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Abstract

Recent dialogues in geography and the social sciences have reminded researchers of the extent to which academic and policy knowledges are socially and spatially embedded – that is, they circulate through formal and informal systems of publishing, exchange, commodification and cultural influence. Academic and policy knowledges are, in short, very much a part of the creative economy. In light of this, our paper surveys knowledges of the creative economy itself, as reflected in a geography of industry reports and government policy statements in selected Asian countries. Using a post-positivist framework adapted from diffusion theory, we critically interpret the circulation, mutation and adaptation of knowledges of the creative economy, claims to its significance, areas of emphases and notable silences.

Keywords: *creative economy, academic knowledges, diffusion theory, policy discourses, relational geographies, Asia*

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, David Harvey wrote in his foreword to Zukin's (1988: x) acclaimed book *Loft Living* that the artist, as one 'representative' of the cultural class, has always shared a position in the market system, whether as artisans or as 'cultural producers working to the command of hegemonic class interest'. Indeed, the nexus between culture and economy and the role of cultural actors within economic systems is not new. What is notable, though, is the extent to which cultural activities have become key elements in the economic regeneration strategies of many countries. In the last two to three decades, and particularly in the United States and Western Europe, the cultural economy's success has caused it to be hailed as a transformative component of total economic activities. Most often it is at the geographical scale of the city that the transformative cultural economy is imagined (Scott 2000). Recently, a normative policy script has emerged endorsing not only cultural economies but the newer, broader notion of creative economies. The script may be characterised as follows: to compete in the new creative economy, cities should seek to implement particular initiatives: encourage creative industry clusters, incubate learning and knowledge economies, maximize networks with other successful places and companies, value and reward innovation, and aggressively campaign to attract the 'creative class' as residents (Gibson and Kong, 2005). Beyond the city, policies promoting growth of the creative economy as a competitive strategy are emerging at various scales and in increasingly diverse places – from municipalities to national and even multilateral trading regions (Yusuf and Nabeshima, 2005).

At the same time, global economic changes have enabled more rapid and penetrating flows of ideas about creative economies, influenced by the shifting geopolitics of production and business organisation. Changes in media, new communications technologies and increased traffic in 'experts' via consultancy work, conferencing, and international contracting have contributed to the pervasiveness of policy discourse about creative economies (Gibson and Klocker 2004). Yet, the creative economy has also gained a level of importance because at the same time the very tradability of knowledge and services has been advanced. Prior to the digital era, the domain of 'culture' was largely insulated from phases of industrial globalisation when thought of as 'national culture' (as is evident in cases we discuss below). The

semantic turn in policy to ‘creative economy’ and ‘cultural industries’ has changed this, and often replaced policy directed at maintaining the arts sector (within the nation) in favour of strategies to reorientate culture to export markets, enterprise dynamics and skilled business in-migration.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, creative economy strategies thus became attractive in several cities in Asia, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei and Seoul – important regional cities with already established national broadcasting, arts and cultural industries, but with aspirations for ‘world city’ status. Given the dynamic changes occurring in Asia, and the different economic situations in which specific Asian countries function, this paper seeks to survey government policies in selected Asian countries and examine the diffusion and circulation of knowledges of the creative economy, areas of emphases and notable silences. The recent popularity and proliferation of creative economy discourses amongst academics and policy makers leads us to our central concern: to track the extent to which the largely western discourses of creative economy are adapted for and in selected Asian contexts by policy makers, and to comment on the appropriateness of such circulated knowledge in the context of each country’s own national visions and goals. To borrow Jing Wang’s (2004: 9) question with reference to the ‘global reach’ of creative economy discourse: ‘How far can ‘creative industries’ travel?’ To address these issues, we have chosen to focus on the following countries: Japan, as the former Asian powerhouse; Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan as the four Asian tigers; and China and India, as rapidly rising economies with huge potential.

CONTEXT AND APPROACH

Despite the growing importance given to the creative economy by governments and policy-makers in the Asia-Pacific, geographies of knowledge on creative economy are still highly skewed towards the experiences of Europe and North America. Much of the frontier research has been on major metropolitan areas in those two continents (e.g. Los Angeles, Manchester and Paris; see for example Scott, 2000; 2002; Florida, 2002). Although work is starting to emerge that discusses the contours of the Asian creative economy (e.g. Yusuf and Nabeshima, 2005), the overwhelming picture (certainly in academic research) is a geography of European and North American

creative cities and industries. This flies in the face not only of the substantial urban and cultural policy foci in several Asian cities, but of the rise in production and consumption of Asian cultural products, evidenced in the emergence and size of creative industries such as Bollywood, the Hong Kong and Korean film industries, Cantopop and Mandarin pop, Japanese manga and anime productions, the animation and digital media industry, and so on. The Euro-American focus of academic knowledges on creative economies also fails to capture how *inter-regional* dynamics and flows might shape policies and industries. In Asia, rivalries between states, linguistic connections and differences and the geopolitical relationships forged with and between powerhouses like China and Japan all inflect flows of investments and ideas.

The nascent dissemination of discourses of creative economy in Asia provides a timely and important opportunity to explore the extent to which flows of knowledges are becoming increasingly transnational – though in ‘lumpy’ and uneven ways. Our approach thus has some link to a long tradition of diffusion theory in geography – one reflected in the various epistemological twists and turns of the discipline. Diffusion theory stemmed originally from Sauerian cultural geography and its ‘reconstruction of diffusion pathways’ for agricultural practices, crafts and ideas (see Sauer, 1952), but found particular favour in the quantitative modelling phase of the 1960s (most notably influenced by Hägerstrand’s model of interaction matrices, innovation waves and adoption surfaces – see Hägerstrand, 1968; Leighly, 1954), that sought to reveal underlying spatial patterns in the diffusions of innovations. Such ‘classical’ approaches emphasised positivist interpretation of observed spatial distributions and the development of mathematical models and simulation techniques that could prove useful in predicting, for instance, the spread of contagious diseases.

At one level, as described above, Asia has been marginal to the geography of creative economy discourses (with its origins in the English-speaking west), lagging behind academic and policy debates in the North Atlantic, and rarely contributing key ideas or theorists. A classic diffusion model could be applied in order to trace how a particular assemblage of ideas (in this case of the creative economy) radiates out from centres of production elsewhere, eventually reaching Asian locations in turn. This geography is one where proximity and physical distance still matter in explaining the

spreading popularity of ideas, despite the advent of new information and telecommunications technologies that were meant to overcome ‘frictions of distance’ and produce an immediacy in information flow through new technological-economic networks (Castells, 1989). Evidence would come in the form of the presence or absence of creative economy strategies in numerous countries (and their primary cities), literally mapped in Cartesian space.

However, rather than apply a diffusion framework in ways that may simplistically depict Asian cities as positioned in a linear geography of marginality and distance, we have another agenda: to trace the uneven and particular ways in which different Asian locations have absorbed and mutated creative economy discourse in their official policies and economic development strategies. Later post-positivist critiques of diffusion theory sought to situate diffusion politically, and understand ‘the selective social processes through which information flows are differentially constituted as socially meaningful’ (Gregory, 2000: 176; see also Agnew, 1979; Blaut, 1977; Yapa and Mayfield, 1978). Our approach is nested broadly within this latter phase of diffusion studies. Although a classical diffusion model of the spread of ideas has a straightforward methodology and common-sense explanatory appeal, it does not account for the quite different sorts of engagement with ideas of creative economy displayed in Asia, nor does it explain how via the circulation and mutation of creative economy discourses, credibility is accorded to the output of Northern thinkers (cf. Yeung, 2002; Gibson and Klocker 2004), as their ideas move through international circuits of publishing, conferencing and policy debate. Asian commentators, academics and policy-makers interested in creative economies are in certain moments both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in relation to Euro-American knowledges: insiders in the sense of being participants in internationally networked industries, or as academics contributing to English-speaking debates; but outsiders because much of the policy work must be conducted at some distance from the places where ideas were formulated, and in a range of languages other than those of major international thinkers in the field. Dissemination and mutation of creative economy discourse in Asia thus inevitably requires some sense of *translation* – both in a symbolic and literal sense.

