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**Trend Report on the
Creative Community Revitalization
in the context of mainland China**

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Abstract:

Based on the theoretical and methodological framework of Trend Studies and Cultural Studies, this project aims to produce a trend report on creative community revitalization in the context of mainland China. The project is divided into five stages, including locating and defining the thematic issue, designing the research project, collecting the data, analyzing the systematized data, and presenting the final insights. We begin with the theory from Cultural Studies scholars, identifying the operational concept of *culture* as non-privileged and social, about shared meanings and a range of everyday practices. Then, we review *creative communities* from the perspective of Cultural Studies, identifying its operational concept in a way that summarizes its characteristics from various literatures.

The thematic trend report employs three methods/techniques: desk research, *coolhunting* and interviews for information collection, systemization and analysis. In particular, the *socio-cultural Trends 2022* published by the Trends and Cultural Management Laboratory of the University of Lisbon works not only as a framework for understanding the macro context of social, economic, cultural, technological, environmental, and political aspects but also functions as a trend map for clustering and analyzing information.

The trends report hopes to provide valuable information, insights and guidelines for community-related organizations and practitioners, brands or businesses that want to work with the creative community, social workers, real estate developers, designers, architects, researchers and the general public interested in creative communities.

Key words: community; creative community; community revitalization; trend; Trend Studies; *coolhunting*; culture; Cultural Studies

Resumo:

Com base no quadro teórico e metodológico dos Estudos de Tendências e dos Estudos de Cultura, este projecto visa produzir um relatório de tendências sobre a revitalização da comunidade criativa no contexto da China Continental. O projecto está dividido em cinco fases, incluindo a definição da questão ou problema temático, a concepção do projecto de investigação, a recolha dos dados, a análise dos dados sistematizados, e a apresentação dos insights finais. Começamos com a teoria dos estudiosos dos estudos culturais, identificando o conceito operacional de cultura como não privilegiado e social, sublinhando significados partilhados e uma série de práticas quotidianas. Depois, entendemos comunidades criativas a partir da perspectiva dos estudos culturais, identificando o seu conceito operacional de uma forma que resume as suas características a partir de várias literaturas.

O relatório temático de tendências emprega três métodos/técnicas: desk research, coolhunting e entrevistas para recolha, sistematização e análise de informações. Em particular, o relatório Tendências Socioculturais 2022 publicado pelo Laboratório de Gestão de Tendências e da Cultura da Universidade de Lisboa funciona não só como um quadro para a compreensão do macro dos aspectos sociais, económicos, culturais, tecnológicos, ambientais e políticos, mas também como um mapa de tendências para agrupar e analisar a informação.

O relatório de tendências espera fornecer informações valiosas, perspectivas e orientações para organizações e profissionais ligados à comunidade, marcas ou empresas que pretendam trabalhar com a comunidade criativa, assistentes sociais, promotores imobiliários, designers, arquitectos, investigadores e o público em geral interessado em comunidades criativas.

Palavras-chave: comunidade; comunidade criativa; revitalização da comunidade; tendência; Estudos de Tendências; coolhunting; cultura; Estudos de Cultura

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Introduction

With industrialization, many developing countries have entered into a process of rapid urbanization, but the human touch of acquaintance society is disappearing. As Tönnies (1887) puts it, the human world is moving from “Gemeinschaft”¹ to “Gesellschaft”², becoming increasingly modern, independent, and rational, yet the ties and mutual trust between people in communities are gradually disappearing (p. 34). At the same time, the wave of urbanization, in which people in cities become atomized while villages lack vitality due to shrinking populations, has also received more attention. The pandemic that began in 2020 has reinforced the importance of community and neighborhood and our relationship with them. Such a shift also prompts us to think: What kind of community is urgently needed in modern society? What kind of ideal communities do people want to live in? How can we make people live in ideal communities? And community revitalization may be an answer.

