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## CREATIVE CAPITAL AND THE FIELD OF CULTURE: KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS IN A CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Creativity as a concept is generally understood as an mental and intellectual enterprise of generating something new that never existed before: ideas, compositions, arrangements, concepts, systems, forms, styles or products. However, creative works is not an absolute creation of 'individual genius'. Creativity is a 'social product', which has interrelation and dependence to other cultural texts. Creativity is a form of a 'dynamic repetition', in which one idea refers to and is intersected with previous ideas, to produce a new synthesis. Moreover, as a social product, creativity is generated in a particular 'creative field', in which there is an intensive struggle for newness and difference determined by the possession and distribution of different kinds of 'creative capital', in its relation to other kinds of capital: economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital.*

**Keywords:** *creativity, difference, repetition, capital, field, culture*

### INTRODUCTION

Creativity is not a new concept or phenomena. It was a central concept in the development of the modern society. However, this concept has been 'reinventing' in what so called a post-industrial and global society, where the concept regains its central role in social, economic and cultural life of the society. Creativity has become a central concept of recent global economic development, which has been reformulated as a 'creative economy' propelled by a 'creative industry' and supported by a 'creative class'. Creativity has become a new 'key word' in recent socio-economic system of the global society.

Creativity has contextually been revitalized as the need for 'new ideas', 'innovations' and 'differences' in recent global economic system has become more intact, as a result of the higher competitive climate of globalisation. Economic actors should make endless efforts to find new ideas in order to be able to survive in a highly competitive climate of globalisation. On the other hand, there has been an incredible growth of economic sectors, in which 'creativity' is the main added value of their products, likes entertainment industry, information arts, media arts, consumer products, as conventional sectors have become more and more oversaturated.

In the context of the use of creative work, it can be argued that creativity is not an individual phenomena, but a 'social production'. Ideas are not produced individually, but socially and culturally. Creative works are produced in certain 'social space' and 'cultural field', which is conducive for the development of creative impulses and the growth of creative ideas. However, creative works can only be produced if particular 'capitals' are available in certain cultural field, which includes 'cultural capital', 'social capital', 'economic capital' and 'creative capital'.

## **CREATIVITY, NEWNESS AND DIFFERENCE**

Human has capacity to 'create something new', because of his/her dissatisfaction with what has already achieved. Most modern human activities are concerned with the 'creating new ideas' (product, thinking, concept, system): sciences, engineering, computer programming, architecture, design, education, arts, music, entertainment, business, finance, law, literature, poetry and entrepreneurship. Creativity is an enterprise of constructing a new 'possible worlds' that has never existed before, through which new horizons, habits, behaviours, values and meanings are constructed.

'Creativity is a specific human mental capacity to produce new ideas through a particular mental process. As remarked by Richard Florida, creativity “. . . involves the ability to synthesize. . . a matter of sifting through data, perceptions and materials to come up with combinations that are new and useful. (Italics by the writer) [1]. Creativity, in this sense, is a 'dialectical process', through which a certain thesis (concept, system, product) is encountered by an antithesis to produce a new synthesis, which we call a creative synthesis. A creative synthesis is intended for a particular function, use or practice and to solve a particular problem, need or situation.

Creativity is a particular form of 'cultural subversion' or disruption. It is a “. . . process of destroying one's gestalt in favor of a better one”[2]. Creativity, according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, refers to individual who expresses unusual thought; who experience the world in novel, fresh, enlightening and original ways; who change our culture radically [3]. 'Creativity' is an exercise of thought that generate new and useful ideas. 'Innovation' is a product of creativity, which contains new and fresh ideas that disturb public mind and opinion: 'technological innovation', 'management innovation, 'market innovation, etc. [4]

Creativity is a process of initiating certain face of 'change'. Creativity is needed in order to change the world. As remarked by Brewster Ghiselin, a creative process is “. . . the process of change, of development, of evolution, in in the organization of subjective life” [5]. Change means difference. In other word, through creativity a certain face of change is initiated, in order to produce a change from a particular tradition. There is a compromise between 'tradition' and 'change' in a particular society. As remarked by Jewkes, Sawersand and Stillerman, in every aspect of society there is a struggle “. . . to reconcile . . . authority and questioning, of tradition and novelty, conservatism and radicalism, stability and progress, continuity and change”. [6]

In arts, particularly the modern art, creativity is a way of producing 'newness' and 'difference'. The aim of modern art is to produce new forms, materials, compositions, idioms, styles, and meanings. Modern art produced something new to replace the old one. The essence of modern art, as remarked by Habermas, is “. . . 'the new' which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style” [7]. The discourse of art is self-criticism, which its objective, according to Clement Greenberg, is “. . . to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effects that might conceivably be borrow from or by the medium of any other art” [8].