This translation occurs in a number of ways: through the movements of ‘experts’, the contracting of international consultants, distribution of popular books (such as those by Florida and Landry), internet-searching and electronic publishing, and via official multilateral policy-making forums. The latter include the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which has emphasised the economic importance of culture in its recent efforts to standardise and enforce intellectual property laws in Asia; the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum (APEC), which since 2002 has been instrumental; UNESCO (see discussion below) and monetary organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, all of which tend to advance generalising prescriptions for economic change (often as a condition of aid). In these instances diffusion of ideas about creative segments of the economy may also be bound up in the globalisation of norms and the wider politics of trade liberalisation.

In light of the multiple paths to diffusion, we also wish to remain attuned to the possibility that non-adoption of innovations (in this case, western concepts of creative economy) may not constitute a ‘lack’ or ‘absence’ of engagement with new ideas – an inference that can often be mistakenly drawn from the application of classical diffusion models based on only observed spatial phenomena. As Yapa (1977) argued, ‘non-diffusion is not to be equated with the passive state of lack of adoption due to low levels of awareness or apathy’. Examples of non-adoption require situating in specific social, cultural and economic contexts. We thus wish to trace the dissemination and adaptation of creative economy discourse, alert to the nuanced ways in which ideas travel, become popular, and are mutated to suit local circumstances – or indeed are not absorbed. Of utmost importance are considerations of the ways in which the domestic issues and tensions establish the setting for policy debates, and the appropriateness or otherwise of the resulting policy prescriptions, in light of the socio-economic circumstances of each national or metropolitan population.

The approach adopted here thus builds the first steps towards a *relational* geography of the diffusion of creative economy discourse. It documents in a descriptive, rather than statistical fashion, what ideas have flowed, and how, throughout Asia, and then maps out the contexts for innovation, mutation or non-adoption. What matters more

than strict spatial dissemination is how various governments, industries, actors and ideas are entwined (or not), relate to each other (or not) and create webs of linkages through which concepts travel and are translated. Ultimately, then, our attempt is to think through how diffusion may be re-theorised in light of recent developments in actor-network theory and relational geography. Diffusion spaces are not ‘blank’ or ‘even’, but rather inherited and mutable – already shaped by local and national politics, international relations, and the presence and particular geographies of formal and informal communications networks. Diffusion spaces are thus constantly made and re-made through always evolving sets of linkages and flows between actors, institutions and industries. It is hoped that subsequent ethnographic research that is intended to follow this work will further flesh out the detail and complexity of how various actors – particularly academics and policy-makers – embody new ideas and act upon them in their professional lives within such networks.

A note on method

For present purposes, we began by searching for policy documents by national governments, and policy statements, including key speeches by government leaders, that had any mention of ideas such as ‘creative economy/industry’, ‘cultural economy/industry’, ‘culture’, and ‘the arts’. The emphasis was on national-level policy¹ rather than policy at any other sub-national level (e.g. prefectural, county). Analysis focused on identifying (a) what the key ideas and concepts underlying policy were for each country, the origins of these ideas, and their evolution; (b) the key sectors emphasised (or absent) in each country, how they relate to their existing economies, and shifts over time, if any; (c) dominant narratives in each country, and any shifts over time; (d) key authors and ‘models’ that policies draw from, what ideas of those authors and models are emphasised, how holistic an understanding of these authors and models there is, and how critical an approach to these authors and models is evident; (e) mutations of global (‘western’) discourses, if any, in these countries’ national policies, how and why. Where relevant and important, material produced by private businesses and consultancies in these countries was also analysed for comparison with national policies. We have presented the evidence gathered here in a

¹ While Hong Kong is part of China, it is treated independently from China here, since it is a Special Administrative Region (SAR).

logical progression based on our findings – from those countries that have most aggressively adopted creative economy discourse, through those that have diverged from its ‘normative’ scripts in certain ways, through to countries with non-adoption. This structure has been used in order to foreground discussions of the contexts of diffusion and adoption/non-adoption.

TRAVELLING DISCOURSE: ASIAN ‘TIGERS’ AND THE INFLUENCE OF NORMATIVE ‘SCRIPTS’

As Table 1 summarises, the most active engagement with the ideas of cultural/creative industries and economies amongst the countries studied was by the four Asian tigers, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan; each with numerous policy documents that outline their government’s respective vision and strategies. By comparison, the normative discourse is markedly absent in India and divergent in Japan, while adopting similar terminologies is in substance quite different in China. In this section, we examine how the largely western discourse has internationalized through its emergence in four key Asian economies. We note, however, that knowledges of the creative economy, even when enthusiastically circulated, are not imported in identical ways, with different nuances and areas of emphases, and select silences.

Singapore

Through Singapore, evidence emerges clearly that the discourse about creative/cultural industries has travelled to Asia extensively and in impacting ways. The city-state’s government agencies have enthusiastically adopted a range of related ideas (creative/cultural industries, creative manpower, creative workforce, creative clusters, creative town, cultural capital). They have also carefully distinguished between similar but non-identical concepts. In particular, government documents use the term ‘creative industries’ to refer to a larger, more embracing category than ‘cultural industries’, and reserve ‘copyright industries’ to include both the creative industries and associated distribution industries (ESS, 2003: 52). These distinctions draw from diverse origins – the ‘creative’ characterization from the U.K. (*Creative Industries Mapping Document*, 2001), the ‘copyright’ categorization from the U.S.

(Siwek, 2002), and the 'cultural' classification from Australia (Cunningham and Hartley, 2001). This markedly underscores the effect of travelling discourses, and the appropriateness of the crossroads metaphor in describing Singapore in the ideas marketplace.

In all four economies which have engaged actively with the creative economy discourse, the burst of attention to the creative/cultural economy came about in the late 1990s and early 2000s, though in the case of Singapore, early pronouncements reveal governmental recognition of the economic potential of the arts dating to the early 1990s. Then Minister for Information and the Arts, George Yeo, was most active among Ministers in publicly suggesting that 'to be competitive in the next phase of our national development, we need to promote the arts' (Yeo, 1991: 56) and that while Singapore had been 'an international market for rubber, for spices, for oil, for Asian Currency Units, for gold futures, and for many other things', it also hoped to be 'an international market for the arts' (Yeo, 1993: 66). Indeed, as part of the promotional strategy, in 1990, the Economic Development Board (EDB) set up a Creative Services Strategic Business Unit, later renamed the Creative Business Programme, to 'develop Singapore into a centre of excellence for the various creative industries' (EDB, 1992: 2). In 1991, it developed a Creative Services Development Plan as the blueprint for the development of the four major sectors, defined as film and music, media, design, and arts and entertainment (EDB Press Release, 10 December 1991). These nascent policy engagements coincided with the earlier academic work on creative economies emanating from Europe (see Bianchini, 1993a; 1993b; Driver and Gillespie, 1993), and contradict the depiction of a simple classical diffusion geography of creative economy discourse discussed above. Rather than Asian places lagging behind in the flow of ideas, discourses of creativity as economic policy were adopted quickly in Singapore, and with a relatively straightforward translation from its European origins, in a first, early phase of their global distribution (though admittedly this was in one of Asia's most prominent, international English-speaking cities). But there seems to have been a hiatus, and it was not until year 2000 that a further push was made in the form of the *Renaissance City Report* (MICA RCC, 2000), followed by a green paper by the then Ministry of Information and the Arts (now Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts – MICA) titled *Investing*

in Singapore's Cultural Capital (MITA, 2002) and a *Creative Industries Development Strategy* by the Economic Review Committee (ERC, 2002).

