences of poor service from 'uncreative workers' have become the reference point for many of the professional interactions with indigenous workers. The project of turning indigenous workers at USCo into creative contributors thus becomes couched within the language of consumerism and enterprise.

In their critique of the way customer service is misrepresented, Bolton and Houlihan (2005: 699) argue that 'By placing actors' experiences of the service encounter firmly within political, economic and social structures, it becomes possible to recognize the variety of means employed to mould the encounter according to economic imperatives'. In the analysis of the discourse of creativity as customer service, it appears that one of these means involves the appeal to corporate subjects' desire to be seen as creative workers. This discourse is proselytised to workers in order to transform them into self-actualising, self-governing agents with a personal interest in servicing the customer. The training programmes which employees at USCo and some foreign restaurants have to undergo are designed to rouse them into a state of excitement over the pleasure they may provide to the customer. On an occasion when I was dining with a friend at one of these restaurants in the late afternoon, when there were very few customers, I witnessed a training session in which the expatriate manager/trainer used role play, laughter inducing games, and motivational language to emphasise the personal satisfaction and pride that is promised when providing customers with a pleasurable dining experience.

Within the discourse of creativity as customer service, the feuds between expatriates and indigenous workers are often interpreted as a failure by the indigenous worker to provide a satisfactory service to expatriates, the internal customers at USCo. According to this perspective, although the indigenous employee might not have agreed to take on the task, s/he had been allocated the responsibility, and their failure to inform the expatriate that no action had been taken indicates a lack of service mentality, which could either be the result or cause of a lack of creativity. Expatriate software entrepreneur Larry demonstrated this perspective when he said:

'We need to teach people that if you give them freedom, they need to manage responsibilities between them. It's hard if they feel they don't have the training. Difficult for them... We're in the service industry and I have to train them to call the customer if anything goes wrong'.

The discourse of creativity as customer service obscures the tension between expatriates and indigenous workers by shifting attention away from the power struggle and bringing the focus to the absence of a customer service mentality towards internal customers. Whilst the training offered by managers at USCo and other foreign companies I visited in Shanghai provided indigenous employees with a set of skills for servicing the customer, it also places responsibility on these employees to adjust and adapt their behaviour and keep a check on their emotional responses in order to please the customer. In this way, 'various normative control devices obscure the conflict and even the more empowered workers become self-disciplining service providers' (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005: 688). Customer service is therefore not in itself an indication of an individual's overall creativity, unless one applies a dramaturgical lens in which the unconvincing performance of actors providing the services could be interpreted as an inability to act the part due to a limited repertoire. However, the demands of what workers should do to bring about customer satisfaction indicates there is a certain type of creativity demanded by the expatriate consumer in their interactions with the indigenous worker. Complaints about the lack of appropriate customer service in China seem to arise from a demand for more spontaneity and willingness to act beyond one's remit in order to achieve customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the discourse of creativity as customer service is by no means accepted by all respondents. Indigenous engineer Beth, and senior Chinese expatriate Frederick for example, agree that customer service is lacking in China, but separate this from their understanding of creativity. Beth said:

'PRC people are very disciplined, especially software and software education. We are not short of ability, but we don't have business understanding. No concept of target customer and customer base or market research.'

Frederick, meanwhile, suggested that service creativity might not be

genuinely creative given the absence of materiality in the provision of services:

'India is mainly service, China is mainly manufacturing. Service is human to human so it's more obvious... [services like] financial innovations can be faked, its achievements can be faked. It's a service creativity but might be false. I feel that China is very creative but the things we create can't be seen. For example construction. The speed is faster than in the US... To be able to finish faster is also creative.'

4.3 CREATIVITY AS SELF-MOTIVATION

Senior technical expatriate John bemoans the poor service in China but separates this from creativity, seeing it as a problem that stems from the absence of self-motivation, which is thought to provide workers with an intrinsic desire to perform better. He said: *'There are good people too, they are just not service oriented... There is pressure to be manager for respect and money. They're very status conscious'*. For John, it is the absence of self-motivation that leads to indigenous employees' lack of curiosity and their easy satisfaction with substandard solutions. On being asked why the Chinese are perceived as less creative, he responded:

'They have difficulty in searching. They need to be creative to do searches and have mind maps. Everything to them is in a fixed space. They are surface oriented and can't make good associations. They don't understand the web of interactions and can't link things. For me, I'll read and delve and put references and like a fish eye, have a perspective and then narrow it down. There also isn't a breadth of reading. I don't limit things, everything is relevant. In terms of depth, they don't go deep either or try to understand it to a point where they can use it. They don't ask why and how. In the past, there's not so much creativity in engineering, but now systems are more complex and need understanding and being holistic... We need breadth and people here are very compartmentalised. They do try but the ones that don't are the large majority. They say yes but I can see they're switching off. They don't ask why and if I tell them, they switch off immediately.'

In a separate conversation John was complimentary about his indigenous colleague Ke Xian, because he often sees technical computing books on the latter's desk that are unrelated to his actual duties and sees him reading them during his break times. He favoured working with colleagues who did this since he saw it as an indication of self-motivation and self-improvement which enhances employee performance. Furthermore, he believed that such motivation leads to a greater breadth of knowledge in the employee, making them more likely to present creative solutions. For John, creativity means:

'that when given a problem, someone can immediately think of 10 different ways of solving it or 10 different ways of using something. It requires daydreaming and inspiration. When faced with problems here, they always only present one option; I want to see three, one that's not so wacko, one that's deadpan and one that's wacko.'

However, there appears to be a shortage of employees at USCo Shanghai who daydream about their work. Instead, a pervasive belief amongst expatriate managers is that the Chinese workforce is dominated by employees who are motivated solely by status, which is used to explain their self-limiting behaviour at work. John complained: *'One guy might have a good idea but has not looked to see if it's been done before. They tend to jump at the first solution'*, adding that *'Experts here are people who have a copy of the "Dummies Guide to Linux" et cetera'*.

This belief that lack of self-motivation limits creativity is echoed by many of John's expatriate colleagues like Oliver, a USCo engineer who said that:

'PRC has a lot of these things stacked up that are counter to good engineering. There are many ways to do things. Some more efficient than others. But lots of things hold it behind. Need to find motivated people with skills. They exist but are hard to find in the open market.'

Like John, Oliver has a preference for self-motivated workers:

'with some of the really good guys, I see them reading heavy textbooks about computing during lunch time that is not directly

related to their work. This impresses me because it's rare and it shows genuine interest.'

Expatriate entrepreneur Barry also ties self-motivation to various characteristics associated with creativity:

'[they have difficulty] being able to figure out how to get from point a to d, being able to think how to get there. To think about possibilities, their ramifications, and not thinking in a straight line, not being told what to do. There's an absence of self-motivation, risk taking, willingness to do it differently, and resourcefulness.'

Within this discourse, self-motivation, with undertones of personal self-improvement, is elevated above other forms of motivation such as the pursuit of status. Self-motivation suggests a personal investment in work which drives workers to use their own resources to broaden their knowledge of the subject. O'Donnell *et al.* (2006: 5) suggest that these

'self-learning and self-management discourses that rely on the inner motivation of employees to develop themselves, often in their own time [are] spurred on by an organisational rhetoric espousing the benefits of career development and advancement, but promising nothing definitive.'

Other, non-intrinsic forms of motivation are thus blamed for poor performance even though respondents suggested they can be just as effective. Expatriate senior manager Carrie for instance was surprised at the performance of workers whom she thought were driven by national pride:

'They are not motivated by a lot: money, title, making sure that they look good. It's mostly ambition and to be a manager. Being able to go home and be proud of the steps that were made and the accolades that are received are most important... The other thing I really noticed the last four months, just because my role's changed, there's a subset of people who are very motivated about making China better. That surprised me very much, I mean people who are Chinese citizens who want to work on China products specifically. People that I'd never seen step up lead and have contributed more of themselves to those types of

projects. And I think that the motivation is truly wanting to contribute to something successful and national pride. And this is to do with the little guys in their 30s so it surprised me a little bit. There's a couple of people in particular who have asked to be on these types of projects.'

She pointed out that employees work harder before the Chinese New Year holidays, when they usually go back to their extended family:

'I'm surprised that our work cycle isn't the same over the holidays. Before they go home they want to be able to say look what I've done, I've got a promotion or I got a big reward.'

Design student Roy also believes that it was financial motivation that drove China's creativity and economic rise after the Mao years:

'[Creativity] needs a good brave attitude. If I only have RMB10, I have to go out and make more. In the 70s and 80s they had nothing so had to go out and 闯 (chuang - be pioneering). Need braveness. After Cultural Revolution there was a lot of people who did that. Now it's stable, people are not so motivated because they already have what they want.'

Given that other forms of motivation can also encourage creativity in workers, the question arises as to why self-motivation dominates the discourse amongst managers who attribute the lack of creativity to its absence. Several scholars (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2006; Evetts, 2003; Miller & Rose, 1995) provide possible explanations which tie self-motivation to the concept of an idealised employee who actively takes personal responsibility in producing the best quality work s/he is capable of as part of a programme of self-improvement. Tracy and Trethewey (2005), for instance, point to the creation of particular identities such as the entrepreneurial worker in managerialist discourses 'that encompass an organizationally prescribed ideal process that produces an organizationally defined self that comes to be understood and experienced as real and of one's own choosing' (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005: 176). This 'entrepreneurial worker' has also been described as 'an enterprising individual in search of meaning, responsibility, and a sense of personal achievement in life, and hence in work' (Miller & Rose, 1995: 454).

The personality of the employee becomes an important aspect of the discourse of creativity as self-motivation, because embedded in the concept of the entrepreneurial worker is the ideal of an individual who is motivated by excellence for its own sake, which reflects 'the right type' of ambition. Indigenous USCo manager Jared, for instance, was confident that *'Self-motivation depends on personality. Creative people are more ambitious, stubborn, ruthless, but not necessarily more selfish. They are self-motivated, and won't be content being stuck. Personality is important'*. Likewise Anna, a team leader at a local IT company, felt that *'personality has an influence. You have to be curious and maybe less logical but can make connections easily. I think everyone can be creative but the environment moulds them'*. It thus becomes surprising for expatriate managers when employees who have interests and display ability outside work are not as outstanding in their work. Expatriate manager Carrie for instance seems unable to reconcile the switch in persona that takes place in individual employees between work and non-work environments:

'I see it [creativity] outside of work is where I see it. In photography or dance or music right? People are willing to stand up and sing but not do a presentation. I see a lot of creativity outside of work but it's not thoughtful. I don't hang out with people at work but I hear about what they did over the weekend and they take adventures which I wouldn't expect.'

Carrie's surprise appears to stem from an assumption that personal development outside work should be construed as part of the worker's employability, even where activities are not completely related to work. Like many foreign companies, USCo provides opportunities for self-development such as team sports and community volunteering events where she has heard people excel. This construction of self-development is embedded in many expatriates' beliefs about employability, but has not transmitted to indigenous employees, some of whom see USCo's provision of leisure activities as an opportunity and service provided by their employers solely for their benefit. During my time at USCo, I initiated a musical string ensemble where five indigenous employees and I met regularly for music practice. These employees, along with others commented on how fortunate they are to be

working for a foreign company that provides such services for its staff, without mentioning self-improvement or personal development. Indeed, for many Chinese students and workers, extra-curricular activities are seen as a distraction from their studies and their work rather than a contribution to an overall programme of self-development.

O'Donnell *et al.* (2006) point to a less benevolent motive behind such organisational provisions. They argue that whilst humanism in human resource development (HRD) emphasises employees' inner motivation to develop themselves in the name of a 'mutual gains agenda' which enhances the relationship between the organisation and its staff, 'much humanist discourse on HRD is one-sided, politically naïve, often poorly informed, and perhaps latently strategic'. This is exemplified in indigenous manager Anna's comment that *'It's important to let the staff know that the development of the company is also aligned with the personal or career development of the staff. This will motivate them'*.

However, as O'Donnell *et al.* (2006) argue, human resource development discourses that emphasise employability also place responsibility for career development solely on the employee, freeing the organisation to pursue radical management change so as to increase profits and raise stock prices, in the absence of the concept of a 'job for life'. The management of employee development is thus political, pertaining as it does to power relations between individuals and their employers. However, it would be overly simplistic to represent indigenous workers as the exploited subjects of an uneven distribution of power, since many do separate their work from other aspects of their lives and adopt a pragmatic approach to human resource development for their own advancement. This may relate to their career, intrinsic motivation, salary increase, or compliance with company culture in the interest of peaceful existence within the organisation.

Furthermore, self-motivation and self-development are not guarantees of success. Members of one of the teams I observed at USCo, for instance, displayed high levels of intrinsic and self-motivation in the enthusiasm they showed for their projects, and all of them pursued other interests. However,

over time, they became demoralised by the constant rejection of their proposals, which they attributed to their inability, as 'technical people', to convince senior management of the profitability of their ideas. The team was eventually disbanded.

Beneath the discourse of creativity as self-motivation, there remains a recognition that ultimately it is financial rewards that determine employee motivation. In response to my question about how to keep employees motivated and passionate about their work, Senior Chinese expatriate Colin lamented the fall in share prices across all IT companies, made their stock options unattractive to workers as they were no longer financially rewarding:

'In the old days, it was the way the staff doubles every two years. During those boom years, when everybody was buying PCs for the first time, [USCo] was a great company to work for. Whatever stuff you buy, basically once every two years, it would double and split. It was a very financially rewarding company. Obviously that era sort of went away with the bust in 99, 2000 right? ...Ever since 2000 all these major companies have pretty much flatlined. And so options are not worth anything to anybody, and people are not getting the financial reward, and particularly with a lot of the headcount trimming, it's not as good compared to those old times.'

Amongst some of the indigenous respondents, self-motivated creativity is also seen as a luxury. Yang Guang, for instance, speaks of creativity as an inherent quality in all individuals, but its expression depends on favourable circumstances:

'Ambition is the crucial factor. If you know what will make you happy then you are motivated. If you just accept and live and die, such people don't care about creativity... Creativity exists everywhere, like some part in your body. You might be able to use it and express it naturally or you might need pressure or guidance to push that creativity out of the body. Maybe creativity is something like a tap. You turn it on and water will come out, turn it off and it will stop. Some types of personalities can be more creative. For example ambitious people know what will

make them happy. If they're in such state, they'll do it naturally and have more creativity. But the fact is that many will stop their creative thinking in their mid-life. Two people might have the same capacity for creativity but one stops because of divorce or a bad job.'

Yang Guang's comment suggests a Maslowian approach to creativity as a characteristic of the self-actualising individual who has had all other needs met and can afford the luxury of indulging in intrinsically motivated creative acts. Indigenous employee Zhang Yi for instance, believes that her creativity at work stems from her freedom from the responsibilities of providing for a family:

'USCo is a great place to work. I'm finding joy in my work here. Cultural standards for some people is not at that level yet, they are motivated by money because they need to eat. Everyone is different and needs to be treated differently. Creativity is a type of luxury.'

4.4 CREATIVITY AS SELF-EXPRESSION

At USCo, the discourse of creativity as self-expression advances particular modes of communication that are more aggressive than the subtle forms more commonly associated with Chinese culture. Investigation into this discourse revealed much essentialism amongst expatriate and indigenous respondents about one another. Ben for instance, a young expatriate marketing manager who also led intercultural competence training for indigenous employees relied on popular psychology to 'explain' differences between cultures where communication styles led to tensions. He said that indigenous staff who *'don't speak tend to be perceived as less creative and shy, and being shy in a corporation is usually not a good thing to be perceived as'*. In contrast, Xian Lai, an indigenous human resources manager, was one of many indigenous employees who believed that Westerners are seen as more creative because:

'They're just better at talking. We used to go to a conference with USCo HR with thousands of people. We feel that the ones that talk have a lot of superficial things to say and it had no relation to our business. They think we have less to say, but actually we have as many ideas, it's just that the style doesn't suit us. It's just that they are good at exaggerating.'

The discourse of creativity as self-expression can be separated into two streams. First is the ability to persuade others of one's own originality, as in Simonton's (1991) proposed addition to the four Ps: person, process, place, and product, which many Chinese respondents believed was not a reflection of true creativity. Second is the way that outspoken people are perceived to be more willing to take risks than quiet people. I will begin by introducing the beliefs associated with each of these streams before discussing their implications for power relations between the employees and the organisation.

The reluctance to self-promote appears to be a part of the representation of the Chinese as introverted, humble, and cautious. Indigenous engineer Ye Lai believed that the Chinese are perceived as less creative because *'Maybe it has to do with our personality. We don't like to talk a lot in front of other people about our own work'*. Whilst Ye Lai and Xian Lai represent their quietness as a form of humility, expatriate managers tend to discuss it in terms of a deficiency which needs to be trained out of indigenous employees. Expatriate manager Daniel, for instance, asserted that *'They are not less creative, they're just not comfortable about talking'*, before going on to explain how USCo Shanghai has held innovation competitions in the past to encourage staff to assert their presence and promote their ideas. Whilst this had a temporary effect of bringing out employees' ideas, *'There's something stopping them talking about it. I don't know if they can catch up [with the US]'*.

Extroversion and bold self-expression is also seen as a means of gathering ideas through frequent interaction with other people. This view was held by employees at different levels, such as senior expatriate manager Colin who said: *'I think by nature of the fact that the US people are always talking with each other and with customers. They are exposed to more. And this is where creativity comes in right?'* Likewise, indigenous engineer Paul believed that:

'People who are more open and cheerful have more ideas because they have more interaction. Those who are less open don't have as many opportunities to see new ideas. They need to chat with others. My personal experience comes from observing the new graduates. Some of them don't talk to many people. Older people have had contact with more people, so

they have more ideas.'

However, as Yang Guang points out, extroversion alone does not make particular individuals more creative: *'Many people think extroverts are more creative because they talk a lot but many introverted people also creative because they can be alone and focus and think for a long time'.*

The aversion to direct open communication, especially in group meetings, is also frequently interpreted by expatriates as conflict avoidance, or as a 'face saving' strategy on the part of indigenous colleagues; both indicate an unwillingness to take risks, which is seen to be directly related to creativity (Beck, 1992; Dewett, 2007). Expatriate Ben asserted that *'the tendency to respect the management and never tell them to do something differently and just follow orders, that right there is a handcuff to let the Chinese feel the freedom to be more creative'.* Expatriate entrepreneur Jason attributes this to China's political history:

'The Chinese language is great at expressing ambiguity because they get their heads chopped off if they say something wrong [in imperial China]... The Chinese communicate with premise only and no logical conclusion. Drives Westerners mad.'

Jason was one of many expatriate respondents who readily subscribed to theories such as Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (1983) or Hall's (1976) work on high and low context cultures to explain cultural differences in communication with indigenous staff. However, as Bjerregaard *et al.* (2009) point out, Hofstede's and Hall's work, which sprung from the field of anthropology, 'rests on a concept of culture which was abandoned [in that discipline] in the 1960s'. Within this perspective, culture is treated as a source of one's values, which determines one's preferred style of communication (Freeman & Brown, 2004; Varner, 2000). Culture is seen to distort meanings, which with enough cultural training, one can 'decode'. At USCo, the responsibility for lifting the 'cultural filter' lies in training indigenous employees to communicate in a manner that expatriates can more easily understand, rather than putting responsibility on the expatriate to 'learn the local culture'. During my observation of Ben's session, one of the participants asked if expatriates also get that level of training on Chinese culture before coming to

China, to which Ben admitted that they do not. In our interview he said:

'You don't come here to really indulge yourself in the China culture. If they did, they wouldn't pay expats the way they do. You can just treat them as locals. So, there is the inherent issue that the people you're moving over here don't just bridge the gap by themselves. And at least within our group, doing those cultural trainings is encouraged. But that's not what you get promoted on, that's not what you sell the two million units which represents our sales goal on.'

Hofstede's and Hall's approaches to culture disregard contextual influences and political and power issues in cross cultural communication (Prasad, 2003, 2006; Jensen, 2004), instead treating culture as a singular and bounded force upon actors who have little agency (Lee *et al.*, 1995; Bjerregaard *et al.*, 2009). The representation of indigenous workers as less creative due to their guarded communication style does not take into account various communication encounters such as those found in social and family settings, based as it is on narrow experiences of expatriates which are limited mainly to business and official settings. Although several expatriates related to me their dining experiences with indigenous businessmen where the latter often became lively and animated over multiple bottles of 'Mao Tai', the enduring image of the Chinese person is still the soft-spoken employee who is cautious to a fault. Lee *et al.* (1995: 284) appeal for a need to uncover and contextualise different voices according to the social and historical milieu: 'We can no longer accept on faith the positivistic paradigm in intercultural communication, which often labels North America as a low-context culture and China as a high-context culture, and accords them each ahistorical and acontextual characteristics'. They further argue that 'A critical understanding of Chinese cultures and North American cultures in terms of politics, history, and norms governing interpersonal relations ... suggests that essentialism often serves the hegemonic class and excludes oppressed people (e.g., people of color, women, gays and lesbians, single-parent and low-income families)'.

The discourse of creativity as self-expression is most apparent in the way that expatriate managers and indigenous employees handle conflict. Ben strongly believed that *'heated debates affect performance in a good way'* and that

'Direct and open constructive confrontation is a good culture skill to adopt'.

The willingness to risk conflict or disregard for potential conflict in self-expression is seen to contribute to individual and group creativity. Chen and Chang (2005) found that conflict has a positive impact in technology driven project teams, but not in service driven teams, which seems to contradict the discourse of creativity as customer service. By pointing to the aversion to direct confrontation in traditional Chinese culture as a hindrance, Chen and Chang (2005) imply that interpersonal conflict is necessary for technological creativity.

This belief that conflict avoidance is a hindrance to local creativity is not isolated to USCo. It was also mentioned by non-Chinese expatriates in other international IT firms and start-ups interviewed for the research. The concept of being *'open and direct'* as a way to be creative is an enduring one in Western IT companies, though it is at odds with the stereotypical image of the nerdy, uncommunicative programmer. This openness and directness sits uncomfortably in traditional Chinese culture. Zhang Yi, a young designer at USCo, explains:

'Westerners have a more open culture, when they greet someone, they open their palms out to shake their hand, we 拱手 (she puts her right palm over her left fist to demonstrate the movement). When they eat, they use a fork and knife that is pointed outwards when not in use, we use chopsticks that are pointed inwards.'

Some indigenous staff at USCo appear to have internalised the message that conflict contributes to creativity, as they attribute some of the success of the operations in Country X to its people's aggressiveness in meetings. One interviewee, despite saying that a war in China would be detrimental to the development of creativity, suggested that *'The people from Country X are good at innovation because they are not afraid of conflict'*. It must be noted however, that USCo has been in Country X longer and its research and development operations are much larger in terms of project and staff numbers than in Shanghai.

Despite this belief that conflict contributes to creativity, the prevalence of

aggressive, confrontational behaviour in Open Source software communities has been addressed by scholars concerned about its detrimental effects (Gallivan, 2001; van Wendel de Joode, 2004; Jensen & Scacchi, 2005). Engineers Ben Collins-Sussman and Brian Fitzpatrick's Google talk 'Open Source Projects and Poisonous People' (2007) offers a list of difficult situations that can occur and present tactics to deal with them. Such forms of aggressiveness were mirrored in 'real life' in many offices visited during the fieldwork, but gatekeepers were careful to prevent me from witnessing any heated arguments. Where meetings were expected to be tense, one of the team members would tell me beforehand that it was 'inappropriate' for me to attend. I could sometimes sense the tension in the staff after these meetings and on two separate occasions, different individuals came and asked if we could go for a walk together to vent their frustration. One of the groups I was to observe decided against my participation because the ethnographer in the project was concerned about how heated meetings that took place regularly could be interpreted. However, accounts of these meetings were sometimes given to me by interviewees who needed to 'offload' after a difficult meeting.

The two main groups I observed at USCo, Mass Product Group (MPG) and Application Team (AT), differed greatly in the ratio of expatriates and indigenous employees, and their difference in managing conflict stood out. MPG is larger, has a bigger expatriate to indigenous ratio in its Shanghai office, and is run mainly locally. Engineers in AT were developing a product that is less well known to non-technical consumers and does not directly generate income for USCo, but had a strong presence in the Open Source community. The difference in frequency of conflict situations might be due to both differences in communication style and the nature of the work.

Chen and Chang (2005) distinguish between task and interpersonal conflict, both of which I witnessed at USCo. Task conflict consists of disagreement in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions, and interpersonal conflicts concerns personality clashes. Whilst AT members appeared to manage task conflict and prevent it from 'getting personal', in MPG the two types were almost indistinguishable. Given the alleged sensitivity of the Chinese, the question arises as to why there were fewer instances of interpersonal conflict in a predominantly Chinese team compared to a team where they are

outnumbered? I explored two possibilities: first, that the Chinese managers are also more sensitive and will speak to their subordinates in a more careful manner; and second, that the Chinese managers have made their subordinates fearful of them and cautious about raising disagreement (both were true). But first, I discuss the sources of conflict that arose, mainly in MPG.

Although all the non-Chinese expatriate interviewees from MPG cited indigenous employees' aversion to conflict and direct confrontation as an inhibitor to creativity, they also mentioned frequent arguments in their meetings compared to other groups with smaller proportions of expatriates. Indigenous staff from MPG, on the other hand, staidly defended their right to be silent and not to respond. This gave the impression that their meetings consist of Western expatriates shouting angrily at reticent, recalcitrant indigenous staff. Sources of conflict cited by expatriates are often interpreted by indigenous staff as a lack of understanding, even when there is agreement on the issues that caused the conflict. For instance, in the negotiation of roles and responsibilities, expatriates often think they are being clear about their roles and objectives whilst indigenous staff remain uncertain, but this is not communicated during the meeting. A shortfall results from differing expectations, which is then seen by expatriates as an excuse for laziness and by indigenous employees as a failure to be specific. Indigenous manager Jared was quick to point out in our first conversation that: *'The Westerners think when we're quiet that we agree. Silence doesn't mean we agree. Sometimes we need more time to think or we don't want to make you lose face [that is, embarrass you]'*. However, some expatriates who are sensitised to the need to engage in face-saving communication find it difficult to be specific for fear of coming across as condescending and offending their indigenous colleagues. As expatriate Sean said: *'Perceived versus real capabilities are very different. They think they don't need help anymore. As a result they became very difficult to work with'*.

Conflict like this occurred frequently at MPG. Whilst expatriate interviewees were eager and more willing to discuss this and their interpretation of the situation, it was difficult to get much more than a mournful 'They don't understand China' from indigenous respondents. Such was the level of

discomfort the topic aroused that this catch all explanation was usually an indication to change the subject. Except where I had regular contact with the interviewee, they would become visibly uncomfortable when I touched on the causes of conflict in mixed teams. One interviewee responded angrily when I pursued the topic, dismissing all Westerners as lacking respect for China. Depending on the interviewee's familiarity with me, there was sometimes an emotional outpouring, where the anxieties around the perceived expectation to participate in conflict would be revealed.

Chen and Chang (2005) found in their comparative study of service and technology teams in Taiwan that there was less personal conflict in teams where management dictated the tasks and more conflict when engineers had to communicate regularly with customers in order to produce software specific to their requirements. In the former instance, tasks are more specific and the goals are clear, whilst in the latter, customers might have difficulty communicating their need and the solution is not yet conceptualised. This suggests that it is during brainstorming and problem articulation that conflict is most likely to arise. Indeed, individuals in AT worked on much more specific tasks whilst MPG's product required more components and frequent changes in direction. Nevertheless, whilst there were differences in opinion and disagreements at AT, they were managed with more sensitivity by team members.

In AT, members were careful to be clear about each individual's roles and responsibilities, which were explained in a way I had initially interpreted as paternalistic. I later realised it is necessary in the local context, where managers are expected to 'empower' their staff as well as give them directives (Interviews with senior expatriate manager Colin Wang, indigenous managers Zhen Yan, and Hannah Mi). Bai Le, for instance, finishes all his directives with a very gentle '好□?' (alright?) as if asking for permission, even though it is unlikely any of his subordinates would disagree with him, especially in front of their peers. Team members at AT are also given time to consider and refuse a task privately, and then given guidance throughout and their progress regularly checked if they agree to take it on. In a meeting with the expatriate, Colin, the overall leader of the project who is based in the US, asked if any of the staff would be prepared to learn a new skill in order to develop a new aspect of the

software. After a lack of response, he offered regular one on one time with the 'volunteer' for training and told them to email him privately if they were interested. Several junior staff responded, seeing it as an opportunity to acquire new skills, which is important to them. This level of detailed management is dismissed as tedious and a costly use of time to expatriates, who are used to working with employees with the 'initiative' to do the research on their own and ask questions when they encounter a problem.

Where there had been interpersonal conflict, this was dealt with privately. When Liu Jun first started at USCo, he took literally its policy of having a flat hierarchy and being open and direct, and told his superiors about a potential mistake that could result from the direction a project was taking. He was reprimanded privately by his superiors for being disrespectful and his colleagues also spoke to him about embarrassing his managers. Although this happened more than two years prior to the interview, he still expressed dissatisfaction about it, particularly as the problem he pointed out took place and none of his team members admitted that he was right. However, he did not sabotage the team's projects as an act of vengeance and was still proud to be part of AT at USCo. Given that most Chinese nationals are aware of the competition in trying to gain employment in a 'respectable' field and the prestige of working for a multinational company, one must question the accusation by the expatriate staff at MPG that they sabotage their projects out of spite, especially in the context where many people had recently been demoted.

The staff at AT were frequently exposed to conflict with external partners, particularly in the Open Source community. Some AT staff who perceived the use of conflict by 'Westerners' as a way to silence disagreement, expressed a sense of their own disadvantage by their poorer command of English and pride at their restraint from being aggressive. According to Jun Chen:

'In the open source environment, people can be impolite, even famous people. What [should] matter most is good code but not to a whole extent. Behaviour is also important... The problems with cultural conflict are hard for us to express effectively because [English] our second language. The people on open source use a lot of bad language and we don't know how to

respond. We are more polite in the PRC but in the open source community, it's not the case.'

This paradoxical view of themselves as both the weak, bullied, victim and the stoic, proud descendants of an ancient civilisation is common to the indigenous respondents and appears to drive much of their desire to become a 'creative nation', but is also seen as an obstacle to expatriates. When an indigenous worker or student says 'The West doesn't understand China', they are partly referring to the difficulty in explaining this internal contradiction to foreigners who have difficulty reconciling what they see to be illogical and inconsistent 'cognitive dissonances'.

However, stereotypes based on race and ethnicity carry expectations and prejudices that influence formal and informal interethnic interactions in a way that could inhibit open communication (Allen, 1995). Individuals may be reticent in expressing themselves for fear of reinforcing stereotypes. As such, cross cultural mentoring relationships and authentic collaboration can be hampered by racial dynamics, particularly where team meetings are the only platform for the employee to communicate his/her opinions. It is therefore important to be aware that the contexts in which indigenous employees are less inclined to communicate openly are not necessarily an indication of their creativity, but rather their sensitivity to how they might be interpreted by their managers and colleagues.

Although self-expression may manifest itself in numerous forms, many expatriates at USCo seem to believe that aggressive, outspoken forms that provoke debate and differences of opinion are more favourable for cultivating creativity, and the cautious approach that is more common amongst indigenous employees is taken as an indication of being less creative. Yet as examples of negotiations at AT show, this is not necessarily an indication of individual or team creativity. However, as Chinese expatriate Chen Ye's encounters with indigenous engineers show, it may be a lack of familiarity amongst team members or power structures that is inhibiting self-expression. His experience appears to be the opposite of most Western expatriates' encounters:

My experience is that when a group is more familiar with each

other than they tend to speak up quite a bit. Some of the engineering sessions I've had where we're trying to figure out a problem here and people are shouting out yes left and right and often times it doesn't get heard by the other person, they are just speaking out their own thing. And it's kinda like by a matter of volume who conquers this conversation. That's kinda what I've seen here. I've not experienced that too much in the States, it seems more organised when I've had brainstorming sessions in the States.

Furthermore, as Ben's definition of creativity illustrates, Western expatriates seem to prefer verbal rather than action based self-expression in the workplace, although this is not indicative of overall 'Chinese creativity':

'I define [creativity] as having a problem statement [such as] How do I solve a problem without using a common methodology to do it?... They are very creative people but in a work environment, as defined by Western definition, maybe not so creative. You take a look walking down the street, at the number of bicycles with plastic bags attached to the carburettor to increase fuel efficiency or whatever. There are so many creative solutions with bamboo outside wrapped in twine that's got 13,000 types of knots in them and they just work. You ask to clean a drain in China and they'll have it cleaned, they won't use an expensive tool that's being made for cleaning the drain, they'll figure out a way to do it. They are creative people when working on their own, so I think it's really just in the workforce that you don't have the ability to exercise that skill'.

4.5 CREATIVITY AS DIVERSITY AND DIVERGENT THINKING

Senior expatriate manager Richard Lu held a similar position to Gloria in a much larger group at USCo's Shanghai operations. He appeared to have a personal interest and emotional investment in encouraging indigenous employees to be more creative. At the end of our interview, for instance, he showed me work that his son had done in the music industry and asked: 'How can we get more of that type of creativity here?' For Richard, creativity stems

from diversity and divergent thinking, which he believes is discouraged by not just the Chinese but the entire 'Asian mentality':

'I lived in the Bay area where 50% were Asians. They pushed their kids. One day my son got a ride with a friend's parent and the parent immediately wanted to know his physics results. I sent him to Jazz camp and it was tantamount to child abuse.'

Whilst the discourse of creativity as self-motivation encourages self-development in other areas of employees' lives as a personal responsibility focused on career progression, Richard's position rests on institutional factors that influence the individual. He suggested to me that political history, the lack of press freedom, and pedagogical traditions are accountable for China's closure to the outside world and its creativity shortfall: *'There's a 1,000 years of repression here. Up to the Ming Dynasty, we had very big egos. We think we're the king. Japan opened up but we stayed closed.'* Like many of the Chinese respondents, he also shows frustration with China's restricted press: *'People's minds need to be stimulated, but the government keeps blocking YouTube and the press. US is more independent and creative, even in Engineering'*. In this section, I discuss the discourse of creativity as diversity and divergent thinking in light of China's politics and approach to education.