In recent years, community revitalization has become a buzzword in the context of mainland China and has gained the attention of a wide range of subjects, including policy makers, designers, architects, academic researchers, community workers, real estate developers and operators, and individuals interested in community. Unlike the familiar urban planning in China, community revitalization is initiated and participated by residents in a bottom-up form, with a more microscopic perspective and the possibility of cooperation and innovation with business. The concept of community revitalization is gaining momentum in China and there have been many communities revitalization-related practices and discussions. Nevertheless, the number of related studies is still relatively small, and most of them are focused on the fields of design, social work or sociology, not to mention the literature that explore community from the perspective of Cultural Studies and Trend Studies.

Therefore, based on the theoretical framework and methodological guidance of Cultural Studies and Trend Studies, this project aims to produce a trend report particularly on creative community revitalization in the context of mainland China, hoping to provide relevant information, insights and strategic guidance for community-related organizations and practitioners, brands or businesses that want to work with the creative community, real estate

¹ “Gemeinschaft” can be roughly translated as “Community”, e.g., a traditional rural community. The details will be explained in 2.1.

² “Gesellschaft” can be roughly translated as “Society”, which refers to modern society. The details will be explained in 2.1.

developers, community workers, researchers and people interested in communities. It is worth noting that since most of the data in this report comes from mainland China, the findings or insights produced are also more applicable to inform and support future community development in mainland China.

We will start from the understanding of culture by several scholars in the field of Cultural Studies and come up with an operational concept of culture that is closer to ordinary people, non-elite and more social, looking at community in a culturalized way. At the same time, this assumption is also about shared meanings and a set of daily practices, which is very similar to the connotation of community. Furthermore, we will focus on the creative community rather than the larger scope of the community. Taking into account the theories of several scholars, including Richard Florida (2010), Arlene Goldbard (2006), EF Rodriguez Gomez (2017), Sue Kenny, Brian McGrath and Rhonda Phillips (2018) related to creative community, we summarize its characteristics as follows: diversity, arts, social change, social well-being, innovative ways and the purpose of economic revitalization, equity and resilience. From the above operational concepts, we will highlight the summary and analysis of dynamic changes and patterns in the development process of creative community revitalization within the geographic area of mainland China that meet its characteristics.

The project is divided into five stages, including defining thematic issues or problems, designing the research project, collecting data, analyzing the structured data, and presenting the insights of the report.

In order to achieve the research objectives within the framework of Trends Studies and Cultural Studies, and in relation to the theme of the project Creative Community Revitalization, three main methods/techniques will be considered in this report: desk research, interviews and cool hunting. These three methods/techniques support information collection and analysis, and there is no order of implementation. Therefore, these three methodologies are interspersed in the course of the research project. Specifically, the desk research starts from the definition of creative community and combines the current situation of social, economic, cultural environmental and technological aspects in mainland China to collect and analyze the systematized data; the coolhunting will search for signals that meet the criteria through keywords and provide both a description and analysis of the signals collected, followed by various references and related macro (ou even micro) trends; the interviews will consider community-related researchers and practitioners, as well as residents of creative communities for their attitudes and opinions.

We also take into account the specific situation in mainland China, the data sources include mainly published books, WeChat media platform, news websites, podcasts and other social media platforms. During the data collection process, we will also focus on recording and tracking media platforms that are strongly related to the creative community and maintain a high level of attention during the research process.

It is worth adding that since many theories and methods of creative community revitalization have been largely influenced by Japan and Taiwan, we also take into account the context and current status of creative community revitalization in Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong, particularly in the part of thematic framework and coolhunting.

In addition, the project is carried out within the framework of the Master's Program in Culture and Communication (Cultura e Comunicação) at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa. Therefore, during the process of data systematization and insights presentation, the socio-cultural Trends 2022 published by the Trends and Cultural Management Laboratory of the University of Lisbon is used as a reference for the macro socio-cultural shifts of this report.

The project consists of three chapters, including a literature review, methodology, and the output of a thematic trend report (i.e., "Creative Community Revitalization Trends Report in mainland China"). Each chapter is described in detail below.

The first chapter consists of two parts, a theoretical framework and a thematic framework. The first part will discuss the understanding of the concept of culture, culture and shared meaning, and the close connection between Trend Studies and Cultural Studies. The second part focuses on the thematic framework of creative community revitalization and will discuss the link between community and identity, summarize the characteristics of creative communities, and the current development of creative community revitalization in China.