Singapore's thoroughness in examining discourse and practice elsewhere as a way of charting its own directions is characteristic of this city-state. Its several policy documents and blueprints expose a detailed knowledge of other experiences, and a willingness to adopt circulating discourses about creative economies. This is evident in the many references to policy and research documents from different parts of the world, from the British Council, UK Trade and Investment, UK Department of Culture, Media and Sports, Australia's *Creative Nation* strategic plan, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, and many others. There are also innumerable references to national policies and the desired vibrancy evident in other countries, including the U.K., Ireland, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Hong Kong and South Korea, for overall policy but also specific industry policy (e.g. design policy). Singapore's aspirations are to emulate cities judged to wear the label of 'creative', in particular, New York and London, though a more realistic target within the medium term is also set in policy documents, to rival Hong Kong, Glasgow and Melbourne. In any case, the driving motivation is to become a "hub" for creative activity, not unlike its desire to be a hub in several other areas, such as tourism, conventions, medicine, and education.

To develop the creative industries, policy makers do not hesitate to reference circulating discourses, particularly by 'popular' academic authors like Richard Florida and John Howkins. Engagement with these discourses is, however, not especially profound, lingering mainly at the level of offering justification rather than deep engagement with specific ideas. Thus, Florida is cited to justify why Singapore must harness the creativity of its people to develop a creative manpower for competitive advantage (ERC Services Subcommittee Report 2002: 1; ESS 2003: 61). The ERC Report (2002: 1), for example, refers to Florida's notion of multi-dimensional creativity, taking the form of 'technological creativity (innovation), economic creativity (entrepreneurship), artistic and cultural creativity', and thereby adopts the idea that Singapore needs to 'embark on a journey of reinvention to look into how we can harness the multi-dimensional creativity of our people' in order to establish a 'new competitive advantage'. Similarly, quoting Howkins (2001), it is

recognized that '(creativity) flourishes most when and where they are rewarded...The most marked growth is not actually in the creation of new products, but in their exploitation, distribution and trade' (ESS 2003: 61). Hence, a lesson is drawn and a case made for maintaining a robust 'institutional framework ... to protect creative property, while enabling it to be exploited, distributed and traded efficiently' (ESS 2003: 61). All of these specific lessons drawn from travelling discourses contribute to the more general narratives that permeate policy documents, of which four strands are key: (1) creativity as trigger for economic development, (2) creative economy as a means of enhancing human capital through creative thinking and problem solving, (3) related to this, that creativity is present across a whole range of industries and not just within arts and culture, and (4) creativity and culture as a means to place competition, improving the quality of life to attract foreign talent, thus enhancing the national competitiveness of the country. Together, these narrative strands contribute to the total vision of Singapore as a 'world city', a 'global arts city' and a 'Renaissance city'.

However, despite obvious influence, not all aspects of 'western' discourse travel unexpurgated. Notions of geographical clustering of creative activities and cultural capital have mutated in the context of Singapore. Whereas agglomeration and cluster theory hold much persuasive sway (but also have some detractors) in the academic literature (see Coe and Johns 2004), and spatial clustering and physical proximity constitute specific dimensions of urban and cultural policy in many cities elsewhere (e.g. Manchester, Sheffield, Dublin, Adelaide), the notion of a 'creative cluster' in the context of Singapore is non-spatial, or at best, aspatial. Instead, the 'creative cluster' has become the defining nomenclature for an industrial sector, comprising industries within the fields of 'arts and culture', 'design' and 'media' (see Table 2 for the specific industries). The idea of a geographical cluster is, however, not completely jettisoned. Instead, it appears in the concept of a 'creative town', where it is recommended that a selected township be developed as a 'vibrant, creative, culturally rich, entrepreneurial, and technologically savvy community' that will

unleash the latent creativity and passion in each individual; integrate arts, culture, business, design, and technology into community planning and revitalization efforts; enhance the ideas-generating

capacity and entrepreneurship qualities of the community; increase cultural awareness among people; and promote community bonding, local pride and participation through arts and cultural events, and the employment of the newest infocomm and media technologies (ERC Services Subcommittee Report, 2002: 17).

Here is evidence of another key narrative strand in Singapore's policy discourse – that of creativity and culture as part of social and community development. This is a strand of the narrative that quite consistently emerges in Singapore, as a reminder that the economic agenda must be balanced with social and political goals, as expressed in the Renaissance City Report, which does not forget the role of culture and the arts:

[They] are mirrors to the cultural, historical and socio-political life of Singaporeans. As forms of social commentary, they provide an avenue for Singaporeans to critique, analyse and discuss their experiences in an accessible and creative manner, thereby encouraging the development of views and positions on issues. This will be a society that is clear about its identity, confident and at ease with itself (MICA RCC, 2000: 39).

This narrative is not at odds with earlier discourses on culture-led regeneration, bearing in mind the works of Bianchini (1993a) and Wynne (1992), for example. However, it should be noted that these earlier academic insights have not constituted part of the circulating discourses reaching policymakers in the same way that more recent high profile 'popular' academic books by Florida and Landry have. Nevertheless, Singapore's plans reflect in part Bianchini's (1993b: 212) view that, to be truly effective, cultural policies should not be measured purely by income or employment generated but should contribute towards improvement in the quality of life, social cohesion and community development. Cultural policy, he argues, should contribute to the development of cities as 'cultural entities - as places where people meet, talk, share ideas and desires, and where identities and lifestyles are formed'. In that way, the arts can become a part of people's daily lives, socially and economically. Only then can the arts be a part of the wider community rather than an appendage to it (Wynne, 1992: x). What these authors do not emphasise, and which

Singaporean policy makers are at pains to illustrate, is the cultural contribution to nation-building.

While it is early days yet to comment on successes or failures, one critical strand that has emerged in public discourse is the concern that over-emphasis on the economic value of creativity may itself stymie the nurturing of local creativity. Critics have argued that Singapore may become a kind of emporium for creative products rather than a hearth for the development of local idioms (Kong, 2000). This is detrimental, not only to the economic value of the creative industries (for why would Singapore be special if all it did was to be a successful trader in others' creative products), but also to the social and political agendas of the nation (for wherein lies the potential for community construction and identity building if local voices do not mature).

From the perspective of a relational geography though, the case of Singapore provides an excellent example of the adoption of specific ideas as well as more general narrative strands from circulating discourses. It also illustrates how internationalizing discourses do travel effectively, but are inflected by place-specific geographies, in this case, of a young state barely 40 years in the making, concerned to keep a social and national narrative alive along with a creative economy agenda.

Hong Kong

In late 1998, then Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa acknowledged the importance of the arts to Hong Kong's future in his policy address. Following that, a number of reports and policy documents were produced on the creative industries (the term most commonly used) in Hong Kong, testimony to the government's desire to exploit this potential further (HKADC, 2000; HK TDC, 2001, 2002; HKDOT, 2002; HKDSCI, 2002; HKGCC, 2003). This was reinforced again in 2003 in Tung's policy address when he said that 'creative industries are important elements of a knowledge-based economy' and that

the Secretary for Home Affairs, the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology, and relevant bureaux and departments will work

together to devise a concrete plan and create the necessary favourable environment to promote and facilitate the development of these creative industries (Tung, 2003: 11).

The key narrative strands in Hong Kong's policy discourse are very similar to Singapore's. First, creative industries are to facilitate the building of Asia's world city, as Tung (2003: 7) established in his 2003 policy address. Second, creative industries are a trigger for economic development, for

like other business activities, creative industries provide job opportunities, create wealth, produce consumer goods and services for local and overseas markets, enable growth in overall consumption... (HKADC, 2000: 2)

At the same time, it is recognized that most companies in creative industries are small but export-oriented (or with a strong inclination towards exporting their services), so the discursive threads in HK Trade Development Council documents also focus on the need to develop measures that support export promotion (HKTDC Creative Industries Report, Sep 2002). Third, as with Singapore, Hong Kong policy documents acknowledge how creative industries enhance the city as a place for quality living, thus promoting tourism and attracting investment (HKADC, 2000: 6). Fourth, in parallel again with Singapore's stance, artistic creation is viewed as 'a cohesive agent in building community identity', 'allow[ing] local citizens as well as visitors a deeper understanding of the Hong Kong spirit' (HKADC, 2000: 6). Finally, a minor strand of the Hong Kong narrative acknowledges the possibility of 'export[ing] cultural influence' (HKADC 2000: 2) and 'promot[ing] mutual understanding between people and countries' (HKADC 2000: 6), a thread more reminiscent of China's attention to international cultural exchange and Japan's penchant for Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power' (see later discussion) than Singapore's economic and social discourse.