Richard illustrates the connection between diversity, divergent thinking and creativity in his response to the question of whether there is a creative type of personality: *'Creative people see things differently... Lots of very strange people are creative...[They are] ready to challenge because they can see things others don't see...they can see and can connect and are good at deduction and logic'*. Furthermore, Richard believed that *'people's minds need to be stimulated'*, sometimes by having interests that are not related to their work. He said: *'only by doing some outside activity. Let your mind go free, do whatever. My idea comes from walking when I solved my thesis. Better to do other things'*. However, from his experience of working with indigenous employees and students at local universities working in partnership with USCo, he has found that creativity is often inhibited by the way researchers are trained:

'Most creative people here have other interests, their ideas are triggered by other things. Research students here are helpers

for their supervisors, but those who have been overseas write better code. Here they don't use their hands, only use their brain. They have to cram and there is no freedom to think. People here learn dancing not for fulfillment but to tick a box...In China, the professor gives you the problem. In [Ivy League University], they have the spirit of exploration. They have no time to be curious here because too much time is spent here checking boxes... I talked to the principal at [prestigious local university]. Told them they need a lab for students to play and experiment.'

Richard's ideas about divergent thinking and play are echoed in the views of other indigenous and expatriate respondents, such as design student Sky who believed that: *'A lot of creativity is fun. China's too pragmatic...Their time at school doesn't allow them to play'*, and expatriate engineer Barry who commented that:

'Local parents drove kids towards sciences. A lot of time is spent rote learning. No time for creative thinking. In Europe and US, kids are encouraged to play. Need balance and people who can think out of the box'.

However, for some of the employees, the practicalities of earning a livelihood are incompatible with this discourse. Although cited by his manager as being one of the more creative team members, software engineer Tian Man, who said that *'he has eaten his fill and can afford the luxury to think about these things'* (interview notes 02/06/2009) believed that *'No, software is not creative. Those who can be creative at work have their company nurture and fund them. I wouldn't look for opportunities to be creative at work. I'd do a hobby. The job is for money'*. Similarly, Thomas Chen, a technical leader on the same team, thought that although *'we need diversity for creativity and there are arguments that education must now be more diverse, we must solve the stomach problem first'*. In this instance, diversity and divergent thinking are part of a Maslowian approach to creativity as a luxury for self-actualising individuals, yet Shanghai residents are possibly exposed to more cultural and economic diversity, with its status as China's 'door to the world' and extensive informal economy, than places such as the Silicon Valley where socio-

economic and cultural diversity is more limited (CNN, 2014).

The diversity discourse appears to work on two levels. First, it allows individuals to compare and benchmark their performance, and second, it provides inspiration and ideas in order to produce original material. IT entrepreneur Jason was strongly critical about what he perceives as the lack of comparison against foreign standards when assessing 'local progress':

'China is doing well superficially. They're convinced China is the best country in the world and see they are improving. They don't realise they're not and don't work with others...Shanghai has changed dramatically every year. It's opening up to the West more and more. There are a lot of little emperors. They have six adults to pamper them. They are full of themselves and don't have to prove they're not the best. They have no hobbies and no creativity. There's no time for play, only watching TV, which is not a hobby, it's just entertainment. They are not creating anything. There're no sports, so they don't get to realise that others are better than you.'

This stance rests on discourses of creativity that advocate competitive behaviour (Carlin *et al.*, 2001) rather than an intrinsic drive for individual expression. It is influential in embedding concerns of the global market into definitions of creativity, reaffirming Neelands and Choe's (2010) argument that such constructions of creativity form the cultural production of a creativity discourse which serves particular ideas about global competition. The solution presented by this discourse is to call for more openness to foreign media, which is incompatible with paternalistic government media policies. Indeed, the Chinese authorities appear to be very sensitive to any criticism and are careful to sustain an image of China's well-being in the media (Tang & Sampson, 2012). Mike Yan related a common saying in China:

'On CCTV's 7:00 news, they are always telling us we have to compete. The first 10 minutes of the news is about busy politicians, the next 10 minutes is about how happy and wealthy we are and the last 10 minutes is about why it's bad overseas. We have been lulled into a false sense of security. People don't dare to take risks.'

Diversity is also thought to inspire new ideas by providing raw material for divergent thinking, but media control by the Chinese government and rigid pedagogical practices are said by many expatriates and indigenous workers to inhibit creativity. IT entrepreneur Sam, for instance, believed that changes to the education system and access to foreign media is necessary in order to produce more creative Chinese citizens:

'The schools are good at the 3 rs but there's a creativity gap. They want independent thinking without causing problems. Confucian teachers lead the way. How do you teach creativity? Westernisation and Western influences help. e.g. Tudou giving people US values, watch Prison Break on Tudou. There are cult followers who try to subtitle the shows. Sites that explain why shows are funny.'

Attributing Chinese workers' 'creativity shortfall' to press restrictions and arguments for better access to foreign, particularly Western media, presupposes that Chinese citizens are without agency, wholly reliant on their government and teachers to dictate their beliefs and aspirations. However, a large number of indigenous respondents used software and virtual private networks (VPN) to access blocked sites; even an indigenous employee who strongly defended Government policies used his USCo VPN to view alternate political points of view on YouTube. Chen Ye, a 'sea turtle' who left China aged five and returned as a USCo expatriate, was clear about the effects of media control:

'I hate the restricted press. I use hotshield... I think far from restricting creativity it spurs it. The more you restrict something the more it's going to try and find cracks to go through. It doesn't block people from seeing what they want to see anyway. From the government's perspective it's what they need to do to follow their policy.'

I too experimented with various methods of circumventing official control of the media, and during the six months I spent in Shanghai, I used three different software packages to access blocked sites, all of them developed by indigenous programmers. Almost as soon as each package became obsolete

due to government updates on the 'Great Firewall of China', a series of new products would be available, through word of mouth, to people who wished to use them. Furthermore, the growing number of online journalists being imprisoned by the state (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2014) indicates that not all Chinese citizens are passively accepting their government's directives.

This discourse appears to be blinkered by the push for educational and political institutions to facilitate the broadening of knowledge, ignoring the skills that come from focus and application. Whilst workers may benefit by acquiring more transferable skills, there are also ideological forces behind the faith in diversity as the source of creativity. As Prichard (2002: 266) points out: 'the creative person or those features associated with creativity – divergent thinking, spontaneity, novel behaviour, intrinsic motivation – are ideological or discursive ploys which fetishise the autonomous, often male, subject, and deny the complex historical, social and economic relations which precede and constitute such a subject, its practices and relations.'

The attempted transfer of characteristics associated with creativity to corporate subjects in Shanghai fails to consider the differences between the Western milieu in which these characteristics became associated with creativity and local culture which influences the motivation, behavioural norms, and aspirations of Chinese workers. Instead, it promotes an idealised model of a corporate citizen whose divergent thinking ability helps him/her to tap into the diversity to which s/he has been exposed, to produce novel solutions and exciting ideas. However, as Hatchuel *et al.* (2010: 17) argue: 'The classic creativity perspective which assumes that new ideas only come from personal divergent and free thinking... neglects the role of learning, working with others, and exploration and discovery in the formation of creative ideas.'

In pointing out that '*Rote learning affects creativity but it's hard to measure objectively. China students know more foundational knowledge than others*', indigenous USCo software architect Hua Cai and his colleagues who hold the same view demonstrate an awareness that creativity does not simply come about by combining particular characteristics thought to be desirable, but that opposing traits and habits can also lead to creative ideas and products.

4.6 CREATIVITY AS MANAGERIAL IMPERATIVE

Managers are often put under pressure by the other discourses discussed above, as they are thought to bear responsibility for employee performance. Whilst self-motivated employees do relieve some managers' workloads, unmotivated employees are a liability to the career of their managers who take on responsibility as role model, mentor, supervisor, and disciplinarian for their staff, and are culpable for poor staff performance. Expatriate manager Oliver for instance asserted that *'Management is everything, I have seen people who perform well under one manager completely become disheartened under another or people doing badly under one manager but doing well under another'*. Managers are responsible for both company profits and staff development, which often do not complement each other. This section departs from the discussion about perceptions of creativity and how they are thought to manifest and addresses the impact of the above creativity discourses on managerial identity and practices, particularly amongst Chinese expatriate managers. The move from creativity as manifestation to creativity as a result of a set of practices highlights the way in which these managers respond to dominant creativity discourses within USCo.

Popular amongst successful Chinese expatriate managers is the discourse of creativity as managerial imperative. In this section I examine how expatriates, particularly those from the Chinese Diaspora who see their roles as empowering pastoral carers for ignorant indigenous workers who will take over the reins when they depart, draw from the romanticism of the traditional 师父 (Shi Fu – Master)/ 徒弟 (Tu Di – Disciple) relationship to manage their staff and encourage creativity. Embodying this discourse is Chew Lee Yong, a third country national from Southeast Asia who had been at USCo since graduating from his post-graduate degree. He had worked in USCo offices in North America and Asia and travelled to other USCo sites around the world. At the time of the interview, he had been with USCo for over a decade and his position was at the same level as John's in Gloria's group. However, he had more management responsibility than John, who was a technical lead, and so his role involved more interaction with indigenous junior staff. As someone who straddles both Eastern and Western cultures, yet belongs wholly to neither, he could make strong criticisms of either culture without implicating

himself, whilst also creating the illusion of objectivity. By framing his criticisms as questions, he managed to fault both cultures without doing so overtly. He is married to an indigenous woman who advises him on how to negotiate local culture. Having been away from his home country for over a decade, he considers himself more a corporate global citizen than one of any country he has lived in, and his inconsistent use of the pronouns 'we' and 'they' when talking about 'the Chinese' reveals a selectiveness of allegiance dependent on which qualities he favours.

Although Lee Yong appears to have internalised USCo's creativity discourse, which ties creativity to aggressiveness, he also sees it as a problem that can be addressed with the right leadership, which he suggests the non-Chinese expatriates fail to provide. On the common complaint that indigenous staff are reluctant to take initiative, he says:

'they are very cautious, they don't want to do more and don't want to do less. They just want to do up to what they're told. It doesn't mean they cannot do more. That's why it's important for us as a leader to encourage... I think it's not the employee to be blamed. Being a leader, working in China you need to find a way to encourage them.'

Over the years, he has devised strategies to encourage the type of creativity in line with USCo discourses. For instance, he believes he has raised staff performance to expected standards by deliberately setting higher targets. Lee Yong's first hand understanding of local culture puts him at an advantage in transforming Chinese citizens into 'creative corporate citizens with a local approach'. For example, he understands that the unwillingness to speak out comes from much more than just the fear of losing face. Using the idiom 枪打出头鸟 (literally – gun shoots out head bird) he opined that it is caution, rather than fear, which inhibits the staff on more than one level. *'How can you have the notion of brainstorming if as a leader you don't encourage the people to speak out? So [we must] adapt into the culture (sic) then the creativity will show itself'*. During the interview, Lee Yong kept bringing the conversation back to leadership as a way of nurturing creativity, listing over half a dozen methods he uses to encourage brainstorming. He distinguishes himself from other expatriate managers: *'For me, people already know me and I'm a good*

moderator based on my feedback, but if you're getting a foreign manager, there will be some variance'.

Chinese expatriates working directly with indigenous employees appear more effective at encouraging their staff or vendors to perform to their standards of creativity. Chew Lee Yong and Chen Ye, a 'Sea Turtle' from the US, both speak of examples where they rephrased a question or presented a request differently in order to achieve better results, whilst non-Chinese expatriates spoke only of the frustration of cycles of negotiations that achieved minimal results each time. Lee Yong began to set higher targets after experimenting with other ways to motivate staff and realising that their fear of drawing too much attention to themselves was holding them back. Chen Ye discovered the importance of *'passing down the vision'* in order to stimulate employees' and vendor's motivations. In both cases, the expatriates devoted considerable effort into coaxing their indigenous staff into performing at a level that is more aligned with Western expectations. It may be that the sort of creativity expected by managers appears in the workplace when the expatriate puts some effort into seeking it rather than simply expecting it. Thus the individual's creativity acts like a currency that is exchanged when the manager is willing to invest their own creativity in managing one's their staff in order to 'receive' their creativity. Some Chinese expatriates suggested that low levels of creativity in staff might indicate that it is the non-Chinese expatriate who is lacking in managerial creativity and imagination.

However, there are also particular macro-discourses, such as ideas of the aggressive 鬼佬 (Gui Lau – Foreign Devil) working alongside the discourse of creativity as managerial imperative, which gives Chinese expatriates an advantage over their non-Chinese counterparts. Chinese expatriates appear to be more successful at negotiating workplace creativity and productivity with Chinese nationals because they are thought to understand the local culture better. However, where Western expatriates like Ben display an understanding of local problems, they are looked upon suspiciously, even though many indigenous workers bemoan their lack of understanding and proclaim a desire to help them. Ke Xian, a colleague of Ben's whom I spoke with regularly over my six months in the field, gradually revealed his disapproval of the US citizen. He suspected that Ben was very good at 拍□屁 (literally – smacking a horse's

rear: the implication is that he used flattery to get what he wanted) and was disdainful of his romantic conquests. In contrast, Wei Tian, who was keen to talk to me about foreigners' understandings of China and often reminded me that I was 自己人 (one of us), cautioned against letting foreigners 看透 (kan tou - see through) the Chinese, adding that even Chinese people have difficulty understanding themselves.

There appears to be some interest in maintaining China's mysterious image which ethnically Chinese expatriates are allowed to penetrate provided they show a commitment to their 'Chineseness' by demonstrating an understanding of China's history, particularly in regard to the Opium War, and using Chinese idioms in their communication. For the most part, Chinese respondents preferred to adhere to the stereotype of the aggressive foreigner, as it fits in with the historical representation of themselves as the civilisation that was taken advantage of by a less cultured people. Thus, it appears that Chinese expatriates who have internalised the Western discourses of creativity and are also willing to serve as mentors and invest in nurturing local creativity are ideally suited to the project of producing creative corporate subjects. Indeed, many Chinese professionals are returning from the Diaspora to take advantage of the career opportunities presented by the demand for individuals who can bridge the different workplace cultures (Zedwitz, 2004).

However, Chinese management is limited in its ability to enact the discourse of creativity as managerial imperative due to a unique set of expectations in the manager/staff relationship, whilst managers in large multinational corporations are increasingly under pressure 'to institute a new regime of managerial governmentality centered on the creation of maximally creative "fast" subjects' (Thrift, 2000: 675). This speed at which workers and managers are expected to perform is incompatible with the time it takes to establish 关系 (Guan Xi) and the types of relationship that are thought to foster employee creativity in China.

All effective managers, expatriate and indigenous at USCo Shanghai must first convince their staff of their commitment to them and then make an emotional appeal to their national pride and ambition. Many of the Chinese expatriates alluded to a form of 师父 (master) and 徒弟 (disciple) relationship idealised in kung fu films set in pre-modern China. Popular amongst Chinese expatriate

managers is this model of pastoral care, which incorporates the idea of leaving a legacy for indigenous workers when the manager leaves and goes back to his/her own country. Chew Lee Yong, for instance, urges his staff to adapt to USCo culture because *'One day we'll be gone and they'll have to take the lead.'* Similarly, Colin, a senior manager at USCo stated:

'The ideal as part of my job is to empower this team to run on their own. I don't know if you have met Bill, he was sent by the US to PRC. He helped build up this team in PRC. When I first got to PRC, it was him who attracted me to one project. And he told me that at our age, at our level, it's our job to build up the next generation of USCo leaders. And I saw the point. I've been around 25 years and I don't know how many more years I can keep doing this. But it's for my benefit, financially also, if when I leave USCo, that there's a new group of USCo leaders that can take over. And that changed my attitude towards the China team. And ever since I have been involved with Hannah and Bai Le, I have always seen it that way. It's my job to empower this team in any way I can.'

This concept of empowerment, which I first formally encountered during the interview with indigenous manager Hannah, is strongly embedded into the idea of a good manager amongst many of the Chinese employees at USCo.

Hannah believed it is a key part of her role:

'I feel that in a team everyone must be willing to innovate. I don't feel that job security is number one. Number one should be your core competency; you need this in order to have job security. And I feel you have to empower the employee rather than take charge of everything. You have to know how to pipeline and take care of your own growth.'

Zhen Yan, one of the most senior Chinese expatriate managers at USCo, who was brought in by Richard Lu from another company to develop local talent, also had strong opinions about the role of a manager:

'We don't have as many empowering managers here... Huawei is hierarchical, but the boss's fundamental way is like Steve Jobs, motivational, heroic. Although it's very strict there and

many Huawei staff often commit suicide. I trained their managers and they're very young and ambitious. Paternalistic managers? It's not like that in every team. There are many different types of caring. Some people pay attention to details. Manager's work is to grow workers. It's like a family and we value them. Develop their positions and good qualities. Depends also on quality of staff. As trainer, I tell them they need clear objectives, then they can navigate their own clear path. Everyone's got own way and everyone has different thinking. As manager, I must understand the staff and find out how a project can develop the workers' ability. Workers leave when they think the manager don't appreciate them. They join the company because of the company but leave because of bad manager. New staff is like a grain of sand that the manager can turn into a pearl. The manager offers a platform for the worker to play. But some need more monitoring than others. Need to give them facilitation. Different workers are different, everyone is unique.'

These Chinese expatriates bring a sense of pastoral duty and care to their roles and see themselves as nurturers with a responsibility for the personal and career development of their staff. This approach does not only arise from a sense of altruism, nor as Colin points out, is there simply a financial motive. The Shifu-Tudi analogy appeals to the romantic imagination of Chinese expatriate managers since shifus in ancient China were revered and conferred status equal if not higher than that of elders in the biological family. Rooted in tradition, these relationships were mutually beneficial as 'Teacher and students were jointly engaged in a process of learning, moral self- cultivation, and the pursuit of a perfected ritual form' (Weingarten, 2015). Lu and Baert (2008: 192) draw attention to the sanctity of the master/ tudi relationship according to Tao practice:

'When two parties begin a Tao-dance of learning and teaching, they create a safe environment under which they both can find truth and wisdom. The Tao-mentor dance is a full harmony commitment between the two parties towards a continuous sharing and change of the Tao-cycle: learning-

teaching-learning. With the Tao mentorship, each individual is dependent on the other for mutual fulfilling of a relationship with sympathy, love, care and respect, which arouses enthusiasm and inspiration for personal growth, change and new perspectives. The important goal of a healthy Tao mentorship is to confirm and nourish the goodness of both parties.'

Chinese expatriates are able to draw upon their cultural understanding to bring about a compromise between Chinese workers' expectations and a 'Western' work ethic to draw out a 'customer oriented' type of creativity. In this approach, the emotional appeal to empower workers sits comfortably alongside the recognition of personal gain for the managers. Nevertheless, the issue of what creativity means is still rarely questioned or challenged.

These managers' willingness to apply their managerial duties beyond what is traditionally prescribed in Western corporate organisations to inculcate into their staff a sense of 'corporate self' rather than 'mere employee' appears to be driven by a heartfelt desire to leave a legacy for their staff. Framed in emotional terms, their commitment to such acculturation of indigenous workers suggests the totality of their identification as corporate subjects with a duty towards not only their own productivity, but that of their successors/'wards'. Nonetheless, Prichard (2002: 266) highlights the dangers in such forms of self-definition, arguing that a thorough performance of identities such as 'creative manager' can lead to an over commitment to work at the expense of one's personal life, since the 'prized workplace subject', being flexible, entrepreneurial and creative, has few boundaries. The identity of the creative manager therefore becomes a central part of the performance of oneself.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the key creativity discourses, as enacted at USCo, exposes difficulties encountered by expatriates in attempts at creating entrepreneurial corporate subjects. The response of indigenous employees to the assessment that they are less creative reveals the complexity of their relationships with foreign employers and managers. Whilst some respondents vocally rejected the opinions about 'Chinese creativity', their adoption of 'USCo values' in their communication with colleagues betrays

a level of complicity. Similarly, the acceptance of the opinion that the Chinese are less creative tends to be accompanied by a masked resentment, usually expressed as a failure on the foreigner's part to understand China.

The discourses of creativity at USCo plant doubts into the Chinese workers about their creative ability by skewing creativity towards a model that is suited to USCo's financial objectives. . The placement of many of the characteristics favoured in the five discourses in the left/ chaotic side of the Creativity Framework reveals a preference for types of creativity that involve expansiveness and spontaneity. Such creativity is characteristic of Thrift's (2000: 674) fast capitalism in which 'firms now live in a permanent state of emergency, always bordering on the edge of chaos, and no longer concerned to exercise bureaucratic control'. Even where managers are applying more time consuming methods or 'ordered' creativity to produce creative subjects, the desired type of creativity is one that should enable them to maintain 'hair-trigger responsiveness to adapt to the expectedly unexpected' (Thrift, 2000: 674). The expectations for the 'good USCo employee' to adopt a notion of creativity that embraces urgency sit within a greater discourse of global competitiveness. Individual workers know that they are unable to challenge this if they want to continue working at USCo; it is taken for granted that the organisation's espousal of this urgent approach is a crucial necessity to guard against falling behind its competitors and failure, as measured by sales and share prices. In this way, USCo discourses of creativity within China reflect the global economy. Whilst this is true of the corporate setting, discourses of creativity within educational institutions and in the arts and design may take a different approach, as education and aesthetic appreciation may not be constrained by such a sense of urgency. In the next chapter, I examine how discourses of creativity are enacted beyond the corporate and IT setting, primarily at DI, a tertiary design school in Shanghai, in order to untangle the somewhat different discourses that were found there.

CHAPTER 5: WIDER DISCOURSES OF CREATIVITY – BEYOND THE CORPORATE SETTING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Creativity in the design-heavy sectors such as fashion, art, and advertising carries associations that appear to be in opposition to those connected to engineering creativity. Creative fashion designers for instance are often stereotyped as flamboyant dressers, whilst creative software engineers carry a more mainstream image. In the previous chapter, I discussed how five different creativity discourses are enacted, mainly at USCo, to produce self-governing corporate subjects. Engagement in particular Western-centric, corporate creativity discourses by expatriate managers and indigenous employees is loaded with expectations around productivity and self-improvement. The chapter inferred attitudes and beliefs about creativity and the creative worker from verbal cues gathered during meetings and interviews with respondents, focusing on ‘what is talked about’ where creativity is concerned and ‘how it is talked about’. Given that the corporate, engineering setting relies heavily on verbalisation in the form of memos, training sessions, and meetings as its main medium of communication, it made sense to focus on the transfer of ideas around creativity through these means. In contrast, in this chapter I rely on field observations of the embodiment and performance of particular discourses of creativity to infer beliefs that emerged as dominant ones amongst workers and students in the design sectors of the creative industries, although I also draw on some material from USCo. Unlike USCo, where ‘proof’ of engineers’ creativity lies predominantly in the products and results of their work, this chapter will show that in the design sector, particularly fashion design, creative workers are expected or believed to embody their creativity by consciously projecting an image of themselves which allows their occupation to encompass their identities.

In this chapter, I explore how three different pairs of discourses concerning

individualism and collectivism, youth and maturity, and exposure and insularity perpetuate a notion of creativity that asserts the hegemony of Western liberal democratic values. Whilst the discourses in Chapter 4 persuaded subjects to adopt particular self-governing strategies in order to improve their own career prospects, the discourses in this chapter pertain to aspects of the subjects' identities, over which they may have less control. I argue in this chapter that engagement in these discourses provokes anxieties amongst the indigenous respondents on a different scale that raises questions about their national identity, economic progress, and political security.

That dominant creativity discourses in China seem to have emerged out of Western capitalist agendas highlights their status as recipients of a foreign culture and denotes their inferiority, yet national pride and fears for the future prevent Chinese respondents from readily abandoning traditional ideals in order to embrace these new values. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that the diffusion of ideas about the creative economy does not take place in a vacuum, but in spaces that already have their own politics, international relations and 'particular geographies of formal and informal communications networks' with 'sets of linkages and flows between actors, institutions and industries' (Kong *et al.*, 2006: 176). In this chapter, I shall examine the way that Chinese anxieties, which arose from Chinese historical relations with the West, and political aspirations are mobilised to respond to some of these creativity discourses.

As in Chapter 4, the discourses discussed in this chapter – individualism and collectivism, youth and maturity, exposure and insularity – do not encompass all beliefs about creativity, but emerged mainly from interviewees' responses and my observations at Design Institute (DI), although I also draw on material gathered from other settings in my fieldwork. They were chosen not just because they came up regularly, but also because they provoked strong, emotional responses amongst respondents. There is also a focus in this chapter on the role of formal education in nurturing or inhibiting creativity, because the Chinese education system was a central concern amongst interviewees, particularly the indigenous respondents from both engineering and design backgrounds. Furthermore, as DI claims to offer an alternative to

the local educational models by demanding more independence from the students, much attention is given to pedagogy in this chapter. I explore how DI's position as an exclusive, private, neoliberal institution with affiliations to reputable local and UK universities affects the transmission of a particular notion of creativity, which also carries discourses of individualism and collectivism, youth and maturity, and exposure and insularity. The question arises at the end of this chapter as to whether this alternative model of education provided at DI really helps students to become more creative, enabling them to join the 'creative class', and if it does, why?

The focus on design and education stands in contrast to USCo, where engineering creativity carries with it a rather different set of associations. Although I draw on material gathered at USCo relevant to the discourses discussed in this chapter, the majority of the discussions here concern design creativity at DI. Furthermore, the flows of power between expatriates and indigenous students at DI are not as straightforward as USCo. Whilst the idealised notion of 'traditional Chinese education' carries with it an idea of reverence towards teachers (Gao, 2008), the neoliberal setting at DI also means that educators are service providers and students their customers. This may in part account for the expatriate teachers' openness to alternate, opposing discourses, which provides another reason for discussing them as pairs.

In Section 5.2, I discuss notions of individualism and collectivism in creativity discourses, arguing that these present indigenous workers and students as uncreative because its education system is believed to foster dependence and produce homogenous subjects who are trained to conform. Chinese pedagogical methods are thus represented as being in opposition to capitalist economic interests. I argue that whilst individualism is associated with greater creativity than collectivism (Zha *et al.*, 2006; Albert & Runco, 1999), it also potentially limits the individual's creativity as s/he risks ostracism and access to shared knowledge.

In Section 5.3, I discuss the creativity discourses of youth and maturity. I propose that dominant discourses of creativity celebrate youth and their associated behaviours because characteristics associated with the young

are also tied to creative people. I argue that young people are excused for certain behaviours if they can represent themselves as 'creatives' because they are seen to be contributors to the economy. However, this sits uncomfortably in the Chinese context because, like the discourse of individualism, it is in opposition with traditional Confucian values of respect for elders. I argue that young people are nevertheless burdened with changing working conditions that place them in a precarious position where they are expected to self-exploit in order to gain future employment. Nevertheless, parental anxiety in China provides youth with a type of intrusive support less common in the West and helps them to respond to changing working conditions.

Finally in Section 5.4, I examine the notions of exposure and insularity in the creativity discourses. Although these appear to be polarised concepts, they often refer to the same thing in that discourses of exposure advocates access to specific Western media; which though accessible to broad audiences, its production is open only to a very select elite in close networks.

5.2 CREATIVITY DISCOURSES OF INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

In my previous occupation as an investment banker in Australia, my employer sent me on a customer service training session where participants were challenged to design a spacecraft for a client. All the teams failed in this task as none had asked the client enough questions to clarify their needs. The session leader pointed out that this exercise did not work in the East Asian context as the first group of trainees immediately sent out a memorandum to all their colleagues telling them the 'right' answer. These training facilitators had taken for granted the universality of individualism and were surprised by its absence in East Asia when they carried out their training. They had not expected participants to volunteer the answers to their colleagues so openly. They subsequently considered that individualism might not be valued as much in other cultures as much as in the Western. This section explores the associations between individualism, conformity, and creativity that emerged in the field observations of expatriates interacting with indigenous students and workers and the interviews with respondents.

At USCo, creativity discourses were embedded within the performance of interpersonal scripts such as customer service, communication with colleagues, and relationships with the manager. They were enacted in place specific settings that require teamwork, networking, and collaboration. In contrast, artistic creativity discourses appear to focus on a more 'portable' form of individualism. For instance, workers in the arts and design sector are able to represent their individuality by unconventional dress in a way that is not as acceptable within most corporate spaces.

Individuality is one of Hofstede's (2006) Cultural Dimensions, a well known concept amongst many of the Western expatriate respondents such as entrepreneur Larry; he believed that the lack of individuality amongst Chinese workers, who prefer a more collectivist way of working, inhibits their creativity. The discourse of individualism appears to be drawn from notions of the entrepreneurial subject where individual subjects responsible for their own job security must undertake a perpetual project of self-improvement as 'their only real job-security comes from their capabilities and continued productivity' (Florida, 2002: 110).

The freelance nature of many design occupations means that workers must establish industry connections in order to secure future work, yet at the same time stand out from their colleagues and convince potential employers that they are exceptional. Gill and Pratt (2008) refer to these workers as members of a 'precariat', merging the reality of the precariousness of their livelihoods and the proletariat to capture the common experience of those employed in occupations that do not provide job security or traditional benefits of permanent positions such as healthcare and holiday pay. Rather than recognising the importance of having useful contacts, the discourse of individualism reinforces the idea of meritocracy (Fougere & Solitander, 2010), where it is claimed that individuals, who stand out either because they have dared to take the risks, or have applied enough talent and effort to do so, will be rewarded for their uniqueness and for being 'special'. It is within such a framework that teachers at DI try to impart a sense of independence and self-sufficiency to their students.

This individualism is said by some respondents to be inhibited by the Chinese education system, which has a tendency to foster dependence and produces homogenous, conforming subjects. Wayne Qu, an indigenous student who believed his experience at DI gave him a new insight into local education, thought that there needed to be a revolution in Chinese pedagogy:

*'To solve creativity question, need to change education.
Everyone is the same. We learn, memorise and sit exams.
Need to explore more. I learn a habit of being independent here.
Everyone uses the same textbook. Exams might be different but
the standards are the same throughout all PRC.'*

Some respondents argued that education should be homogenous for the large Chinese population in order to ensure fairness in the competition for limited places in tertiary institutions. The creativity discourses that accompany the demands of economic growth, however, call for changes that cater for more heterogeneity. Moreover, the exams and standardised tests are thought by most respondents to be too entrenched in the system to accommodate any alternatives:

'The government is trying to spread creativity but the most important thing is still to pass exams. Study is to get into good school so we're less good at creativity. The government is promoting it because there's a feeling that if graduates have creativity spirit, then it's good. They know just passing exams is not enough, but it's still the first priority... Everyone puts priority on high exam results.' (Cao Yu: Design Student)

Nevertheless, the focus on passing exams is not sole reason given by respondents for the lack of individuality amongst Chinese workers, but its combination with an over-reliance on teachers is seen to be detrimental to individuality and by association creativity. The representation of Chinese students and workers as homogenous by respondents is not site and time specific, as in a frozen snapshot of a full exam hall or factory workers in uniform, but is presented as a process that starts from the time the child is born, with parental anxiety over the child's future. Some scholars (Bill, 2009; McLendon *et al.*, 2007) argue that education and training institutions are

important sites in the enactment of political projects, as discourses within these organisations reflect how a state sees itself. To this extent, state paternalism and rigid governmental control in China appear to be reflected in the pedagogical methods of its educational institutions.

The following story, first told to me by USCo engineer Nancy Li to illustrate why indigenous workers are unwilling to take responsibility, is familiar to many Chinese respondents: A teacher who has taken her students out on an excursion notices that they are thirsty, and so sends the prefect to pick some apples from a tree she had seen earlier. The prefect goes back to the tree to pick the apples, ignoring a grape vine that she had passed even though it would have served the same purpose and saved time and effort. Since the teacher had said to pick from the apple tree, the prefect did exactly as told. According to Nancy, *'The prefect has no initiative and will walk longer to get apples despite passing a grape vine...'* but the very reason this student is a prefect is because *'There is a belief that good children don't ask why'*. The prefect did not ask why the teacher wanted the apples. Had s/he done so, s/he would have realised the urgency and picked the grapes instead. Such absolute obedience, encouraged by teachers' rewards, is thought to discourage children from appreciating their uniqueness. According to Nancy and several other respondents, students may hide their individuality in case their teacher pigeonholes them as problematic.

Chan and Chan's (1999) study of 204 primary and secondary school teachers in Hong Kong suggests that Chinese teachers may be reluctant to encourage creativity in their students precisely because of associated socially undesirable personality traits. Whilst teachers in the study thought that creative students possess positive traits such as 'always questioning, imaginative, quick in responding, active and high in intellectual ability,' creative students were also thought to be 'arrogant, attention seeking, opinionated, rebellious and self-centred' (Chan & Chan, 1999: 188).

At DI however, teacher respondents believed that the least creative students and the most difficult to teach were those who possessed such characteristics that were seen as being negative. This difference in the understanding of creativity may stem from differences between pre-tertiary

and tertiary education; Chinese and foreign teaching methods; or industry/ subject matter. However, for many of the indigenous workers interviewed, creativity is associated with individuality, which traditional Chinese classrooms are thought to have difficulty accommodating.

There is therefore some ambivalence felt by parents towards teachers in China as they are expected to help students achieve the best possible results in rigid exams for which obedience and rote learning are necessary, whilst also nurturing their creativity and individuality. Whilst many indigenous interviewees complained that the absolute authority of the teacher in Chinese classrooms inhibits student creativity, they also bemoaned the loss of status and respect that teachers used to command *'in the old days'* (Alan, indigenous USCo Manager). Paul Zhou believes that:

'Education is suffering and needs to change. Especially the humanities teachers, they're all very poor. Unless they're teaching English, the pay is low... Teachers used to be passionate about their jobs and earned a good income and were well respected. They had a sense of achievement. Now it's different.'

Throughout my field work, the Chinese teacher was presented as a dictatorial but maternal figure who has the students' best interests at heart but is intolerant of non-conformists. Far from nurturing student creativity, Chinese teachers are thought to inhibit it by instilling fear in a rigid system of rules that silences the child's opinions and, according to some expatriates, has a long term negative effect on workers which results in a 'heightened awareness of authority', even at university level. Senior USCo manager Zhen Yan is critical of the teachers' authority in the classroom, saying that Chinese students *'don't dare to ask questions because the teacher is all powerful. They don't want to challenge the teacher.'* Engineer Piao Yang believes that: *'PRC focuses on rules and don't give reasons. If I ask a teacher why, I might get scolded'*. User interface designer Zhang Yi, who is passionate about Chinese culture and reacted strongly against suggestions that Confucian culture suppresses creativity, is less defensive where traditional Chinese education is concerned. She has noticed a:

'difference between PRC teacher and foreign. PRC teachers do

not accept students' ideas. I experienced learning from a Western teacher. Western teacher will say: "good idea!" and give advice on how to do it. So the student will be open. Student won't tell their ideas to PRC teacher because they are afraid.'