In 1.1 and 1.2, we will consider Raymond Williams' "culture is ordinary" (1958), the three definitions of culture (1961) and Stuart Hall's (1997) shared meanings, representations and signifying practices, to arrive at the following operational concept of culture in this report: culture is ordinary, non-privileged, anti-elite, and thus should not be seen as refined or vulgar; culture is social because it expresses certain meanings and values in institutions and daily behaviors; culture is about shared meanings and a set of everyday practices because community members share ideas and values in the process of meaning making through their common daily practices. In this way, the operational concept also establishes relevance to the community that is discussed in the Part. 2.

In 1.3, we will explore the close connection between Trend Studies and Cultural Studies from three perspectives: lexical evolution, theoretical content, and research methods, mainly considering authors such as Devon Powers (2019), Stuart Hall (1973, 1990), Els Dragt (2017), Raymond Williams (1958, 1961), Nelson Gomes, N (2020), Nelson Gomes et al. (2018, 2021a, 2021b), Suzana Cohen (2021), Sandra Rech and Nelson Gomes (2017), Teresa Lobo et al. (2020), Trends and Culture Management Lab (2022), Mason et al. (2015). In terms of lexical evolution, trends and culture have become more linked since the 1960s. In terms of theoretical content and research methods, both Trend and Culture studies are interdisciplinary in nature. Particularly in theoretical content, they both emphasize the zeitgeist or the “structure of feeling” in the research process; and in research methods, they both highlight the nature of finding invisible “patterns” in the visible manifestations in the process of data collection and structural analysis.

In 2.1, we will explore the relationship between community and identity, mainly considering the theories and perspectives of Bell and Newby (1971), Paul James and other authors (2012). It can be argued that a community is a collection of people who share common values, beliefs and meanings engaging in common daily practices, and that people living in the same community create their particular identity or sense of belonging in their daily practices and interactions.

In 2.2, following our assumptions about community, we will conduct a literature review on creative community. We find that there is no clear, standardized definition of the expression, which requires us to understand the meaning of creative community in different research contexts in the relevant literatures, in order to arrive at an operational concept of creative community. Based on Darras (2018) and Florida (2002), Arlene (2006), Kenny, McGrath, and Phillips (2018), Gomez and others (2017), we define the operational concept of creative community in this report as one that has any following characteristics: (1) creative communities are open and diverse, as evidenced by the heterogeneity of community members in terms of nationality, age, generation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.; (2) creative communities are often strongly connected to arts; (3) creative communities have a high relevance to social change or social well-being; (4) creativity points to innovative ways of revitalizing communities, so innovation in approach is also a characteristic of creative communities; (5) economic revitalization, equity, resilience, publicness and change possibility are probably the main reasons for creative community revitalization.

Based on operational concepts of culture and creative community, in 2.3, we refer to a variety of literature and introduce the contextual history and current situation of creative

community revitalization in mainland China in chronological order. It is worth noting that although the geographical region focus and application of this project is mainland China, we cannot ignore the great influence of the community theory and revitalization methods of Japan and Taiwan on mainland China. Therefore, this section will also sort out and add the background and current situation of community revitalization in Japan and Taiwan from various literatures, leading to the corresponding part of mainland China. After the search of various literatures, we can find that creative community is less frequently expressed in the discourse and contexts of China, Taiwan, and Japan, so the theme and its related influence in Taiwan and Japan will be browsed in a broader context first and then turn to the most specific and related parts.

Chapter II consists of two parts, the methodological framework and the project process framework. In the third part, as mentioned before, we will apply three main methods/techniques, namely desk research, interviews and coolhunting. In the fourth part, we will indicate how many phases there are in the project and what are the objectives of each stage.

In 3.1, desk research as a common technique in market research to obtain secondary information in a low-budget and convenient way, provides us with relevant data on the research topic, which is of vital importance. In this section, we consider perspectives of Zofia Bednarowska (2015), Dadhe (2016), Paul Hague and many other authors (2016), as well as trend reports from business sides such as Accenture, Mindshare and IPSOS.