Another way in which Hong Kong policy documents differ from Singapore's is that Hong Kong policy documents do not make reference to circulating discourses and key authors, though they are informed by them, to the extent that research commissioned by the Hong Kong government that has been produced in the last few

years by Hong Kong University's Cultural Policy Research Unit has shown a clear knowledge and understanding of circulating discourses, including the works of Florida, Howkins and others. In the policy documents, however, the citations are of examples of other countries, particularly the UK, and to an extent, Australia and New Zealand. The British example is especially used to justify the need to develop a creative economy. Something should be said here about the historical and political economy context of this tendency to defer to the UK, an outcome of colonial rule for 150 years, and the ties that have developed consequently, for example, through years of British investment in Hong Kong. For example, HK Arts Development Council's first introductory paper on creative industry in 2000 uses UK as a case study to extract implementation strategies for Hong Kong. It draws from the UK Task force on creative industries' mapping document (1998) rather extensively. Following this, the HK Trade Development Council's piece on 'Creative Industries in HK' in 2002 makes reference to and compares creative industries in UK, Australia and New Zealand, to the fledgling one in HK, to justify the need for development of HK's creative sector.

Hong Kong's business community is also active in urging the development of creative industries. For example, like the government departments' penchant to look towards the UK, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce also urged the government to consider the former colonial government's 'Creative Business Network' (2003) as the model of public sector/ business sector involvement to spearhead the creative economy development in Hong Kong (HKGCC, 2003: 1).

Overall, there is much in common between Hong Kong's and Singapore's emphasis on the creative economy, and many similarities in the discursive threads. Both are also engaged in detailed study of the experience of other countries and display a willingness to learn from other successes. Singapore displays somewhat more engagement with specific concepts (e.g. creative cluster, creative manpower) in the globalizing discourse than Hong Kong does though of late, Hong Kong has also embarked on an effort to measure Hong Kong's creativity index, adapted from Florida's conception. In general, this may reflect the greater degree of planning in Singapore, in contrast to the Hong Kong government's less directed and more

facilitative role, in which an ‘open industrial alliance’ is advocated (HKADC 2000: 6).

South Korea

South Korea and Taiwan provide further evidence of international diffusion of discourses, with the ‘creative’ and ‘cultural’ industries appearing in numerous policy documents, though again without as many of the related concepts as is apparent in Singapore. There is, however, no less enthusiasm for the potential of the creative economy. Like Hong Kong and Singapore, South Korea picked up the normative discourses particularly in the late 1990s, where Culture and Tourism Minister Park Jie-won announced in 1999 that culture was a ‘key strategic industry in the knowledge-based society of the future’ (*The Korea Herald*, 28 Sept 1999). Creative/cultural industries such as film and broadcasting were deemed to be economically more competitive than manufacturing. He expressed the government’s commitment to expanding the infrastructure of cultural activities and nurturing cultural manpower, in basic art disciplines as well as culture-related industries (*The Korea Herald*, 17 Sept 1999).

Indeed, the term ‘cultural industry’ was given official recognition as early as 1999 when the *Cultural Industry Promotion Act* was established. This *Act* defines cultural industry as being ‘industry related to the production, distribution and consumption of cultural products, which tend to create economic value’ (HakSoon, 2005). According to the *Act*, the scope of Korea’s cultural industry includes film, music, video, games, publishing and printing, broadcasting, advertising, design, crafts, character, fine arts, animation, performing industry, and digital contents etc. With this legislation came the establishment of a five-year plan for the Korean cultural content industry, including *Content Korea Vision 21* (2000) and *Creative Korea Vision* (2004), as well as the establishment of public organizations, namely the Korea Culture and Content Agency (2001). KOCCA is currently affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Since the 1999 *Act*, various policy documents and statements emphasizing the economic potential of culture have been produced from three ministries: Foreign Affairs and Trade, Culture and Tourism, and Commerce, Industry and Energy. This is a contrast to the emphasis in the 1970s on preservation of cultural heritage in cultural

policy and in the 1980s on the promotion of arts and cultural activities for the population to enjoy (Kim and Yoo, 2002: 82). While discursive elements related to creativity and/or culture as central to national identity/histories persist, today they do not dominate over the argument of economic importance. In fact, South Korea, like Taiwan, as we will see later, has developed its own concept, 'cultural content industries', to refer to 'a kind of 'cultural product' that is produced by cultural factors such as heritage, a people's way of life, ideas, values and folklore' (KOCCA, 2005).

It is important to note here the 'Korean Wave' which refers to the influx and soaring popularity of South Korean popular culture in other Asian countries. This transfer and consumption of culture within Asia painted a clear picture of the economic value associated with creative industries, resulting in the establishment of organisations such as KOCCA, which formed in 2001, the same year the term 'Korean Wave' was coined in China. It is important to consider, however, that the success of the Korean Wave was not due to organisations such as KOCCA but rather the 'adaptability' of South Korean culture to other Asian cultures, namely Chinese. A graduate student at Peking University was quoted as saying, "We like American culture, but we can't accept it directly". (New York Times, January 10, 2006) Similarly, another student stated, "And there is no obstacle to our accepting South Korean culture, unlike Japanese culture.....Because of the history between China and Japan, if a young person here likes Japanese culture, the parents will get angry". (New York Times, January 10, 2006) This suggests then, that the success of Korea's creative industries are not necessarily immediately related to policy, but rather regional history.

Unlike Singapore, South Korean national policy documents make no reference to the key authors in creative/cultural industry discourse, which may suggest (albeit inconclusively) that the normative ideas came to South Korea via a different circulation. One possible link is South Korea's involvement with UNESCO through the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre of the Culturelink Network (APRCCN), a part of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. Information provided by the APRCCN is not reflective of popular academic discourse, despite providing a definition of cultural industry.

Taiwan

In Taiwan, government documents mapping strategies for the creative industries seem a little later in the making, starting some two years after the other three ‘tigers’, in 2002. Indeed, the major document, the Cultural Policy White Paper, was produced as recently as 2004. Despite the relative recency, Taiwan’s attention to the development of this area is no less serious than in Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, and indeed, is at least as energetically pursued. Clearly, Taiwan is coming to terms with its bubble and now bursting economy centred on manufacturing. As a means of preventing a collapse of the economy and in the desire to create another ‘Taiwan miracle’, the government has taken on a comprehensive campaign that envisions cultural/creative industries as a trigger to the next national economic boom. The six-year national development plan initiated in 2002, named ‘Challenge 2008’, noted that ‘the value-added model of the knowledge-based economy should be the core of innovative design in production, especially artistic and esthetic creation, which has been ignored during the past’ (*Challenge 2008*, 2002: 2). Specifically, the Cultural Policy White Paper created by the Council for Cultural Affairs adopted the strategy of cultural and creative industries, understood using British Government and UN definitions. In addition, Taiwan has coined its own terms: ‘cultural creative industries’ and ‘creative living’ to reflect its aspirations. The use of ‘cultural creativity’ may represent an effort to distinguish the new initiatives from the older ‘cultural protection’, in which Taiwan had in some way viewed itself as the only place in which Chinese culture was being preserved following the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. This may have also been further perpetuated by Chiang Kai-shek’s decision to remove many valuable cultural relics from mainland during his exile to Taiwan; in a way saving them from the Communists. This new ‘cultural creativity’, however, focuses on quite different cultural resources, and the specific sectors that the government has chosen to develop are identified in Table 2.

While the narrative about creativity and culture triggering economic development dominates Taiwanese policy discourse, one exception deserves attention. Taiwan’s drive to embrace cultural/creative industries is so strong that opposing groups are voicing concerns about the potential loss of national cultural identity in exchange for profit (http://www.barcelona2004.org/esp/banco_del_conocimiento/docs/PO_22_EN_SHIU.pdf). This is evidence of the extent to which

the normative discourse has dominated government agendas, that alternative voices have found the need to issue a reminder of the other roles of culture and creativity.