Newness and difference is also the essence of modern design. This can be concluded from several definitions of 'design', which regard 'newness' and 'difference' as their main motive. J.K. Page, for example, defines 'design' as “the imaginative jump from present facts to future possibilities” [9]. J.B. Reswick defines design as “a creative activity it involves bringing into being something new and useful that has not existed previously” [10] In the same tension, Jones defines design as a process to “initiate change in man-made-things” [11] It can be seen that newness or difference is the main indication of the progress of art, design, architecture and other creative activities. The need for design profession is the need for creating newness and differences.

## CREATIVITY AND REPETITION

Ideas are not generated from 'nowhere', but from particular transcendental 'sources', both external and internal. In every process of ideas generation, one never starts from absolute 'zero point' or 'empty mind'. In the process of ideas generation, there is an intensive process of 'learning from the past'. One reuses, reactivates, revitalizes, reinvents, re-contextualizes or re-appropriates something from the past (ideas, knowledge, principles, experiences, systems, forms, norms, habits, and ideologies) in order to be able to produce new synthesis. We call this activity of 'back and forth' to the past and to the future, a 'repetition'.

However, there is a strong disavowal of the role of 'repetition' in the theory of creative process, because of the centrality of the concepts of 'originality' of ideas and the 'genius' of its creator. We have forgot that we always refer to existed (or past) knowledge and information, in order to develop new synthesis. Based on this repetitive character, 'creativity' can be defined in new way as "an activity of repetition, in order to change it to produce something different for the future". Repetition and different here should be acknowledged as an integral part of the creative process. There is a process 'recombination' of previous knowledge, concepts and ideas in order to produce new ideas. This is what called by Einstein as "combinatory play".

Creativity, in this sense, has to be seen as a process of creation of new ideas within the trajectory of time (past-present-future). This is, according to Bergson, because our basic psychological experience of time is that of *durée*, of a dynamic continuation of the past into the present and toward the future" [12]. Duration is a continuous movement of the past that erode the future, through which it increase and change itself [13]. It is an 'engine' of change, through which a continuous differentiation of forms, systems or styles is produced, but on the foundation of repetition *contradictio in terminis*.

Repetition, according to Ricoeur, is ". . .the anticipation of the future, the recovery of fallenness and the moment of vision" [14]. It ". . . opens potentialities that went unnoticed, were aborted, or were repressed in the past [15]. Everything moves through time towards the future must repeat itself, in order to change itself. As also remarked by Deleuze, "we produce something new only on condition that we repeat . . . what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return" [16]. This is what sois called a "dynamic repetition": to repeat in order to change, to step back to the past in order to project to the future.

'To produce difference through repetition' is also the main character of creative process in arts, design, architecture, sciences, technology and other creative activities. A painting, sculpture, machine or building with a 'genius' structure, arrangement, form or style has to be regarded as a form of 'repetition', because of particular repetitive contents inherent in its structure: of function, genre, form, structure, material, use, or meaning. In term of the definition of art and design, we can proudly propose that, art and design is "an activity of repetition or projecting to the past, in order to change it to produce something different for the future".

The repetitive character can also be identified in science and technology in general. All

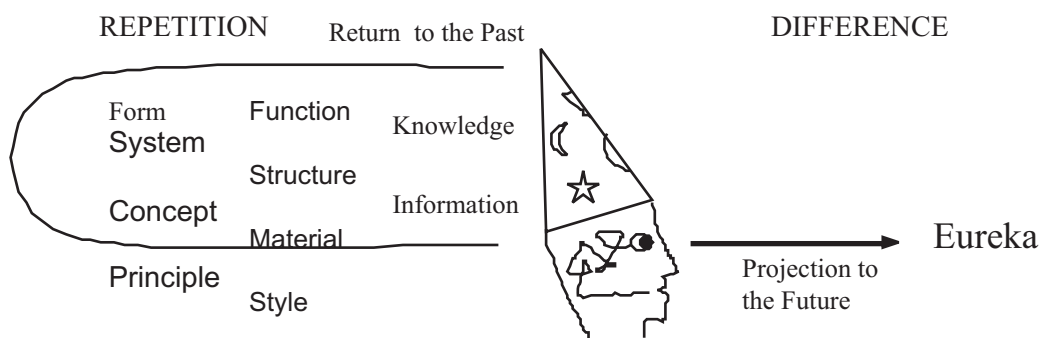


Figure 1:  
Creative process as a process of 'repetition' in order to produce 'difference'