Accompanying this harsh image of the teacher is a seemingly contradictory one of a maternal figure who coddles her students, but this is consistent with the reluctance to let students explore independently. A familiar complaint about teachers in local schools is that they 'do everything step by step', providing too much guidance and focusing too much on exams. Like Nancy Li, engineer Cao Yu traces indigenous workers' unwillingness to take ownership and responsibility over their tasks to their relationship with their teachers: *'From school, the teacher tells students what the right answer is and how we must do it.'* Jasmine from DI thought that students do not cultivate the habit of asking questions at school because *'Teacher will guide each step of the way'*. She believed that the detail given in their instruction makes it unnecessary for students to ask any questions. Furthermore, she thought that students who are preoccupied with doing exactly as the teacher tells them in order to pass exams will not expand their mental resources to question their teachers. Luke Wang complained that indigenous *'students focus on memorising and do it step by step. The teacher needs to ask and give students more independence. I've seen that overseas is better. If you see their course materials, there is more coursework than exams'*.

However, placed in an environment like DI, where they are asked to be more independent and express their individualism and uniqueness in their work, students appeared lost. Having cultivated a habit of performing exactly to the teachers' instructions, students were unable to make independent decisions when presented with the opportunity to do so. Kevin, a teacher at DI was frustrated by what he perceives as a lack of effort: *'They Google it and take the first idea they see. They select the first thing they see. For example, when looking for a font, most will choose Arial. To them, it's new and clean and what the teacher wants'*. Indigenous USCo engineer Luke believed that this attitude follows the worker into the workforce; like many of his peers, he attributed it to the absence of ownership and responsibility over

their tasks: *'Some people are not willing to think deeply. It's like school, teacher tells you what to do and you do it'*.

Some expatriates suggested that the Chinese education system is characteristic of the Confucian culture of deference towards elders (Ho & Ho, 2008). IT entrepreneur Sam perceived a dilemma in Chinese pedagogical methods: *'They want independent thinking without causing problems. Confucian teachers lead the way'*. Chinese teachers are also thought to be reluctant to relinquish their power over their students, whilst parents are blamed for giving teachers absolute authority in the classroom. Indigenous USCo engineer Haitong for example complained that *'at school, the teacher won't encourage independent thinking. PRC don't encourage children to be creative'*. USCo manager Zhen Yan was frustrated that *'at meetings with parents, [teachers] usually just talk about results. If teacher or principal is not like that then the parent will complain'*. Despite these complaints, diversions from the curriculum or syllabus are often met with anxiety. Engineer Wen Hui, whose father was a teacher, was reprimanded by his colleagues for his methods of teaching her, even though he had not used them on his own students:

'My father was a teacher in middle school. He once brought a mahjong set home for my grandma to teach me how to play, thinking it was good for making me more intelligent. But his boss said he's setting a bad example as a teacher.'

According to indigenous USCo manager Jared, although many parents worry about their children becoming 螺口 (luo si ding: screw – 'cog in a wheel'), their anxiety over their exam results and their future drives them to put pressure on teachers to focus on exams and on children to obey their teachers. Thus, in 'transitioning' its workers into a 'global workforce' and encouraging the growth of local creative industries, the desire for indigenous innovation and creativity (Cao *et al.*, 2006; Casey & Koleski, 2011) comes into conflict with the desire to sustain established ways of teaching.

Within the discourse of creativity as individuality, market and educational objectives are set up as opposites. Boyer (2005: 548) argues that institutions that govern various forms of capitalist economy, including education and

training establishments, are polarised on a spectrum of market-liberal or state-centric, because they are organised around a 'conventional opposition between State and market [which is reinforced] by actors such as communities, networks, associations, and private organizations'. In this instance Chinese education institutions are also set up in opposition to market interests. The demand for indigenous innovation and economic growth calls for a more individualistic population that is not afraid to challenge authority, yet such individuals also pose a threat to established systems and to the Chinese workers who risk losing a supportive peer network. The discourse of creativity as individualism thus fuels an anxiety amongst Chinese workers, students, and parents, whose desire for economic prosperity is equally matched by their fear of political instability.

Teachers at DI try to prepare students for the workforce by transitioning them from traditional Chinese pedagogical methods to more independent Western styles of learning, whilst maintaining 'Chinese values'. The discourse of individualism and its association with exceptionality and uniqueness (Fougere & Solitander, 2010) appeals to teachers and students at DI who embrace exclusivity rather than broad appeal in their work. There is an emphasis in DI's marketing courses on finding specific 'target markets' that are narrowed down to age groups, sub-cultures, and affluent classes (2009 field notes). Students who aim for a broader clientele are discouraged on the basis that such designs do not appeal to consumers, whose tastes and choices are limited to that which represents the identity they are trying to project (field notes from lecture by Kate, fashion marketing teacher at DI). Students are urged to understand their target audience, which in most cases are wealthy consumers with large disposable incomes, and explore these different identities by artificially immersing themselves in particular sub-cultures and organising festivals and events such as 1960s hippy parties and themed fashion shows.

These practices at DI present targeted consumers as individualistic yet dependent on like-minded communities for their sense of being part of an exceptional elite. In this way, teachers at DI engage Florida's (2002) concept of the creative class, in which trendy elitist consumers drive economic growth and standards of living through their purchasing choices. Leslie and Rantisi (2012: 466) argue that this creative class framework is 'premised upon a very

individualistic and entrepreneurial model of work'. Furthermore, the notion of exclusivity that pervades discourses of creative design at DI takes meritocracy for granted, failing to acknowledge that most of its students come from well connected, wealthy families. They are often persuaded by teachers that with enough hard work, success is guaranteed. Whilst this might be true at DI, where teachers with close industry contacts are able to persuade employers to grant positions to their most promising students whose work stands out against their peers, it is not universally the case.

Despite the intensive provision of one on one support by DI teachers, indigenous students still find it difficult to adjust to the new independence that is required of them compared to local mainstream schools. Ruth says:

'When we came here we were not used to it. Didn't like the independence at first, but it's trained us. Here [at DI] we can't take short cuts. Must work harder, less time to socialise. At first we're not used to the English, but after some time it's ok. In the first term, three people left because it's too difficult...'

One of the strategies that many students used to deal with this new expectation of independence is to turn to more collaborative methods of working, such as forming groups or pairs for mutual support. I noted a difference between newer students and those who had been at DI for more than one term. Newer students in their first term appeared shy about approaching the teacher on their own. However, in more advanced classes where groups or pairs had formed, students were much more outspoken and would plan what they wanted to say before approaching the teacher as a group. Where they had problems with a teacher, they would also approach the administrator or translator, as a group, to complain. The only time I saw students go to the administrator alone was for very specific issues that pertained only to the individual, such as changing courses or correcting an error in their fee payment. Far from stifling their creativity, the collectivism amongst these self-organising students appeared to give them confidence to express themselves. This 'silent' discourse of collectivism does not seem to have been explored in the scholarly literature specialising in creativity. Although Scott (1985) touched on the subject of collectivist creativity in industrial action, there is little published researched on this matter from the

perspective of creativity. It may be because it comes as a surprise to Westerners who believe that individualism is an inherent trait amongst creative people (Rinne *et al.*, 2013), despite evidence of group creativity in crafts such as quilting and community mural painting (Ho, 2010; Burt & Atkinson, 2012).

Australian teacher Kevin said: *'I had thought that if I put weak with the strong, the weak will slack off and the strong might lose, but in fact, the good students lead the weak'*. Thus many of the more experienced teachers at DI exploited their students' preference for working in groups in order to help the weaker students. At DI, some expatriate teachers who had previously assumed that individualistic tendencies are universal were surprised at the differences in motivation amongst indigenous students. Some teachers also encouraged student cooperation as a way of resolving the language problem. Meghan would often tell stronger students to explain complex concepts in Chinese to those who were having difficulty understanding them. In the instances observed, the stronger students did not object to sharing their knowledge with their peers and were even enthusiastic about it. Student Ren Zheng explained: *'When I explain to someone, I have to think about it and it makes me understand it better'*.

However, this goodwill seems to only extend to peers who acknowledge the stronger students' superiority. Jasper was happy to share his knowledge with Ru Quan, one of his closest friends, until the latter voiced his unhappiness at Jasper's appointment by an industry partner as the leader in an extracurricular group project. Ru Quan wanted Jasper to give up his leadership position as he did not see a need for one in the project, whilst Jasper, unwilling to do so, searched for reasons why the group needed a leader. Tension between the friends grew until the project was abandoned due to a lack of funding. The friendship appeared to recover from this episode, especially as they found employment in different industries upon graduation.

Despite this preference for collaboration, most of the students from DI were considered too individualistic for the local job market. When I mentioned to respondents from a local start-up that I was working with students at DI, several of them commented sarcastically that 'Students from DI are a special

breed'. They then went on to explain the problems they have had with employees who were DI alumni due to their inability to 'fit in' and their arrogance. However, teachers at DI were also critical of overconfident students who refused to participate in their peers' collaborative efforts. In Carol's experience, *'The hardest to teach are the ones that think they already know everything. They refuse to listen and think they are better than the other students'*.

Epstein (2004) highlights the thought processes behind the overly individualistic, non-conformist worker:

'This teamwork stuff is just a bunch of nonsense. I work for me and for me alone. It's important that this project has my personal stamp on it. If the project doesn't say ME, why work on it? Working with other people just brings up a lot of feelings I'd rather not have to deal with...I am not the sort of person who goes along with the herd. I think all this business about a well-defined software process is just an attempt to get everyone to conform, and if I have to conform, I lose my individuality, my sense of who I am.'

Although Epstein (2004) is writing about software development, the problem was common amongst students and, it appears, some of the alumni at DI. However, this seems to be overlooked in much of the management scholarship promoting individuality and non-conformity as a source of creativity (Lee & Lim, 2004; Augsdorfer, 2012), particularly in design creativity (Wodehouse *et al.*, 2011; Von Osten, 2011). Von Osten (2011) suggests, for example, that the celebration of individuality is part of a Eurocentric ideology that produced 'the idea of the artist as an "exceptional subject"', pointing out that 'Notions about "creative talent" and what it means to "be creative" have served bourgeois individualism'. She argues that 'classical exceptional subjects of modernity – artists, musicians, non-conformists and bohemians – also function as role models in European Union debates on labor and social politics'. DI students seem to have adopted these role models as well.

However, it seems that imitating the behaviours of these 'roles models' is only acceptable once one has achieved an extraordinary level of success.

Whilst popular Western discourses of creativity often highlight the eccentricity of famous artists and fashion designers (Plucker *et al.*, 2004; Joy, 2008; Carson, 2011) in order to accentuate their originality, 'commoners' who display such individuality seem to be viewed with suspicion. The acceptance of such individuality is conditional and appears to depend on success, popularity and wealth. The individuality of famous artists is tolerated, but where 'non-successful' people display overly individualistic tendencies, this seems to provoke criticism from their peers. In my response to a colleague's perceived individuality and overconfidence in a conversation which took place during my fieldwork, for example, I responded with the following entry in my monthly snapshot:

'A friend who's also doing a PhD recently told me about a presentation she gave about her research. She said that all the other people presenting talked about how they were doing their work and asked for advice but she didn't. She was just very focused and told everyone what she's doing and had no questions because she knows exactly what she's doing. It made me think that perhaps this kind of thinking, stifles rather than fosters creativity because if one does not ask for suggestions on how to improve one's work, then one cannot push the limits of one's own abilities. This sort of self-affirmation might be good for building one's confidence, but it does not allow the person to grow. If the thinker hoards his ideas and takes criticism personally, or is fearful of criticism or asking for help, then how can he improve on them?' (June snapshot)

Although my response might have arisen out of some resentment or desire to belittle, the snapshot also presents an insight into the need to abandon one's individuality occasionally in order to gain a better understanding of one's area of expertise through cooperation. The snapshot also reveals that immediate reactions from peers to an individual's overconfidence, independence, and individualism may sometimes be too severe. Given time and further reflection, I considered that perhaps my colleague was not hoarding ideas or being arrogant, but may have been displaying defensive behaviour out of a fear of having her work rejected. The isolation and loneliness that sometimes accompany individualism however does not allow individuals to explain

themselves, as they may interfere with the projection of confidence. The discourse of individualism is set against conformity, but also against real collaboration in an industry where intellectual property is closely guarded and freelance subjects are placed in competition with one another. It also fails to recognise the isolation and ostracism of individuals who are excluded from established groups. The discourse of collectivism has not been explored in detail but may be an interesting area for future research.

5.3 CREATIVITY DISCOURSES OF YOUTH AND MATURITY

Some scholars (Galenson, 2004; Simonton, 2007; Jones, 2010) have attempted to distinguish between youthful and mature creativity, acknowledging that creative work can originate from both young and old people, albeit in different forms. Creativity discourses of youth and maturity are not straightforward in the sense that youth is not always a positive quality and old age is not always seen as an inhibiting factor. Galenson (2004) for instance pointed out that Frank Lloyd Wright designed the famous Fallingwater house at 70. The emphasis on maturity in my research emerged out of interviewees' reflections regarding whether ageing benefits or inhibits creativity, and whether creativity discourses that favour youthfulness and the characteristics associated with it are a threat to traditional Chinese values. Youth culture is consistently associated with creativity in discourses that focus on the latter's economic potential (Mulgan & Worpole, 1986; Zimmerman, 2008; Volkerling, 2001). Urban policy makers adopting Florida's (2002) Creative Class hypothesis favour the reorganisation of spaces to attract young, well-educated professionals and promote an image of the city as youthful, along with its related icons of being 'cool', 'trendy', and fashionable (Zimmerman, 2008). Employees in artistic sectors of the creative industries such as design and publishing also embrace the motifs of youth, projecting their creativity by emphasising their 'youthfulness, their lack of responsibility and a greater openness to display and individuality in the way they dressed' (Nixon & Crewe, 2004: 137). This section discusses the creativity discourses of youth and maturity in Shanghai. Drawing on empirical material from both USCo and DI, I examine the associations that are made between youth, maturity, and creativity.

Many of the respondents answered interview questions in a way that reflected the discourse of youthful creativity, attributing greater creativity to the young and associating maturity with being less creative. In considering concepts of maturity in relation to creativity, employees at USCo extend this concept beyond individual workers and their personalities to products and their life cycle. The term 'mature products', for instance, refers to older technology that, although still being developed and given new improvements, is considered less creative than 'pioneering technology'. Expatriate engineer Gary in USCo for instance believes that creativity is *'very important for cutting edge technology. For mature products, it's not very important'*.

Beliefs that young people are better at being creative tend to rely on some form of categorical syllogism, as the behaviours and personality traits associated with youth in China often overlap with those associated with creative personalities in dominant Western creativity discourses.

Characteristics such as non-conformity, confidence, risk taking behaviour, ambition, curiosity, and impulsiveness are often attributed to both creative and young people (Goldsmith, 1987; Whittle *et al.*, 2013). For example, when asked why young people are more creative, indigenous USCo manager Hannah replied: *'as youth, they are more impulsive...'* suggesting that impulsiveness and risk taking are celebrated for their creative potential. Such notions of youthful creativity are tied to the idea that young people need instant gratification, portraying them as 'creative consumers' (Mooney & Rollins, 2010) whose self-centredness and individualistic motivations are justified by their potential contribution to the economy through both their purchasing power, their demand for new ways of exchanging goods and services, and their ability to generate new products.

In the discourses of advertising and design, this 'new breed of creative consumer' (Mooney & Rollins, 2010: 8) has been transformed by marketing experts from adversaries whose constantly changing tastes pose a threat to business stability to collaborators whose engagement with new information and communication technologies enable producers to work more efficiently (Berthon *et al.*, 2007; Mooney & Rollins, 2010). The Western media panders to these new creative consumers' status, reinforcing notions of customer

sovereignty (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005). Mooney and Rollins (2010) for instance, point out that 'Time Magazine crowned "You," the online consumer, its 2006 "Person of the Year" and Ad Age, a print and online service that delivers news on marketing to media professionals, chose the consumer as the "Agency of the Year"'.

Although many of the students at DI do not accept the assessment of themselves as impulsive creative consumers, their interactions with peers and service workers often betray an attitude of entitlement that is associated with creative consumption (Nixon & Crewe, 2004). This was particularly blatant on one occasion when I went to a karaoke club with a group of students from DI and an altercation arose as two groups of students from different courses disagreed on who should be in charge of the karaoke machine. In the aftermath, insults between students were aimed at their work, their style and tastes, and their lack of originality. Their loud presence and commanding manners towards employees at the venue were also reminiscent of Nixon and Crewe's (2004) account of publishing and advertising workers in London exhibiting 'laddish' behaviour. In arguing that these Chinese youth enact aspirational behaviours, modeled from celebrities as trendsetters as part of an identity forming process which marketers ought to exploit, Stock and Tupot (2006) reinforce the ideals of young consumers whose trespasses can be overlooked because they are exceptionally creative.

Chinese youthfulness and creativity thus become aligned with the dominant Western creativity discourses and economic liberalism's thesis that the pursuit of self-interest will benefit society at large (Clarke, 2005). In contrast, cautiousness and pragmatism are linked to the older generation and traditional Chinese values, which are considered old fashioned and regarded as a hindrance to China's creativity and economic development. Characteristics that are simultaneously associated with youth and creativity such as recklessness, tend to be set up in opposition to traditional Chinese values and 'older people'. Expatriate manager Gary assesses the difference between the younger and older generations in China in the following way:

'The older generation are more cautious, and their English isn't as good. But the younger can sometimes go too far, too aggressive. They are in your way, pushing in. How far should

the pendulum swing? I prefer to work with younger people if I need to move quickly, but it's better with older people for communication and learning about culture and politics. They have known suffering, bad economic times et cetera, but I can't have that with the younger people.'

There is however, some ambivalence regarding the more self-centred behaviours of young people, which are interpreted as a shift in values by some older indigenous respondents. Anna from Indigenous Startup, for example, is undecided about the changes in the younger generation:

*'People in China prefer stability. You can see that in our investment patterns. We don't like to spend the future's money. People are very pragmatic, so that's why there's a big difference. Is it changing? Yes, the younger generation are **better**. The 90s born, their language and way of expression is difficult for those born earlier to understand. **I don't know if this is a good thing but it is a change.**' (emphasis mine)*

Although young people are thought to have more of the qualities that enable them to be creative, they are also sometimes perceived to lack the maturity and depth of knowledge to 'produce good work'. The same qualities that are thought to enable greater creativity in young people, such as stubbornness and impulsiveness, are also seen by some as a hindrance to their development of the skills needed to be creative. Expatriate USCo manager Terrance related the following to illustrate a problem he had with a young person who appeared to embody these characteristics:

'There's one guy who is really intelligent that has tremendous potential and he challenges people constantly but he doesn't listen. You can try and explain to him why you should do something. He understands your reasoning but he still won't adapt. And if he could learn to adapt he would probably be one of the most valuable people at this site. And I really want to cultivate this guy, I've been talking to his manager. He was one of the people I told off once in front of everybody when I said "how could you be so stupid". Although it was just an expression on my part, to him it was unforgivable that I made him lose face.'

It's just the way we talk. If I really thought you're stupid I wouldn't even bother talking to you. I still can't figure out how to get through to him. I've worked with him the last 6 or 7 years in various programmes but never quite as closely as I'm working with him now. So it's now that I'm seeing how bold headed he is. I don't need to be educated on this stuff because I'm not trying to grow my career. He's trying to grow his career and I'm trying to help.'

In this instance, the young man's stubbornness and refusal to conform, which is set against his rejection of his superior's guidance, is seen as a hindrance to his self-improvement and career. The celebration of individualism in young employees appears to be conditional upon their self-discipline and willingness to accept the opportunities that their superiors provide. Often, as in the case with students at DI, such 'opportunities' involve providing free work for industry partners, in their own time, without receiving extra credit for their courses. The youth are thus expected to self-exploit in order to improve and learn from these opportunities that are presented to them.

The creativity discourse of youth is particularly complex in China because of how generations are conceptualised. Some respondents speculated that in terms of behaviours, generational gaps could be as small as five years, as each official five year plan carries a particular focus on the specific needs of the country, resulting in the deployment of national media campaigns and curriculum changes in educational institutions to promote the acquisition of certain skills and attitudes. Jason, Terrance, and Larry were a few of the expatriates who thought that members of each generation growing up immersed in particular messages of the five year plans assimilate the associated values, so that their aspirations and behaviours are aligned with policy objectives from their formative years.

Residents of all ages with whom I discussed youth were fond of essentialising those born '七零后 (qi ling hou - post 1970), '八零后 (ba ling hou - post 1980), and '九零后 (jiu ling hou - post 1990). Although some of the stereotypes have been challenged, particularly by the post-1990 generation, there seems to be a consensus that particular behaviours are typical to each of these groups

because of political and social changes that have taken place since the 'lost generation' (pre-1970) came of age. As the following excerpts from 'Douban' (2014), a social networking and online lifestyle magazine website illustrate, the newer generation are portrayed as being more hedonistic, cosmopolitan, and individualistic than their predecessors.

‘工作狂基本上都是70后的。

80后, 拒□加班□

90后: 拒□上班□

Most workaholics are born in the 70s

Those born in the 80s dislike working overtime

Those born in the 90s dislike work

70后喜□喝□酒□一般是□城□酒□

80后要么不喝酒, 要么就喝啤酒。

90后: □国果汁, □日本汽水...

Those born in the 70s like to drink red wine, particularly the 'Great Wall' brand

Those born in the 80s do not drink much, but when they do, they generally drink beer

Those born in the 90s drink Korean fruit juices and Japanese soft drinks

70后无□任何□候□看到有站着的□□, □都会□上□□□□座□

80后崇尚上下□平等□

90后: 天上地下, 唯我独尊!

Those born in the 70s will always give up their seat for the leader

Those born in the 80s uphold equality between superiors and subordinates

Those born in the 90s believe: "the heavens and earth exist for my benefit!"

Whilst it may be common for older generations across all cultures to hold these prejudices against 'young' people, the delineation of personality and cultural differences within such specific time frames is accepted in China on a level that is uncommon in the West. I found during my fieldwork that concern about the 'ba ling hou' and 'jiu ling hou' generations was widespread, as people of all backgrounds and occupations, including taxi drivers and market-stall holders, were keen to express their thoughts about these young people. In contrast, discussions in the West about Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Next *et cetera* tend not to take place so often in daily conversation.

This acute consciousness of changes in patterns of behaviour amongst the youth seems to stem from a collective anxiety about China's economic future in relation to the rest of the world, particularly as respondents in the discussions often firmly place their beliefs and experiences of young people's behaviours and attitudes within the context of 将来 (jiang lai – the future). Whilst the informal exchanges brought up some deep concerns about the departure from traditional Chinese values amongst the post-1980/90 generation, there were mixed responses as to why these changes were tolerated. Underlying most of these were the legacy of China's defeat to the West in the Opium War and the humiliation that is still at the forefront of national consciousness amongst many Chinese respondents, including some members of the post-90 generation. Whilst the economic promise of the youth's self-centred individualism and its associated creativity may present a reason for accepting these changes, it is a deeper memory of the Qing Dynasty's resistance to change and foreign ideas – which to many people partly accounts for the defeat of Imperial China – that appears to be behind the tolerance and even sympathy towards these youth. Tian Man, a young engineer believes that the youth will restore the diversity that was lost in the subsequent rebuilding of China after its defeat against the West: *'We must start our history again. Before the Opium War, there was a lot of culture'*.

The notion that China needs to 'catch up' with the West brings ambivalence to the perceived changes in the attitudes of the youth. During an informal conversation, Baile, an indigenous '70s born' manager at USCo, expressed the view that young people should be allowed to make their own mistakes so that they can properly understand for themselves why certain actions are wrong. Like many of the Chinese nationals I spoke with, he both despaired of the recklessness of the post-80 and 90 generations and was sympathetic towards their struggles and uncertainty for the future. Indigenous USCo manager Jared Yang was similarly defensive on behalf of the youth:

'Young people are more innovative. Self-motivation depends on personality. Creative people are more ambitious, stubborn, ruthless, but not necessarily more selfish. They are self-motivated, and won't be content being stuck.'

The concept of balance between youth and maturity is attractive to many indigenous workers caught in the schism between tradition, family, and cultural identity on the one hand, and economic necessity, obedience to the state, and personal ambition on the other. Appeals for students and workers to seek a balance between the traits associated with youth and maturity are often absorbed into the dominant creativity discourses that focus on economic productivity. When Yang Shan, a hardworking young intern at USCo reflected on the criticism aimed at his generation, he both internalises and rejects these judgements:

'Perhaps the younger generation is not as pragmatic but there needs to be a balance. I'm very pragmatic. Maybe a bit too individualistic. But this is a rule of our generation. Maybe... I think the previous generation is more creative than us because they were able to [survive] in a difficult environment. I feel my parents and grandparents think society is better now than before.'

Although there is a preference at USCo for hiring young people who are easier to inculcate into the organisation's values, many expatriate respondents said they prefer to work with older indigenous colleagues as the ability to collaborate is perceived to be related to one's maturity and a contributing factor to team creativity. Expatriate Aaron for example said that when *'people are more focused on their own teams. It's both good and bad. It's a sign of maturity and we're getting better results now'*. Similarly, younger workers are perceived to have more of the qualities that are aligned with the type of creativity celebrated in the fast economy (Thrift, 2000), in that the *'younger generation are more risk taking, they have nothing to lose anyway, [the] older generation are more matured and they can think more maturely and are more practical'* (Chew Lee Yong).

Teachers at DI also raised concerns about the youthfulness of the students, many of whom have wealthy parents who have kept the lives of their only child sheltered (Jacobs, 2010; Cameron *et al.*, 2013). Some of these students had been persuaded by their parents to attend DI because of its reputation and the prestige of being enrolled in a private foreign institution within a well regarded local university. The resulting drop out rate of students (about 10% according

to administrators in the Fashion Design Department) who found the new style of learning too difficult, especially given their lack of interest, was a cause for concern to the heads of departments and administrators who worried about the income and financial sustainability of the institute. These financial concerns did not appear to trouble many of the foreign teachers however, who often secretly encouraged the students to pursue their own interests. Kevin provided guidance to a student who subsequently left before completion to help her parents in their business. He explains:

'This girl was very good but she was partying a lot. Very artistic but felt lost. Didn't know what she was doing. Now she's making money for her parents' business. Makes sense. She feels important now.'

Whilst many scholars (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000; Hurley & Thorp, 2002; McDowall & Boyd, 2004; Zepke & Leach, 2005; Bill, 2009) explore the influence of Western students' interests, predispositions, and social and cultural capital on their choices in tertiary education, the additional pressure of family obligations and parental demands factors strongly in the choices made by young people in China, even amongst the more individualistic post-90 generation. Although the family's strong influence might be a source of tension for some young people, as Kevin's example above illustrates, there seem to be more who claim to benefit from such intervention from their elders. Some scholars have written about the expectation of youth in the West to self-discipline and take charge of their education (Miller & Rose, 1997; Bloomer & Hodgkinson, 1997; Zepke & Leach, 2005), which China is eased by the role that most parents and teachers take to provide intensive guidance, almost to the point of negating the young individual's own desires and ambitions. Thus, what could be an overwhelming sense of personal responsibility for one's entire future transferred in a large part to the older generation.

An example is the case of a 'Tiger Mother's' (Chua, 2011) involvement in her son's performance at DI. Jasper's mother began to establish frequent contact with his teachers and some of the management staff when she asked for help to bridle her son's uncontrolled social life. In the first term of Jasper's enrolment, she established Guanxi with the teachers by regularly taking them out for meals where she would explain her son's behaviour and

talk about his habits, likes and dislikes in order to help them understand him better. Although this is an extreme example, these strategies for managing their offspring's education are not uncommon with Chinese parents. I once attended a PhD seminar in a university in London where the presenter's Taiwanese/ Chinese mother was in attendance. At the end of the session, she personally took his mobile phone and approached all the other attendees for their contact details. At DI, where there is an expectation that the school will take some responsibility for their students, it is not uncommon for administrative staff to be asked to report their students' extra-curricular activities to the parents. Indeed, DI advertises that it offers a parent support service and encourages staff to bring the strength of the family into their teaching and management, calling on parents' cooperation to achieve educational success for their children.

Jasper's mother also used Guanxi to transform the teacher/student relationship into a master/disciple one, which mimics a parent/child relationship with its expectation of loyalty, piety, reverence from the ward, and pastoral care from the guardian. This ideal is reminiscent of practices in pre-modern China, where offspring would be sent to skilled masters as apprentices who were also treated like foster children, and is still portrayed in popular film and literature (Ho, 2002). However, the aspiration for such relationships rarely translates into practice, as wider professional and social networks now influence the interaction between 'master' and 'disciple'. Whilst students in such relationships are still mainly the recipients of knowledge, the exchange is also more likely be two-way, as students impart knowledge about their subcultures to their teachers and the power relations are affected by the students' status as customers and their teachers' role as service providers. In some instances, where teachers at DI are new to the country and the city, they rely on their students and colleagues to broaden their knowledge of local culture, practices, and practical information such as where to source fabrics.

Nevertheless, the amount of effort it took for Jasper's parents and teachers over three years to stimulate his interest and motivate him is not unusual at DI. Apart from a small number of students who had decided to return to further their studies after having been in the workforce, it seems that many of the students at DI had enrolled into their courses at their parents' behest. A

minority would leave because *'their parents forced them to do [the course]'* (Interview notes 30/04/2009 - Ruth and Kelly), which suggests that some of these young people may not want to be creative in the way that they are expected to. However, family obligations and work load prevents them from engaging in the type of self-reflection that would facilitate that realisation until the pressure becomes too stressful and they give up. As the 'heroic inventor' discourse places an emphasis on agency, and creative products are seen as the oeuvre of extraordinary individuals, DI's young students, with their lack of agency, seem to contradict the dominant creativity discourses. Parents, administrators, and teachers engage in invasive, interfering practices, which emphasise and reinforce the students' lack of agency and individual identity. The young people are thus caught in a double bind where they are urged to be creative and celebrate their youthful individualism, but are also expected to conform to expectations of model citizenship that are regulated through parental involvement in their career decisions and lifestyle choices. The anxieties of parents and guardian-teachers for the future thus become mobilised in moulding the youth into self-governing, creative subjects.

The celebration of the youth's freedom and individualism masks the precariousness of their future employment, which some parents of students at DI try to mitigate by being closely involved in their offspring's education. However these parents may in fact be creating a generation of youth who are so well trained in self-exploitation that they fail to consider better alternatives to the employment model they have been offered. According to McRobbie (2002a: 101), this appears to have already happened in the UK, under New Labour's invention of a 'youth driven meritocracy', which encourages workers to discover individuality. This involved the reorganisation of labour along 'wildly free market lines', where workers without the protection of traditional employment models that provide benefits must invest their own time and resources, and pay for their own equipment and office space to produce their work, as well as be attentive to the 'idiosyncratic, temperamental and certainly unpredictable' ways of the industry: 'Success, wealth and even fame and celebrity are now routinely held out as possibilities for those prepared to take the risks and put in the long hours'.

Despite their anxiety, many parents did not seem to be concerned about the

precariousness of their offspring's chosen fields. In the end of term fashion shows and exhibitions, many parents would personally thank the teachers for transforming their children from unrefined, 'lost' delinquents into sophisticated, poised young adults. The success of the education at DI seems to lie partially in the ability to transform the students' representation of themselves and their bodies from naïve recipients of cultural products into entrepreneurial consumers. Carol's description of Jasper's style when he first enrolled at DI is reminiscent of the 'before' description in fashion makeover programmes: *'He was wearing a t-shirt and slippers [flip flops], and he carried a Tweety Bird back pack on his shoulders. He was like a country bumpkin. It used to make me laugh'*. However, through frequenting exclusive nightclubs and restaurants, attending fashion shows, and browsing 'high end' garment retailers as part of their learning at DI, students adopt the tastes of the elite and gain a sense of style more aligned with the global market. Many teachers, particularly those from the fashion and fashion marketing departments, spoke of creativity as an act of refining the roughness and coarseness of the realities around them to 'reveal' beauty. This idea of refinement extends from objects to students whom teachers *'groom... for the international platform'* (Carol). For the teachers, the idea or the inspiration is secondary to the execution, which is where they believe creativity emerges. Whilst the idea or inspiration may be drawn from local culture and individual insights, execution must follow established canons of style and be aligned with 'international standards' in order for students to gain the type of employment they aspire to in successful fashion houses and multinational advertising agencies. By changing their dress in a manner that reflects their knowledge of current trends, students present themselves as savvy producers of themselves and their work. In this way, 'Being self-made and motivated, achieving financial success, and representing one's country become bound up in a story about girls' [and boys]' citizenship as product. Makeup, lingerie, sporting goods, fashion and music are the accessories for citizenship. The positive qualities that these role models represent can in fact be purchased' (Harris, 2005: 278-279). On the other hand, as Bill (2009) points out in the fashion context, 'designers were trained to think of themselves primarily as creative individuals and were therefore ill-equipped to develop strategies that would make their activities more economically sustainable'. The effectiveness of the discourse of youth in the creative industries lies in the readiness amongst young people to adopt the

latest fashions, eager as they are to project the rapidly changing trends of the day, thereby contributing to the economy not by producing their own economic wealth, but by sustaining national wealth through their consumption of novelty.

Here again, the discourse of youth celebrate a type of creativity that embraces rapid change, the unpredictability and recklessness of youth, and their precariousness. However, in China, anxieties around future economic prosperity and stability keep parents and older people involved in their young people's decisions to the extent that wealthier parents who can afford the time and money will take an almost invasive interest in their children's career decisions. The discourse of maturity does not receive as much attention because older people do not provoke the same level of anxiety amongst Chinese citizens. Whilst expatriates at USCo believe that more mature employees are better at collaborative creativity, and older people are thought to be better at applying the focus necessary for prolonged experimental work (Simonton, 2007), their potential contributions seem to go unnoticed in the design sector where the focus is mainly on young creative workers who are thought to be better at formulating new concepts.