While the standard authors such as Florida, Landry et al. are nowhere to be seen in the literature, Taiwan has directly adopted concepts from the British Cultural and Creative Industry Team and the UN Commission on creative industries, and after translation, widely distributed Australia's *Creative Nation* report. Indeed, like the other 'tigers', and reminiscent of post World War II Japan, Taiwanese official discourse is deeply built on information on European countries, particularly the UK, drawn from serious detailed research. Like the other 'tigers', Taiwan also sent a group of officials around Europe (Denmark, France and England) to observe culture and creativity in order to structure Taiwan in a similarly successful fashion. Thus, despite the absence of key Western authors, Taiwan has not avoided the opportunity to draw directly upon existing work and structures of other countries.

Geographies of circulation and adaptation

The four 'tigers' share some similar circumstances and goals (such as the desires to establish 'world city' status and to transcend a reliance on manufacturing), and have been attracted to creative economy discourse in much the same ways. All four have emphasised common narratives of place competition in the global economy, 'new' economic growth and export potential, and the commercial contributions of creativity and the arts. Evidence exists that they also compete with, and borrow from, each other. Singapore aspires to rival Hong Kong, and Taiwan has adapted concepts from other earlier Asian innovators. Yet even within this group of countries, the stories of creative economy are augmented with local variations, some wedded to already-existing cultural discourses (like nation-building in Singapore), while elements of the Euro-American normative script are ignored or downplayed (like discussions of creative clusters within cities) or resisted, as in Taiwan. In other Asian contexts, such as Japan, the divergences become even more pronounced.

DIVERGENT DISCOURSES: JAPAN'S DILEMMA

In contrast to the travelling discourses impacting Asian ‘tiger’ territories, the experience of Japan, China and India all tell different stories of partial diffusion, adaptation, and silences. Of all the Asian economies discussed in this paper, Japan’s economy perhaps needs the most resuscitation. Yet, Japan’s national cultural policy least emphasises the economic potential of culture, focusing instead on culture and the arts as social assets to nation-building and personal fulfilment, and as a resource for international leadership (offering ‘soft power’) and enhancing foreign relations through international exchange (as opposed to international trade). Interestingly, in contrast to government, economic organizations and business lobby groups in Japan have recognized the potential of ‘creative industries’, ‘creative economy’ and ‘creative clusters’, and have argued for a similar recognition by the government when setting future policy for the country.

The degree to which Japan has or has not adopted popular academic discourse associated with creative economy is immediately evident from results produced by general searches using appropriate terms. In Japanese, of the three sets of characters used, one set is used for words that are considered to be ‘foreign’ to the original Japanese language. Such words are becoming more and more common as young Japanese aspire to be cool by adopting English words into casual conversation. In the case of the term ‘creative industries’ there is an equivalent in Japanese: ‘kurieiteibu sangyou’ (クリエイティブ産業), which is written by using the foreign characters for the word ‘creative’ and by using traditional Japanese characters for the word ‘industries’. Despite the available translation of this term, searches utilising this particular translated format produces links, interestingly enough, to foreign sites, written in Japanese, such as The British Council Japan and the Queensland Government link for its display at the Expo 2005 in Japan. In both instances, creative industries seek to promote activities of those nations, rather than discuss creative industries as a part of Japan’s economy. The directly translated version of this term is not evidently used by the Japanese government.

In order to uncover Japanese-based material on creative industries, it is necessary to search other terms such as chishiki keizai (知識経済) (knowledge-based economy). In doing so, reports from the OECD Tokyo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

organizations such as universities or institutes of learning appear. These reports refer to the potential that creative industries can offer Japan's economic future and the success or mandates in other parts of the world.

National policy discourse in Japan tends to use the terms 'culture' and 'the arts' more frequently than 'creative arts'. More significantly, the concept of 'creative/cultural industry' does not appear. In discussing culture and the arts, the emphasis is on personal, social and spiritual fulfilment, on their centrality to national identity and heritage, and latterly, on international relations. In 2004, statements from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, spelling out its use of budget, foreground these priorities explicitly:

With the aim of building a fulfilling and healthy society by enhancing the 'Power of Culture', the main budget items consist of projects to promote nation-building based on culture and arts – which include support for programs to support Japan's cinematic and media arts and other artistically or culturally creative activities; ensuring the transmission to future generations of cultural properties; promoting international exchange involving cultural properties; enhancing cultural hubs to promote culture and arts in local areas; and so forth (ACA, 2004a: 5).

Pursing such an agenda, and in direct contrast to the Singaporean model, modern influences are constructed as threatening to local cultures – triggering conservative and somewhat nostalgic policy visions:

Diverse forms of traditional culture that have been passed down in local areas are being threatened by extinction due to such social factors as depopulation, urbanization, the combined impact of a steeply dropping birth rate and an ageing population, and changes in lifestyles. It is crucial, therefore, to ensure that the succession and development of uniquely local forms of traditional culture so that they can be passed on to future generations (ACA, 2004c: 35).

Even in the encouragement of new media, commonly associated with creative industries, the impetus is to ‘disseminat[e] and promot[e] culture’ and to ‘invigorate[e] all of Japan’s arts and culture in the 21st century’ (ACA, 2004b: 22). As Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto (2003) of the NLI Research Institute wrote:

.... the agency’s (Agency for Cultural Affairs) policies do not constitute an industrial policy, but are focused instead on support and subsidies for artistic activities in the private sector, operation of national cultural facilities, and promotion of cultural policies that are not commercially viable as industries in the market.

It may be quite rightly argued that the Agency for Cultural Affairs does not have an economic remit, and thus, understandably, may not be the place to locate a circulating discourse about cultural and creative economies. Yet, turning our analysis to the discursive threads from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), it is evident that Japan's central government is yet to carry out formal research and furthermore, support the change from industrial to intellectual output. While there are some hints of governmental recognition of the potential of creative industries within METI and JETRO, they use different terminologies, in particular, the ‘service industry’ and ‘new value creation economy’. Further, in mentioning them, METI and JETRO merely acknowledge that not much has been done in Japan to mobilise these industries. For example, as recent a document as METI’s *White Paper on International Economy and Trade* (2004: 21) states:

Although no comprehensive studies are currently being carried out in Japan concerning evaluation of intellectual assets, efforts are being made that will support comprehensive intellectual assets evaluation in future, such as examination and information disclosure and value evaluation methods for intellectual property, improvements in risk management capacity, and promotion of environmentally-friendly company management.

Similarly, in the 2003 *White Paper on International Trade*, there is acknowledgement of the growing importance of the ‘contents industry’ (2003:253), with reference made to developments in other Asian regions, and the potential for Japan:

The development in the infrastructure of digital contents distribution in the Asian region, has given rise to expectation of significant expansions in business opportunities in the contents industry. The overseas development of the contents industry, in addition to increasing the added value of the Japanese contents industry, could contribute to increasing the competitiveness of Japanese industry as a whole and enhancing Japanese brand value by enhancing understanding of the diversity of Japanese culture.

However, this acknowledgement has yet to be mirrored by policy directives.

In contrast, the documents produced by economic organizations and commercial lobby groups contain stout arguments (going beyond simple acknowledgement) in favour of creativity and culture as an industry as well as being a part of social development. Dominant narratives such as ‘creativity as trigger for economic development’ and ‘creative industries contribute to international trade’ are at the core of arguments in favour of creative industries. These groups, including for example the Marubeni Corporation’s Economic and Research Institute, and NLI Research, display a clear recognition that creative and cultural industries represent profit opportunities and that such industries are already successful overseas. They therefore argue that the government should better recognize the value of supporting such initiatives for the future of the Japanese economy. Further, these non-governmental groups’ positive disposition towards normative discourses is evidenced in their frequent references to authors such as McGray (2002), Howkins (2002), Zachary (2000), Venturelli (2001), Florida (2002), Shlain (1993) and Nye (2004).