inventions 'refer to' or are 'repetition of' previous inventions, in order to improve or make them better. As bravely remarked by John Jewkes, Davis Sawers dan Richard Stillerman that invention today “. . .has become more automatic, less the result of intuition or flashes of genius and more a matter of deliberate design” [17]. They “. . .were merely improvements or adaptations of existing knowledge” [18]. However, this is not a claim that there is absolutely no 'newness or 'breakthrough' shown in any inventions, but only to emphasize that all inventions have certain repetitive contentscontradictio in terminis.

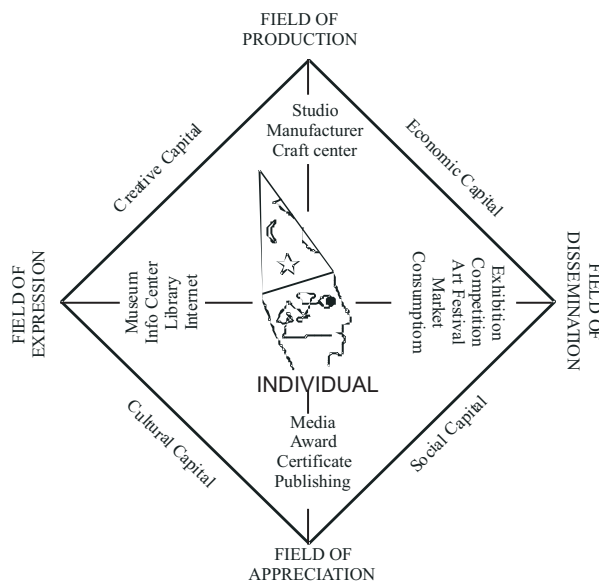
## CULTURAL CAPITAL AND FIELD OF CREATIVITY

In term of creative production, creative works are product of a 'creative class', which is identified by Florida as “. . .people who add economic value through their creativity” [19]. However, Florida's notion of creative class here is too economic, that sees creative works as a peculiar form of 'economic capital'. It can be shown, that some forms of 'community arts', 'folk culture', 'sub-cultural arts', 'graffitti' or 'cultural festivals' produced by 'creative communities' are nothing to do with economic capital, but more social, political, cultural and religious 'capital'. In order to understand the concept of creativity more comprehensively, we need expanding the concept of 'capital' itself by referring to Bourdieu's sociological concept of 'field' or 'capital'.

A 'field' or 'market', according to Bourdieu, is “. . .a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital'” [20]. The structure of field can be understood as “. . .the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits which are at stake in the field [21]. In the context of creative works such as arts, 'artistic field' can be defined as “. . .a space of literary or artistic positions defined by by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the distribution of this specific capital” [22].

A struggle for positions, according to Bourdieu, is specifically determined by the kind of 'capital' owned and distributed. Bourdieu uses term 'capital' in a very broad way, which includes 'economic capital' or 'material capital' that comprices all material things that have value economically (money, gold, land); 'symbolic capital', which comprices all non-material things but have certain cultural values (prestise, status, authority); and 'cultural capital', which includes a

broad range of goods or systems that shape cultural form and meaning (language, education, arts) [23]. There is only implicit description about 'social capital' in Bourdieu thinking, which has a particular relation to social ranks determined by the 'structure of relations' between classes or groups in a society, as well as all the pertinents properties which gives its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert to practice [24].



Based on Bourdieu's notion of 'field' and 'capital', we can propose a specific 'field' of creativity, of what is called a 'creative field'. A 'creative field' can be defined as “a structured space of creative struggles for difference and differentiation and their interrelations that are determined by the distribution of different kinds of 'creative capital'.