5.4 CREATIVITY DISCOURSES OF EXPOSURE AND INSULARITY

Whilst USCo draws upon the discourse of exposure that puts responsibility on individual workers to expand their knowledge for the sake of self-improvement in order to build their careers and benefit the company, at DI, exposure concerns the acquisition of knowledge and experiences around the continually shifting canon of artistic and design work that is regarded the best, as measured by financial success and public profile. Although student designers are encouraged to make contact with industry professionals, there is also a discourse of insularity that permeates the design sector (Soar, 2002; Sunley *et al.*, 2011; Rantisi, 2014), particularly fashion design, which appears to encourage insularity due to the sense of privilege it affords participants within the industry. In this section, I examine the discourses of exposure and insularity in the creativity discourses at DI. I argue that these discourses are politically loaded, as they draw shifting boundaries separating the insider from the outsider, and are largely one-sided in the sense that they call for

Chinese workers to be more exposed to the West but not vice versa.

A common complaint amongst expatriates working with indigenous employees and students is the latter's lack of exposure to industry developments outside China and non-Chinese media content, which they argue leads to a lack of creativity in individuals, an ignorance of current standards, and risks of intellectual property theft. The discourse of exposure can be categorised under two strands: exposure to ideas and developments in the same field, and exposure to ideas outside one's area of expertise.

Exposure to ideas and development in the same field is considered by expatriate respondents to be necessary for two reasons. First, it enables Chinese workers in the creative industries to 'catch up' to 'International Standards' of quality. As Anna from Indigenous Startup, whose background is in print advertising says: *'our problem is that we don't know what it's like overseas and what level they're at in their development. We don't know what to catch up to.'* Second, exposure also mitigates risks of copyright infringements that may take place without the creator's knowledge.

Clarence, an account manager from a multinational public relations company, Relate Co., spoke of how the organisation was sued by an artist for unknowingly using copied work. The case made it clear amongst the staff that the lack of exposure is not just a problem for creatives, but also for their managers and clients who launched the advertising campaign without any awareness that it was not original.

Exposure to ideas outside one's specialisation was also considered important amongst teachers and expatriate managers because it embraces the notion of the self-improving worker who takes responsibility for his/her own knowledge acquisition and therefore, career progression. Furthermore, students and workers are urged by their teachers and managers to take an interest in subjects and activities beyond their chosen occupations as greater breadth of knowledge is thought to promote diversity and divergent thinking that increases creativity. Some teachers expressed frustration at the students' lack of exposure to 'global culture', believing that the design sector favours products that contain intertextual references that are thought to attract more sophisticated, younger audiences (O'Donohoe, 1997). Kevin,

an expatriate teacher laments: *'They don't know about design and subculture. They can't identify groups and prefer to have fun and hang out rather than be competitive... It's about exposure. Trainspotting, drugs and such things is new to them.... They don't watch independent, Hollywood movies. Books and magazines are not important to them. The library to them is a waste of time'*. Although Kevin expressed his dislike for what he perceived as the 'West is Best' attitude, where students copy from popular Western media as a first solution whenever they are assigned a task, his comments nevertheless reflect a Western-centric point of view where students' level of exposure is assessed by how much of Western subculture they understand.

The discourse of exposure seems to touch upon one of the most politically sensitive areas of China creative industries, provoking emotionally charged responses from many of the indigenous respondents with whom I spoke. The history surrounding the Opium War, issues of political sovereignty regarding press control, and Western hegemony remain matters of concern for many ordinary citizens grappling with their desires and their identity. For instance, Jasmine, an indigenous translator and administrator at DI, appreciates Western independent films, European fashion, and foreign cuisine; she is usually up to date with the latest software that allows her to bypass the government's Great Firewall, which blocks censored online content. However, she is also a strong supporter of government press control, and has argued: *'Why should we open up to the West when all they will do is take from us?'* She then went on to talk about the Opium War and the theft of Chinese artefacts (Hsu, 1970).

The argument for more exposure to the West is often interpreted as a ploy to force China to open up to threats against its territorial integrity. To many of Jasmine's contemporaries, there remains a very real possibility that China would become colonised by a Western power, but for the government's vigilance. The censorship of content is seen as important, because it protects the ignorant from Western propaganda about Tibet, Xinjiang, and seditious parts of the local press. Many respondents would engage in lengthy discussions once the issue of press control arose. Zhao Ke, a young engineer at USCo, was one of a number of respondents who were

outspoken about the Chinese government's right to press control. They perceived China's sovereignty to be fragile and vulnerable to Western agendas and believed that much of foreign media were deliberately working to undermine its territorial integrity so as to weaken its power and facilitate an easier invasion. These respondents believe that the Western media deliberately tries to spread distorted news to the Chinese public in order to bring about civil unrest in China, so that the country will once again be vulnerable to foreign exploitation. Although more moderate respondents who have frequent contact with foreign expatriates, such as Jasmine, tend to be more cautious about expressing such views for fear of appearing paranoid and ignorant, they often surface in informal discussions of the rationale behind the Chinese government's strict press control.

As such, many of the indigenous interviewees were ambivalent about the censorship of content. Many defend the strict censorship because of conservative values and fear for China's territorial integrity, believing that '*if we open up, they will exploit us*' (Jasmine). However, accompanying this strong reaction to the perceived threat against China's autonomy is an awareness of their alleged insularity and implied backwardness, which, when pointed out by expatriates, often leads to an uncomfortable silence in the conversation. Nonetheless, there appears to be a greater knowledge amongst Chinese citizens about the West than vice versa. The average Chinese citizen's knowledge of Western culture, politics, and geography, although partial and often limited to popular icons and representations by the state approved media, appears far more extensive than the lay Westerner (Holm & Farber, 2002; Harding, 2009). The argument that indigenous students and workers are less creative because they lack exposure thus appears to stem from a preference in Western media for lifestyle content, such as celebrity gossip and fashion, over political content such as world news and current affairs.

The hegemony of Western standards of creativity is evident in the types of exposure that critics argue Chinese citizens need in order to become more creative. A common argument proposes that young people in China are more creative than older people because they have had more exposure to the outside world and learned English at a younger age. However, closer

inspection reveals that this 'creativity' refers to their ability to absorb and mimic Western humour and tropes rather than their actual ability to generate new ideas. Indigenous engineer Haitong for instance believes that '*We need more exposure to the west and change in education to focus less on utility.*' In this discourse, 'outside' refers specifically to the West. Likewise, expatriate IT entrepreneur Sam believes that

'with [exposure to Western media] comes some sense of independence. There are all steps. Younger people get more cues from the outside. Arts are constrained typically. Not much support for them. Foreign films are restricted, they can't just write books on what they want.'

It is also noteworthy that Sam refers to a 'sense of' independence that it provides for Chinese youths from their families and traditions rather than independence itself; although these new youthful citizens are becoming more independent from their elders, it appears as if they have found a different culture to depend on for a sense of belonging rather than actually becoming independent in an individualistic way. Furthermore, it is not clear that they have achieved real independence through their access to foreign media, as it does not indicate that they do not still rely on their families for basic support. Indeed, many young people in China still live with their parents until they get married (Forrest Zhang, 2004).

Thus, respondents speaking about exposure appear for the most part to be referring to access by residents in China to the Western media. Discussions about exposure reveal an underlying belief that the West is a leader of a global culture that China must learn from. The latter's achievements are thus assessed in relation to Western accomplishments, perpetuating the model of the West as developed and China as 'developing' or 'emerging'. Although concepts of originality and novelty in creativity are debatable amongst scholars, (See Chapter 2, Kneller, 1967; Mead, 1959; Parkhurst, 1999; Runco, 2004), some of whom argue that an idea is original if the creator produced it on his/her own even if it already existed, the measuring of Chinese creativity against Western standards means that creativity is defined in relation to what has already happened outside the Chinese creative worker's world. Clarence, a South East Asian customer relations director at

Relate Co., a multinational public relations and advertising company points out:

'The local creatives think that they are being original, but if they had explored further, they would have seen that their idea is not new. They would also discover that other people have done it in a more sophisticated way than them.'

The exposure to Western media is seen by expatriates to bring with it desirable values that Chinese workers must adopt in order to compete in the global marketplace. According to the discourse of exposure, the global market demands a certain 'standard' of service and 'quality' which Chinese workers can only achieve through contact with Western media and training from the West. Western IT entrepreneur Sam reflects on the changes he has seen in China, which he attributes to exposure:

'The generations are separated by exposure...The younger people are more expressive and creative. The younger people get blogs and are less repressed. They are dressing wilder and are more creative... Outside influences are changing the culture and the Chinese are more open to it now.'

However, exposure also increases the risk of deliberate copyright violations, particularly as many design students and workers have difficulty distinguishing between being inspired by another's work and copying. According to Clarence, a manager at a multinational media company, and Kevin, a design teacher at DI, many students and employees will argue that their work is 'inspired' by another when the content is '*clearly a copy*'; the boundaries between copy and inspiration are sometimes vague and subject to personal opinion (Bartow, 2004; Shirwaikar, 2009). During our interview for instance, Kevin complained about a student who designed a water dispenser that looks like an Ipod because it copies Apple's product. However, some of the other students and some of the teachers thought it was clever and original. The number of imitation products and parodies of famous US franchises such as Starbucks, KFC, and McDonald's indicate that there is no shortage of exposure to popular Western culture in China. It may therefore be that the discourse of exposure really calls for Chinese designers to access more insular, exclusive subcultures (Zhang, 2010) in order to

improve the quality of their work.

Expatriate teacher Carol sees students' lack of exposure as an asset, as *'Their minds are not polluted, they have fresh minds and are not exposed to Western ideas. They are not boxed up'*. Furthermore, she adds that there is *'plenty of their own inspiration from within China, they are proud of their culture'*. Although it was more common amongst interviewees to think of creativity in relative terms to the West, many teachers at DI said that the best instances of creativity are ones that are drawn from local life, and encouraged their students to draw inspiration from traditional Chinese designs, particularly those from ethnic minorities. Indeed, the most original designs in their fashion shows and exhibitions appear to incorporate traditional motifs.

Although students are encouraged to draw inspiration from their own experiences, designs that are ostensibly inspired by Chinese culture seem to be valued less by teachers at DI than those that are more Westernised. At many of the end of term fashion shows hosted by the students for instance, the award winners, nominated by industry professionals, tend to have designed clothes 'inspired' by the latest trends from the most recent fashion weeks hosted in major cities around the world, such as Paris Fashion Week. Students are encouraged to keep up to date with these trends by funding their own subscriptions to expensive specialist magazines and tickets to attend shows at Shanghai Fashion Week as well as those abroad, including Europe. Their personal commitment is an expected response to the rhetoric of self-motivation, which teachers argue is necessary for entry into an insular industry.

At DI, the discourse of exposure sits comfortably alongside the discourse of insularity without any dissonance. Students are encouraged to target subcultures and appeal to lifestyle aspirations of particular clientele by gaining an understanding of these insular communities, which they can only do by accessing these exclusive, privileged spaces and products. Students who can present themselves as being an authentic part of particular subcultures or have previous experience or access to industry partners and organisations are perceived as more creative and successful. Roy for

instance, an Industrial Design student who practises street graffiti under a pseudonym, was introduced to me as one of the 'most interesting students' in the department, whilst Sky, who had established a career in the industry before deciding to return to formal education, was considered by her teacher to be his best student.

Some teachers at DI, aware that the design sector, with its closed ranks and exclusive cliques (McRobbie, 2002b; Luvaas, 2013) can be *'bitchy'* (Carol) and *'catty'* (Joseph), try to prepare their students for the industry by building their resilience to insults and teaching them how to *'play the game'* (Joseph) of fashion criticism. Students are thus encouraged to create, perform, and embrace insularity because it is the accompanied sense of privilege and exclusiveness that commands the profits. As design blogger Anna Batista (2012) points out: 'insularity sells well especially with foreign buyers and surely in our financially unstable times many designers would prefer to sell globally by being insular to selling on a smaller market by having globally recognisable inspirations'.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined three pairs of discourses and the way indigenous workers, students, and their parents respond to them. In the first third of the chapter, I discussed the way that the discourse of individualism sets up the Chinese education system as detrimental to creativity because of the focus on conformity, which is believed by respondents to foster dependence on teachers. I argued that this discourse fails to consider that individualism is only celebrated if the creative person has already gained a high level of success and some fame in his/her field. Ordinary people who display such individualism are often criticised and sometimes ostracised by their peers and colleagues. Within the discourse of individualism, which Turner (1988) for instance has pointed out is rooted in property ownership, are particular ideals that are tied to Western capitalism. Similarly, Adam Smith's 'Invisible Hand' (2008) has also often been interpreted as a theory of the individual whose pursuit of self-interest may benefit society as a whole. Whilst these ideas about individualism have since been challenged (Turner, 1988) and are specific to contextual factors, the emphasis on individuals as the primary agents in advancing national economies remain embedded in dominant

creativity discourses. However, as I previously pointed out in Chapter 2, this individualism does not extend to consumers who are being persuaded by advertising to adopt the same material aspirations and follow current trends.

I also discussed the discourse of youth, proposing that creative people and stereotypical young people share traits that are desirable in the 'fast economy'. However, as generational differences in China are influenced by government policies and the rapid changes resulting from the five year plans since the one child policy of the late 1970s, each cohort born to the five year plans are believed to hold distinctive values and aspirations. Whilst younger generations are thought to be more irresponsible and self-centred, changing work conditions also places a greater burden on them, with less security, making their employment prospects more precarious. The anxieties triggered in the older generation by behaviours associated with young people, the conditions that they are exposed to, and concerns over China's economic and political future leads parents and guardians to be over involved in the decision making processes of their children and wards. However, tight knit family structures across China normalise such involvement, even in neoliberal educational institutions where the teachers are mainly Westerners.

Finally, I argued that discourses of exposure and insularity are really part of the same argument for students and workers in China's design sector to tap into a narrow canon of Western media and content, which reinforces the hegemony of Western content. A sense of elitism permeates through these discourses since access to the most exclusive content is limited to those who have the means to subscribe to expensive magazines or are part of the social networks that can gain early access to the latest software used to bypass the great firewall of China before the authorities shut it down.

The examination of these discourses has unveiled the governmentality of indigenous Chinese workers and students and the strategies they apply to deal with the contradictions and double bind that arises from the call to become creative, productive citizens whilst also being faithful to their traditions. The call for workers and students to be creative urges them, for the sake of national economic well being, to adopt a sense of responsibility

for themselves and their own careers. Embedded in these discourses is the myth of a meritocratic society where those who work hard enough and who possess enough talent may excel, and those who fall behind their peers are simply less hardworking or not as gifted. However, this ignores the role of networks and industry contacts, made largely through Guanxi connections, in the career progression of the individual. In the next chapter, I examine the reasons why these discourses are celebrated in the major discourses over alternative ideas of creativity, and why the latter have been neglected.

CHAPTER 6: FRAMING CREATIVITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Drawing on empirical material from fieldwork in Shanghai, this thesis has argued that the notion of creativity is less a set of absolute characteristics that can be produced than a value system that emerges out of the context in which the term is applied. The question remains however, as to how such different ideas have come to be associated with the term, and how these ideas may relate to one another.

The Creativity Framework proposed here provides a means for exploring the richness and variety of beliefs about creativity, both within academic literature and in practice, particularly in the context of the software production industry. The intention is not to establish a system of classification, but to provide a broad guideline for thinking about creativity beyond the way it has so far been written about in the sciences. Rather than proclaiming ‘this is what creativity is’ – much like scholars who have tried to understand it in terms of producing creativity – I propose the Creativity Framework as a way to conceptualise how creativity might look if we take into account the variability of meanings associated with the concept. The previous two chapters contain an exploration of the particular meanings ascribed to creativity, and how these are enacted by expatriates, students, and workers in Shanghai’s creative industries. In this chapter I present the Creativity Framework as a way of considering creativity which encompasses the various meanings associated with the term. The Creativity Framework is tool I have formulated as a first step towards inquiry into these other forms of creativity.

Dominant discourses of creativity (Banaji & Burn, 2007) place an emphasis on the type of creativity that is immediately obvious and profitable, such as design work, neglecting the creativity of the less visible areas of production, such as software coding, manufacturing, and other ‘back end’ work. As a result, attention to creativity is skewed in favour of those involved in ‘front end’ creativity, sidelining the importance of creativities that could be just as crucial for tasks such as the execution of ideas, maintenance of existing systems, cost

saving, and problem solving. Dominant discourses also rely on a narrow definition of creativity, despite the lack of agreement between psychologists and cognitive scientists who have written on the subject (Parkhurst, 1999; Torrance, 1988).

To date, scholars have grappled with the task of defining creativity without sufficiently taking into account the political, economic, and epistemic influences that have shaped the interpretation of what is creative. Moreover, the rise of creativity research has not taken place in a vacuum but has rather been heavily influenced by a climate that is tied closely to its interpretation.

Guilford's (1950) APA address (Chapter 2), which urged the US government to promote creativity in public education in order to compete in the Space Race, contained strong political elements; the emergence of creativity as a valuable human trait occurred alongside commercial expansion in the West (Chapter 2), bringing additional elements to the understanding of the notion; and the rise of particular epistemic traditions such as logical positivism and empiricism over other epistemologies such as hermeneutics or structuralism has led to the dominance of 'scientific' ways of studying creativity. The development of postcolonial perspectives of creativity is necessary to uncover alternate meanings associated with the term and challenge the dominance of Western centric discourses.

Given that a large body of literature dealing with the definitions of creativity already exists, and was reviewed in the conceptual framework (Chapter 2) I shall not repeat this here. The aim of this research has not been to list what defines creativity and its 'causes', but to further the understanding of creativity whilst also being aware that cultural, social, political, economic, and epistemic climates influence the interpretation of what creativity means. The Creativity Framework outlined in this chapter is a way of examining the beliefs, interpretation, and meanings associated with the term so as to identify the relationships, influences, and patterns between the various concepts that are connected to the idea.

To facilitate comprehensive coverage, the discussion is organised according to Rhodes's (1961) four Ps: person, process, press, and products as the adjective 'creativity' is usually applied to at least one of these. As Chapter 2

noted, Rhodes's original vocabulary has been maintained, with the exception of the word 'press', which has been replaced by 'place'. I will examine the way that practitioners from my fieldwork and researchers interpret creativity in each of these four areas before proposing how creativity may be radical, chaotic or ordered according to the Creativity Framework.

6.2 THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

In this section, I propose a framework of creativity that can accommodate diverse types of creativity without being so all-encompassing that it loses meaning. The main purpose of the creativity framework is to help reconcile tensions and contradictions in the meanings associated with creativity and facilitate consideration of alternate perspectives. On the one hand, creativity is seen as characteristic of humanity, 'the universal heritage of every human being that is born (Maslow, 1974: 107); whilst on the other, there is a dearth of literature covering the creativity exercised by the poor and disempowered as a strategy for survival (Owusu, 2007), and their own need and capacity for self-expression (Stack, 1975). Instead, much of the discussion is centred around 'productivity'. Neelands and Choe (2010: 10) have argued that the 'English model of creativity'³ treats creativity as a universal quality when it is in fact 'a culturally specific construction which is defined so as to serve the interests of particular positions in the field of cultural production'. The creativity framework opens a space for the inclusion of other definitions and dimensions not previously considered in the debates.

Boisot's (1998) work on knowledge assets particularly helped inspire the development of my approach by pointing to how chaos, order, and complexity can result from novelty, experience, and discovery. The formulation of the idea that creativity can be chaotic or ordered has largely arisen from this consideration. Other authors (Cheng & Van de Ven, 1996; Gabora, 2000) have also suggested that creativity arises from the interplay of chaotic and ordered processes. Furthermore, a preliminary interview I conducted with the founder of a software company who complained about employees who are 'too creative' suggests that there are indeed chaotic and ordered types of creativity.

³Introduced by the New Labour movement in the 1990s through the Creative Partnerships programme (2002 – present) (Hall & Thomson, 2007), to promote 'self-actualisation' for disadvantaged individuals so they may become less dependent on state support.

The Creativity Framework (Figure 6.01), provides a model within which one may plot various examples of the four Ps. Personality traits, processes, places, and products may fit according to the extent to which one considers them to be chaotic, ordered. In the next three sub-sections, I will introduce the concepts of chaotic and ordered creativities, and briefly discuss the concept radical creativity.



Figure 6.01 The Creativity Framework

6.2.1 CHAOTIC CREATIVITY

Within the proposed framework, chaotic creativity is the raw result of divergent thinking that has not been refined by experience, skill and knowledge. The chaotic regime is characterised by data overload (Boisot, 1998: 37), its distinguishing factors being volume, disorder and destruction. Chaotically creative personalities are overwhelmed by ideas and processes, they lack direction, their products may be harmful, and their environments are disorganised. The relationship between chaos and creativity has been explored by academics across various disciplines including psychology (Barron, 1988; Richards, 1996; Richards, 2001), management (Bilton, 2007; Vinten, 1992), and the social sciences (Montuori, 2003; Sheldrake *et al.*, 2001). Whilst it seems intuitive that being 'clear-headed' is much more conducive to productivity than being 'in a muddle', mental disorders are increasingly linked to creativity, especially in the case of bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia (Richards, 1996; Richards, 2001). Similarly, tidy environments appear to be more efficient, but the image of a writer or artist working behind a desk full of clutter invokes a sense of high productivity (Livingston, 1996; McElroy *et al.*, 1983).

The stochastic principle of creativity (Simonton, 2003) dictates that there must be a prolific production of ideas in order for one good one to manifest. According to Simonton (2003) there must be numerous contributing ideas that are a result of the creator's exploration for a good creative idea to form. At some point during the creative process, the sum of ideas might have existed as a collection of disorganised concepts that the creator had not yet sorted into

coherence. Such disorganisation may be said to lie on the chaotic end of the Creativity Framework (Point A in Figure 6.01)

6.2.2 ORDERED CREATIVITY

Ghiselin (1963) introduced the notion that there are different levels of creativity, distinguishing between a major, higher, primary type of creativity at one end of the spectrum and a minor, lower, secondary type of creativity at the other.

Ekvall (1997) lists two types of creativity: adaptive, and radical or innovative creativity. This 'lower' creativity is classified in this thesis as ordered creativity. Examples of ordered creative products might include incremental innovations and repurposed inventions. Ordered creative processes and environments are highly structured. Kirton (1976) provides an apt description of what might be 'ordered' creative personalities in his characterisation of 'Adaptors'.

Thomas Edison's purported assertion that genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration is a reminder that creativity does not just come from some divine, mysterious realm of great ideas that picks out individuals at random to grant them success over their peers. Many of the world's great inventions, such as the Internet, were said to be a result of considerable hard work and collaboration amongst a network of inventors. Repetition is often seen as the antithesis of creativity because of the tedium that arises out of performing repetitive tasks, but an increasing number of scholars are beginning to explore its relation to creativity (Tin, 2003; Slutskaia, 2006; Brower, 2003). In the preface to their book, **Surpassing Ourselves - An inquiry into the Nature and Implications of Expertise**, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993: xii) point out that 'the romantic way we are brought up to think about creativity makes expertise seem like an impediment'. Practice and the accumulation and refinement of skills over time to facilitate expertise is not as exciting as the 'aha' moment, yet according to Nijstad *et al.* (2010) both are necessary for the type of creative breakthroughs that bring about change and improvement. The creativity of the 'drones' in engineering teams could be said to manifest in their determination and willingness to try new things whilst maintaining a strict order in their methods. Through their conservatism, they may establish standards of quality in the products they work on. Consumers could be said to benefit from their persistence in experimenting with different production methods that lower costs and allow the masses access to new

technologies. Within the Creativity Framework, such ordered instances of creativity lie on the other extreme (Point B in Figure 6.01)

6.2.3 RADICAL CREATIVITY

In the Creativity Framework, radical creativity is the type that leads to products and ideas that change society. Inventions such as the Gutenberg Press, the Internet, and the car, as cited by survey respondents, may fit into this category because they fundamentally changed the lives of ordinary people. I argue that radical creativity is the product of the confluence of chaotic and ordered creativity in the four Ps, and that criticisms of the Chinese for being 'less creative' (Ng, 2001) arise out of the failure to recognise aspects of creativity that are not celebrated in dominant Western discourses, even though they may contribute to radical creativity. I also propose that although these discourses maintain that radical creativity is desirable, conservative governments support policies and behaviours that oppose creativity in order to preserve values and avert uncertainties that may follow creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1950).

Every so often in history, an idea or product has led to a major shift in consciousness in society and brought about revolutionary change in the way people perceive and interact with their world. Radically creative 'products' cited by survey respondents such as the printing press, the telephone, and the production line have an expansive effect, bringing knowledge to the masses and allowing golden ages to flourish. According to respondents, they may also facilitate other types of creativity. The invention and popularisation of the internet for instance was cited by both expatriate and indigenous participants and survey respondents as a radically creative product because it has facilitated and inspired creativity and innovation in other fields such as education and the media.

Radical creativity may be both enigmatic and obvious. It is easy to identify once it has taken place but also difficult to explain. There is little agreement on how this type of creativity evolves or even what it is. Hence, the models proposed by eminent creativity scholars such as Csikszentmihalyi (1999) and Amabile (1983) are driven by attempts to isolate the characteristics of radical creativity by placing it within a structure which filters out non-radical creativity. Gilson and Madjar (2011) propose three ways in which radical creativity differs

from ‘incremental’, or what I refer to in this thesis as ‘ordered’ creativity. They suggest that motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic; origin of the idea, whether it is problem or solution driven; and source of the idea, whether it came from within or outside the workplace, are related to the likelihood of the product being radically or ‘incrementally’ creative. I propose that radical creativity is an accumulation of chaotic and ordered creativities. I will now illustrate how the Creativity Framework could accommodate the discourses discussed in the previous two chapters.

6.3 LOCATING DISCOURSES OF CREATIVITY IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

This section illustrates how the creativity discourses discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 might fit in the creativity framework, based on the characteristics that are associated with the type of creativity demanded. It is not intended as a normative or prescriptive device, but rather shows how different understandings of creativity may be conceptualised in relation to one another.

6.3.1 CREATIVITY AS CUSTOMER SERVICE IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

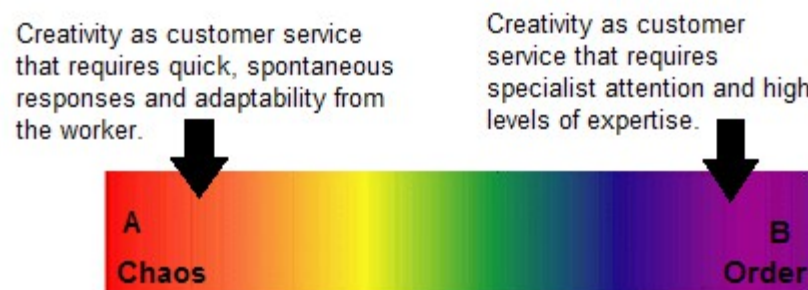


Figure 6.02 Creativity as customer service

The demand for quick, spontaneous responses to customer requests suggests that the type of creativity that expatriates believe Chinese need to develop veers towards the chaotic side of the creativity spectrum (see Figure 6.02). However, the absence of this type of creativity in customer service does not indicate a complete absence of customer service creativity. Many of the expatriates I spoke with frequented the spas and remedial massage therapy centres in Shanghai where professional staff, trained in traditional Chinese acupuncture, provided high quality service and were able to minister to their customers’ ailments with bespoke treatments. Such creativity, which requires intensive training and rarely requires the worker to act outside of his/her role,

may not be as noticeable in the fast paced corporate setting of USCo offices, but may fall somewhere near Point B in the creativity spectrum. However, this is less recognisable amongst expatriates complaining of China's lack of creativity on the basis of the lack of flexibility in customer service.

6.3.2 CREATIVITY AS SELF-MOTIVATION IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

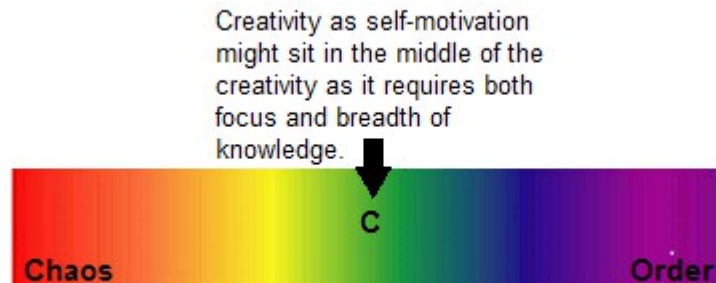


Figure 6.03 Creativity as self-motivation

The type of self-motivation in this discourse demands that workers use their own resources to develop greater depth of knowledge in the field of their choice whilst also exploring related activities that may improve the quality of their work. It could therefore be said to fit in between the Chaotic and Ordered ends of the creativity spectrum, near Point C in Figure 6.03, given that it requires both focused effort and breadth of knowledge. Whilst this balance may produce more creativity, ironically for this discourse, creative workers who are driven purely by self-motivation may be so materially secure that it is no longer necessary for them to display other characteristics of being a good employee, which demands some conviviality and compromise with colleagues who might disagree with them.

6.3.3 CREATIVITY AS SELF-EXPRESSION IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK



Figure 6.04 Creativity as self-expression

In the discourse of creativity as self-expression, Western ideas of creativity

seem to lean towards the chaotic side of the Creativity Framework (Figure 6.04, Point A) as they call for more confrontational, spontaneous styles; whilst Chinese ideas of creativity appear to lean towards the ordered side (Figure 6.04, Point B) calling for more measured communication style

6.3.4 CREATIVITY AS DIVERSITY AND DIVERGENT THINKING IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK



Figure 6.05 Creativity as diversity and divergent thinking

The discourse of creativity as diversity and divergent thinking would be located in the chaotic side of the creativity spectrum (Figure 6.05, Point A), as it requires greater breadth of knowledge for workers. At the opposite of the spectrum lies creativity arising from focus and execution of singular ideas.

6.3.5 CREATIVITY AS MANAGERIAL IMPERATIVE IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK



Figure 6.06 Creativity as Managerial Imperative

Chinese managers' dedication and focused attention on producing suitably committed 'creative' employees suggests a type of creative management located towards the 'ordered' side of the Creativity Framework, whilst more laid back management styles might be located on the 'chaotic' side.

6.3.6 INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

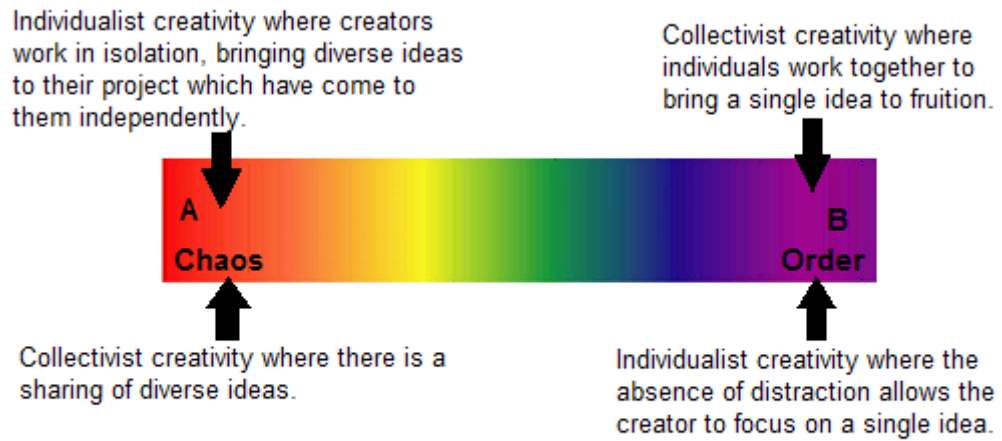


Figure 6.07 Individualism and Collectivism in the Creativity

Individualistic creativity may seem to fall on the chaotic side of the spectrum if considered from a wider scale of the industry as it allows people working independently to bring diverse ideas to the field. At this scale, collectivist creativity may sit on the ordered side of the spectrum as each member of a team is working together towards a single result. At the narrower scale of the individual or team work on the other hand, collectivist creativity could be said to lie on the chaotic side of the spectrum as it allows for diversity of ideas that group work facilitates, whilst individualist creativity allows workers to focus without the distraction of having to consider multiple ideas from colleagues. In highlighting individuality at the wider scale, Western discourses of creativity appear to lean towards the chaotic side of creativity, which celebrates diversity and uniqueness over comparatively ordered processes such as apprenticeships and the gradual building up of skills and knowledge involved in the cultivation of creativity.

6.3.7 YOUTH AND MATURITY IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

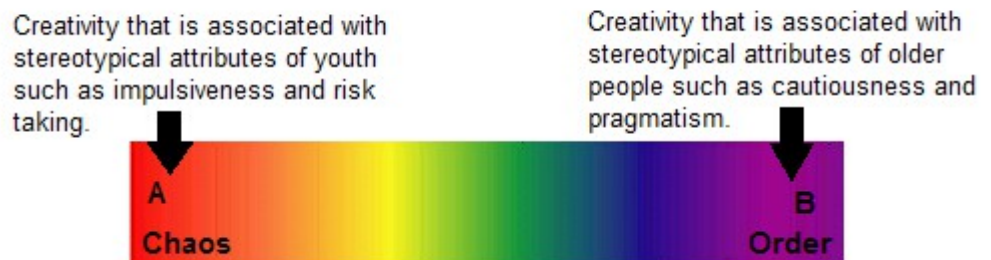


Figure 6.08 Youth and Maturity in the Creativity Framework

Personality traits associated with creative individuals often overlap with those associated with youth. However, my research suggests that there are also

forms of creativity and personality types associated with maturity that may be representation as more 'ordered' since they involved slower, more systematic processes.

6.3.8 EXPOSURE AND INSULARITY IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK



Figure 6.09 Exposure and Insularity in the Creativity Framework

Whilst the discourse of exposure at DI appears to refer to chaotic types of creativity (Point A in Figure 6.09), the types of media and content that design workers and students are encouraged to expose themselves to often come from a limited number of sources. The insularity of the design sector therefore positions both these discourses on the right side of the Creativity Framework, closer to Point B in Figure 6.09. These two seemingly contrasting discourses, also appear complement each other within the fashion industry. In the following sections, I will discuss how tensions arising from differences in the understanding of what creativity means in personalities, processes, places and products may be reconciled in the Creativity Framework.