Overall, the language in national policy documents either ignores the cultural and creative industries, or acknowledges briefly (and recently) the growth of the ‘service’ and ‘contents’ industries, but it is apparent that organisations such as METI and JETRO as well as the business groups are still in the stage of trying to lobby the

central government of the value of these sectors. It remains clear that there is no national agenda to dive into these concepts, certainly not anything similar to the Asian ‘tigers’.

Somewhat ironically, while the divergent discourses persist, Japan’s creative and cultural industries have already achieved international influence – anime, Hello Kitty, manga, J-pop and so forth – and it is clear that, even without a specific national creative industry policy, Japanese cultural products have international circulation. As McGray (2002: np) highlights:

Director and actor Takeshi Kitano, arguably the Japanese film industry’s most noteworthy recent export, was first embraced in Europe, then in the United States. At this year’s Berlin Film Festival, Hayao Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* became the first animation feature ever to win a top festival prize. A major publishing show in Frankfurt, for the first time, opened an exhibition of Japanese *manga*. Namie Amuro, reigning “J-Pop” (Japan-Pop) music diva of the 1990s, built a huge fan base in Asia without ever going on tour in the United States. Millions of teenagers in Hong Kong, Seoul, and Bangkok covet the latest fashions from Tokyo Japanese lifestyle magazines, some of the most lavishly produced in the world, are smuggled by illegal distributors across Asia as soon as they are on newsstands in Tokyo ...

Further to this, when former Korean president Kim Dae-Jung visited Osaka, Japan in 1998, he paid homage to the development of cultural products in the Kansai Region of Japan, in ways that also reflect that country’s consciousness of the contribution of creative industries: ‘I am especially happy to be here in Kansai because this region is practicing what I have been preaching – that is that the economy in the coming century will evolve into one led by information and culture industries’ (Dae-Jung, 1998). Though there are municipal-level policies to encourage sectoral developments (e.g. fashion design in Kobe) the silence at national policy level and the absence of a coordinated approach remains.

Various reasons might be ventured as to why the internationalizing discourse has not convinced Japan's national policy makers in the same way that it has enthused economic organizations and business lobby groups there; and why the creative and cultural industries gained ascendancy in Japan despite the absence of national policy². First, postwar Japan has strongly juxtaposed 'culture' and 'economics'. 'Culture' is a palliative for overworked, overstressed industrial/ business warriors. 'Traditional' culture is viewed as soothing to the trauma inflicted by industrial modernity. An unchanging 'national culture' is invoked as a constant that can ameliorate the disorientating effects of that country's recent problems:

As society undergoes abrupt and extensive changes in industry, employment, science and technology, and many other fields, a greater share of the Japanese population is seeking a sense of spiritual fulfilment. Culture, which bestows people with a sense of composure and satisfaction, surely plays an essential role in enabling people to experience genuine fulfilment (ACA, 2004b:22).

At the same time, 'traditional culture' has been deployed to counter the image of Japanese people as unidimensional economic creatures. These factors may explain why ACA's policies are not about 'culture as economy'. Second, given Japan's imperialistic history in Asia, any hint of Japanese 'economic imperialism' or 'cultural imperialism' will not be well-received. This is particularly true as it pertains to Korea and China. To adopt aggressive normative discourses about cultural industries and to officially proclaim and fuel the domination of J-pop and other exported cultural products in Asia from a national stage might appear to be an unwarranted act of aggression. Business groups and non-governmental organisations do not face the same constraints as the national government.

Given that Japan's industrial development has traditionally been government-led, one might well ask why some creative industries have thrived despite the absence of national policy. McGray (2002) offered one perspective on why Japan's recent recessionary conditions may have boosted the creativity of the workforce:

Perversely, recession may have boosted Japan's national cool, discrediting Japan's rigid social hierarchy and empowering young entrepreneurs. It may also have loosened the grip a big-business career track had over so much of Japan's workforce, who now face fewer social stigmas for experimenting with art, music, or any number of similar, risky endeavors. 'There's a new creativeness here because there's less money,' said Tokyo-based architect Mark Dytham, a London transplant. 'Good art is appearing, young strong art. Young fashion is appearing'.

This, he argues, is reinforced by the fact that Tokyo's one-child families have conferred on the younger generation a tremendous consumer power which is propelling a range of industries, from fashion to music to cell phones (McGray, 2002).

It is also important to consider non-profit organisations such as Hoso-Bunka (The Foundation for Broadcast Culture). Though the foundation "aims to promote the cultural and technological development of broadcasting and progress of radio, television and other telecommunications media" (HBF, 2006) and co-operates with the International Institute of Communications, it is not the sole body through which Japanese creative industries are promoted. For example, outside of broadcasting, media and telecommunications, there is a vast array of creative industries. With noteworthy Japanese successes in fashion and film, for example, it is necessary to realise that the exposure and success of these projects to date, have not been reliant on, or due to Japanese government policy or the influence of Japanese organisations. Rather, the industries are successful due to the efforts and quality of the individual projects; not because of the promotional interventions of an intermediary body.

The Japanese story then, with its divergences and complexity, demonstrates how non-adoption of ideas does not simply equate with a 'lack' stemming from ignorance, but instead, emphasizes the importance of context, history and economic and political geography in explanations of the diffusion of new ideas, and adoption/non-adoption in official policy.

ABSENT DISCOURSE: UNPLANNED CREATIVITY IN INDIA

Unlike Japan's ailing economy, China's and India's economies have been hailed as holding great promise. Like Japan, India does not have the same aggressive creative/cultural industry policy that the Asian 'tigers' have. Indeed, despite the success of Bollywood and the software and digital media industry, there is an absence of an explicit and coordinated national policy for 'creative' and 'cultural industry'. These terms are simply not apparent in policy discourse. What exists instead are 'standalone' regulations for different sectors which in effect constitute part of a creative economy, which are thriving, and which hold ever greater promise. As Assaf (2005: 4) projects:

According to current projections the Indian entertainment industry is expected to double in size in the next five years from the current level of US\$4.3 billion to US\$9.4 billion in 2008. Similarly, the software industry is expected to increase three-fold from the current levels of around US\$20 billion to US\$67.5 billion in 2008. The Indian animation industry is expected to grow to US\$1.5 billion in 2005.

Like Japan, the policy discourses in India are focused on culture as integral to national identity. This is reflected in India's cultural policy which outlines three objectives: to preserve the cultural heritage; to inculcate art consciousness among the people; and to promote high standards in the performing and creative arts (Embassy of India 2005). The Ministry of Culture's mission statement further reflects the non-economic stance adopted by the government:

The mission of the department is to preserve, promote and disseminate all forms of art and culture. In order to achieve this, the department undertakes the following activities:

- Maintenance and conservation of heritage, historic sites and ancient monuments
- Promotion of literary, visual and performing arts
- Administration of libraries
- Observation of centenaries and anniversaries of important national personalities and events

- Promotion of institutions and organisations of Buddhist and Tibetan studies
- Promotion of institutional and individual non-official initiatives in the fields of art and culture
- Entering into cultural agreements with foreign countries.

The functional spectrum of the Department ranges from creating cultural awareness from the grassroots level to the international cultural exchange level (Ministry of Culture, Government of India, 2003-2004).

Nonetheless, hints of a travelling discourse emerged in the latest (10th) 5-yr plan (2002-2007), indicating an awakening to the potential to be harnessed, and the need for policy to facilitate greater economization of culture in the coming years:

In the present day world, culture is not confined to merely being a manifestation of the urge for self-expression by individuals and communities but is also a vehicle for providing employment opportunities. With a large number of people dependent on the output of this sector, promotion of this sector is necessary to spur economic growth, apart from strengthening its role as an expression of the creative urges of the people. (India's 10th 5-yr plan, 2002: 279).