In 3.2, Coolhunting is adopted by many trend researchers as a market research method. Although it may be considered by some to be more suitable for short-term marketing planning, when used as part of an overall trend identification, interpretation and implementation system, it ensures maximum scientific rigor and has value and relevance in the trend research process. Subsequently, we also present several criteria of the Trends and Cultural Management Laboratory for hunting cool signals. In this section, we consider theories from Higham (2009), Vejlgard (2008), Gladwell (1997), Peter A. Gloor and Scott M. Cooper (2007), Els Dragt (2017), Nelson Gomes, Suzana Cohen and Ana Marta Flores (2018), Gomes N. and other authors (2021a, 2021b).

In 3.3, the interview as a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee is a common qualitative research method in social sciences. Taking into account the views of Dadhe (2016), Els Dragt (2017), and the IPSOS business report, we can find that interview as a way of collecting first-hand information provide us with fresher and more targeted information, facilitating the discovery of interrelated points or patterns based on desk research and coolhunting. In this way, we can see that people's needs, attitudes and aspirations may shift in

that direction. It can also be used as a complement to the first two methods/techniques to make this research more authoritative and reliable. In addition, interviews are frequently-used by many experts to study trends, and interviewing experts from specific fields or trend creators, trendsetters and trend followers have all proven to be effective ways of tracing trends.

At the end of each section from 3.1 to 3.3, we will include a description of how each method/technique is applied in this project.

In Part.4, we will clarify that the project is divided into five stages, including locating and defining the topic issue or problem, designing the research project, collecting data, analyzing the structured data, and presenting the findings or insights of the report.

Chapter III is the text version of the output result of this project, i.e. Trends Report: Creative Community Revitalization in the context of mainland China. It contains the collection of all the data under the Desk Research (Part 5), the cool signals (Part 6) and the interviews (Part 7) with the analysis based on the structuring of the data. Finally, the conclusions of the trend report are presented in Part 8, categorized with reference to the five macro-trends of Laboratory of Trends and Cultural Management (Laboratório de Gestão de Tendências e da Cultura). Based on the conclusions, in Part. 9, we have written more action-oriented insights that we hope will provide some inspiration for anyone who is interested in the theme of creative community revitalization in mainland China. In order to achieve better dissemination of the findings and insights, we have visualized the report, which can be viewed in the Appendix.

CHAPTER I - LITERATURE REVIEW

Part.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1 The concept of culture

How can we define culture? Defining culture is a fundamental issue in cultural studies and cultural theory. Many theorists have acknowledged and proven the inner complexity and difficulty of this task (see Williams 1976, Hall 1997, Du Gay et al. 1997). Understanding and defining culture is the starting point of cultural studies, and it is essential for studying socio-cultural trends.

Since the meaning of culture appears to be complex, dynamic, and fluid, it seems that no single definition can fully encompass the concept, given its wide range of applications in everyday life. As a result, culture can have different entry points for different disciplines, making it a term that explains everything and nothing.

Therefore, it is important to understand culture from its etymology and to identify an appropriate entry point for studying cultural trends. This involves examining the evolution of the concept over time and understanding the historical context in which it developed. Additionally, exploring the theories of different scholars in the field of Cultural Studies can help us find connections between Cultural Studies and Trend Studies, as well as with the theme of this project, “Creative Community Revitalization”.

From the etymological point of view, the evolution of *culture* is particularly complex. Cultural theorist and literature critic Raymond Williams points in his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976) that the term of culture was originally linked to cultivation of crops and animals or the idea of taking care (p.77). Du Gay, P. and his colleagues (1997) echo Williams’ etymological backtracking and summarizes the developmental process of this term in a diachronic way. As they (1997, pp.11-12) conclude, the concept of culture has four meaning-shifting historical periods:

During the Enlightenment, culture and civilization were synonyms, describing the universal processes of human development and processes that European civilization had achieved, opposed to those rude, less civilized societies (Du Gay et al, 1997, pp.11). In this sense, ‘culture’ relates to a good taste and a good manner, virtuous in comportment or behavior. In the nineteenth century, ‘culture’ became associated with ‘the specific and variable cultures

of different nations and peoples', and here the meaning emphasized the variety of specific ways of life of groups, peoples, nations and periods. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, under the influence of Matthew Arnold's notable book *Culture and Anarchy*, the meaning of the term has come to be narrow to 'high arts', like philosophy, arts and learning (as opposed to popular culture or mass culture). It can be added that all of the three meanings of culture mentioned upward are still active today. After entering the 20th century, the importance of the humanities and social sciences has increased and can be compared with economic and political factors. This is also the "cultural turn"(Hall, 1997, p.2) that is often mentioned.