6.4 PERSON

Although many people, such as the DI students, are thought to exhibit behaviours associated with creative personalities but have not proven themselves to be creative, and others such as Jun Chen, one of the star engineers at USCo, have produced creative work but do not 'behave' according to popular Western conceptions of a creative person such as being outspoken, physically distinctive in the way they dress, or exhibiting interest in diverse topics and subjects, many respondents still associate creative personalities with particular traits. Expatriate USCo engineer Gary for instance states that '*The individual needs to be open minded to be creative, to think independently and take a chance willingly. People who are inquisitive and*

have an entrepreneurial spirit are creative', which raises the question of what constitutes personality and why (Bonner, 1961). In this section, I discuss the beliefs around creative personalities, how they have emerged, and the responses to these beliefs.

Rhodes (1961, 307) defined person in relation to the four Ps as 'information about the personality, intellect, temperament, physique, traits, habits, attitudes, self-concept, value systems, defense mechanisms, and behavior'. Those psychologists who have tried to fit human behaviour into a logical positivist framework have attempted to define creative personalities by narrowing down a list of characteristics that can be identified as predictors of individual creativity. Feist (1998), for instance, attempts to define the creative personality using the Five Factor Model: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness. Some scholars (Wallace & Gruber, 1989; Mumford, 2003; Selby *et al.*, 2005) point out the contradictions within the body of research into creative personalities, some of which claim that creative people display the same characteristics that other studies argue are negatively correlated to creativity. Amongst scholars who have presented theories and arguments to reconcile these tensions, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) is perhaps the most well known due to the popularity of his proposal that creative people possess ten paradoxical traits, paraphrased here as energetic but quiet, smart but naïve, playful but disciplined, imaginative but realistic, extroverted and introverted, humble and proud, passionate but objective about their work, rebellious and conservative, happy and miserable, and escape gender stereotyping because they are both 'male' and 'female' in their psychological make-up. Traits correlated to creativity are sometimes translated in the popular press as both cause and evidence of creativity (Miller, 2013), leading to a circularity in arguments about creative personalities (see Chapter 2).

6.4.1 TENSIONS IN THE DISCOURSES

Whilst most Western respondents accepted the paradoxical traits associated with the creative personality, many of the indigenous respondents were unable to absorb the inconsistencies and contradictions of 'the creative personality' and rejected the idea that creativity correlates to particular personality traits. For instance USCo engineer Luke (quoted in Chapter 4) who believes that creativity stems from having the right attitude and commitment rather than

personality, and Paul who believes that extroverted people are more creative because they are exposed to more ideas, but being extroverted in itself does not guarantee creativity. When asked why the Chinese are perceived as less creative than Westerners, indigenous respondents often point to the following: lack of understanding by the West, the lack of background training and experience, absence of motivation, the education system, political and economic circumstances, prevalence of copying in China; but those that pertain to personality, such as the aversion to risk and confrontation, provoked a negative reaction. Indigenous respondents often displayed a strong resistance to suggestions their personality makes them less creative. Senior manager Carrie, an expatriate from the US relates this incident:

'We did this large innovation thing was held for the technical leaders and they brought in this external guy. And he'll have a balanced view of where we need to work on. It was consistent and someone said, what specific data suggests we are not creative. She was mad. And it was interesting she just kept drilling in on it and he wasn't backing out. And it was offensive to her like it was a really negative statement that Chinese aren't creative.'

Carrie's inability to comprehend the indigenous female employee's anger and why she found the statement that 'Chinese aren't creative' offensive seems to support the complaint that Westerners do not understand China. Her belief that the external consultant provided a 'balanced view' despite his broad, essentialist claim that the Chinese are not creative reveals the extent to which the expatriate manager has internalised orientalist perspectives. Furthermore, Carrie's failure to see that it is 'really negative' to be labelled uncreative betrays an insensitivity towards employees in general.

Some respondents thought that although one's personality might influence whether they are perceived as being creative, it is not a causal factor for individual creativity. Engineer Kai Xu for example, says that *'We're less vocal. We're not expressive, it doesn't mean we're less creative.'* Here, being less expressive has an effect on self-promotion, but is not taken as an indication that one lacks creativity. When Nancy Li argues that *'Creativity and risk taking are not really related except in business. One can be creative even without risk taking. The risk is not that great. Risk is to do with expressing*

creativity, not creativity itself she is also resisting the idea that risk aversion, a personality trait, makes one less creative. Where respondents appeared to accept the notion that Chinese people are less creative because of their personality, it is treated either as a misunderstanding, such as when Ye Lai (quoted in Chapter 4) who believes that the cautious approach to communication amongst the Chinese hides individual creativity; or taken with some bitterness like when Hua Cai says: *'I have to agree that we are not as creative. Everyone says that, so why should I disagree?'*

The strong resistance against correlating personality traits to creativity may stem from Chinese beliefs about personality. Throughout my time there, the saying 性格决定命运 (xing ge jue ding ming yun: personality determines fate) was quoted many times, often by teachers and managers who are teaching their students and staff about the right attitudes and behaviours. In this context, to put creativity down to personality suggests that the 'Chinese personality', which has been moulded and nurtured over the years by caring elders is incompatible with creativity and one must be sacrificed for the other. Many Chinese respondents were unwilling to criticise the stoicism of Confucianist teachings as they see it as a strength that sets them apart from other cultures. USCo designer Zhang Yi for instance, became angry during the interview when the subject of Confucianism and culture arose:

"We have good culture, we can't blame it for lack of creativity. We like to keep a low profile, it's not about broadcasting and advertising yourself. We are not aggressive, it does not mean there's no innovation. There is a need to understand, it's wrong to think that culture makes a person not creative.'

Most Chinese respondents were careful when discussing personality traits, to only include non-inherent attributes that can be transformed through practice. Hua Cai for instance, believes that personality *'is not a problem for creativity, creativity is a problem about being pro active. It can be changed. Encourage people to have ideas and good ideas.'* Expatriate USCo engineer Aaron noticed this persistent resistance amongst Chinese workers to identify personality as a determinant of creativity. He points out that *'Some are aware*

that they are seen as less creative but they see it as a cultural difference rather than a personality defect. It's more about the ways of doing something. In my time in Shanghai, they've moved from thinking that the West is best and something to copy from to we copy and improve on the West.' It is a lack of understanding stemming from cultural differences that leads Westerners perceive Chinese people as less creative.

Expatriate engineer Gary extends the disassociation between personality and creativity to all engineers and appears to suggest that the 'creative personality' is separate from creativity. His opinion reflects those of many technical staff at USCo. That is '*engineers are nerds and not very creative in terms of personality. They are not less creative, but when it comes to taking responsibility and risk taking, they are not as forthcoming.*' He also displays a skepticism about the value of creativity that is common amongst indigenous staff at USCo:

Being too creative can be another problem. There are too many open doors that haven't been walked through. Such people should go into brainstorming activities. There's the idea guys and the delivery guys. It's hard to find the same person who can go from the cradle to the grave of a project. Very creative personalities need structure. It takes a while to find a place for such people. The ideal balance depends on the project, but I see three main aspects, the idea, fact finding, and execution, the last requires a bigger team. The very creative can also do very well for the first generation for the project, but can't stay each step of the way because s/he will want to be on the cutting edge and will get bored. Such people are very bright. They work with people and can learn how to execute a project. It's good for them to experience execution just so they know how it's done. Likewise with execution people to be creative sometimes too.'

Practicality and pragmatism are often set up in opposition to creativity, particularly when discussion enters into the why Chinese people are seen as less creative. For instance Sam, a Western entrepreneur

believes that pragmatism is a characteristic of all engineers, not just the Chinese:

'Engineers are particularly practical. They are there to make things work. There's mainly linear thinking, use what works. Scientists can dream too. People gravitate towards jobs that suit their personality. The top government people in China are all engineers. PRC runs well because it has an engineer mentality. Pragmatism versus creativity is a contention.'

Whilst senior manager Colin Wang Senior responds to the question of why Chinese people are perceived as less creative by saying that:

'I don't know if [creativity] is the real issue or maybe some crazy American who is just being arrogant. Look at Silicon Valley, there's lots of people who think they're creative and they have lots of bright ideas and start their own company. Most of them fail. Then you have people that maybe Chinese types that may start a more crude, more realistic, more practical kind of business and they succeed. So it all depends on what you mean by creativity. Off the wall ideas vs more practical, more thought out, more money making ideas that I think Chinese are good at.'

The categorisation of creative personality into types seems to be a popular way of reconciling the contradictions presented in psychologists' theories about creative personalities. Rather than accepting contradictory traits in a single creative individual, respondents seem to prefer to separate creativity into two key types. Like many of his peers, indigenous engineer Kai Xu distinguishes two main types.

'The first can stick to procedure and do things methodically, the second will want to try different things. Innovation comes from patience and persistence. The person or team has different

problem solving skills and unique opinions and can handle getting bad feedback often They can also execute and is pragmatic.'

This need to balance the unusual and unique with the practical and pragmatic was also present at DI where teachers emphasised practicality in design. In a class I observed, where students were presenting drawings for their tutor's advice, one student showed her drawing of an unusual pair of trousers, which many of the other students admired. However, upon seeing the drawing, the teacher asked the student how the trousers would be able to defy gravity and hold the shape that was presented in the drawing. In a later conversation with the teacher, she expressed her frustration at student designers who fail to consider how they might actually go about making the garment when they are thinking of their ideas. For her, practicality and pragmatism were just as important for creativity as the idea.

This categorisation into types of creativity allows Chinese respondents to reclaim creativity as part of their character. By setting up the pragmatic type in opposition to the imaginative type, creativity can be attributed to both in such a way that they can be seen as different but equal.

Although some scholars like Csikszentmihalyi (1996) have tried to integrate the inconsistencies in defining creative personalities through the amalgamation of contradictory personality traits to describe and explain the inconsistencies of the radically creative personality, there remains a strong preference for chaotic traits in the discourses. Historically, the literature exploring creativity is focused more on chaotic types such as divergent thinking, mental illness, and eccentricity (Hargreaves & Bolton, 1972). This is still more abundant than studies exploring the ordered qualities like convergent thinking, and many of these propose that divergent thinking leads to more originality (Jauk *et al.*, 2012). Whilst more recent scholars point out the importance of both forms of creativity (Ashton-James & Chartrand, 2009), the literature on convergent thinking remains limited (Cropley, 2006).

The construction of the creative personality in the field of psychology feeds into

popular conceptions of creative individuals as extraordinarily gifted, exceptional individuals who do not have to live by the same standards and norms as non-creative people. By endorsing creativity as exceptional behaviour, the creative personality becomes a scarce and valuable resource for which sacrifices and destruction of existing culture and values must be tolerated. Gardner (1993), for example, proposes a concept of creativity where a creator makes a Faustian sacrifice for their work, such as Einstein's isolation, Freud's asceticism, or Stravinsky's combativeness. These characteristics, which in 'non-creative commoners' are treated at best as personality defects and at worst as psychological disorders, are tolerated in extraordinarily creative individuals because they are believed to have sacrificed normality for the benefit of human progress. Although according to Sheldon (1995) creative people function according to an internal standard they have set for themselves rather than adopting the values determined by their society, they are exempt from the same treatment as mentally ill people and criminals, who also stray from the norm because their behaviour is accepted as a by-product of their uniqueness. The attitudes of the employers and staff at Indigenous Startup towards students from DI reflect a resistance to this discourse. When they say that DI are a 'special breed', they do so with a hint of bitterness as their experiences with DI alumni who expect 'special treatment' because of their training at the exclusive school have resulted in problems with colleagues.

However, at USCo, the contradictions in beliefs about the creative personality give it an amorphousness that allows the concept to be manipulated and selected to appeal to workers seeking to become creative individuals. As discussed in Chapter 4, the key discourses of creativity that were enacted at USCo were predominantly Western-centric ones which support economically driven discourses. Employees who display personal traits such as adaptability to customer needs, self-motivation, eloquence, and being interested in a broad range of subjects, are seen to be more creative than those who do not. The not so subtle message spread through in-house training programmes, internal memorandums, and newsletters is that indigenous staff need to be more creative, 'like their Western colleagues', in order to work with them. The characteristics of creativity, such as aggressiveness, individualism, and outspokenness are often correlated with Western characteristics in the minds

of indigenous respondents and their ambivalence about 'becoming creative' may to some extent arise from their reception towards the coded message to become more Westernised.

This Western-centrism is embedded in much of the dominant discourses of creativity pertaining to personality. For example, discourses celebrating individualistic employees as more creative than conformists, discussed in Chapter 5, are often expressed in the context of differences between Eastern and Western culture. Western respondents like Sam provided an example:

'Creative types tend to be unusual. Ultra conservatives tend not to do things that are different. Culturally, being different is not good. Pushy kids think they're creative. In extreme cases, like Japan, some kids lock themselves up in their own rooms because they can't handle school and its constraints of society. The society is repressive and does not accept non-normal people.'

At both USCo and DI, the coaxing of indigenous workers and students to adopt personality traits that lean towards the chaotic end of the Creativity Framework is constructed around anxieties about their personal and national future, and framed as a necessity for national economic survival and personal material security in a competitive job market. Workers and students are urged to undertake a perpetual programme of self-improvement in order to 'stay ahead' in increasingly precarious employment conditions, whilst managers and teachers believe they are grooming them for *'the international platform'* (DI teacher, Carol). However, the conflict between chaotically creative personality traits and traditional Chinese values puts many workers and students in a double bind, since exhortations to become more creative are accompanied by disapproval by peers and elders when the subject behaves in a manner that is overly non-conforming. The solution seems to be for students and workers to establish cosseting relationships with their managers, teachers, parents, or some other elder, who will act as a kind of patron, providing time and tutelage beyond the confines of work.

Many respondents from USCo expressed a need for indigenous workers to

develop qualities such as spontaneity in responding to customer requests, more extroverted communication, and a broadening of personal interests, which fall on the left /chaotic side of the Creativity Framework. However, there were also responses that suggest these qualities do not determine individual creativity. On the topic of self-motivation for instance, some managers, like Carrie, noted that employees who are driven by national pride or family obligation rather than self-motivation can also be driven and creative.

The interpretation amongst human resource practitioners, managers, and workers in the creative industries of this apparent preference for studying chaotic types of creativity by psychology and management academics seems to be that individuals who display more chaotic/disruptive traits are more creative. Although many of these paradoxical traits depend on subjective judgements based on personal experiences and opinions, they are accepted as qualities to aspire to. As discussed in Chapter 4, USCo staff attending in-house training sessions are inculcated with 'USCo culture', which places an emphasis on individual creativity. Using slides that present 'facts' about the creative personality drawn from Western popular psychology, much of the content was presented in the context of working with Western colleagues, and involved encouraging indigenous staff to be more extroverted, direct and open, and 'customer focused'. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 5, teachers and students at DI and some practitioners in the local start-ups conceive of creative persons as more disruptive and non-conformist, emphasising qualities on the chaotic side of the Creativity Framework. However, whilst the eccentric stereotypes are more visible in the design sectors, respondents also displayed cautiousness in their acceptance of these discourses.

6.4.2 PERSON IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

The Creativity Framework allows the various traits associated with creativity to be conceptualised in a way that may shed light on why particular personality types are valued over others as being more creative. On the left of the spectrum (see Figure 6.10) lie chaotic or disruptive qualities and on the right, conservative qualities, usually associated with order.

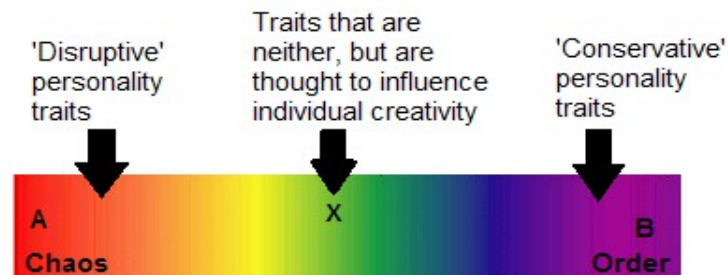


Figure 6.10 Personality in the Creativity Framework

The colour gradation along the spectrum illustrates that the range of personality traits associated with creativity may fall into either extremes of chaotic and ordered creative traits such as volatility and strong focus, respectively. However, there may also be traits that are less extreme, such as congeniality and aloofness, and ones that may not fit at either end, such as narcissism. Traits that are placed on the bottom left, chaotic side of the spectrum are traits that facilitate divergent ideas and could be disruptive to existing technologies, brands, and practices. Traits on the right, ordered side of the spectrum, are traits that can be said to facilitate convergence and conservatism. Whilst personality traits may not be an accurate predictor of an individual's creativity, they do seem to influence perceptions by others of how creative a person is (Rudowicz & Hui, 1997; Goncalo *et al.*, 2010). I have proposed that the Creativity Framework presents radical creativity as an accumulated balance of chaotic and ordered creativities that produce a profound new idea. Applied to personalities, this could accommodate Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) proposal that creative people can paradoxically display both chaotic and ordered traits. Although creative people and their associated behaviours and personality traits may vary across different occupations, cultures, and nationalities, depending on what these domains value as creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), there appears to be a dominant idea about the behaviours and personality of creative people.

Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison were cited most often in the online survey as historical figures whose ideas and inventions transformed the world for posterity; they are often used in studies of creative personalities (Paulhus & Landolt, 2000; Aaron *et al.*, 2004; Charyton *et al.*, 2008), but it is difficult to establish whether there was a set of personality traits they all shared which predisposed them to being radically creative. Whilst there may allegedly have been some common characteristics between these

three inventors (Graham & Bachmann, 2004; Sieczka & Sieczka, 2009; Michalko, 2010), such as having varied interests, resilience against multiple failures during their careers, and inquisitiveness that motivated them to work on their ideas despite the absence of financial reward, the only personality traits that this indicates is that they were all persistent and intrinsically motivated. Moreover, it seems absurd to suggest that all creative people have the same personality or personality type, given that creativity is manifest in different ways across a wide range of fields and subjects. These personalities are often used in studies of creativity and promoted as examples for employees and managers to follow (Graham & Bachmann, 2004; Sieczka & Sieczka, 2009; Michalko, 2010), yet they say nothing about how those who display traits allegedly similar to these eminent creators would be like as colleagues, nor how they might interact with peers and managers in an office environment.

At USCo, managers and employees seem to infer from the myths around these heroic inventors the behaviours that are expected of them, particularly those that demonstrate 'intrinsic motivation'. Given the lack of clarity about the personalities of eminently creative people, the question then arises as to why psychologists and management scholars attempt to isolate a set of personality traits, based on those they believe are associated with eminent creativity, which are then used as predictors of an individual's creative output. Despite Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) popularly accepted proposal that there are paradoxes in the creative personality, the dominant Western-centric discourses seem to favour the traits on the left/chaotic side of the Creativity Framework. In laying out a spectrum along which we can plot the types of personality traits that are associated with creativity across different cultures, one may identify certain prejudices that might exist in the way creative persons are believed to behave, and we may begin to address the issues arising from these prejudices.

6.5 PROCESSES

Understandings of creative processes amongst respondents in the field were also subject to variation. As with creative persons, discussions about creative processes in China centred around Western standards and ideals. Expatriate managers and teachers alluded to processes in China as less creative either

because they led to 'lesser creativity' or because they were deemed inherently unoriginal in comparison to those in the US or Europe. A Foucauldian approach might reveal how definitions of creative processes established in Western academia serves to reinforce the perception that Chinese creative processes are inferior.

Rhodes (1961: 308) referred to creative processes as applying 'to motivation, perception, learning, thinking, and communicating.' He proposed that 'Essential questions about process include: What causes some individuals to strive for original answers to questions while the majority are satisfied with conventional answers? What are the stages of the thinking process? Are the processes identical for problem solving and for creative thinking? If not, how do they differ? Can the creative thinking process be taught?' In the first two decades of creativity research after Guilford's address to the APA, psychologists dominated the body of literature on the subject (Mednick, 1962), and definitions of creative processes were limited to mental ones within creative individuals. The broadening of this definition to include physical, action based, group processes was accompanied by the entry into creativity research of scholars from other disciplines such as economics (Higgs *et al.*, 2008; Hills *et al.*, 1999), management studies (Gilson & Shalley, 2004), design studies (Dorst & Cross, 2001) and engineering (Callele *et al.*, 2005). Wallas (1976) introduced the classic model of creative processes, which is divided into four phases: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. Subsequent modifications to this model were made in order to propose solutions to the questions raised about each of these phases, such as whether creative processes are sequential, cyclical, or random (Hermann, 1991; Basadur *et al.*, 2000; Cunha & Gomes, 2003); whether particular phases are necessary or sufficient (Amabile, 1996); and whether there are micro processes within each stage and what they might be (Flower & Hayes, 1981). These have mostly resulted in either a variation of Wallas' model or an uneven focus on one specific phase (Lubart, 2001), but most creativity models are essentially trying to answer two questions: 'How does one get an idea?'; and 'How does one get from idea to product?'

The research tends to treat creativity as an end result of a formulaic series of mental or physical events that can be orchestrated to produce a novel and

useful product (Gilson & Shalley, 2004; Callele *et al.*, 2005; Kilgour, 2006; Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Megalakaki *et al.*, 2012). At USCo, processes are interpreted as events and procedures that must be tolerated in order to achieve the results that come at the end. The discourses of creativity enacted at USCo, discussed in Chapter 4, reflect this. Discourses of self-motivation, self-expression, divergent thinking, and managerial imperative, are embedded with the message that these will produce more efficient, quicker and better results for the company. The quicker and shorter the processes, the more intelligent and efficient it is thought to be by managers who perceive unwillingness by indigenous employees to 'go out of process' (USCo expatriate Ben) as a lack of creativity. As visual representations of creative processes, usually in the form of flow charts, have a tendency to simplify and misleadingly present all parts as equal in time and effort (see Figures 6.13 and 6.14), an expectation that it should take no more than a set amount of time to generate an idea, as indicated by deadlines, is prevalent amongst USCo managers. At DI on the other hand, there was less impatience with processes and teachers emphasised the need to learn the details involved in design. Nevertheless, emphasis was still placed on end results. In this section I discuss how discourses of creative processes emphasise the creativity of the result at the expense of the process itself.

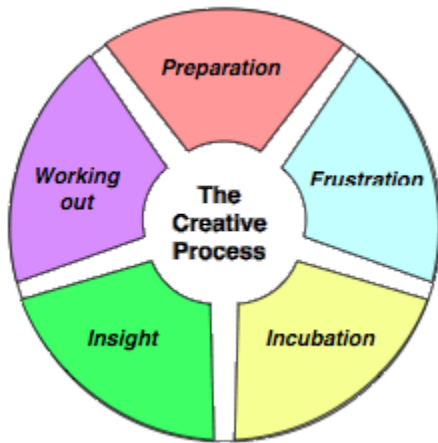


Figure 6.11 Example of an illustration of creative processes, the 'classic model'. Taken from http://www.mentoringforchange.co.uk/change/creative_process.php

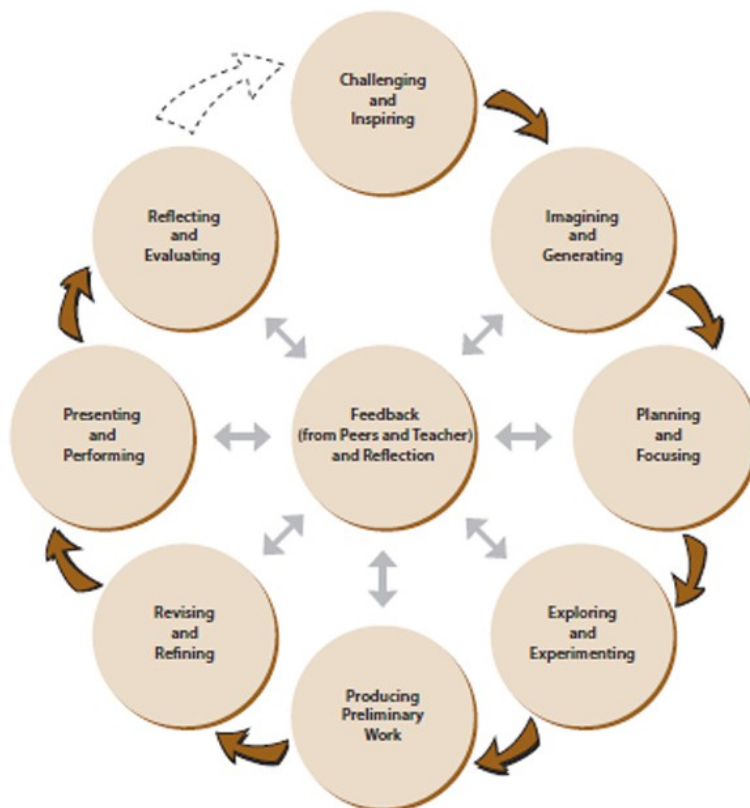


Figure 6.12 Example of an illustration of creative processes in ICT. Taken from <http://www.ict.sislerhightechnology.com/the-creative-process-for-the-ict-student>

6.5.1 TENSIONS IN THE DISCOURSES

Despite the necessity for both types of creative processes, there is a disproportionate amount of research focusing on chaotic types, particularly in psychology where studies of the relationship between mental illness and

creativity abound (Nettle, 2001). This seems to translate in practice into beliefs that creativity lies predominately in ideas generation, whilst other, more ordered processes such as practice and learning are perceived as being less creative. The initial conceptualisation and the final result of creative processes are favoured over experimentation, preparation, incubation, and verification phases, which do not seem to hold as much fascination for researchers. In practice however, Carlson (2008) argues that ordered creative processes tend to benefit from more secure funding, as they are usually supported by large organisations that have grown too big to tolerate ad hoc creative processes, and because ordered processes are expected to yield positive results, however small these might be. Whilst this was not the case in the innovation team at USCo, other responses from my field research seem to support this. Jason, Larry, and Sam are all successful expatriate entrepreneurs in Shanghai who at the inception of their businesses, needed employees to assume multiple responsibilities, which distracted them from working on detailed, focused projects. However, as their businesses grew, they were able to employ more administrative staff, which allowed technical staff to spend more time improving their products.

Despite better funding afforded to ordered processes, there remains a bias that favours chaotic parts of creative processes. The process of producing a pair of shoes, for example, from the initial design to the final product displayed in the retail outlets involves creativity at nearly every stage, yet the attention given to designers reflects the celebration of particular types or stages of creative processes.

At the outset of my research, I had presented my thesis proposal to IT academics from various 'developing countries', many of whom believed that opportunities for creativity in their work were fewer than those offered to Western programmers. Designers in both the software and fashion industries are celebrated whilst those who help bring the product to fruition are largely ignored in the dominant creativity discourses. This is particularly stark amongst the newer 'specialist' members of the workforce, as many tertiary training institutions also inculcate students with a sense of elitism. Older, more experienced respondents for instance, were inclined to express frustration at young designers who were reluctant to consider the practicality of their designs

or unwilling to work on less stimulating aspects of creation and production. Although this was rare at USCo, where most employees were grateful to work for a reputable multinational corporation, some respondents mentioned working in companies where software architects had refused to write code because they thought it a waste of time; this seems to be a common problem in many software projects beyond USCo where architects refuse to code because it was considered a waste of their talent (c2.com, 2013). Such attitudes seem to be more visible in the fashion sector. Before becoming a teacher at DI, Carol had worked with young graduates who refused to perform particular tasks such as pattern making, even though it is technically challenging and creative, because having gained a degree, they considered it 'beneath them'.

The notion of meritocracy that is embedded in dominant Western discourses of creativity (Oakley, 2006) permits graduates and those in design to claim an advantage over those whose creative work involves more ordered processes. In a meritocracy which favours mental over physical labour (Schulte, 2003), chaotic processes, which are mainly mental ones, are celebrated more than ordered processes, which are mainly physical and action based. This 'meritocracy' does not take into account artificial limits on the supply of highly trained workers through the lack of opportunities for learning and experience afforded to those who live in 'less creative' countries, which causes a shortage of workers who can produce original and value adding work in these places.

A resistance to this discourse amongst indigenous workers at USCo causes much consternation amongst expatriates who see processes as rigid obstacles to efficiency. Yet there appears to be an inability to consciously perceive this results bias. Ben for instance, does not seem to understand why it is easier to work around process in the West:

'To work outside of process in China is impossible. And you have to follow process and process changes slower. So when I say impossible I mean slower. It's not completely impossible but it's just easier in western societies to work around process because we've. I don't know why.'

The perceived unwillingness for indigenous workers to 'go out of process' is often interpreted as a lack of creativity, or power play on the part of the indigenous employee. Ben explains his 'best known method' (BKM) of resolving an issue that commonly frustrates expatriates in China:

'So my BKM is always if I have to work around process, always go to the management first and say, 'hey, I need to work around process here, I need you to tell Worker A to help work around that process. Usually the boss is Chinese and if he has to tell Worker A to work around process, one of two things happens. One he either loses a little face, or two, it's officially documented that he worked around a different process.'

The interpretation of the unwillingness to change process as an aversion to losing face reflects a tension between expatriate and indigenous staff when negotiations of responsibility take place. Like many western expatriates, Ben presumes that the boss is losing face because his authority is being undermined, which is the reason he was reluctant to change the process. However, a closer analysis reveals that it is cautiousness that prevents indigenous employees from changing processes. Carrie could not comprehend the resistance from indigenous staff when she first tried to change a testing process: *'...if we change course through the organisation then it throws everybody off. And it's like: wait a second, we're still going to the end goal, it's just going to get there a different way.'* However, she began to understand the risk aversion that underlies many indigenous workers' motivation.

'Time and time again, there's no interest in changing the process. Now we have this huge focus on volume outside of China and Europe and we're trying to get the team to change process to slim it down and to take a risk. Instead of doing 4 cycle plans of testing, do two or test a line of code instead of 30 lines of testing everyone do every third line. Change in process. We've not been able to get the team to make that change and just recently we were able to get the software team, the management to understand how big the problem was: it's too

slow, and to provide some flexibility to enable us to change the testing pattern and we haven't executed that yet. The question there has been really interesting. They're asking me who's accountable for the quality. So clearly it's their ass if something goes wrong.'

Xian Lai, an indigenous human resources manager at USCo believes that this risk aversion and reliance on process is related to the deference to authority and a status consciousness that is present in indigenous staff.

'They are interested in whatever their boss tells them to do. If you can flourish in your job and be more efficient, that's good. Usually only the top ones will consider what is needed beyond what the boss tells them. Many won't think that a process is too long and how to change it. Or everyone has ideas but nobody will go and do. Those that will do and change are the top who will use their own ability to change the process.'

The conferment of authority in the form of a managerial title allows one to confidently consider changing the existing processes, but until then, workers avoid standing out or putting themselves forward. A number of informants, expatriate and indigenous quoted the idiom: 枪打出头鸟 (literally – gun shoots out head bird, first mentioned in Chapter 4) which also applies in these instances. Oliver, a Chinese expatriate from the US points out that unwillingness to go out of process has to do with confidence rather than creativity. When employing new staff, he looks for

'People that have insights into their job and can go beyond following a process and say "I know why I'm doing that process right". So that's typically the type of people I'm looking for. But that's more about professional confidence though, than the creative part right?'

The impatience for process amongst Western expatriates, set in opposition to the reliance on it in China accentuates the lack of creativity in the Chinese in the eyes of the Westerners. However, there also exists an alternate view

amongst indigenous respondents: that creativity is a process and by following a process, workers are participating in a longer term, collective creativity. Many indigenous respondents appeared to have an appreciation of process as something that gives them a sense of achievement and possibly offers an alternative to Western capitalist models of production. This belief was articulated by some of the more passionate engineers at USCo, who despite working for a Western company and ostensibly subscribing to their corporate culture, maintain hope for a different discourse of the creative process. Hannah for example, reveals a disdain for the Western free market process of bringing about 'progress'. When considering the Chinese model of development, she says:

'What can China give to the world? It can give an alternative voice to the US free market model. Perhaps a different road can lead to the same goal. Innovation is a kind of spirit. It's a process. We dare to dream.'

The attitude of Westerners towards process appears inconsistent when one considers the messages that are transmitted about processes and creativity. Whilst calling for flexibility in production processes, they are simultaneously displaying rigidity about 'creative processes'. Local staff who prefer not to change existing processes are deemed uncreative, but by insisting on certain behaviours and processes that Westerners associate with creativity, expatriates can be just as inflexible. Expatriate entrepreneur Jason believes that a large number of failures in China comes down to a lack of process. He gives the following example:

'At [EUCo], they hired the best from the best universities but they didn't have a process. Didn't check their ideas first before writing the code. Their so called creativity comes from ignorance. They don't know the state of the art and don't check against the state of the art.'

This believe in processes extends to mental ones as well. Sam, also an expatriate entrepreneur believes that the Chinese workers have

'Different thought processes. They are task oriented, not a lot of meta-analysis. Carl Crow⁴ said: "the Chinese are like that".

⁴ US Expatriate publisher and businessman who lived in Shanghai in the early 1900s.

They don't like to waste brain cells on things not related to the task. They don't think about the bigger picture... Chinese don't speak out, there's an aversion to making mistakes.'

Under scrutiny, the expatriates' statements reveal a presumption of their own superiority and double standards. Western processes are deemed better for yielding creative results and ought to be followed whilst Chinese processes are seen as procedures that inhibit efficiency and creativity. As local production consists mainly in refinement of an existing product that have already had their creative input in the west, it is thought that not as much creativity is needed and that their processes are also less important. This is articulated by expatriate engineer Daniel who claims that: *'Creativity is not that crucial here. There's slow improvement. They're here to execute and process only.'* Tensions between expatriates and indigenous employees arise when the latter refuse to accept the expatriate manager or boss' directives without argument. Yet by insisting that the indigenous workers be creative in a particular way, expatriates are ironically also inhibiting their creativity by disallowing them to make their own discoveries.

Several Chinese expatriate and indigenous managers believed that China cannot become creative if Westerners insist that they skip the process of becoming creative and not be allowed to discover for themselves, why their way of doing things is 'wrong'. Many indigenous respondents believed that becoming creative is itself a gradual, incremental process which calls for patience and appreciation of each necessary step towards it. As senior local engineer Thomas Chen says:

'When the manager decides if something is to come to China, they have to consider several things. One is whether the people in China can do it. But this is a process because when you start you can't do much.'