Figure 2:  
Field of creativity and creative human environment that conducive for the production of new ideas or innovation



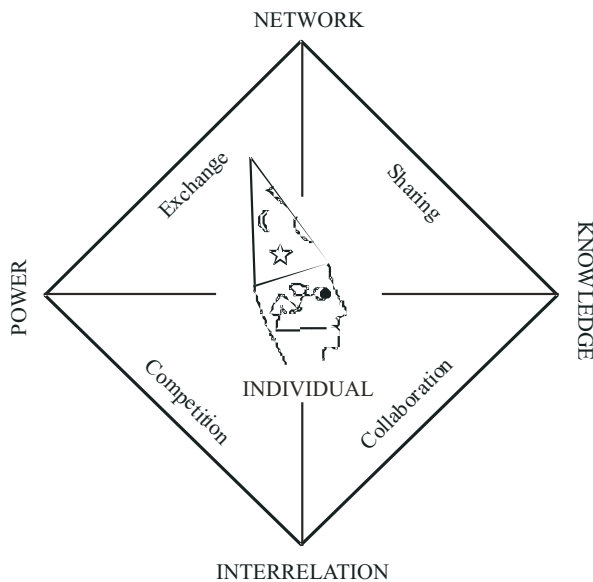


Figure 3:

The relation of 'knowledge' in a discourse formation, which is determined by the availability of knowledge, network, power relation and socio-economic relation conducive for a creative field

We can identify four fields that construct a creative environment: 'field of expression' as a field in which new ideas or innovations are generated; 'field of production' as a field in which new ideas are produced in the various 'means of production' (which is not only an 'economic production', but also 'cultural production', 'social production' or 'religious production'); 'field of dissemination' as a field in which 'creative products' (which is not only an 'economic product', but also 'cultural', 'social', 'political' and 'religious product') are distributed and disseminated; and 'field of appreciation' as a field of 'discourse' in which creative works are appreciated and given value through a particular standard of judgment and value.

Because it is a social product, which is produced in a particular 'social space' or 'social field', creativity should be understood as a comprehensive process

that involves all related fields ('field of expression', 'field of production', 'field of dissemination' and 'field of appreciation') as a total field that sinergetically reinforces creative impulse and encourages creative works. In a society, in which appreciation (interests, rewards, honour, awards) to creative works is relatively bad, motivation or impulse for creative works is unlikely to be strong. In a society, in which there is no demand or enthusiasm to produce creative ideas in a particular 'production system', creative individuals might be frustated, and try to find a more conducive environment. Moreover, without a good system of dissemination (socialisation, information, distribution) a creative appreciation is unlikely to be emerged.

A 'creative field' can be constructed at the level of community, society or all humanity. For example, despite a particular state is not capable of established a conducive social space for creativity, certain communities are still capable of developing their own 'creative space' by arranging their own 'creative network'. We can see this phenomena in creative classes in Bandung, who in mutual collaboration with cultural activist likes Common Room (CR), establish their own 'creative field': 'expressive system' (community information and knowledge system), 'production system' (independen production), 'dissemination system' (community exhibition, festival, special market) and 'appreciation system' (community journal, magazine and other media forms).

## CREATIVE CAPITAL

As argued above, creativity is not an individual phenomena but a social production and cultural system. Creativity, according to Csikszentmihalyi, is an interrelations of three parts of a system. First, the domain, as a set of knowledge systems, symbols, rules and procedures shared by a particular society. Second, the field, which includes all members of a particular society who deals with and make judgement about creative works: teacher, collector, writer, critics, or goverment agency. Third, the individual person, who uses symbolic resources in particular domain to create particular creative works containing new ideas, systems, forms or patterns: artists, musicians, architects, designers, scientists, enggineers, entrepreneurs [25].

Based on Csikszentmihalyi's notion of creative system, we can identify more specifically four 'capitals' that are necessary for the creation of an environment conducive for the generation of creative ideas, as mentioned above: 'cultural capital', 'social capital' and 'economic capital'.

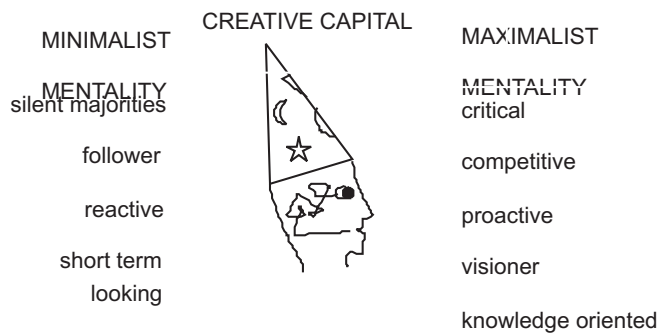


Figure 4:  
Mentality as a form of creative capital.  
'Minimalist mentality' is a mentality that block  
Creative impuls, whereas a 'maximalist mentality'  
motivate the impuls.