From the evolution of the etymological meaning of culture, we can see that the concepts associated with culture have carried different levels of meaning in historical changes, and these meanings are still used in various scenes of daily language use. The understanding of culture is not linear, but complex. From the perspective of Cultural Studies, this also means that we need to start with the definitions of culture by different scholars to find an entry point to study socio-cultural phenomena and trends.

It's worth noting that in this project we do not intend to compare and judge which scholar's concept is more convincing, but to explore and discuss the different understandings of the concept of culture proposed by different scholars from the perspective of Cultural Studies and Trend Studies, thus integrating the reasonable parts into the operating concept of this report. In this way, the thematic topic "creative community revitalisation" can be better understood and researched to some extent.

The first person we are underlining that analyzes the concept of culture systematically is Raymond Williams, who proposes that culture is ordinary and sums up three definitions for culture. The ordinariness of culture is the starting point of understanding the three definitions of culture. In his early work in *Culture is ordinary*, Williams (1958) unfolds his socialist and anti-elitist perspective from a bus journey beside a cathedral to the farming village, where he was born and grew up (p.1). This is a depiction of a living culture, abundant in vivid details of sight, hearing, touch and smell, as well as memories intermingled with colors and all real life goods. Breathing in this specific place and time, he emphasizes repeatedly the ordinary or ordinariness of culture, where culture does not merely belong to the minority, the elitist or ruling class, and there should not be attached with any value judgment. For him, it is arbitrary, unilateral and even biased to separate "culture" into highbrow and lowbrow, and particularly it excludes a way of life and values of ordinary people from the realm of culture (p.3). This ordinary culture means that it is neither against elite culture nor against popular culture.

For the study of socio-cultural trends, this understanding of “culture is ordinary” is crucial. When we view culture from a broader perspective, instead of narrowly thinking of culture as highbrow, it means that culture is no longer a game for the elite, but a window to observe the changes in the living life, like mentalities, perceptions, behaviors and attitudes of the general public.

In addition, Williams (1961, p. 57) divides the complex term culture into three categories: ideal, documentary, and social. The first **ideal** one defines “culture” as the study, state of process of perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values, expressed mainly by Matthew Arnold in his book *Culture and Anarchy* (2006). The second is a “**documentary**” definition of culture, which is related to the discovery, record, evaluation of “the best that has been thought and written in the world”, despite that only a handful of thoughts and experience of human beings can be documented and passed on detailly in different ways. The “**social**” definition of culture has been emphasized by Williams (1961, p.57) and many other scholars. The author argues that it is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meaning and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviors, including refreshingly the organization of production, the structure of the family, the characteristics forms through which members of the society communicate and etc. as a part culture (1961, p.58). Compared with the first two, the third definition of culture is rather wider and embodies a larger possibility of understanding the general “laws” or “trends” by observing and investigating social and cultural developments. And this has also inspired the analysis of trends (there will be a detailed description of the term “trend” later in 1.3 Culture Studies and Trend Studies).

At the same time, according to Du Gay, P., Hall, S. and other scholars (1997), the third definition unfolds the close connection to “collective representations” interpreted by Emile Durkheim (1971, p.10), a significant theorist in the realm of sociology, as “the shared or common meanings, values and norms of particular peoples as expressed in their behavior, rituals, institutions, myths, religious beliefs and art”(p.12). This is consistent with Williams’ (1958, p. 2) emphasis that “culture is ordinary”, and this view is reflected both in the group society and in the individual mind. Individual ideas, attitudes, and behaviors are closely related to the collective mind and the spirit of the times, and individual ideas and meanings can be seen in the social view of the times, while countless individuals construct group meanings and directions that drive social development and shifts; in turn, the changing social view reshapes individual ideas.