That dominant creativity discourses value dynamic idea generation and product launch over painstaking execution stages of processes reflects an urgency that is part of the imperative of the fast economy. Thrift (2000: 675) points out that modern economies are 'based upon a particularly fine-grained approximation of time' as 'increasing attention [is] given to the measurement of

short-term financial performance' and 'increasing speed of production and consumption'; this forces firms to 'launch new products more frequently and to compress product development cycles'. Kawakami of the Chindogu movement, which celebrates 'unuseless inventions', considers the satisfaction lost from such speed: 'In the modern, digital world, everything is so quick... with the electronic (dictionary), it only takes two seconds to find a word, but it gives us no mental or spiritual satisfaction. Yet if you use your own hands to find it, you can enjoy the process. It's a spiritual act' (Hornyak, 2002).

There is much frustration amongst expatriates trying to impart a sense of urgency to indigenous staff where meeting targets is concerned. Whilst non-Chinese expatriate respondents often displayed impatience towards the '*unwillingness to go out of process*' (Ben), Chinese respondents were more appreciative of the inherent creativity and discovery within processes. Expatriates like Kevin believed that indigenous workers rely on rigid processes for a sense of security: '*Look at their documentation. It's a process of negotiation. They like to have the process*', whilst indigenous employees often complained about too much focus on results and not enough on process. Mike Yan, for instance, laments that the Chinese government are '*more focused on results than process, even if you work hard, if you fail in the end result, you are a failure*'.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996), whose work on 'flow', a mental state where one becomes completely focused and immersed in one's work, romanticises slower, more focused processes, but only relatively short ones where the creative person is engaged in 'creating'. Longer processes, such as where interns acquire skills over the years that enable them to eventually become experts in their field, are rarely thought of as 'creative processes'. Yet there were some Chinese managers, expatriate and indigenous, who seemed to consider this to be a part of the creative process. Senior expatriate Richard Lu extended his belief that a '*PhD is not about the topic but the process*' to his subordinates at USCo Shanghai:

'Bringing people like F [a Chinese expatriate], he can be an example. So are Hannah and Beth [both indigenous team leaders at USCo]. People here are starting to get things. We must work by example.

Richard's belief that employees should be *'allowed to discover for themselves why something is wrong'* was reiterated by other indigenous employees at USCo, some of whom extended it to China's mistakes in the manufacturing sector, arguing that the shortcuts that had caused damage to China's reputation⁵ were part of a process of learning and development for the country. They appeal for more patience and understanding from foreigners in letting China 'make its own mistakes' and have the 小聪明 (xiao cong ming – literally: small cleverness) to discover for themselves why their actions are wrong as part of the process of developing a more creative economy. Here again, the dominant Western creativity discourses provoke an acute consciousness of perceived foreign superiority.

6.5.2 PROCESS IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

Lubart (2001: 301) proposes three possible reasons why some processes may lead to more creativity than others. First, there may be 'qualitatively different process models, one for creative work and another for non-creative work'. Second, the 'differences in outcome arise by varying certain process-relevant parameters (for example the time spent on particular subprocess)'. Finally, 'there is no specifically process-related difference between creative and non-creative work. The same sequence of thoughts and actions can lead to more or less creative outcomes. What is important for creative work is the quality of material (e.g., knowledge) used in each part of the process. Metaphorically, the engine is the same but some people use better grade fuel than others'. In this section, I shall leave aside arguments about 'the quality of material' as this has already been discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 where I wrote about the discourse of creativity as divergent thinking, diversity of ideas, and exposure. Instead I examine the arguments that 'qualitatively different process models' and variance in 'process-relevant parameters' make a difference to creativity.

The Creativity Framework proposes that there are different types of creative processes with varying degrees of chaos and order. I propose that different

⁵. In September 2008, shortly before I started my field work, Chinese authorities revealed that powdered milk contaminated with melamine had caused the death of four babies and led to tens of thousands more babies becoming critically ill. This became international news and was often cited as a typical example of Chinese manufacturers' behaviour during the interviews.

stages of a process call for and provide varying opportunities for different types of creativity. Most instances of ordered creativity in the IT sector, for example, happen mainly in the verification stage, where testing, repetition, and experimentation are required. The preparation stage, on the other hand, allows for more chaotic creativity to manifest. Mumford *et al.* (1997) argue, based on their study of 112 undergraduates at a US university, that more creative processes tend to have more ill-defined problems, more re-combining and re-organising of structures and categories; more divergent and convergent thinking; and multiple cycles within the cycle. This seems to suggest that creative processes have more chaotic characteristics than ordered ones, since creativity is greater where knowledge is less structured and categories are looser. However, Torre (1995:179) points out that in the early phase of a creative process, 'our thinking often lacks clarity and we tend to act in a confused, aimless manner. Disoriented, we often endeavor to merely persist hammering away, jumbling issues and information together without purpose or a sense of direction', which suggests that chaos within processes can inhibit creativity.

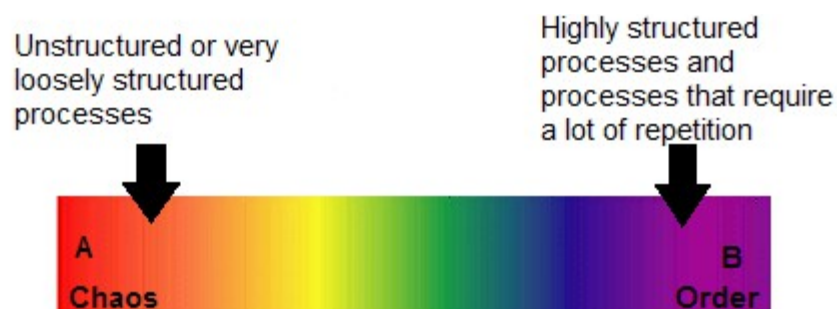


Figure 6.13 Processes in the Creativity Framework

Figure 6.13 illustrates how processes might fit in the Creativity Framework. At the chaotic end of the Creativity Framework lie disorganised processes that are common to the early stages of idea generation. My observations in the field suggest that these can manifest both within the individual and in teams. Many respondents spoke of experiencing some sort of chaos in their thoughts when trying to produce creative work. For instance Jasper, a fashion student at DI, was often overcome by periods of anxiety where he would pace up and down the corridor of his apartment, trying to make sense of his thoughts. Although this was frustrating for him, he says he would not give up this part of the creative process as it is the source of his ideas. Similarly, the indigenous innovation team at USCo was producing prototypes on a weekly basis.

However, with a vague remit to *'deliver a product that would justify the production of tens of millions of the unit'* (indigenous USCo manager, Jared), they lacked focus and often came back from their meetings with senior managers feeling demoralised.

At the other end of the Creativity Framework lies ordered processes, which involve repetition, organisation, and refinement. In his study of nine different inventions of varying complexity, from the paper clip to complex architecture, Petroski (1996) argues that it is through methodical experimentation and testing that new products become stable enough to be launched into the market. In another USCo team that I observed, members worked according to strict schedules and followed clearly defined processes to bring about incremental changes to their products. Their work followed a sequential, linear pattern where each section of code they write relies on previous sections. Although individuals worked on different parts of the software, they were integrated at the end. The products were then tested by the quality assurance team before being sent back to the team to repair bugs in the system. According to Wei Tian who led the QA team, this cycle is repeated throughout the life of the project. Far from being bored or frustrated by this repetitive process, respondents from the team said they found their work mentally stimulating. Similarly, some of the fashion students observed at DI were also able to focus intensely for long periods when experimenting, such as when they were draping fabric on a mannequin to achieve their intended design. It appears that ordered creative processes impose a structure that enables the execution of an idea, without which individuals may become trapped in a disarray of ideas, failing to take steps towards producing anything tangible. I propose that most processes lie between these two extremes of chaos and order. Beyond having an idea, articulation and action produce tangible forms of creativity. Whole creative processes that yield satisfaction for the creators must thus include both chaotic and ordered aspects.

6.6 PLACE

In Chapter 2, I mentioned several reasons for my use of 'place' instead of Rhodes's original 'press' to refer to 'the relationship between human beings and their environment' (Rhodes 1961: 308). First, it simplifies the confusion and debate amongst scholars (Feldhusen & Goh, 1995; Runco & Pagnani,

2011; Simonton, 1991) on how 'press' actually means what Rhodes intended. Second, the word 'place' incorporates the social and physical spaces that scholars writing about creative environments (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1989) have addressed. Finally, the use of the word 'place' allows discussion of particular political systems and ideologies that have in recent years been driving policies to create specific environments that are thought to attract and nurture creative class workers (Florida, 2002; Kotkin & Siegel, 2004; Peck, 2005; Hoyman & Faircy, 2009). Furthermore, the use of the word 'place' allows for an exploration of how discourses are enacted in specific contexts in which meanings of creativity are constructed.

The decision to use the word 'place' arose during the analysis of the empirical material, when it became evident that judgements about individual creativity amongst interviewees depended on their beliefs about place specific creativities. For instance, when USCo senior manager Gloria said that '*Outside work, there's lots of creativity*', she articulated a common belief amongst expatriates that the lack of creativity is a 'workplace' issue. Similarly, citing examples of street vendors and recycling workers, Ben pointed out that indigenous workers '*are creative people when working on their own... it's really just in the workforce that [they] don't have the ability to exercise that skill*' (see Chapter 4). Although Gloria's and Ben's comments reflect a general recognition amongst expatriates that there is much creativity to be found in China '*in the way that people adapt and survive*', the examples given for this creativity tend to be drawn from street vendors on much lower incomes, who are not accounted for in USCo's financial reporting. The mention of creative endeavours of non-office workers as '*outside work*' and not '*in the workforce*' seems to suggest that the definition of creativity is fixed whilst work is only defined as such when it takes place within specific settings. It also suggests that work that does not take place in an office is 'outside work' or 'outside the workforce'. Whilst Wilson and Keil (2008: 841) propose that informal workers are the truly creative residents of a city given their 'immense contribution to the contemporary urban economy,' the accounts at USCo claiming that Chinese workers are less creative do not appear to extend to workers in the informal economy.

Creativity is spoken about amongst corporate respondents and those who

aspire to participate in the formal economy in the context of profitability, efficiency, and 'productivity', whilst the creativity that occurs in the informal economy is perceived as a survival necessity. The question of how to make the workplace more conducive to creativity is specific to companies that can afford a 'workplace' in the form of office spaces. In the same way that the creativity discourses of the West treat creative processes as a sequence of events that produce creative results, place is treated by some scholars (Simonton, 1975; Sternberg, 1997; Kristensen, 2004) and practitioners as a set of physical, social, and emotional conditions that can be manipulated to produce creativity, if only the mystery formula were solved. Place thus becomes a resource for the production of a type of creativity that is important for the narrow definition of work.

The Maslowian notion of creativity as a characteristic of those whose other needs have been met surfaces in discourses about creative places. Many indigenous respondents believed that creativity is reliant on the creation of a peaceful liberal democracy that is conducive to artistic, economic and technological expansion. In their view, the reason for China's relative backwardness in technological innovation compared to the West is because war and the upheaval caused by the Cultural Revolution distracted its citizens. There is a common belief amongst indigenous respondents that basic needs must be met before individuals can embark on creative work that lets them channel their energies into producing original ideas that can potentially have an impact on society. As Tian Man, who comes from the Shandong Province says: *'Most people need three basics first, eat well, don't get harmed or conned by others and buy a house and have children'*. However, there is also a minority who believe that it is precisely the conditions of repression and the need to fulfill their basic needs that draw out the creativity in people. USCo intern Yang Shan alludes to this when he says: *'I think the previous generation is more creative than us because they were able to do it in a difficult environment'*.

6.6.1 TENSION IN THE DISCOURSES

Whilst no respondents nor scholars advocate that places should be absolutely chaotic or ordered to facilitate creativity, there appears to be a preference for a small degree of chaos in the dominant creativity discourses. Conservative,

autocratic societies are thought to stop individuals from developing their creativity whilst liberal democratic societies are believed to encourage it (Ng & Smith, 2004; Meusbürger *et al.*, 2009). This was reflected in the field, where expatriate and indigenous respondents both pointed to tradition and hierarchy as reasons why China is 'behind'. DI students Ruth and Kelly for instance said that *'China is more traditional and needs to catch up'* when asked where it stands in comparison to the rest of the world in terms of its creativity. Similarly, for indigenous USCo engineer Nancy, China is less creative because *'The old emperors did not like too much thinking or it will challenge them'* even though she points out that *'In the old days there was lots of innovation in China.'*

Discussion of political ideologies in discourses of creativity are often skewed towards the chaotic side of the Creativity Framework, with liberal democracies celebrated as being better environments for generating creative ideas (Jones & Brown, 1994). However, some indigenous respondents fearful that China might lose its political stability if it adopts a Western model of government argue that if national security is compromised, then creativity would not have an opportunity to flourish. USCo engineer Wang Cao for instance believes that *'yes, the Chinese government does encourage people to think, but there's a bottom line where nothing can change. That is The Party and government security.'*

Florida (2003) believes that creative people are more likely to 'vote democrat' and members of the creative class tend to be 'socially liberal' (Florida *et al.*, 2011), though he does not extend his argument to claim that liberal democracies produce more creative people than others. Scholars are more confident in arguing that authoritarianism stifles creativity (Rubinstein, 2003). In my fieldwork, these beliefs were reflected in the discourses of creativity pertaining to the self and individuality, where, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, fear of the manager's or teacher's disapproval is thought to inhibit workers and students from making decisions, taking initiative, and putting forward their ideas. Such fear is thought to stem from an institutionally reared sense of obedience. Engineer Kao Jie for instance, believes that organisations like USCo do better because it *'allows its workers to challenge them but in local places, you might offend the boss.'* USCo expatriate engineer Gary illustrated how deference might lead to less creativity amongst indigenous colleagues:

'They won't even make decisions that are simple, there's just no reward for it, so they prefer to beat around the bush and not focus. A lot of time is spent working out the setting and power, to reduce wriggle room. Most people prefer to escalate decisions to the boss. I would like to give them a blank cheque and say do whatever, but it's not USCo culture. If it's a start up, then they need to create or die and there's no choice, but they still need to have a schedule. There's no blame culture at USCo, but it exists in the China culture.'

However, my field observations suggest that this deference to the boss or manager might not be a straightforward hierarchical one where juniors simply obey directives unquestioningly. Managers are also expected to fulfill certain duties in return. Throughout the time I spent with the indigenous innovation team at USCo, team members often bemoaned their lack of an influential leader who could act as patron and help articulate and defend their ideas to senior management, unlike the most successful team in the Shanghai operations, where they had a leader based in the US headquarters to put forward their work. Furthermore, as conversations with expatriates and my experience in trying to gain access to the field had shown, seniority does not give one the final say in decision making. Some indigenous employees even argued that the loose hierarchy and freedom in foreign companies like USCo might also inhibit creativity through the lack of job security that puts pressure on individuals to produce results. Indigenous engineer Wang Cao says: *'There's a possibility of getting fired here. There's a risk. We need to deliver, need to show results, so it's not good for innovation.'*

In a similar vein, economies that veer to the chaotic side are seen as preferable to ones that are closer to the ordered extreme. Dominant discourses around the economy and its relation to creativity rely on two assumptions that form a positive feedback loop fueling ever increasing growth, each reinforcing the other in a circular argument. The first assumption is that economic success is a result of creativity, and the second is that creativity is a result of economic success. Anxieties around the lack of creativity arise out of

a fear that by falling out of the loop, the state will descend into economic decline.

The free market is thought to provide incentives for business minded individuals to exercise their creativity (Baumol, 2002; Kreft & Sobel, 2005) whilst planned economies are thought to harm creativity because of the lack of incentives (Liu & White, 2001). However researchers such as Form (1987) and Ainley (2005) also point out that in capitalist free markets where the main priority is increasing efficiency and profits, deskilling of workers can also take place, which is detrimental to creativity. DI student Sky, who had worked in advertising before returning to her studies believes that: *'the economy is growing fast and everyone is chasing money. It's killing creativity.'* Galbraith (2008: 5) ridicules the idea that a free market produces entrepreneurial creativity, saying that 'the world has given up waiting for tax cuts to unleash the hidden creativity of the business class,' yet the notion is an enduring one. Most Western respondents believed that China's planned economy continues to disadvantage its workers, as the previous economic regime's guarantee of job security and centralised decision making suppressed self-motivation. USCo expatriate Aaron, for example, believed that communism has given the Chinese workforce a non-creative reputation: *'Some people don't take initiative, they only do what they're told'*.

On the other hand, some indigenous employees believe that much creativity is present in China but the lack of understanding of marketing and branding in the relatively recent liberalised economy means that Chinese workers do not know how to present their ideas as creative. Indigenous engineer Beth (quoted in Chapter 4) and the Indigenous Innovation Team at USCo for instance, believe that Chinese workers needed to build up expertise in marketing and customer service in order to convince consumers of the value of their products. Simonton's (1991) inclusion of a fifth P, representing the ability to 'persuade' others of the value of one's work might thus be applied to represent Chinese people as less creative.

Reflecting the literature on physical spaces and creativity, the majority of which advocate that greater creativity is associated with less order, many respondents to the survey and interviewees idealise creative workplaces as

ones that have a competitive atmosphere, messy but organised desks, and an open knowledge sharing environment. The workplace is commonly conceived amongst interviewees as an office space where paid work happens.

Workplaces are seen as locations where management, within the confines of a physical space – the office – utilise the environment to facilitate employee productivity and creativity. However, conversations with senior managers revealed a different reality. Colin Wang illustrates:

'...10 to 12 years ago, when we started doing big projects, you can still go to a conference with most of the people you work with who are in the same building so you can go into a conference room to work issues and those kind of stuff right? But over the past 10 years, everything, you know, USCo sort of realise the bulk of our revenue is actually from overseas. And we start putting on headcount overseas. Now we whenever we meet, I never go to a conference room unless I wanted to make a private phone call. Most work is from your cubicle. The average colleague you work with are spread around the world, in different time zones. So you find yourself at a meeting at 7am in the morning and then a one on one like this and two, including 9 o'clock at night. So I work from home, work one hour. I spent more time on the headset and cellphone than really working at the office.'

Discussions of place in the dominant discourses of creativity reinforce Western superiority over 'less creative cultures' by tying Western values of individuality, democracy, and economic liberalism to personal creativity. This is also reflected at the smaller scale within workplace discourses where personal decorations in the cubicles are showcased as evidence of employers' open mindedness and care for employees' individuality, self-fulfillment, and freedom. However, whilst employees are allowed to decorate their cubicles with personal objects, their activities within their workspace are still subject to managerial control. One senior manager for instance found the habit of sleeping under their desks at break times particularly offensive and took steps

to ensure that none of her staff did this. However, upon her departure, this practice returned as the next manager did not take up the issue. Similarly, guides who showed me around various USCo and start up offices were proud to present leisure facilities such as games rooms, ping pong tables, basketball courts, cafes, and music rooms provided for staff use on the rationale that it stimulates workers' creativity and provides an incentive for them to stay with the company. However, indigenous workers who commented tended to speak of them as fringe benefits rather than creativity inducing instruments.

6.6.2 PLACE IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

There is a large body of literature exploring the relationship between physical workspaces and creativity (Kristensen, 2004; Sundstrom *et al.*, 1982; Haner, 2005; Ceylan *et al.*, 2008). Scholars in this area often treat the relationship between the two as *a priori*, and are concerned mainly with how to organise the workplace in order to promote employee creativity, arguing mainly that tidy, sterile work environments stifle creativity whilst a degree of disorder is beneficial (Kristensen, 2004; Augustin & Brand, 2009). However, Kristensen (2004) argues that the degree of tidiness or disorder may also be an indication of other factors in the workplace, such as employee autonomy, which also contributes to creativity. I propose that characteristics of the workplace, such as office layout, tidiness, and where the manager sits may be located in the Creativity Framework according to how chaotic and ordered their effects are. However, these should not be considered in isolation from social forces, which are not merely a result of physical configurations of the workplace, but rather interact with the materiality in a complex manner that affects employees' behaviours and performances. A workplace where the managers sit amongst junior staff, for instance, may be seen by the 'progressive' management at USCo as more chaotic as it allows more interaction across the hierarchy than one where the managers are isolated from the staff, but it may also make employees feel 'micromanaged', inhibiting their creativity (Strube *et al.*, 2012). Figure 6.14 illustrates how characteristics of places might be located in the Creativity Framework.

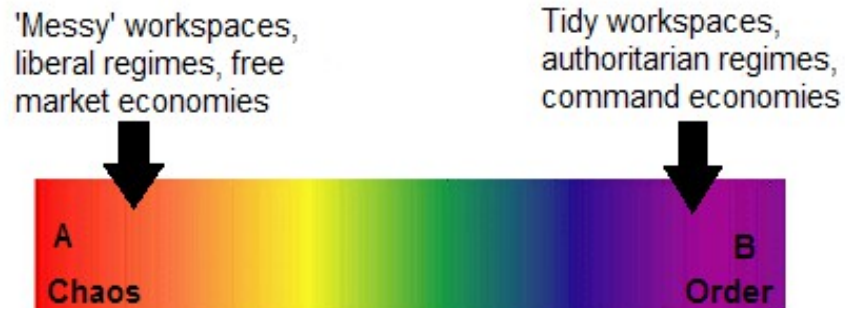


Figure 6.14 Place in the Creativity Framework

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Simonton's (1975) attempt at establishing a connection between social and political milieu and creativity failed to produce a convincing argument that any one system of government is better for creativity than another. Whilst some scholars argue that repressive societies may stop individuals from developing their creativity (Sternberg, 1997; Meusburger *et al.*, 2009), others have suggested that political oppression can also generate creativity (Morley, 1995; Carr & Mytum, 2012). Social and political characteristics of place such as the form of government, and social value systems that influence individual aspirations and behaviour are located within the Creativity Framework either on the chaotic or ordered side depending on how disruptive and diverse, or conservative and uniform they are. Liberal democracies for instance might be located further to the left if indeed they offer greater cultural diversity, whilst totalitarian dictatorships might be located at the extreme right of the framework if they stifle creativity.

There is also a gap in the literature about the role that economic ideologies play in supporting creativity, but there seem to be an assumption that China is 'behind' in its creative industries because of these factors. A number of articles point out that some cities have an advantage over rural places in attracting creative workers (Florida, 2002; Luckman *et al.*, 2009), and the body of literature is dominated by the argument that creativity leads to economic growth (Florida, 2002; Mokyr, 1990; DCMS, 1998; DCMS, 2001). Whether liberal economics leads to the growth of individual creativity seems to be largely unexplored, as interest is skewed towards making creativity work for the economy rather than the economy work for creativity (Florida, 2002; Mokyr, 1990; DCMS, 1998; DCMS, 2001). I propose that different types of economic

ideologies may be more conducive to the cultivation of different types of creativity. Entrepreneurial creativity, for instance, might be more widespread in a free market economy that celebrates entrepreneurship and economic innovation, whilst economies where profits depend on low margins and high turnovers, such as in China, may better support cost saving types of creativity, although this could be explored further.

6.7 PRODUCTS

There has been relatively little research to date on creative products compared to research on the other three Ps: person, process, and place. Many studies try to infer the definition of creative products by drawing responses from groups of people (Besemer, 1998; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Horn & Salvendy, 2006), which in fact reveals more about the subjects' values and background than the products' creativity. I will be using examples cited by respondents for this discussion as I am unable to draw on specific examples from my fieldwork due to intellectual property concerns of individuals and organisational participants.

When defining creative products, scholars in the logical positivist tradition often attempt to find precision and agreement on what constitutes the creative (Besemer & Treffinger, 1981), and become embroiled in debates about the characteristics of a creative product. To briefly recapitulate the discussion in Chapter 2, two aspects of the creative product have been common to its definition. The first is that creative products can either be ideas or physical objects (Rhodes, 1961), and the second is that to be creative, these products must be both novel and functional (Rhodes, 1961; Besemer, 1998). Amabile (1982) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) point out that to qualify as creative, a product must be deemed so by people qualified to make the judgement. These definitions take the criteria for creativity as absolutes, not accounting for the reality that concepts of physicality or novelty are not always obvious. Whether a product is a physical object or an idea for example, can be unclear, as in the case of 'the Internet', which is both an idea and a series of physical objects, and also with performance art. Similarly, there are degrees of novelty and functionality – some creative products may be more ostensibly novel than others. A creative product might also be a new combination of old products, a new combination of new products or a new combination of new and old

products. Though to a lesser extent, functionality also exists on a scale dependent on the user's judgement.

6.7.1 TENSIONS IN THE DISCOURSES

A majority of the scholarship on creative products, which emphasises novelty, pays more attention to pioneering ideas (Briskman, 1980), although financial gains from ordered creative products may sometimes surpass those from the first generation ideas (Abernathy & Utterback, 1978). At USCo Shanghai, the innovation team explored ways of applying and combining the latest technologies to create an original product that could be launched in the local market, but none of their ideas developed when I was there was considered radical enough or profitable enough to go into production.

Similarly, although ideas in the fashion industry are often recycled, inspired, shared, and copied by designers, the discourse is centred on originality, newness, and 'freshness' (see Chapter 5). Problems stemming from a lack of clear delineation between the concepts of inspiration and copying, as discussed in Chapter 5, can also be extended to concepts such as 'improvement' and 'adaptation' of creative products. It appears that these are subjective terms that depend on how much the audience or 'target market' had been exposed to. Given that products are rarely completely original and ideas are often 'borrowed', the question arises as to why some products are favoured as more creative than others.

Expatriates' conceptions of China's creative products appear to have their basis in the types of commodities that China is known for producing, and beliefs about their pragmatism and aversion to risk taking. Expatriate entrepreneur Jason points out that "*Modern things are not developed here.*" This belief is reiterated by both expatriates and locals in the research. However, Chinese interviewees and respondents to the survey were more aware of the ambiguities and inconsistencies around the definition of creative products. When defining creativity, indigenous respondents made an effort to bring the multiplicity of meaning associated with it so as to include themselves in the discourse. Whilst expatriates would usually provide a definitive answer, such as Jason who says: '*Creativity is about finding solutions to problems by cross breeding*', indigenous respondents will cautiously point out the different

types of creativity, so that China's creativity can be included. USCo engineer Bai Le for instance, defined creativity by saying that: *'There are different types of creativity. There's problem solving creativity, which is small and smart. China is just as good as anywhere else at that.'* Similarly, Wen Hui, a software programmer at another US company believes that,

'Whether something is creative or not depends on your background. You need to learn to appreciate something. Some people have Western minds and don't appreciate the 山寨 [shan zhai] IT movement, but those with a sense of humour will appreciate it. It's grassroots creativity.'

Part of the perception of China as less creative than the West appears to stem from its products being of 'lower quality'. Here again, there is a circularity to the argument, Chinese products are less creative because China is less creative, and the production and manufacture of products that are less creative is believed to prevent indigenous workers from developing their own creativity because it keeps the Chinese trapped in a safe option of eating from the 'iron rice bowl'. Some see it as an absence of incentive to produce 'great creativity' since the market for less creative products is large enough to generate wealth for its workers. Local engineer Jen Jia for instance believes that local entrepreneurs take the safe option and fall short of 'great creativity because:

'Exact copies of Facebook are more successful than local originals. There's no need for innovation on the internet. The most important thing is to make money. It's safer just to follow, why take risk? It's realistic/ pragmatic. The idea is copied but they add local twist. It's actually also creative, to make small additions, even though it's not revolutionary.'

His colleague Ye Lai also believes that *"We're still not good at high tech. Not very original. The new designs are not very obvious. We are the world's factory.'* However, rather than seeing copying as evidence of being less creative, some indigenous respondents argue that it actually displays creativity in 'doing business' and 'making money'. Mike Yan narrates the following with air of pride at the ingenuity and daring of Wang Xin's founder:

'From my understanding, PRC has no innovation of its own. It's all copied. e.g. Baidu is a copy of Google and Facebook also

has its own copy with no changes called Wang Xin. Wang Xin sold its business and took all the staff with it and then repeated the whole process again. The Chinese are able to do this because of language and the market is so big. QQ is the same, it's like Skype but it doesn't need to be innovative, it just has to copy.'

Rather than seeing the production of creative, commodifiable products as an economic necessity, like many of the expatriates do, indigenous respondents seem to prefer to see it as a future progression, to be considered at a later time, when the market for their products has been saturated. This does not mean that they consider their own products less creative, instead, the discussion centres around a difference type of creativity. When asked why China is perceived as less creative, Engineer Han Guang answered:

'We really do less revolutionary creativity, but we do engineering as well. It's different creativity. The West doesn't understand East as well as the East understands the West. We won't snatch their rice bowl. There are opportunities here for new areas. Should the West be a standard for the East? US engineers are stupid. PRC only has a small number of cities and a large population and people have to be very good to get in. US ordinary engineers are not of a high standard but their top engineers are very good. They have more innovative and out of the box thinking... PRC is good at incremental but not disruptive creativity. It takes time, people here won't know yet what to do with disruptive creativity and how to use it.'

Although many expatriates cite the pervasive copying in China and its manufacturing base as evidence that China's creative products are somehow lesser than those of the West, there is a type of creativity in the production of copies and manufacturing that indigenous respondents argue is highly creative. Expatriate Ken, who has a talent for entertaining his fellow expatriates by ridiculing local products, dismisses copying as uncreative, but his description of the 'fakes market' reveals what some indigenous respondents believe is the inventiveness and adaptability of Chinese copying:

'There are different grades of fake and the pricing reflects that too. Obvious fake, fake-real where close observation will reveal it as a fake and good fakes where it's just like the real thing. Guangdong is the manufacturing hub, they have a low margin, but 10,000 units is too low for them. You should go to Yi Wu, it's the commodities city of China. You can buy anything there. Lots of foreigners go there, it's like a low class Harrods. Which other country in the world has a city like that?'

Numerous indigenous respondents argued that the creativity of these copiers is evident in their ability to cater to different markets and to replace expensive raw materials and processes. Although this is not obvious to consumers who are looking for novelty and the quality is lower, it is still thought to be creative because they are able to use their resourcefulness to produce copies from reverse engineered originals. According to indigenous respondents, their originality lies in the use of alternative materials and processes to make cheaper copies. Whilst many expatriates like Ken, who are frustrated by the lack of regulation around intellectual property, prefer to cite copying as evidence of an absence of creativity, many indigenous respondents cite them as evidence of their ingenuity.

Although older indigenous respondents like Bai Le appear to feel shamed by the copying culture and calls the copiers 小聪明 (xiao cong ming – literally little cleverness), younger, savvy indigenous respondents justify copying to the extent of celebrating the 山寨 (shan zhai) movement as a complex and subtle form of creativity that defies the dominant discourses. Throughout the big cities like Shanghai and Beijing, there are many examples of creativity that less knowledgeable expatriates think are poor quality copies but some locals and expatriates see as a tongue in cheek take on US culture with a local twist. Such examples include quasi Starbucks, KFC, McDonalds et cetera, with names like Starfucks, Sunbucks: which uses a Chinese lion in place of the Queen in the logo, and Buckstar. A copy of McDonald's called Wichael Alone uses the same fonts and colours in its logo, but the cleverness is in the translation of the Chinese name 麦当□ to 我当家, which means 'I am the boss' but sounds similar to the Chinese name for McDonald's. It is often cited amongst those who celebrate 山寨 because it audaciously declares: *'This is*

our territory, we do it our way.' The term 山寨 literally means 'Mountain Stronghold' and was traditionally used to refer to bandits who are sometimes portrayed in the classics as the Chinese equivalent of Robin Hood. Their lawlessness is perceived to be justified against unfair regimes. This reflects the perception amongst 山寨 supporters who see intellectual property law as an unfair imposition of Western values on China. Some scholars (Yang & Li, 2008; Tse *et al.*, 2009) have written about the importance of 山寨 for China's creative industries and celebrate the counter-culture around it. For many supporters, copying is a necessary step towards the development of local creative ability, wealth and economic stability and the international intellectual property regime is seen as an attempt to keep China 'behind'.

The limited academic literature on creative products often presents them as measurable objects (Besemer, 1998; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Horn & Salvendy, 2006), failing to take into consideration emotional factors such as consumer ethnocentrism and nation branding where judgements about creativity are concerned. Although creative products may in theory originate from anywhere in the world, creative brands are often associated with particular countries which hold a reputation for particular types of goods and services. Anholt (2005) pointed out that 'Japanese electronics, German engineering, French luxury goods and Italian fashion, for example, enjoy such a positive reputation that many consumers will pay a substantial premium'. Established brands from wealthy countries thus have an advantage over brands from 'emerging markets'.

More than the other three Ps, discussions about products seemed to provoke a sense of national pride and shame amongst indigenous respondents. Whilst some respondents like Jared Yang proudly declared that his wife no longer asks him to bring back foreign goods when he travels abroad because Chinese products are now just as good, if not superior, others expressed apprehension regarding China's manufacturing base. Li Liang's comment, *'We can't always be the world's factory. We will have to catch up'*, reflected a commonly expressed worry amongst indigenous respondents about China's economic future, but Yang Shan pointed to a more visceral concern over the effects on the image of the Chinese: *'I feel that being the world's factory is not a good thing. I'm not sure if this is a compliment to China'*. There are also

those, like Han Guang, who take pride in China's status as 'the world's factory', believing it to be a shrewd economic move:

'So far, copying and incremental innovation is working. We won't run out of people to copy from and if we do then we'll be number one and that's not a problem. PRC is the world's factory... The costs are not high in PRC, we are export oriented.'

For the most part though, questions about creative products with respondents often led to some vehemence in their replies. Their reputation as producers of inferior copies of overseas products, the lack of international industry award winners from China, and a sense of Western superiority often brought to the surface tensions arising from China's semi-colonial history.

6.7.2 PRODUCTS IN THE CREATIVITY FRAMEWORK

Like personalities, processes, and place, creative products may also be categorised into types (Garcia & Calantone, 2002) that fit into the Creativity Framework. Radically creative products are defined in this research as products that have changed society either by transforming the lifestyles of a large number of people or through a common understanding or appreciation of particular subject matters. In the online survey that was launched as part of my research, 96% of respondents agreed that the most radical creative products have an impact on society, 84% believed that these products have multiple uses and 79% thought that they are usually the first of their kind. 21% of respondents cited the personal computer as a creative product because its invention and popularisation changed the way millions of people work, whilst the Internet was cited by 23% of the respondents, because it changed the way people communicate and allowed communities of shared interests to form across long distances. Whilst innovative companies strive to produce radically creative products, the majority can be said to fall on either side of the Creativity Framework. Figure 6.15 illustrates how products might fit into the Creativity Framework.