Despite this acknowledgement, translation into operational measures is not yet evident in public policy. Indeed, the 'thrust areas' identified by the Prime Minister's Office for policy implementation in 2005 for the various Ministries and Departments are also notably silent on the development of India's culture economy or creative industries. The focus of the Ministry of Commerce, for instance, is on the SEZ (Special Economic Zones) and Competitive Economic Zone policy, while the focus areas for the Ministry of Culture are on development and implementation of policies on heritage sites/monuments, archaeological surveys and archival material (Prime Minister's Office, 2005).

In February 2005, UNESCO hosted a symposium in Jodhpur, India, on creative industries and how they could help the development process. There was no

representation by Indian government officials at the symposium. This prompted the *Financial Express* (26/2/05) to lament the notable absence of ‘key players who needed to hear the debate to enable them to go back, comprehend the global, national and regional issues and varying positions and views to convert the relevant ideas into policy for the many diverse areas in India’.

Like Japan, the question that might be asked about India is why the travelling discourse is absent, despite the presence of thriving creative industries. Unlike Japan, perhaps this is linked to the presence of other, more pressing national priorities: to overcome poverty, obtain food security, deal with internal conflicts and tensions. Potentially, a creative economy strategy is somewhat of a luxury, only vigorously pursued by wealthier countries (both within Asia, and elsewhere).

THE INAPPLICABILITY OF WESTERN NORMATIVE DISCOURSE: CREATIVITY IN SOCIALIST CHINA?

China offers an interesting case for analysis as a socialist country transitioning into capitalism, unlike the rest of the cases examined here. Our discussion benefits much from insights by Wang (2003, 2004) who asked some similar questions about the specific discursive constructs in China taking into account its particular socioeconomic circumstances.

An analysis of the national policy documents suggests that China is not shy of using the term *wenhua chanye* (文化产业 cultural industries). The acknowledgement of the value of cultural industries represents a move from its earlier industrial model in which cultural goods are ‘standardised goods... distributed to an imagined national community’ (Keane, 2004:267). The term ‘cultural industries’ appeared in 1995 when the Chinese Government officially declared cultural industries to be part of national development (Keane, 2004: 268). This was followed up in 1998 when the Ministry of Culture formally instituted a Cultural Industries Department, and again in 2001 when the Tenth Five Year Plan confirmed the role of *wenhua chanye*. These appearances of ‘cultural industries’ in policy discourse must be situated within the Ministry of Culture’s broader approach to the cultural sector, which may be categorised as a

three-pronged one, focused on enhancing the cultural product itself; on the infrastructures (physical, legal, fiscal) to support the production and protection of cultural goods; and on international cultural relations.

The first approach is translated into policies directed towards improving the quality of the arts and cultural works (for example, through a nationwide programme of ‘Works of Excellence for the Stage’ to boost the production of quality theatrical works around the country). The second approach covers a large area, and entails:

- enhancing grassroots cultural infrastructure so that community cultural activities gain momentum
- building a sound cultural market system and creating a good market environment for cultural development, including developing a system to contain piracy, smuggling and pornography
- actively promoting cultural industries via the setting up of a Department of Cultural Industries to outline the roadmap and strategy, the formulation of development plans by all local authorities, the restructuring of state-owned cultural enterprises, widening of market access to foreign investments in the management of cultural and entertainment programs as well as the construction, renovation and management of cultural venues, and the encouragement of domestic capital, particularly private capital, to enter the cultural market
- strengthening protection of cultural heritage through documenting key heritage sites, promulgating appropriate laws on the protection of cultural relics and folk and traditional culture; and
- investing in the production and maintenance of cultural infrastructure (e.g. grand theatres, museums and libraries).

The third involves encouraging international cultural exchange, effectively a foreign relations policy.

In referencing *wenhua chanye*, China draws a distinction with *wenhua shiye* (文化事业), the former reflecting a willingness to establish commercial cultural enterprises dealing with ‘commercializable’ products (有营利性), and the latter cordoned off as

‘public cultural institutions’, dealing with a non-commercializable sector (Wang, 2003: 7). As Wang (2003: 7) elaborates, commercializable products are ‘considered less sensitive to national culture and information security’, and include ‘performance, tourism, industrial and cultural exhibitions, technical production and distribution of audiovisual products, sports and entertainment, higher education and professional education’. Indeed, the policy is to have existing national capital ‘exit gradually by means of asset sales and transfers, mergers, close-downs, and bankruptcy’ while encouraging domestic and foreign capital to enter the market (Wang, 2003: 8). At the other end of the spectrum are the highly regulated state-owned monopoly *danwei* (单位), including the non-commercializable sector comprising libraries, museums, institutions responsible for the preservation of national cultural artefacts, and compulsory education (Wang, 2003: 8). These are deemed significant for cultural identity formation and information security. Additionally, reference is also occasionally made to the idea of *shi ye ji tuan qi ye guan li* (事业集团企业管理), that is, the appearance of a public institution which functions like a commercial enterprise. This reflects a transitioning China, with a rapid re-drawing of boundaries between public and private, commerce and culture.

The discursive and practical distinctions described above are a reflection of the local social, economic and political geography. The adopted distinctions contrast China with countries like the U.S. which pursue the logic of free trade and open markets, even in the context of cultural goods. Interestingly, though, China is not alone in not subscribing fully to the idea of free markets and free trade in cultural products. Canada and EU countries, despite being at quite a different end of the ideological and economic developmental spectrum from China, do not support free trade rules in relation to cultural and media products either (Wang, 2003: 12). This is because they seek to protect their national culture from the homogenizing influences of American cultural products, and desire to make space for the creative content of their national cultures. On the other hand, for China, Wang (2004: 13) argues, the ‘western concept of creative freedom’ is inappropriate, given state surveillance that curtails what Keane (2003: 2) calls ‘unfiltered, market-led content’. Thus, the persistence of a non-commercializable sector is directed at ensuring that not all creative content becomes rampant and unfettered. This would explain what Cunningham *et al.* (2005: 6)

identify to be the intractable regulatory system that oversees particular creative industries sectors. Ironically, it is also the weakness of surveillance in another sense, that of limitations in policing IPR violations, that product innovation is stifled and imitation favoured over creative innovation (Cunningham *et al.*, 2005: 6).³ Another possible reason for the distinctions between *wenhua chanye* and *wenhua shiye*, and the absence of *chuangyi chanye* in official discourse, stems from socialist thought. Specifically, the longstanding Marxist leadership's view of cultural output as superstructural and intangible, reflecting economic reality rather than a pure economic commodity, left little role and recognition for the creator (Keane, 2004: 16). Thus, it is no surprise that the supposedly global reach of normative discourses is inflected by the specific locales and milieux of China.

At this juncture, China appears to lag behind its Asian counterparts (like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea) in its attempts to position itself in the global creative economy. It continues to battle ills of capital funding, administrative red tape, a weak regulatory IPR environment and flagrant piracy. Further, given China's historical and cultural legacies, the concept of 'creativity' remains an unfamiliar one. However, variations within a very vast country are beginning to emerge. In 2005, Shanghai started identifying 'creative industry clusters', and has 18 in total now. Beijing, on the other hand, continues with the notion of 'cultural creative industries'. Variations notwithstanding, overall, China's national policy discourse has lately come to recognize the economic value of the 'cultural industries, though importantly, the socialist backdrop renders the 'western' discourse subject to much modification, or simply inapplicable. Indeed, as with Singapore, besides the economic bent, China's policy discourse remains cognizant of the cultural needs at the community level, with efforts to improve the cultural life of urban and rural folk through the construction of cultural centres, libraries, and the protection of traditional folk art/culture.

Conclusions

³ The recent "White Paper on IPR Protection" (published in April 2005) signals the government's intent to bring the IPR issue under control and restore business confidence. This represents another step in China's transition to capitalism.