Combining this concept with Williams' three definitions of culture, we can see that in human society, peoples from ethnic groups have their own specific common meanings, values and norms, which can be reflected in their behaviors, rituals, religious beliefs, works of art, myths and legends, social systems, family structures, lifestyles, etc. All of this consists of a chain of meanings shared by these particular people, piecing together an overall, socially-detailed "culture".

1.2 Culture and shared meanings

Stuart Hall who was a Jamaican-born Marxist sociologist and one of the fathers of cultural studies followed the steps of former scholars and connected culture with shared meanings and social practices, which is essential to the operational concept of this report.

Stuart Hall (1997) emphasizes the cultural turn in social and human science and indicates that “culture, it is argued, is not so much a set of *things* - novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics - as a process, a set of practices” (p.2). The theorist adds, “cultural meanings are not only ‘in the head’. They organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects.” (p.3). In that case, culture is a dynamic process concerning a series of practices in society undertaken by individuals or a social group, a community or a nation rather than a seemingly immobile, static, still and solid object. Within the dynamic process of culture, the emphasis of production and circulation of meanings among people is important. It is worth noticing that the meaning-making process is not fixed and practices that produce meaning are always changing.

Stuart Hall (1997) introduces several ways of giving people, objects and events meanings, for instance, by framework of interpretation, by how we use them, integrate them into our everyday practices, or by how we represent them. These practices are involved in this meaning-making process and are “organized, guided and framed by meaning”, which is called “signifying practices” by Du Gay, P., Hall, S. and other scholars (1997, p.18). Notably, these “signifying practices” are socially and culturally significant and are completely different from what we deem pure actions of behavior. Just as Du Gay, P., Hall, S. and other scholars (1997) mention, there is an obvious difference between mere behavior and social actions elaborated by Max Weber in the *Methodology of the Social Science* (1949, p.46). According to their interpretation, mere behavior is no more than a biological action, and all the creatures in the world are able to react in this way, just like human being’s instinctive knee-jerk reactions. On the contrary, social actions are deemed to be relevant to meaning, which is culturally significant (Du Gay et al., 1997, p.18). Thus, we human beings have been giving and producing meanings and values to events, people and objects through our daily practices, rather than passively being driven by genetics. This point is also mentioned by Stuart Hall (1997, p.3).

Stuart Hall (1997) also points out that all these practices happening in our social daily life are meaning and value-contained for us, and they “need to be meaningfully interpreted and shared by other people” as well (p.3). However, it doesn’t mean that one particular thing, event, action, people or anything else can be comprehended by whoever in the world. These making

sense for us do not necessarily mean something for others who are not sharing the same system of representations with us. Only the shared meaning can be agreed on and interpreted meaningfully among a group of people then can a real community be established. The consensus can be shared by different kind of communities, for instance, a handful of people who have the same interests like Tai Chi, people who are all followers of an opinion influencer in the social media, people from the same building, block or neighborhood, people of the same ethnic group, nation or country, people who speak the same language, people who have some belief and people who have the similar experience or share large human emotions (like peace or love), surpassing the language barriers and geographical boundaries. Stuart Hall (1997) explains the reason in a straightforward way why the concept of culture can be defined as “shared meanings” or “shared conceptual maps” (p.18). According to Hall, people have their particular way to perceive and interpret the world, and only they can broadly share a series of connected concepts through which they share a better understanding of the world, can they express themselves as well as pass on their message to other people. Therefore, belonging to the same culture can be comprehended as living in a particular social world where a group of people share and interpret roughly (encode and decode) similar cultural meanings.

Summarily, on the basis of Raymond Williams’ groundbreaking contributions to the concept of culture, Stuart Hall associates culture with shared meaning and signifying practices, which is quite different from previous scholars and has also constructed the theoretical basis of Cultural Studies. Meaning is produced and circulated in a dynamic process, changing as people give and take meaning to things, and meaning is produced and transmitted in particular everyday practices. In it, all participants compete, negotiate and agree on common meanings in order to produce and interpret meanings, integrating diverse understandings, perceptions and their intentions.