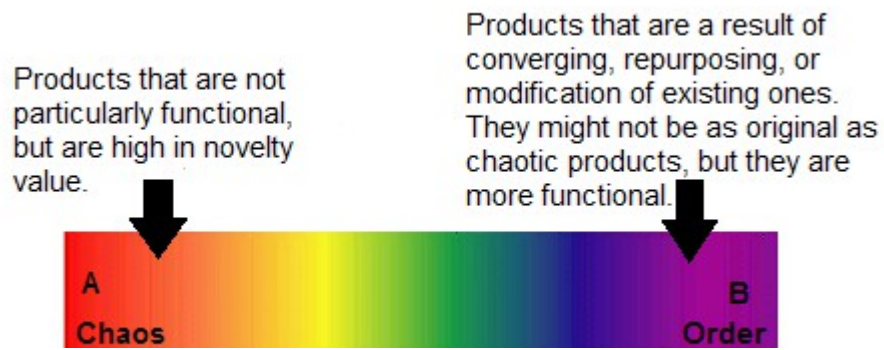


Figure 6.15 Products in the Creativity Framework

Many products that can be considered faddish and wasteful would lie on the chaotically creative side of the Creativity Framework. Many of the bargain discount stores across the UK, for example, stock products that are low in quality, have specific or limited utility, present solutions to problems that do not really exist, and are wasteful in the sense that they have a short life-span and are quickly disposed of. Their appeal lies in their novelty and they raise the consumer's awareness of a problem that does not really exist, such as spinning spaghetti forks that 'solve' the problem of twirling one's fork 'manually'. Chaotically creative products are likely to be the brainchild of inventors who take part in innovation as a sideline (Greenberg, 2008) whose ideas came in a flash of inspiration rather than as a result of laborious, long thought out research. Russ Colby, for instance, was a lawyer and salesman before becoming the inventor of the talking toilet paper dispenser, inspired by a joke with friends, which has earned him over a million US dollars (Greenberg, 2008). Chaotically creative products tend to be low in quality. Since inventors and producers of these products have limited financial resources, they often use the cheapest raw materials and manufacturers that offer the lowest costs, usually in China or other parts of Asia. As a result, chaotically creative products produce high levels of waste when manufactured and consumed in large quantities (Greenberg, 2008). Chaotically creative products do not necessarily have to be wasteful however; the Chindogu movement offers a solution to the waste problem whilst embracing chaotically creative inventions. Kawakami, the founder of the Chindogu movement, said 'the art of Chindogu is... an anarchic antithesis to 21st-century consumer culture that can enrich people's lives and bring them closer together'. He added: 'Chindogu is the symbol of freedom, a free soul is needed to think of chindogu, to think of stupid, crazy things. You can never do it with common sense alone' (Hornyak,

2002).

Ordered creative products, on the other side of the Creativity Framework, are characterised by two criteria which emerged from respondents in the field and the survey. First, they may not have an immediate impact on the market or society, and second, they usually take enormous time and human resources to develop. Ordered creative products are commonly seen in software engineering as newer versions are frequently launched to entice consumers to upgrade. The responses from the interviews conducted during my field work led me to divide ordered creative products into three types, namely: incremental improvements on existing products, such as the retractable ball point pen being an improvement on the ball point pen; converging technologies such as the camera phone, which combines the phone with a camera; and repurposed invention, as in old products applied to new uses such as WD40, which was originally developed as a solvent and degreaser for use in the aerospace industry (WD40, 2014).

Incremental innovations include minor improvements or adjustments to current technology. They tend to be valued less than radical, pioneering innovation because consumer excitement about the product has usually worn off by the time subsequent versions are launched, and the improvements they bring about are not ostensibly different enough to cause excitement amongst consumers (Darroch & McNaughton, 2002; Roy *et al.*, 2004). Most incremental innovations respond to consumers who expect and demand improvements to existing products, but do not surpass expectations (Abernathy & Utterback, 1978). Batteries that last longer, planes that fly further and computers that run faster are some examples of incremental innovation. They meet society's expectation that technology will keep improving but do not radically change the way these products are used. These advancements arise from relatively slow research and experimentation by teams dedicated to their jobs rather than a flash of insight by individuals (Koberg *et al.*, 2003).

However, not all incremental innovations are limited to ordered creativity. If the increment is big enough, it can cause a breakthrough and render existing competing products obsolete. The invention of the DVD for example, replaced

VCDs and Laser Discs before they had a chance to compete in the market. In recent years, incremental innovations have led to a high turnover of consumer electronics. It is unlikely that mobile phones and laptops that exist today will be used for the duration of a human lifetime as consumers update their gadgets in order to keep up with the advancements of the sector. The design sector on the other hand is dominated by incremental innovations, given that the majority of fashion consumers are relatively conservative, particularly in the garment sector. Whilst radical creations may be displayed on fashion catwalks, these serve to raise the public profile of the designers and are rarely sold in retail stores.

The second type of ordered creative products is known as converging technologies (Passey *et al.*, 2006), where two older products are combined to produce a novel one. Some of the most successful teams at USCo Shanghai were integrating technology that had been available since the 1960s into newer systems, using code 'recycled' from old programmes. By adding old applications to existing products, inventors change the way they are used; according to many respondents, this may also be considered a creative act. Whilst most converging technologies fall into the ordered side of the Creativity Framework, some may also border on being radically creative. For example, neither the camera nor the phone are completely new ideas but the combination of the two into a camera phone and its use in social networking has been said to have radically changed social interaction and the way people express themselves (Srivastava, 2005). In the design sector, the widespread practice of 'borrowing' and blending ideas, and using existing styles to create new looks, even by prominent designers, contributes to the confusion amongst DI students between inspiration and copying.

The third type of ordered creative products, repurposed invention (Maestri & Wakkary, 2011; Jason, 2013), also borders on being radically creative. These are inventions used for something other than their original intended purpose. They may not have found a marketable use at the time of their invention and so are overlooked by the masses until the discovery of their application in common objects. Lasers for instance were invented in the 1940s at Bell Labs by Arthur Schawlow and Charles Townes, who were looking for a way to study molecular structures (Bell Labs, 2014); however they were not common until

experiments by numerous scientists over the years incrementally improved them so that they are now varied and ubiquitous. Repurposed invention is also received enthusiastically amongst designers and design critics who celebrate the novelty of using non-conventional materials, such as costume designer Lizzie Gardiner's American Express Gold Card dress, which generated much commentary at the 1995 Academy Awards (Jones, 2007). A number of teachers in the Industrial Design department at DI also encouraged students to consider the use of recycled disposable materials in their work. Much of the discourse on creative repurposing of technology takes place in the context of environmental waste, reuse, and recycling, (Winge, 2008; Bigham, 2012; Bardone & Shmorgun, 2013; Raven, 2013) and remains a fairly new area of scholarship.

6.8 CONCLUSION

It appears that industry and academic discourses of creativity and contemporary creativity scholarship, particularly those that try to 'produce' or 'define' creativity, have a preference for types that lean towards the chaotic side of the Creativity Framework. The hegemony of ideas within dominant discourses of creativity, which favours more chaotic types, is enacted in a way which positions the Chinese and possibly other emerging and developing economies as inferior in relation to the West, precisely because it is based upon economic standards and measures that are dominant in the west. It seems that the ability to generate higher monetary profits is the main determinant of which people, processes, places, and products are most creative, whilst those that generate little to no profit are sidelined. These dominant creativity discourses are embedded within the notion of 'catching up with the West', which is inherently political. Creativity can thus not be studied in isolation under a logical positivist lens that attempts to objectively define it. Economic motives, political intent, social milieu, and epistemological climate are all crucial factors that influence ideas of what is or is not creative.

As I had pointed out in Chapter 1, an inclusive conceptualisation of creativity can inform political solidarity amongst workers in the creative industries, and the Creativity Framework facilitates this. As the spectrum of creativities in the Creativity Framework incorporates forms of creativity that are often neglected in the dominant discourses, this may encourage creative workers to demand

greater recognition of their contribution to their field. A software programmer who is taking on mainly coding work for instance, might be motivated to rally others who are similarly disenfranchised to negotiate for better opportunities or pay once s/he is confident that their work is also creative, albeit in a different way. Similarly, by recognising that creativity lies not just in the design but also the processes involved in the materialisation of product, one may acknowledge the skills applied by all those their making.

Creative places may also be charted along to spectrum to facilitate a recognition that particular physical, social, political, and economic aspects of place are favoured in the dominant discourses, and enable us to question why this is the case. As such, the Creativity Framework also allows dominant discourses to be mapped, which enables a clear recognition of which types of creativity are missing. One may for instance plot along the spectrum, the various studies of creativity and find a disproportionate focus on particular, chaotic types of creativity, as my research as shown. Patterns and trends in the discourses can then be identified, and questions around why these types of creativity are celebrated over other forms of creativity may reveal deep political underpinnings. In doing so, one may consider why the epistemic traditions, political milieus, and economic motives attribute creativity to some persons, processes, places, and products, but not others.

Furthermore, creativity should not be understood as the end result of a series of manipulable circumstances since humanity is complex and attempts to 'programme' workers to be more creative may in fact lead to a less creative workforce. Moreover, attempts at inducing creativity at the individual level raises ethical concerns around the objectification of the human subject. Kounios and Beeman's (2009) for instance, placed participants under electroencephalography (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in order to understanding the neural correlates of the 'Aha moment' and have claimed that their discovery 'that insight is the culmination of a series of brain states and processes operating at different time scales' may bring about 'interventional opportunities for the facilitation of insight.' (Kounios & Beeman, 2009: 210) Whilst this may be desirable, there's a risk of us becoming 'creativity machines' and responsibility put on those who chose not to subject themselves to such 'intervention'. The Creativity Framework places value on

not just the insights that result from mental creative effort, but also on the processes that precede these and the physical efforts that bring the ideas to fruition.

Whilst it may be argued that creativity is inherent in all human beings, it is still necessary to confine its definition within something like the Creativity Framework to prevent creativity from losing its meaning. It is necessary to consider that the criteria of novelty and value (Chapter 2) still remains an important aspect of creativity. Yet whilst all human beings have the potential to produce novelty and value, not all human activities are novel or valuable. The Creativity Framework does not serve to include all human activities, personality traits, work processes, and products as creative, but rather challenges those engaged in the field to consider forms of creativity that do not fit in the ways that are represented in the dominant discourses. That is, in terms of results, particular forms of self-expression, and characteristics of place. By considering creativity within the spectrum presented in the Creativity Framework, non-creative activities may be excluded, whilst also including those types of creativity that do not fit within the dominant discourses.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has addressed two main questions in the context of creativity in Shanghai: 'What are the meanings associated with creativity and why?'; 'How and why are discourses of creativity produced?'. The case studies have highlighted the ways in which individual workers enact and negotiate creativity discourses according to their particular and different identities and needs. This concluding chapter provides a summary of the empirical chapters and answers the main research questions. It then discusses the empirical and theoretical contributions before exploring the practical implications of the research and concluding with suggestions for future research.

7.2 THESIS SUMMARY

This thesis has provided an understanding of creativity through personal, individual perspectives which had not previously been explored in depth in academic scholarship. The focus has been on creative workers' adoption and performance of dominant discourses of creativity, developing a critique of these discourses, and exploring underlying impetuses behind them. I have sought an answer to the broad question: 'Why have particular meanings come to be associated with creativity?' and more specifically, 'Why are Chinese people commonly perceived to be less creative than Westerners?' both by their employers and colleagues, and by themselves? In order to challenge these representations I have examined how and why creativity came to be connected to certain behaviours and found that economic objectives have a strong influence. For clarity, I have adapted Rhodes' (1961) four Ps of person, process, press, and products to organise the arguments for the ways in which creativity may manifest, replacing 'press' with 'place' for reasons already discussed. Whilst this model, having originated in the 1960s may seem dated, it still remains a comprehensive way of organising discussions about creativity. My exploration of dominant creativity discourses within each of these four Ps revealed a gap in types of creativity that are not economically productive. That is, excluded from these discourses are creativities that are not measurable within economic accounting, such as the creativity of street vendors, the

unemployed, and housewives. Furthermore, the dominant discourses were found to celebrate an aggressive type of creativity which extols such attributes as speed and high turnover of ideas over slower processes such as the painstaking accumulation of skills.

Thus, in Chapter 2, I traced the lineage of ideas that led to the current associations between creativity and commercial activity, and discussed reasons given by scholars for the lack of creativity in China. By doing this, it became clear that creativity is tied to Western liberal democratic, free market ideals. The basis for the argument that China is less creative seems to lie in its 'deviation' in political and economic structures, culture, pedagogy, from Western liberal democratic 'norms'.

In Chapter 3, I detailed the methodology that was applied to my research. Elaborating on how the use of ethnographic methods facilitated the insights into how dominant discourses are enacted in the software and design sectors of the creative industries in Shanghai. I also discussed the use of a survey which informed the research, though it was not applied in the overall analysis.

Chapter 4 drew out the key themes in the dominant discourses of creativity as enacted by employees at USCo, an IT company with major research and development facilities in Shanghai. I argued that the performance of expatriate-led discourses tying creativity to customer service, employee self-motivation, communication skills, divergent thinking, and managerial imperative reflect uneasy power relationships between expatriate managers and indigenous managed employees. The discourse of creativity as customer service extends to interactions between staff and their colleagues and managers, which substitutes bureaucratic regulation and stability with the uncertainties of the market (Gay & Salaman, 1992).

The concept of customer sovereignty (Bolton & Houlihan, 2005: 685), which conflates all interactions in the workplace into a simplistic provider/ recipient dichotomy, depicts customer satisfaction as the main objective in all of the workers' endeavours. The creativity of workers is questioned when they do not draw on personal resources to ensure that their customers are happy, such as when they do broaden the scope of their job remit to satisfy a customer

request. Whilst the 'customer service mentality' may appear to have no relationship with creativity, to many expatriates, its absence is an indication of a lack of creativity.

In Chapter 4 I also discussed the discourse of creativity as employee self-motivation, which managers at USCo seemed to accept without question, although some are aware that familial obligations and nationalistic sentiments may also be effective motivators for Chinese workers. This discourse places an obligation on workers to improve themselves through a rhetoric that espouses the benefit of career development, though promotion is not guaranteed (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2006). This discourse forms one of the devices of self-government that workers are encouraged to adopt, along with the discourse of creativity as communication style, which encourages employees to adopt more assertive modes of expression, and the discourse of creativity as divergent thinking, which promotes self-improvement beyond the workplace. Discussions of self-expression with respondents exposed cultural tensions between Westerners and indigenous employees, with each side believing that the other should 'improve' their communication styles. As for the discourse of creativity as divergent thinking, issues of China's restricted press and allegedly narrow pedagogy featured strongly in interviews as causes of its citizens' lack of creativity.

The last discourse discussed in Chapter 4, creativity as managerial imperative, places responsibility on managers for the creative performance of employees. Those arguing for greater managerial support that is focused on improving employee creativity are mainly foreign Chinese expatriates who have been able to straddle the two cultures. They appear to be more willing to adopt the master/ disciple model of care in their relationships with staff. Indigenous workers were also found to support this discourse as their responses often betrayed a sense of dissatisfaction with the lack of understanding and unwillingness to provide pastoral care and nurturing on the part of the foreign managers. Nevertheless, indigenous workers appear to agree with the judgements of themselves as less creative, having been convinced that corporate and economic survival depends on a type of creativity that facilitates urgent responses to market changes (Thrift, 2000).

Chapter 5 examined three key pairs of discourses in the creative industries: individualism and collectivism, youth and maturity, and exposure and insularity, arguing that dominant discourses tend to favour individualism over collectivism, youth over maturity, and exposure over insularity. Even though these pairs do not occur as simple binary opposites in the production of creativity, the celebration of one over the other in the major discourses suggests that this is so. Individualism is given more attention than collectivism in much of the literature on creativity (Simonton, 1975; Zha *et al.*, 2006; Furnham *et al.*, 2009) and this was also reflected in my field work. Although individualistic employees are thought to be more creative, my research showed that they are also believed to be more difficult to work with in a team. Their 'overly creative' disposition is thought by colleagues to be too disruptive where team creativity is needed. I argued that whilst the dominant discourses celebrate individualism and youthfulness, in practice, managers in the creative industries prefer working with more balanced personalities and those who are unable to accommodate their colleagues are ostracised. Here again, cultural tensions between Westerners and indigenous workers surfaced, with foreign teachers and managers believing that China's collectivist culture which stems from Confucianism and the past communist political regime inhibits Chinese workers' creativity. The discussion of creativity in youth and maturity revealed tensions and anxieties amongst Chinese parents, students, and workers regarding their economic security and social behaviours. Whilst there has not been any scholarship demonstrating that either the young or elderly are more creative (Galenson, 2004; Simonton, 2007; Jones, 2010), there seems to be a belief amongst many respondents that young people are more creative, but their creativity is problematic. Here, the effects of government interventions such as the one child policy and five year plans were highlighted as main factors influencing differences between the generations. Discussions about creativity and exposure uncovered tensions around the free press and access to foreign media, with many respondents believing that Chinese workers and students need to be more knowledgeable about 'the outside world', which in most discussions, are restricted to US and Western content. Although the discussions tended to favour exposure over insularity, the research revealed that some parts of the design sector, such as the fashion industry, also favour insularity for the prestige that exclusivity presents.

Finally in Chapter 6, I introduced the Creativity Framework, which proposes that creativity should be conceptualised as a trait that is embodied across a spectrum of chaos and ordered types of persons, places, processes, and products, and not limited to those of conventional Western discourses. I propose the use of the Creativity Framework as a way of reconciling the tensions arising from the variability of interpretations of the concept and elaborated on the notion that types of creativity fall along a chaos-ordered spectrum. This categorisation of creativities may seem at odds with Foucault's argument that scientific classification (1982) serves as one of the steps in objectification of the subject, however the model proposed in this thesis is not meant to be a system of classification, but rather a guideline for conceptualising variances in how creativity is perceived. Whilst scholarship from psychology and management tends to exclude, my model includes creativities that are not considered in their enquiries and challenges scholars to consider what is missing in the dominant discourses. Part of this chapter was structured along the four Ps of person, process, place, and products, tying them together with the Creativity Framework and discussions of the dominant discourses of creativity addressed in the previous chapters. I argued that dominant discourses of creativity mainly favour chaotic types of creativity, and are enacted in a way that positions the Chinese, and possibly those from other emerging and developing economies, as inferior in relation to the West, because its standards and measures are based upon liberal democratic, free market economic ideology. I propose that creativity should not be studied in isolation, under a logical positivist lens that attempts to define it objectively; rather, economic motives, political intent, and epistemological climate are all crucial factors that influence ideas of what is or is not creative.

7.3 KEY EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The use of ethnographic methods supported an understanding of creativity from the personal and individual perspectives of workers and students in the creative industries, providing a 'first hand' account of how creativity discourses are performed and enacted. This is an important aspect of creativity research that has not previously been examined sufficiently. Whilst the scholarship on creativity has covered the meanings (Amabile, 1983; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009), causes (Simonton, 1990; Simonton, 1999; Sternberg, 1999) and economic effects (Florida, 2003; Leslie & Rantisi, 2012) of creativity in depth,

there is little as yet written about how those whose livelihoods depend on these discourses respond to them emotionally and in practice.

The use of ethnographic methods in the field over six months enabled me to gain a full and rich account of the creativity discourses in two of the sectors in Shanghai's creative industries. Only by being present for an extended period of time was I able to establish relationships with respondents and see them regularly, so as to build on the data collected in the interviews. By being 'on site' regularly, I could observe disparities between what is said and what is enacted. Furthermore, the auto-ethnographic methods also helped me to trace how my own understandings had developed over time, and enabled me to see how multiple, seemingly contradictory positions may actually be compatible. For example, the issue of the one child policy, which some respondents had touched on, appeared at first contradictory in that these 'little emperors' and 'little empresses' were thought to be spoilt by their elders, but at the same time, under enormous pressure to perform well at school and at work. However, through frequent interaction with same people, I became aware that anxieties from parents and grandparents about their wards' future economic stability and welfare, as well as traditional beliefs about familial duty, and a sense of loss of their own freedoms and happiness during the Cultural Revolution led to these 'contradictory' behaviours from parents and guardians.

My research has revealed how dominant discourses of creativity serve a particular form of governmentality that urges subjects of the new economy to accept personal responsibility as 'productive' citizens in a way that encroaches on their private lives and leisure time. Through programmes of institutional training, workers are taught to adopt aspirations that align with economic objectives. Individual creativity in the dominant discourses explored in this thesis seems to amalgamate a list of desirable traits which serve the employer and the greater economy by planting in the worker, desires that will make them productive subjects. These creativity discourses encourage workers to adopt a 'service mentality', be self-motivated, more expressive, and take on diverse interests, all in the name of transforming them into valuable employees. Furthermore, managers are increasingly given the responsibility for their staff's creativity, placing them under the burden of the latter's achievements. Although there is some awareness that alternate definitions of creativity exist

(Higgs *et al.*, 2008; Banaji, 2011; Gilson & Madjar, 2011), much of this is overridden by the exhortation to produce and contribute to economic growth embedded in the education of Chinese workers and expatriate managers.

I have also revealed the anxieties amongst Chinese citizens regarding their future well being that are provoked by dominant creativity discourses. Whilst nationalistic concerns about Chinese creativity have been addressed (Lovell, 2006; Cao *et al.*, 2006; Casey & Koleski, 2011), in-depth investigations of the personal experiences of Chinese workers from an academic point of view are lacking. The responses of indigenous workers and students I spoke with in the ethnographic work showed the unsettling effects of the dominant Western creativity discourses. Whilst a small number reacted with anger and many were defensive, they nevertheless agreed that China is 'behind' the West in the creative industries. Many appeared to have internalised the need to be creative and taken on a project of self-improvement to become more creative for what they believe to be their own benefit and the benefit of their family and country. Although their lesser creativity was challenged by one indigenous respondent, there remained much self doubt about their creative abilities amongst the majority I spoke with. Moreover the 'double bind' that arises from the incompatibility between the dominant creativity discourses and traditional Chinese values serves 'not to discover what [they] are but to refuse what [they] are' (Foucault, 1982: 785). That is, rather reinforcing and developing their qualities, indigenous workers are persuaded through the dominant discourses of creativity that their strengths are insufficient and they must deny a part of themselves in order to fulfil the demands of national and familial obligations. They believe that in order to express creativity, they must become more outspoken, aggressive, and individualistic is contrary but also aligned to the Confucianist teachings imparted to them in their youth. Hence, to answer the call to be creative in order to make their nation proud requires a denial of a part of themselves.

Although the Tiger Mother (Chua, 2011) trope has brought popular attention in the West to stereotypes of overly assertive Asian parents (Hsieh, 2011), the concerns driving parents and guardians of young Chinese workers in the creative industries have not been studied in depth, particularly in the context of an increasingly precarious employment market where workers are responsible

for more and more benefits formerly provided for by the employer, such as health insurance and pensions (Gill & Pratt, 2008). My research uncovered some of the strategies which parents and guardians apply to try to secure their offsprings' and wards' futures, such as the use of guanxi to gain extra guidance for tertiary students. In doing so, they attempt to strike a middle ground in which they may find a balance between traditional Chinese values such as obedience to authority and collectivism, and at the same time adopting the characteristics associated with creativity such as individualism.

My research has also uncovered the ways in which the dominant discourses of creativity amongst teachers and managers are still heavily influenced by rather dated Western scholarship. 'Measurable' instances of creativity supported by logical positivistic methods of assessing creativity, such as the Torrance test (1988), for example, are favoured in educational institutions and corporations. That it was largely accepted as a given that the Chinese are indeed less creative may be due to the fact that many of these tests are designed for a Western population, based on Western standards of what it means to be creative. The types of creativity that are 'outside work' are missing from these measures, though many expatriates pointed out that they were abundant in Shanghai. Furthermore, causal theories of cultural differences like those of Hofstede (1986) and Hall (1976) also support assignments of creativity to particular cultures despite more recent scholarship pointing out these theories' shortfalls (Lee *et al.*, 1995; Prasad, 2003, 2006; Jensen, 2004; Bjerregaard *et al.*, 2009). Whilst many respondents were eager to accept that cultural differences influenced perceptions and behaviours, and often drew on them to explain conflict in the workplace and differences in communication styles, there was little recognition that cultural perceptions may cause individuals to act reflexively. That is, their awareness of stereotypes based on their race and ethnicity may carry expectations and prejudices that influence interactions between expatriate and indigenous colleagues (Allen, 1995).

This research has also shed light on some of the seemingly dichotomous but complex meanings associated with creativity in China. In delving into the issues of how individualism or collectivism, youth or maturity, and exposure or insularity affect creativity, I found that understandings amongst respondents of each of these characteristics are embedded with essentialist political, social,

and cultural assumptions that clash with what are seen to be traditional Chinese values. There appeared to be a belief amongst many respondents for instance, that individualistic workers are more creative, as are younger people, and people who are more exposed to other ideas. However, these discourses seem to be based on the ideals of Western liberal democracy, where meanings associated with creativity are entrenched in a kind of heroism (Hunter, 1973; Casson, 1990; Becker, 1995) which appoints a figurehead to embody the group's or community's creative success, which in the field has translated into managers and others in authority taking responsibility for the group's creativity. Likewise, the emphasis on youth in the dominant Western creativity discourses (Mulgan & Worpole, 1986; Zimmerman, 2008; Volkerling, 2001) has infiltrated the sectors I observed, going against Confucianist teachings of reverence towards elders. Discourses of exposure and insularity have also proven to be deeply complex and much less straightforward. Although exposure prescribes expansive experiences and accumulation of knowledge for creative workers, insularity recommends that they isolate themselves into sub-cultures in order to make their work more appealing. Many of these discourses have little to do with creativity in that although they encourage creative workers to produce originality, they do not encourage workers to imagine an alternate economic system.

Throughout the thesis, I have shown that the enactment of the creativity discourses reveals a preference for particular 'chaotic' types of creativity that the fast economy (Thrift, 2000) is purported to thrive on. Approaches to creativity amongst expatriates in Shanghai have been skewed towards a Western-centric point of view, with its emphasis on individuality, speed, and divergent thinking, drawing attention away from aspects of creativity that are more collectivist, drawn out, and focused. Although evidence gained from my field research shows that meanings that individuals associate with creativity reflect the complexity of the way their aspirations and personal, familial and national obligations help to construct their identities, there remains an inclination amongst managers and teachers to consider creativity simplistically as an 'objective' quality that a person, idea, or artefact either does or does not possess. Furthermore, this research has shown that creativity actually manifests in a much more nuanced way by drawing attention to contextual factors at different scales and in different spaces. In the next section, I shall

summarise the foundations for a theory of creativity in the form of the Creativity Framework that allows for the inclusion of these latter aspects in considerations of creativity.

7.4 THEORETICAL ADVANCEMENTS

This case study of China has demonstrated that creativity theory needs to be expanded and broadened to take into account both political factors and the differences that culture makes. Far too much of the academic literature on creativity is based fundamentally on European and North American understandings and culture (Lubart, 1999; Runco, 2004; Ho & Ho, 2008). If creativity is a way of being, and there are different ways of being creative, then the embodiment of creativity must be just as varied. Personality psychology (Feist, 1998; Furnham *et al.*, 2009), being a predictive science, is focused on cause and effect and does not take into account political and economic circumstances within which personalities are developed and 'unfold'. Neither do current dominant creativity discourses consider the contexts within which creativity is given meaning.

I have shown that 'the creative' is not a set of skills or personality traits, nor a series of events and physical and social settings that result in a 'creative' product, but rather a value system which reflects the ambitions and aspirations of a particular group. For instance the study of personality in the psychology and management literature is focused on how particular types of personalities are more creative. However, the contextual argument I present in this thesis proposes that those who do not possess 'creativity traits' may also be creative, but are overlooked because their creativity does not take place within the sites where creativity is studied, such as those that are 'outside work'. Moreover, the paradoxical traits of creative persons (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) does not establish a system for determining who is creative, but rather serves to excuse unpredictable behaviours by those who are deemed exceptionally creative. Similarly, studies of creative processes are focused mainly on ones that obtain a 'successful' end product, although the processes themselves can be creative. This was evident in the field study where impatience amongst expatriates eager to shorten or bypass processes led to tensions with indigenous colleagues. Additionally, studies of place have attempted to pinpoint exact conditions where creativity is most likely to flourish by examining

different economic, political, and social conditions within different scales (Simonton, 1975; Florida, 2002; Drake, 2003). However, this research revealed that perceptions of creative places are premised upon the superiority of Western, liberal democracy over other regimes. Furthermore, I have challenged the idea that place is a set of environmental factors that can be manipulated to bring about creativity by drawing attention to the contexts within which meaning and value is given to the concept. For example, the free market economy is thought to be better suited to creativity because it facilitates entrepreneurial creativity, Galbraith however (2008) points out that this has yet to happen. Unlike Csikszentmihalyi (1990) who argues that creativity is domain dependent, that is whether a product is creative depends on a group of experts who have the authority to determine if it is indeed so, the Creativity Framework accommodates creativity that is excluded by these experts.

The studies of creative products have so far focused on the characteristics that make a product creative (Besemer, 1998; White *et al.*, 2002; Horn & Salvendy, 2006), however, I have shown that these judgements may be influenced by nationalistic and cultural biases and conditioning. Many indigenous respondents for instance, pointed out that the cost saving innovations in Chinese manufacturing are as much a product of creativity as advancements that lead to greater efficiency and qualitative improvements, but cost savings are not valued as much amongst those outside China.

I propose a way of acknowledging other forms of creativity by way of the Creativity Framework. Such recognition would not only inform political solidarity (Fuchs and Sandoval, 2014) but may challenge the biases and prejudices that are ingrained within dominant discourses of creativity. By reclaiming creativity theory back from the narrow focus of efficiency and profit, and recognising that meanings of creativity are situationally dependent, this research provides the foundation for further exploration of the phenomena. A spectrum between Chaotic and Ordered types of creativity (Figure 7.1) provides a way of conceptualising these differences. This is not meant to be a system of classification but rather a guideline for thinking about creativity within different milieus.



Figure 7.1 The Creativity Framework

An awareness of creativity as a varied concept that can manifest itself in chaotic or ordered forms not only unveils the political and economic determinism that has dominated current discourses, but may also have an empowering effect on workers on the margins and the outlying regions of the creative industries, such as the junior engineers performing the coding tasks for software designers and street vendors whose problem-solving skills constitute the 'outside work' type of creativity that expatriate managers aspire to for their employees.

7.5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are two main areas where this research may have practical applications. First, industry practitioners may benefit from a broader understanding of creativity, which may contribute to improving their strategies for employee performance. Second, the mapping of creative industries, first undertaken by the UK DCMS in 1998, and which remains influential internationally as a way of assessing the contribution of the creative/cultural sector (O'Connor & Xin, 2006; Chen, 2011), may gain from a consideration of how creativity outside or on the periphery of creative industries that are not considered 'industrial' or creative enough can share its knowledge and play a role in improving the industries.

The DCMS (Bennett, 2013) recently suggested the exclusion of the craft sector from the definition of the creative industries on the grounds that there are many craft workers whose work has more to do with manufacturing and is thus not truly 'creative', and that their economic contribution is difficult to measure given that most craft traders earn below the VAT threshold. Similarly, in China where modernisation and progress agendas are at the forefront of policy making decisions (O'Connor & Xin, 2006), the creative and cultural industries' emphasis on economics allows the government to impose strict restrictions on the press without a sense of contradiction. Across the UK, commentators argued that it is 'during the manufacturing process that the creativity takes

place' (Morrison, 2013) and that exclusion 'denies makers, craft agencies and organisations and the government itself robust and commonly agreed data that evidences craft's importance' (Bennett, 2013). This debate highlights the risks in the dominant discourses of neglecting and cutting funding to vital 'processes' that lead to creativity, thus stifling it. The strong focus on economic results and industry overshadows other applications of creativity in areas such as community building, conflict resolution, and awareness-raising.

7.6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis has shown the theoretical basis, methodology, and results of my research on creativity discourses as enacted by individuals in two sectors of the creative industries in Shanghai. It has answered Kong *et al.*'s (2006) call for an ethnographic approach to flesh out the detail of how various actors embody and diffuse ideas about the creative economy, unveiling the complexity of the relationship between concepts of creativity, practices, and identities in the software and design sectors of Shanghai's creative industries. Four main areas would benefit from further investigation. First, the theoretical innovations presented in this thesis could usefully be extended to a wider geographical scope. The initial ideas that inspired the research were concerned with how particular 'colonial mentalities' prevalent amongst expatriates in Asia attributed a lack of creativity to indigenous workers. Whilst the case study of Shanghai has revealed how anxieties around national identity, economic growth, and personal financial security have influenced responses to such judgements, it would be worthwhile to consider how these debates are played out in other settings within and outside China, with their differing set of anxieties.

It would also be worthwhile to extend the industrial scope of the theoretical propositions introduced in this research. This thesis only covered software programming, fashion and visual design, which constitute but a small proportion of the creative industries and creative labour. Other sectors of the creative industries would also benefit from in-depth studies into how their creativity discourses emerge and influence the behaviour and expectations of

those who work within them.

There are also various other areas arising from the Creativity Framework that could be explored. For example, the pairs of creativity discourses discussed in Chapter 5 – individualism and collectivism, youth and maturity, and exposure and insularity – warrant further study. There are numerous instances of collectivistic creativity such as quilting, tapestry making, and mural drawing, which may benefit from an in-depth investigation.

Finally, gendered aspects of creativity were hinted at by some respondents and during the analysis, but they have not been covered in detail here due to the limitations of my field setting. Although some psychologists (Ai, 1999; Pearsall *et al.*, 2008) have tried to establish differences between creative performances in men and women, there is still little known about issues such as how gender influences perceptions of creativity and receptiveness to the dominant discourses within each sector of the creative industries. Such a study may shed light on ways to balance gender differences in particular sectors as well as suggest ways of narrowing the income gap between men and women. Ideas of feminine/ masculine creativity were also hinted at by some respondents from the design sectors who for example perceived some acts such as sewing as a feminine endeavour, but fashion illustration as a masculine skill. An investigation into how these associations are formed may reveal underlying assumptions that are influenced by the political and economic contexts in which these discourses are enacted.