First, 'cultural capital', which includes a language, symbol, education and knowledge. Creativity, in this sense, is highly determined by 'knowledge capital': the availability of knowledge system, procedures, methods, rules, strategies, documentations and management system, which conducive for the creation of a creative environment. Based on Foucault's notion of 'discourse', it can be argued further that the structure of knowledge, power and social relation in a particular society determines the production of creative ideas and

innovations [26]. Four preconditions of discourse formation can be identified : the clarity of knowledge structure, accessibility, social relation and power relation behind knowledge production. For example, in a society in which knowledge (its source, access, and truth) is dominated by certain totalitarian power system, creative works will be centralized in certain creative elites.

Second, 'social capital', which includes all actors involved in the creative generation, production, consumption and appreciation. The quality of actors and their 'social field' will determine their creative production. First, whether the field is 'reactive' or 'proactive'. A reactive field blocks creative impulses, whereas a proactive field strenghtens the impulses. Second, whether the field is 'conservative' or 'progressive'. A conservative field is restrictive and tolerates only a very limited portion of change, which makes the duration of change is very slow and the generation of ideas are less intensive. In contrast, a 'proggressive field' is affirmative and highly tolerate a very bizzare or extreme ideas, which creates a relatively dynamic change and intensive generation of creative ideas. Third, whether the field is 'open' or 'closed'. An 'open field' is a field with a close and intimate relation between its system (social, cultural, economic, politic), which make possible a certain collaboration or exchange. A 'closed field' is a field with a very 'exclusive' and 'elitist' systems. For instance, a disconnection between manufacturers and university.

Third, 'creative capital', as a creative individual who continuously capable of producing new ideas, concepts, systems, forms or products in incessant change situations. A creative individual is a smart, open, playful, discipline, imaginative, and fantastic person, who has self-esteem, need of achievement, anti-establishment spirit, subversive motivation, passion, sensitivity, and love of what he/she does [27], spontaneous, playful and unusualness [28]. According to Buzan, 'mind mapping' is an important capacity of creative individual, through which "...the mind should be left as 'free' as possible" [29]. There should be also an "intrinsic motivation", by which individuals are engaged or absorbed in certain activity. Csikszentmihalyi calls this situation 'flow', as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seem to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" [30]. The creative individual, according to Gardner, is "...a person who regularly solves problems, fashion products, or defines new questions in a domain in a way that is initially considered novel but that ultimately becomes accepted in a particular cultural setting" [31]. It means that besides an intrinsic capacity, a creative individual has to be a 'social man'.

Fourth, 'material capital' or 'economic capital', which comprices all material things that have value (money, gold, land). Creativity, in certain context and situation, is 'capital intensive', especialy creative activity in a particular research center of multinational corporation, which its objective is to produce new ideas, systems, or products for industrial purposes. In this kind of creative activity, a certain amount of money, instruments, softwares, hardwares, devices and infrastructures are highly demanded in order that a chain of experiments can be conducted.

## CONCLUSION

The role of creative individuals in the social field is to build a healthy social milieu or a 'creative society', in which there is a good appreciation for innovation and creativity. Particularly, in a society in which imitation and pirating are part of social habit and the reward and appreciation for innovation is relatively bad, the creative individual can be positioned as a 'critical subject', who can build a critical and proactive self, as a main capital for a 'creative self'. Since the role of academic graduate is very important as 'creative agent' in a global creative economy and society, education has responsibility to create an academic climate, which is 'creative oriented'.

To create a 'creative society', all 'minimalist mentalities': a mentality of ignoring quality, ignoring process, a shortcut mentality, lack of self confidence, consumeristic, undisciplined and irresponsible, as described by Koentjaraningrat [32] has to be eliminated. As also argued by James L. Adams, all 'blocs' 'perceptual block', 'mental block', 'cultural block', 'intellectual block' and 'environment block', which are related to the lack of or minimalism of creative capital as described above (cultural capital, social capital, economic capital and creative capital) has also to be eliminated to create a healthy social environment conducive for the generation of new ideas [33]. In this sense, all capitals required in the creative field should be optimized.

A 'creative society' can only be established if all 'fields' (field of expression, field of production, field of dissemination and field of appreciation) are also sinergetically optimized. There should be also appropriated 'space of knowledge' (information center, museum, data bank) in which creative ideas can be expressed; a 'space of production', in which creative ideas are realized, produced or materialized; a 'space of dissemination', in which new ideas, concepts, forms and products are introduced, communicated and socialized; and a 'space of appreciation', in which new ideas, systems and products are appreciated, criticized or honoured based on certain value and meaning systems.

## NOTES

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