The operational concept of *culture*

For this report, we start from Raymond Williams’ “Culture is ordinary” perspective, a broader focus on culture. This concern is not highbrow or elite, but rather a more ordinary and day-to-day understanding. Behind this ordinary lies a focus for the “social” properties of culture, that is a comprehensive analysis of the general patterns and trends behind surface phenomena/expressions. Finally, we must also consider the connection of culture to shared meanings, signifying practices and systems of representation, in other words, the processes by which culture is constructed in dynamic practices.

The report's operational concept is derived from these three summaries of what “culture” means: culture is ordinary, non-privileged, anti-elite, and therefore should not be seen as refined or vulgar; culture is social because it expresses certain meanings and values in institutions and everyday behaviors; culture is about shared meanings and a set of everyday practices because community members share ideas and values in the meaning-making process through their shared day-to-day practices.

1.3 Trend Studies and Cultural Studies

The term “trend” is frequently mentioned in modern society. In this project, we focus on socio-cultural trends rather than industry-specific trends, such as pharmaceutical trends and military forecasts. However, the relationship between trends and culture is complex and dynamic, and the two have both differences and commonalities. Therefore, for the relationship between Trend Studies and Cultural Studies, this section focuses on three perspectives: word evolution, theoretical content and research methodology.

From the perspective of lexical evolution

In terms of background or origin, the word “trend” has a very rich connotation and evolutionary process, and is not connected to culture (especially consumer culture, popular culture) from the beginning, but in a process of gradual development.

Devon Powers (2019) describes its meaning as a general course, tendency, drift or an existence in ideas or behaviors in the **late nineteenth century** (p.4). Subsequently, given that social science has sprouted in the **early twentieth-century**, trends transformed into a more quantitative, statistical and data-related existence. And it was only after the **middle twentieth century** that the understanding of trends gradually shifted from a quantitative to a more qualitative perspective, which the authors analyze as being behind the growing culture of consumption, the stratification of social groups, and the widespread acceptance of anthropological notions of culture (p. 33). During this period, trends began to become intrinsic to consumerism, understood as “contemporary taste, style or consumption patterns and behaviors” (p.33).

After the 1960s, this connection began with the three definitions of culture proposed by Raymond Williams (1961, p. 57), which we described in 1.1, namely, culture as ideal, documentary and social. The third of these definitions, “culture is social”, is to be emphasized here, meaning that it is possible to discover “universal laws or trends” through analyzing the patterns of changes. In this way, all socio-cultural shifts can be observed and studied as a whole, which inspires the understanding and analysis of trends.

Beginning in this period, the generalized term “trend” could be applied into a variety of contexts, referring to any movement or change both in academic and business world. In the field of higher education, trends are beneficial for social science researchers to observe and analyze wide-range and long-term social shifts in both quantitative and qualitative ways. According to Powers (2019), the term “trend” can be found in many social science references

around the twentieth century (p.27). For business people, particularly marketers, trends are considered to be a plausible tool to “manage instability”, as Powers (2019, p.5) adds, which is rooted in our fast-moving modern society and to seize business opportunities by identifying consumers’ changing behaviors and attitudes. We can see that during this period, with the rise and development of mass media and globalization, “trend” bred in the flourishing consumer culture has gradually become a “barometer” to observe the dynamic development of new things in the consumer society.

Subsequently, this focus on mobility and uncertainty in modern society has not only attracted the business sector of government, but also has spawned the vigorous development of socio-cultural trend forecasting related industries. According to Powers’s investigation (2019, pp.4-5), trend forecasters, trend analyst, trend spotter, coolhunter, cultural strategist, innovation director, brand consultant.....A great number of professionals related to trend, cool, brand and innovation have made obscure and indispensable contributions to constitute a flourishing trend industry since the 1970s. For them, trend forecasting can be used to help them understand the changing attitudes, behaviors and needs of their customers, leading to lucrative profits or better business management. What they do briefly to resonate with trends is basically discovering trends, explaining them, predicting them and even manufacturing them (Powers, 2019, p.3). Along with related practices in the media, government agencies, and the fashion industry, the first two decades of the 21st century have seen a significant increase in trend forecasting agencies, strategic consulting firms, and the many professions associated with working with trends, especially in more economically and culturally dynamic places. They provide the business world with novel insights to take the pulse of the social and cultural changes of the times.