To conclude, I had set out to answer the questions ‘What does creativity mean?’ and ‘Why does it mean these things?’ guided by my personal experiences growing up in a multi-cultural household. I had hoped to find a definitive answer and formulate a grand theory of creativity, explaining what is or is not creative. Instead, my research has revealed the complexities involved in the way meaning is ascribed to creativity, exposing the subtle workings of political and economic motivations behind dominant discourses that classify particular behaviours, cultures, and individuals as more or less creative. This new understanding enabled me confidently to reject the denial of my own creativity based on my background and personality traits as I came to recognise that the term is applied within contexts of power relations, bestowed

by those in authority upon the governed. Although research that made this knowledge possible was facilitated by my extended time conducting ethnographic research, it is possible that those without this field experience may also benefit from this new understanding of the creative. In other words, to sum up my research in one sentence: What one thinks is creative depends on what one believes creativity to mean.

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APPENDICES

- A. The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree to keep confidential any proprietary information the Researcher may gain access to in the performance of the research project. "Proprietary Information" refers to information of any kind which is disclosed by [redacted] and which is identified in writing as proprietary at the time of the disclosure. The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree not to disclose and not to publish any Proprietary Information to others outside the Research Team without the permission of the designated [redacted] representative (the "[redacted] Contact") unless this information has already been published or disclosed publicly by a third party or is required to be disclosed by order of a court of law.
- B. The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree to disguise the name of [redacted], its technology, and the names of its employees and clients in all materials (e.g., reports, papers, case studies, presentations, PhD thesis) generated from the research. If [redacted] would like to have its name associated with a particular publication, this will be discussed with the Researcher.
- C. The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree that no information disclosed by the Researcher to [redacted], in any form whatsoever, is the confidential information of any corporation, individual or association not a party to this Agreement.
- D. Upon termination of this Agreement, the Researcher and Royal Holloway agree at the written request of [redacted] to return to [redacted] all equipment, documents, papers, drawings, tabulations, reports and similar documentation which were furnished by [redacted] to the Researcher. Upon the termination of this Agreement, the Researcher and Royal Holloway shall make no further use or utilization of any such information without the prior written consent of the [redacted] Contact. The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree not to make any reproductions of any material provided by [redacted] without [redacted]'s prior written consent.
- E. The [redacted] Contact will facilitate the review of all papers works produced by the Researcher before their general circulation or publication to ensure that the identity of [redacted], its technology, and that of its employees or clients ("redacted Information") have not been disclosed, and that Proprietary Information has not been revealed. [redacted] agrees to complete this review within a reasonable time period. [redacted] shall respond to a written request for publication of a research paper within thirty working days and shall respond to a written request for publication of a thesis within sixty working days. At the written request of [redacted] the Researcher will amend her work to remove any [redacted] Information or Proprietary Information before publication. To the extent that such inadvertent disclosure of [redacted] Information or Proprietary Information has occurred, it will be corrected by the Researcher. Issues of data interpretation, however, remain exclusively the responsibility of the Researcher.

5. ADVERTISING

Except as expressly stated herein, no party may use another party's name in advertisements nor otherwise disclose the existence or content of this Agreement without the prior written consent of the others' authorized representatives.

6. INDEMNIFICATION

The Researcher and Royal Holloway agree to defend, indemnify and hold [redacted] harmless from and against any and all liabilities, claims, penalties, forfeitures, suits, and the associated costs and expenses (including attorney's fees), which it may hereafter incur, become responsible for or pay out as a result

of death or bodily injury to any person, destruction or damage to any property, contamination of or adverse effects on the environment and any clean up costs in connection therewith, or any violation of governmental law, regulation, or orders, caused, in whole or in part, by (a) the Researcher's breach of any term or provision of this Agreement, or (b) any negligent or wilful acts, errors or omissions by the Researcher in the performance of this Agreement.

7. RELEASE OF LIABILITY

The Researcher accepts all responsibility for the Researcher's safety and well being and the Researcher acknowledges that the Researcher has adequate health and personal injury insurance to cover any injury sustained while performing her Research. The Researcher, the Researcher's heirs, assigns representatives, executors and administrators waive, release and discharges any and all claims for damages, costs, expenses or causes of action which hereafter arise under any theory of law from these contracted Services and accrue against **redacted**, its agents, representatives, successors or assigns, whether caused by any other person, or by application of law.

8. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND **redacted RULES**

- A. The Researcher will comply with all national, state and local laws and regulations governing the performance of her research covered by this Agreement.
- B. The Researcher and Royal Holloway shall indemnify and hold **redacted** harmless for breach of contract, negligence or breach of statutory duty by the Researcher arising from this Agreement.
- C. The Researcher agrees to abide by all **redacted**'s rules and regulations while performing the research on **redacted**'s premises, including, but not limited to, safety, health and hazardous material management rules.

9. INDEPENDENT PRINCIPAL

- A. The Researcher will be deemed an independent principal and will not act as nor be an agent or employee of **redacted**. As an independent principal, the Researcher will be engaged to perform a specific project; and under such circumstance, the Researcher will be solely responsible for determining the means and methods for performing the required project.
- B. Nothing in this Agreement should be construed to create or imply a contract of employment for any specific duration between the the Researcher and **redacted**.

10. KNOWLEDGE OF SAFETY HAZARDS

Required information on known hazards, safety requirements and emergency procedures associated with project areas or operations on **redacted** premises in which the Researcher may be involved together with appropriate Site Rules shall be provided by the Researcher's **redacted** Contact or any person designated by him. The Researcher will treat the information provided by **redacted** under this clause 10 as **redacted** Confidential Information.

11. MERGER, MODIFICATION AND WAIVER

- A. This Agreement is the entire understanding between **redacted**, the Researcher

and Royal Holloway with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous agreements, dealings and negotiations. No modification, alteration or amendment shall be effective unless made in writing and signed by duly authorized representatives of all parties.

B. If any provision of this Agreement is determined to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, such determination shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

17. NOTICES

A. Service of all notices under this Agreement shall be sufficient if given personally to the Researcher and mailed certified or registered, return receipt requested, to the representatives listed below, or to such other address as may be provided in writing from time to time.

1. The **redacted** Contact shall be: **redacted**, GM of **redacted** Ltd
2. The Royal Holloway contact shall be Dr Hitesh Patel, Deputy Head (Research), Research and Enterprise, The Orchard Building, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, UK.

18. CONTROLLING LAW

This Agreement is to be construed and interpreted according to the laws of the PRC and the parties hereby submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the PRC.

AGREED by the parties through their authorised signatories:-

For and on behalf of **redacted** Ltd

For and on behalf of **Royal Holloway and Bedford New College**

Signed

Signed

Print name: **redacted**

Print name

Title GM of **redacted** Ltd

Title

For **Ms Andrea Burris**

Acknowledged by the Researcher's academic supervisor,
Professor Tim Unwin

Signed

Signed

Appendix B – Daily Diary Template

Input Field	Justification	Analysis
Location/ Project Team:	The four teams I am working with are composed of one team that works under the directive of a 'western' office, a team that works independently, and two virtual teams that work in partnership with employees from various Intel offices around the world. In order to relate this to the work of Richard Florida on creativity which influences public policy, special attention will be paid to the degree of formality, dress and diversity in the workplace.	This information will help me to 1. Observe how workers respond in each of the teams. 2. Note if members respond/communicate differently in any generalisable way within each team. 3. Compare behavior across teams.
Chronology of today's events:	The sequence of events according to the order in which things happen.	1. How rigid are the structures in terms of what has to be done first? How methodical are the workers? 2. Why did they happen in this order and how does it influence participants' responses to subsequent events.
Actors:	So I can identify who is involved, their responses and why they respond the way they do.	1. Who are the people involved? 2. What is the education and cultural background of those involved? 3. Are there similarities and differences in responses based on culture/teams? Note the difference between the China Innovation team and the other 3 teams that work with international partners.
My role in the events:	I will be looking at my positionality in terms of whether and how my presence might influence behavior and events in the field.	1. How am I perceived by my partners? Why? Note the similarities and differences between those who have been overseas and those who haven't and

		<p>between those who work in the China team and those who work in the international teams.</p> <p>2. How do they respond to the way I conduct myself? Why?</p> <p>3. Is my presences affecting their work? In what way?</p>
What I learned:	This will be a record of information that is new to me as well as what needs to change. Is it tacit or explicit types of knowledge?	<p>1. I will be looking for themes and patterns that emerge based on the teams I'm working with over time. i.e. what sorts of things am I learning? Are they about people, things or ideas? How does time spent in each team influence the types of things I learn?</p>
Personal thoughts:	In this field, I will record my emotional and intellectual responses to the day's event.	
Questions:	Any questions arising from the events on the day. Why do I think these questions are important?	<p>1. These questions will enable me to track my progress over the next six months. I will be able to analyse this section in terms of the nature of the questions, how I'm asking them, why I'm asking them and the types of questions. Are they more about me or the participants? What does this say about my perception of creativity?</p>
Plans for tomorrow:	This will be in the form of a to do list and will help me to address questions that arise during the previous day and test my hypotheses.	<p>1. This will help me to retrospectively work out what my priorities were during my time in the field, i.e. what I thought was important and why I thought it was important.</p>
Detailed description of...	I will write about particular events which seem to stand out.	<p>Why did these events stand out? What does it say about what my beliefs about creativity were at the time? How do these</p>

		beliefs compare with my beliefs when I am writing up? Why is there a difference/ similarity?
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Appendix C – Monthly Ethnographic Snapshot Template

1. Relevance

1. Why is it important for software designers to gain an understanding of the meanings associated with creativity?
2. What could they gain? Why?
3. What could they lose? Why?
4. What other priorities come first for them? Why?
5. What helps? Why?
6. What hinders? Why?
7. What are the attitudes of the different stakeholders in the project with regards to creativity? Why?
8. How would I describe the interplay between power/empowerment and creativity in this context?
9. Why do I think that this interplay works out in the way that it does?

2. Interaction with Participants

1. How adequate is my approach to the partners in this context? What really worked well this month and what not? Why? What should I change?
2. How are my relationships with team members influencing their output? Why?
3. Who seems to be 'best' and 'worst' at being creative? Why might this be?
4. What are the factors/processes that seem to influence designers most? Why?
5. What aspects of the work are designers most/least enthusiastic about? Why?
6. How does the balance between teamwork and individual work influence output?
7. How cohesive are the teams? What makes it so?
8. How do team members respond to directives from their western counterparts? Why?
9. What are the main sources of joy/frustration for team members? Why?

3. Self-positioning/monitoring

1. How effectively am I handling my multiple roles (intern, researcher, trainer, student)?
2. How do I feel? How disciplined am I? How self-accountable? Am I on top of things or am I overwhelmed and losing track? What can I leave out? What can I give up? Where I could get help?
3. How are the relationships with my main reference persons (gatekeepers, supervisor, trainees, colleagues)?
4. Who have been the main people to influence me in my work?
5. How well am I handling the interplay between project, research and personal life?
6. How is the attitude of my partners towards my PhD?
7. Are there any foreshadowed conflicts? Should I try to prevent them/keep out or should I enter and manage them? What are the foreseeable risks in the different scenarios?
8. How is the overarching, independent context playing? Do the initial assumptions hold true?
9. What have I learnt most this month? Why?

10. What has surprised me most ? Why ?
11. What has saddened me most? Why?

4. Reflections on generating data

1. How rigorously am I tracking the process? How systematic am I?
2. How appropriate is my methodology? Why? How could I improve it?
3. Apply divergent thinking: what's the outcome?
4. Apply convergent thinking: what's the outcome?
5. How lucid am I being as a researcher? Am I sucked in by everyday life?
6. How much re-reading, re-listening, re-watching, writing, reflecting am I doing?
7. How good is the data I am generating? How usable? How manageable? How fair the amount? Realistically: will I be able to handle it?
8. How well am I relating what I'm doing to what I've read in the literature?

Appendix D – Interview Guide Questions

1. Background Questions
2. Where does the perception that the Chinese are less creative come from?
3. Where does the PRC stand in relation to the rest of the world in terms of creativity?
4. How do the following influence individual creativity?
 - a. Culture, including organisational and generational culture if mentioned by respondent
 - b. Government policy
 - c. History
 - d. Environment
 - e. Personality
 - f. Education
 - g. Language
 - h. Saving face (if it hasn't come up under 'Culture')
 - i. Sense of responsibility or ownership
 - j. Attitude towards risk taking
 - k. Hierarchies or managerial styles
 - l. Willingness to ask questions
5. How does one recruit creative people?
6. What does creativity mean?
7. Why is creativity important?
8. Is it better to work for a local or foreign company if one wants to be creative?
9. Does your job give you opportunities to express your creativity?
10. How do you nurture creativity?
11. Why keep certain jobs in the West?

Appendix E – List of Interview Respondents

ID	Pseudonym	Role	Date	Location	Gender
E01	Gary	Marketing Manager	24/02/09	USCo	Male
E02	Aaron	Marketing Manager	04/03/09	USCo	Male
E03	Jason	IT Entrepreneur	12/03/09	Informant's office	Male
E04	Sam	IT Entrepreneur	12/03/09	Informant's office	Male
E05	Daniel	Engineer	16/03/09	USCo	Male
E06	John	Software Architect	20/03/09	USCo	Male
E07	Ken	Business Developer	20/03/09	Restaurant Chain	Male
E08	Gloria	Senior Manager	16/04/09	USCo	Female
E09	Larry	Entrepreneur	24/04/09	USCo	Male
E10	Sean	Engineer	29/04/09	USCo	Male
E11	Kevin	Design Lecturer	30/04/09	DI	Male
E12	Barry	Engineer	12/05/09	USCo	Male
E13	Oliver	Engineer	03/06/09	USCo	Male
E14	Colin Wang	Senior Management	04/06/09	USCo	Male
E15	Fred	Musician and Design Lecturer	04/06/09	DI	Male
E16	Ben	Marketing Manager	16/06/09	USCo	Male
E17	Chew Lee Yong	Product Development Manager	16/06/09	USCo	Male
E18	Carrie	Production Manager (senior)	29/06/09	USCo	Female
E19	Chen Ye	Rotation Engineer	02/07/09	USCo	Male
E20	Terrance	Manager	02/07/09	USCo	Male
E21	Frederick	Senior Management	06/07/09	USCo	Male
E22	Joseph	Design Lecturer	01/08/09	DI	Male
E23	Joel	Painter/ Writer	01/08/09	DI	Male
E24	Karl	Entrepreneur	03/08/09	Informant's Office	Male
E25	Carol	Design Lecturer	04/08/09	DI	Female

E26	Clarence	Busines Director	04/08/09	Skype	Male
E27	Tobias	Lecturer	05/08/09	Local University	Male
E28	Meghan	Design Lecturer	07/08/09	DI	Female
E29	Ted	Architect	07/08/09	Skype	Male
E30	Yung	Design Lecturer	07/08/09	DI	Female
P01	Jared Yang	Manager	19/02/09	USCo	Male
P02	Baile	Manager	23/02/09	USCo	Male
P03	JunChen	Engineer	25/02/09	USCo	Male
P04	WangCao	Engineer	02/03/09	USCo	Male
P05	Yen Jing	Engineer	03/03/09	USCo	Female
P06	Wen Hui	Engineer	06/03/09	USCo	Female
P07	KaiXu	Engineer	10/03/09	USCo	Male
P08	Yang Guang	Engineer	11/03/09	USCo	Male
P09	Mike Yan	User Interface Designer	17/03/09	USCo	Male
P10	Liu Jun	Engineer	24/03/09	USCo	Male
P11	Piao Yang	Engineer	25/03/09	USCo	Male
P12	Wei Tian	Engineer	26/03/09	USCo	Male
P13	Zhao Ke	Engineer	26/03/09	USCo	Male
P14	Paul Zhou	Engineer	30/03/09	USCo	Male
P15	Haitong	Engineer	30/03/09	USCo	Male
P16	KeXian	Engineer	31/03/09	USCo	Male
P17	Cao Yu	Engineer	31/03/09	USCo	Male
P18	HanGuang	Engineer	02/04/09	USCo	Male
P19	Beth	Engineer	02/04/09	USCo	Female
P20	Ye Lai	Engineer	02/04/09	USCo	Male
P21	Luke Wang	Engineer	07/04/09	USCo	Male
P22	NaMan	Engineer	17/04/09	USCo	Male
P23	HuaCai	Architect	21/04/09	USCo	Male
P24	Nancy Li	Engineer	22/04/09	USCo	Female
P25	Zhang Yi	User Interface Designer	23/04/09	USCo	Female
P26	Fangmu	Engineer	27/04/09	USCo	Female
P27	Zhen Jia	Engineer	28/04/09	USCo	Male

P28	Kao Jie	Engineer	28/04/09	USCo	Male
P29	Li Liang	Engineer	29/04/09	USCo	Female
P30	Gerald Zhang	Engineer	29/04/09	USCo	Male
P31	Ruth	Design Student	30/04/09	DI	Female
P32	Kelly	Design Student	30/04/09	DI	Female
P33	Jasmine Chen	Student Support Manager	30/04/09	DI	Female
P34	Zhen Yan	Manager	04/05/09	USCo	Male
P35	Feilu	Engineer	05/05/09	USCo	Male
P36	Guo	Engineer	06/05/09	USCo	Male
P37	Roy	Design Student	08/05/09	DI	Male
P38	Wayne Qu	Design Student	08/05/09	DI	Male
P39	Sky	Design Student	08/05/09	DI	Female
P40	Richard Lu	Site Manager	01/06/09	USCo	Male
P41	TianMan	Engineer	02/06/09	USCo	Male
P42	Lisa	Technical Leader	29/06/09	USCo	Female
P43	Xian Lai	Human Resources Manager	06/07/09	USCo	Female
P44	QianLu	Engineer	08/07/09	USCo	Male
P45	Yang Shan	Intern	08/07/09	USCo	Male
P46	Hannah	2nd level line manager	10/07/09	USCo	Female
P47	Wen De	Engineer	13/07/09	USCo	Male
P48	Thomas Chen	Software Architect	13/07/09	USCo	Male
P49	Josephine Yue	Engineer	05/08/09	USCo	Female
P50	Wendy	Forum Moderator	06/08/09	Startup Office	Female
P51	Anna	Account Planner	06/08/09	Startup Office	Female
P52	LiYing	Web developer	06/08/09	Startup Office	Female
P53	Arthur	Web Designer	06/08/09	Startup Office	Male
P54	Nick	Business Opportunities Manager	06/08/09	Startup Office	Male

P55	Jasper	Design Student	12/08/09	DI	Male
P56	Oscar	Entrepreneur	13/08/09	Startup Office	Male
P57	Coral	Administrator	13/08/09	Startup Office	Female
P58	Ke Xian	Engineer	17/08/09	USCo	Male
P59	Ren Zheng	Design Student	18/08/09	DI	Male
P60	Ru Quan	Design Student	18/08/09	DI	Male

Appendix F – Survey Questions

1. What do you think are the most creative products ever invented and why?

Please name at least one product.

a. Product 1 & reason

b. Product 2 & reason

c. Product 3 & reason

2. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.

The most creative product I mentioned above:

a. was the first of its kind.

b. was an added improvement on an old product.

c. was an old product applied to a new use.

d. is a tool that enables its users to be creative.

e. has multiple uses.

f. can only be used for one function.

g. had an impact on society.

h. is widely accepted as something creative.

i. is only appreciated by those who work in that field.

j. was one person's idea but many people have helped to develop it.

k. all came from one person who didn't have any help from anyone else.

l. took many people a long time to develop.

3. Who do you think are the most creative famous historical figures and why?

Please name at least one.

a. Person 1 and reason

b. Person 2 and reason

c. Person 3 and reason

4. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.

The most creative people are

a. moody.

b. quiet.

c. outspoken.

d. determined.

e. respectful towards authority.

f. rebellious.

g. unpredictable.

h. dependable.

i. unreliable.

j. passionate.

k. ambitious.

l. carefree.

5. Which organisations immediately spring to mind as being creative and why?

Please name at least one.

a. Organisation 1 & reason

b. Organisation 2 & reason

c. Organisation 3 & reason

6. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following I

think the most creative workplace I mentioned probably has

a. happy and fun loving staff.

b. a serious atmosphere.

c. a competitive atmosphere.

d. messy but organised desks..

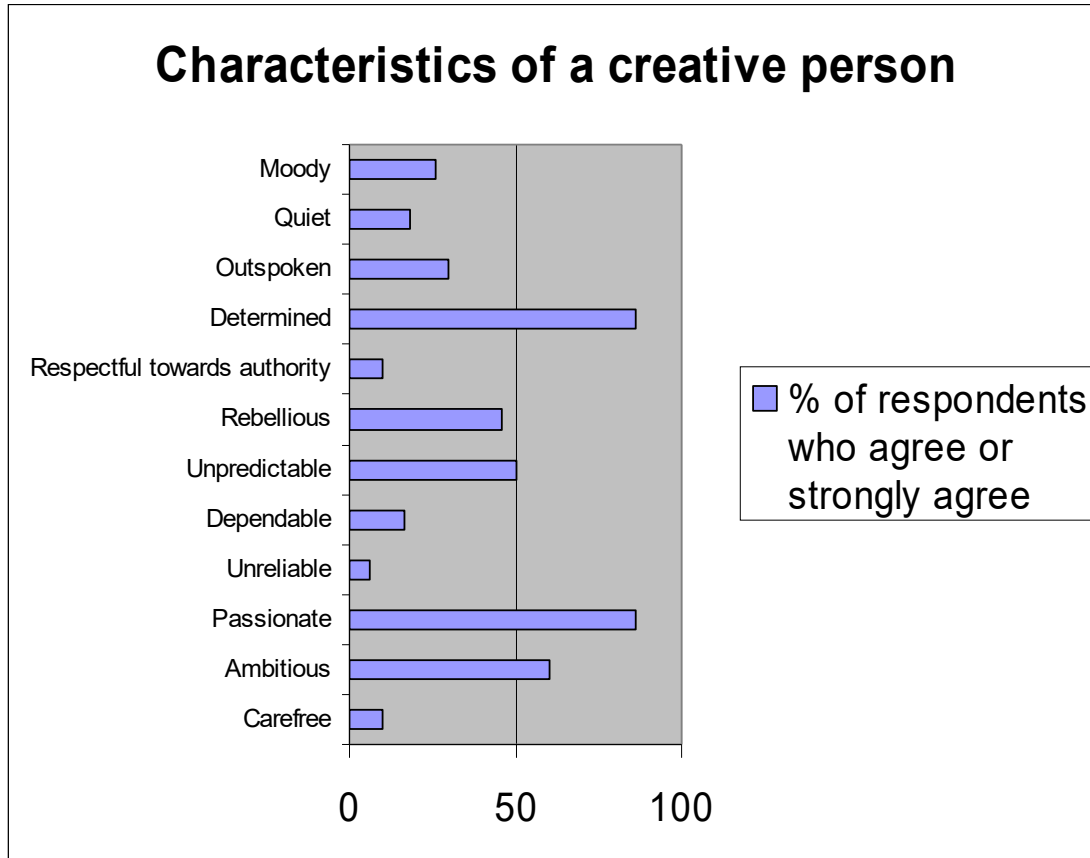
e. untidy and disorganised desks.

f. clean and tidy desks.

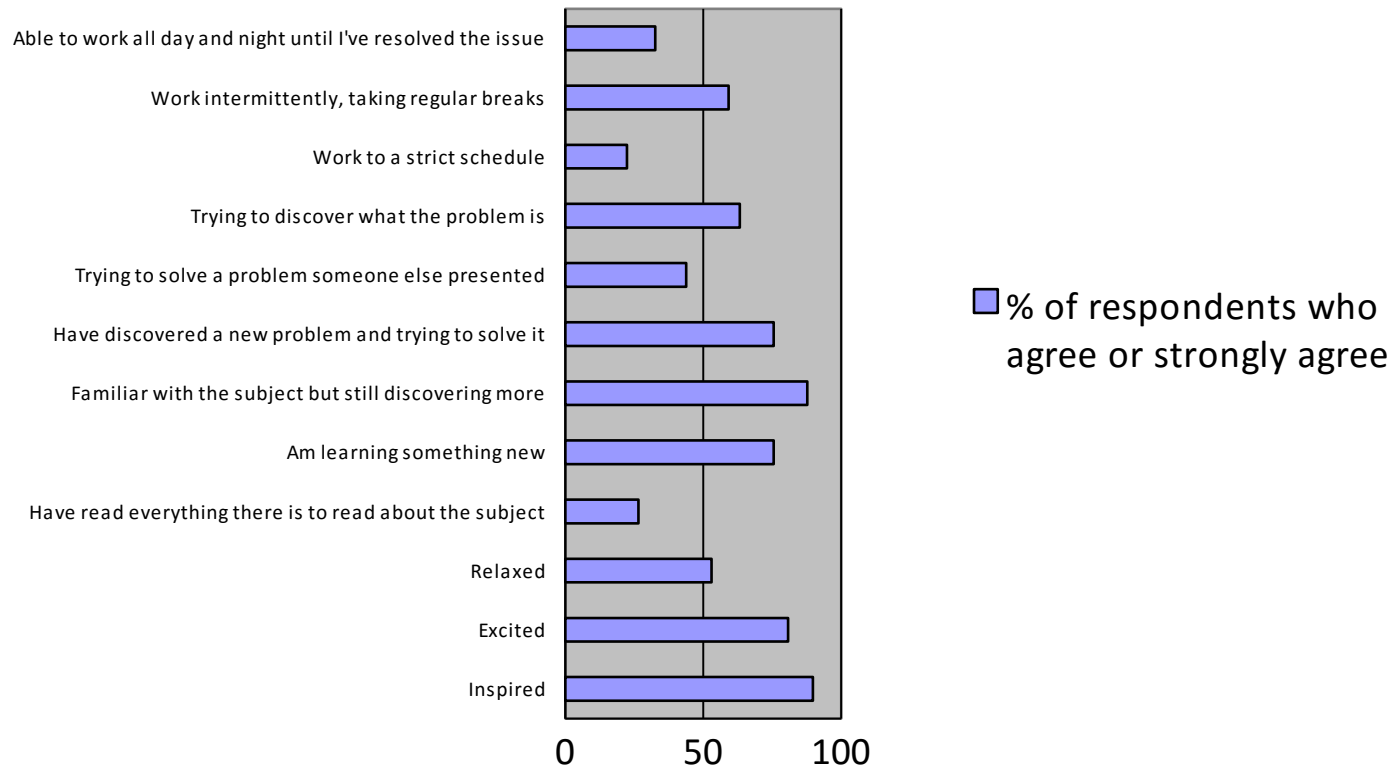
- g.information flows that move from bottom up.
 - h.information flows that move from the top down.
 - i.an open, knowlege sharing environment.
 - j.vague mission statements.
 - k.a clear business strategy.
 - l.goals that keep changing depending on external forces.
- 7.In your opinion, which are the three most creative countries in the world right now and why?
- a.Country 1 & reason
 - b.Country 2 & reason
 - c.Country 3 & reason
- 8.Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.
The most creative country I mentioned
- a.has a free press.
 - b.has a government controlled press.
 - c.has a mainstream press that is controlled by private interests.
 - d.is a developed country.
 - e.is a country with an emerging market.
 - f.is an underdeveloped country.
 - g.struggles to find a balance between security and freedom.
 - h.puts economic development above human rights.
 - i.respects individual rights over economic development.
 - j.is a socialist country.
 - k.is a communist country.
 - l.is a capitalist country.
- 9.Think about your most creative achievement either as a part of a team or as an individual, excluding having children and consider why and how it happened. What are the three most important features of process you applied to bring about the achievement?
- a.The creative achievement
 - i.Feature 1 & reason
 - ii.Feature 2 & reason
 - iii.Feature 3 & reason
- 10.Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following. I am at my creative best when I:
- a.am inspired.
 - b.am excited.
 - c.am relaxed.
 - d.have read everything there is to read about the subject.
 - e.am learning something new.
 - f.familiar with the subject but am still dicovering more.
 - g.have discovered a new problem and am trying to solve it.
 - h.am trying to solve a problem someone else presented to me.
 - i.am trying to discover what the problem is.
 - j.work to a strict schedule.
 - k.work intermittently, taking regular breaks for my hobbies.
 - l.am able to work all day and all night until I resolved the issue.
- 11.Do you think that creativity is important? Why? Please use this section to share your thoughts on what creativity means to you
- 12.Innovation in your native language is...
- 13.Creativity in your native language is...
- 14.Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- a.A creative person is also an innovative person.
 - b.An innovative person is also a creative person.
 - c.Creativity does not always lead to innovation.
 - d.Innovation is always creative.
- 15.What industry do you work in? You may tick more than one.
- a.Hardware
 - b.Software
 - c.Sales
 - d.Design
 - e.Gaming
 - f.Education
 - g.Web services
 - h.Manufacturing
 - i.Public Relations/Advertising
 - j.Other, please specify
- 16.What type of organisation do you work for?
- a.Local Governmental Organisation
 - b.Local Private Organisation
 - c.Multinational Organisation
 - d.Start up
 - e.Other
- 17.Please state how long you have worked in this organisation/company.
- 18.What is your role within the organisation?
- a.Administrative
 - b.Programming
 - c.Project execution
 - d.Project Management
 - e.Human Resource Management
 - f.Research
 - g.Technician
 - h.Other (Please specify)
- 19.Please state your age in years.
- 20.Please state your nationality.
- 21.Have you been interviewed by Andi Burris? (Y/N)

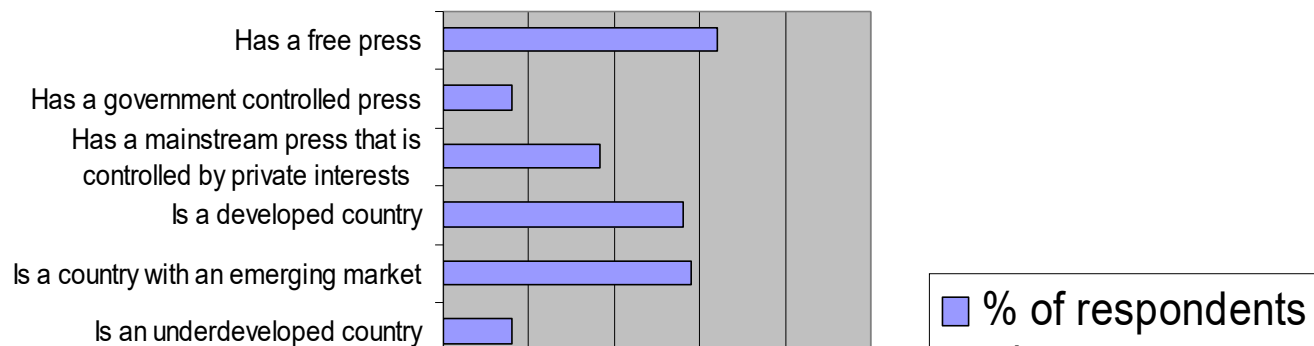
Appendix G – Survey Results



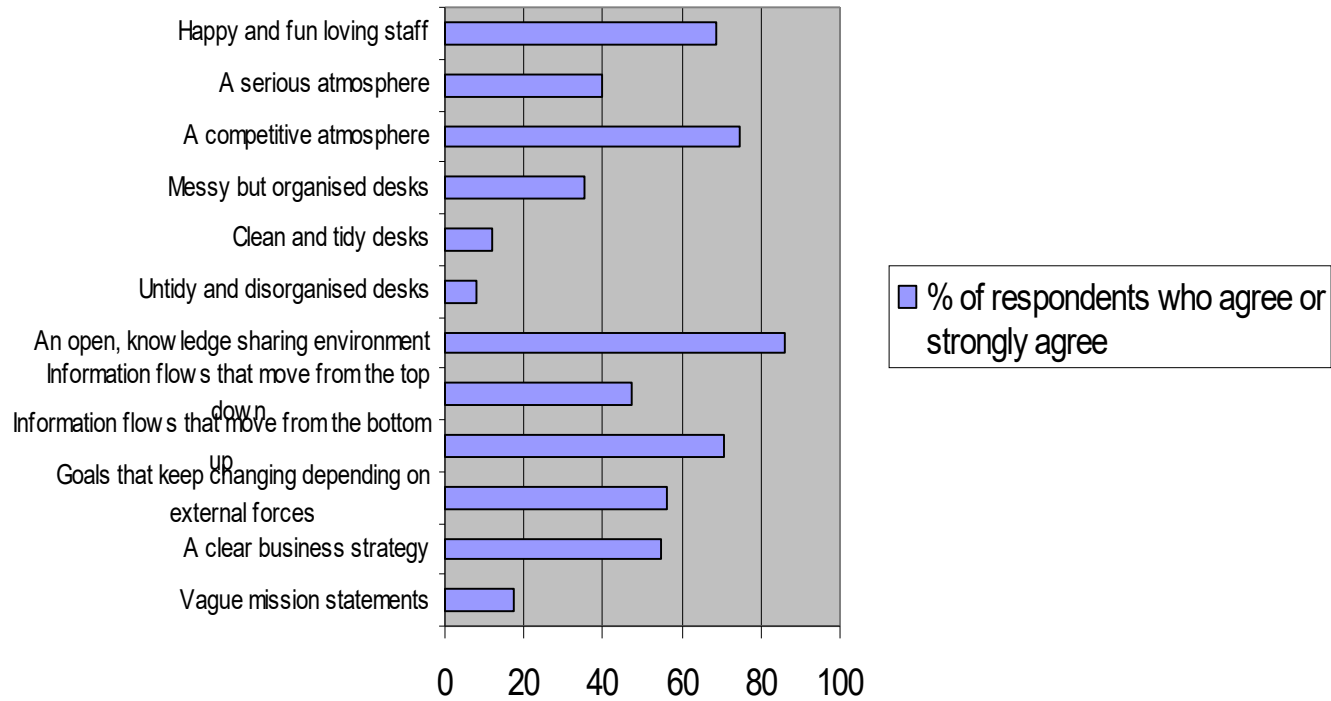
Characteristics of creative processes



Characteristics of a creative country



Characteristics of a creative workplace



Characteristics of a creative product