This paper traced an uneven geography of flows of creative economy discourses. The extent and type of engagements with internationalizing discourses of creative economy vary enormously from country to country, and in the case of Japan, between the government and commercial forces within the nation. Instead of charting a literal spatial diffusion of creative economy ideas, we have instead sought to read the broad contours of a relational geography of information flow and policy formulation. Rather than map a chronology of policy development from one place to another, we have sought to show how ideas have travelled through networks of government agencies, chambers of commerce, arts policy-makers and export promoters in complex ways. This paper anticipates ethnographic research that could further flesh out the embedded and embodied processes through which new ideas are received and considered, mutated or adopted, or simply jettisoned. This approach understands that distance, and other 'traditional' barriers such as language still matter, despite the advances in ICT. Geography does indeed play an important role in explaining the uneven terrain of flow and uptake of ideas about creative economies throughout Asia. Further, we have sought to show how ideas have flowed, been received and adapted (with varying enthusiasm) in intermittent, sometimes incoherent or contradictory ways, emphasising especially the role of national socio-economic and political circumstances.

In the case of Singapore, adoption of discourses was early, if tentative, and then followed by a more substantive phase. But even in its latter phase of more deep absorption of creative economy discourse into national economic development policy, Singapore tended to use key theorists like Richard Florida as little more than 'expert citations'. Reference to Euro-American experts legitimised creative economy strategies rather than informing them in heavily conceptual ways (cf. Gibson and Klocker, 2004). In other places – like Taiwan and South Korea – creative economy discourses have been rather eagerly embraced, yet without reference to the key authors of those ideas, or the detail of their theoretical constructs. At the same time, competitive relations within the region have unsettled linear presumptions of 'source of origin' and 'receiving' locations: some Asian countries have borrowed from each other, or generated creative economy policies so as to avert falling behind regional counterparts (as in Singapore and Hong Kong). Here, the push to adopt normative

western concepts was likely to be subordinate to the desire to remain ahead of nearby countries in a 'race' to global status and success.

There are numerous ways of interpreting this uneven, contradictory and partial geography of information flow and adaptation in relation to our original aims. On the one hand, the rather surface application of overseas expert knowledges in places like Singapore highlights an uncritical appraisal of imported ideas, and possibly an inappropriate application of such knowledges in local circumstances. In parallel to this, Taiwan and South Korea's engagements with creative economy discourse (and silence on the role of western 'experts') could be seen as a case of convenient cultural borrowing of terms like creative and cultural industries, linked to observed successes in pan-Asian markets for entertainment, without any depth of intellectual exchange. But on the other hand, Singapore's surface adaptation of western concepts also means that the influence of particular foreign experts is minimised. Their theories do not deeply penetrate policy formulation, and though cited, are instead swamped within the more torrential flows of people and ideas traveling to Singapore, and mixing there, from Europe, Australasia, North America and the rest of Asia.

Discourses of creative economies in Asia are also as much defined by how they do not engage with western concepts and ideas, as by the extent to which they do. In some cases, there were simply silences on whole aspects of western policy discourse (as in India); or alternative emphases that either hybridized new 'commercial' interpretations of creativity with older, social and community development goals (Singapore, China); or scorned commercialism and modernity and instead, promoted 'traditional' culture as a sphere of cultural expression providing relief and retreat for increasingly urban, professional classes (Japan). In all cases, creative economy policies could not be understood intellectually – nor divorced practically – from domestic and regional political circumstances. The absence of export-orientation in Japanese creative industry policies owes much to its post-war legacy, and the sensitivities surrounding the influence of Japanese culture in the region, while China's transition from socialist to capitalist state was evident in the emphases and tenor of its strategies. Rather than construct simplistic geographies of diffusion of creative economy discourses – where Asia is seen as marginal to other, more central places of origin (a conclusion that could be made by purely looking at the geography

of academic effort on the topic), we have hoped to demonstrate how knowledges flow and are mutated in complex and multi-scaled ways – simultaneously transforming local, metropolitan, national and regional discourses, and being transformed in those contexts. Although there is much in the ‘normative’ script of creative economy worthy of critique (see Gibson and Kong 2005), it is clear that in Asia, the normative script has only partially diffused (in some places more than others), often augmenting, but rarely overwhelming, local goals and desires.

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Table 1: Key Creative economy ideas in selected Asian countries

Singapore	Hong Kong	South Korea	Taiwan	Japan	China	India	
	<p>An abundance of related concepts pepper a number of policy documents, including creative industries/creative economy/creative cluster, cultural industries, creative town concept, cultural capital, creative people, creative workforce, connected nation, copyright industries. Clear and careful distinctions between creative/cultural/copyright industries/economy. Earliest mentions of economic potential of culture emerged as far back as the early 1990s, though concentrated attention appears to have emerged with a 2000 Renaissance City report and thereafter.</p>	<p>Creative industries are identified as a key thrust in Hong Kong's economic reform, as they build innovative capability. First acknowledgement by Chief Executive as early as 1998, followed by a slew of government and commissioned reports in the early 2000s. Notion of 'creativity index' has been adopted and is being studied.</p>	<p>Significant appearance of ideas like 'creative industries' and 'cultural industries', as well as 'cultural content industries'. The term 'cultural industry' utilized as early as 1999 when the 'Cultural Industry Promotion Act' was established.</p>	<p>Even more use of ideas like 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' than South Korea. Taiwan has coined its own term 'cultural creative industries' by combining both. Has proposed new concepts of industry sectors like 'creative living'. A key policy paper is the Cultural Policy White Paper of 2004, authored by the Council for Cultural Affairs.</p>	<p>The idea of cultural industry/economy and creative industry/economy is not much evident in policy documents. The term 'creative industries' does have a Japanese equivalent (<i>ku-rieteibu sangyou</i>) but there is not much material on it in government discourse. The most dominant terms in government documents are 'culture', 'culture and arts' and 'creative/cultural activities'. Documents by economic organizations and lobby groups try to make a case for 'creative industries', 'creative economy' and 'creative clusters'.</p>	<p>A 1995 15-year initiative where cultural industries was declared as part of national development. In, 1998 establishment of Cultural Industries Department in the Ministry of Culture. 2001 10th Five-Year Plan mentioned <i>wenhua chanye</i> (cultural industries) for the first time since the reform era. Distinction between</p>	<p>Absence of explicit and coordinated 'creative industry' and 'cultural industry' national policy.</p>

Singapore	Hong Kong	South Korea	Taiwan	Japan	China	India	
						public cultural institutions (<i>wenhua shiye</i>) and commercial cultural enterprises (<i>wenhua chanye</i>).	

Table 2: Key sectors of the creative economy in selected Asian countries

Singapore	Hong Kong	South Korea	Taiwan	Japan	China	India
<p>Three key groups of creative industries identified in the 2002 Economic Review Committee’s Creative Industries Development Strategy, viz:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arts and culture (including performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, photography, crafts, libraries, museums, galleries, archives, antiques, trade and crafts, impresarios, heritage sites, performing arts sites, festivals and arts supporting enterprises); • media (including broadcasting (radio, television and cable), film and video, publishing and printing, music recording, digital and IT-related content services); • design (including architectural services, advertising services and visual communications design, interior design, fashion design, graphics design, product and industrial design and so on) 	<p>11 domains of creative industries: Advertising, architecture, art, antiques and crafts, design, digital entertainment, film and video, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computing, television and radio</p>	<p>Korean Culture and Content Agency (KOCCA) defines Korea’s cultural industry in terms of film, music, video, games, publishing and printing, broadcasting, advertising, design, crafts, character, fine arts, animation, performing industry and digital content.</p>	<p>The Council for Cultural Affairs identified 13 sectors that make up cultural and creative industries: visual arts, music and performing arts, crafts, cultural display facilities, the design industries, publishing, TV and broadcast, movie, advertising, digital recreation and entertainment, designer fashion industry, architectural design industry, and lifestyle industry.</p>	<p>Traditional arts, dance and music, theatres, museums, historic properties, artists are frequently identified. Economic/lobby groups identify music, film, television, publishing, design, computer games and advertising as worthy of development and support.</p>	<p>Includes film, television, audiovisual products, publishing, performing arts, visual art, sport, and education. Excludes architecture, advertising, design, and heritage.</p>	<p>Sectors such as performing arts, film, software and digital animation are all regulated and developed as ‘standalone’ segments in India, rather than as part of coordinated and consolidated policy.</p>