From the perspective of theoretical content

Trends embedded in consumer culture have become the object of discussion and analysis for many researchers in the academy, and Trend Studies has become an interdisciplinary course or is considered an emerging approach. And the study of trends is to some extent also very closely related to the study of culture. And among them, the close relationship between Cultural Studies and Trend Studies in terms of theoretical content has been repeatedly confirmed by researchers.

One important reason is that Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field, as it incorporates theories from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, media studies, communication studies, literary studies, political science and many others. Taking

anthropology as an example, cultural studies draws on anthropological theories to understand how culture is produced, consumed, and circulated across societies and historical periods. In Cultural Studies scholar Stuart Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990), he uses the anthropological concept of "cultural hybridity" to analyze the experience of the British diaspora. He considers that diasporic identity is characterized by a hybridity between their home culture and the dominant culture of the host society. Taking Media studies as another example, Cultural Studies draws on Media studies to understand how media shape cultural identities and practices, and the ways in which media are produced and consumed. In Angela McRobbi's (2008) *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, one of the main theories she draws on is Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding. She uses Media studies theory to analyze how media representations of femininity have changed over time and how they relate to broader social change in gender roles and expectations.

The diversity of disciplines makes Cultural Studies a rich and comprehensive field of study, full of fascination and complexity. Similarly, Trend Studies is also an interdisciplinary field that draws on a range of theories from different disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, consumer culture, diffusion theory, and marketing, among others. It aims to be used to identify and analyze patterns of change in various areas of human life and society, such as fashion, lifestyles, consumer behavior and attitudes, as well as changes in values. For example, Devon Powers (2019) focuses specifically on the cultural trends forecasting industry (cultural trends) to conduct research that draws from a diverse academic spectrum of business history, Cultural Studies, future studies, Media studies, branding and marketing in an attempt to explain how the business of trends is shaping consumer culture and the future.

In addition to the interdisciplinary nature of both Trend Studies and Cultural Studies, we can also discover the connection between them by looking at specific concepts and theories in Trend Studies. Gomes et al. (2021a) present the study of trends as a perspective or analytical process for socio-cultural dynamics, aiming to understand changes in people's particular attitude or way of thinking, as well as key patterns in behavior related to representation, practices and objects. Through a literature review, Gomes and other authors (2021a) argue that Trend Studies is closely associated with Cultural Studies and that the former is a method with specific objectives in the latter's pluralistic field of investigation. Rech and Gomes (2017) consider Trend Studies as an emerging interdisciplinary field aiming to understand the socio-cultural dynamics that articulate with disciplines such as Cultural Studies, design, marketing, fashion studies, sociology and anthropology, so as to explore the relationship between trends and *zeitgeist* or the spirit of time. It can be added that *zeitgeist* is a word that comes directly

from German: “zeit” meaning “time” and “geist” meaning “spirit”. *Zeitgeist* is a set of beliefs and ideas that have been passed down over a certain period of time, reflecting a culture, a religion, a society, and the current state of the people of that time. Els Dragt (2017) likewise mentions the keyword *zeitgeist*. While she deems that most social studies attempts to investigate human social life in its broadest sense, trends research focuses specifically on studying changes in groups and societies. It examines the *zeitgeist* of change as it occurs, rather than looking through the past to analyze changes that have already occurred (p. 39). Els Dragt’s interview with Tessa Cramer, Academic and Senior Lecturer Trend Research at Fontys ILS, also mentions the need for trend research to be sensitive to the spirit of the times (p. 26). All of the literature emphasizes the connection and distinction between social studies and trend research, and again draws our attention to the critical significance of the term “zeitgeist” for Trend Studies.

Another keyword similar to *zeitgeist* is “*structure of feeling*”, which was coined by Cultural Studies scholar Raymond Williams (1961, p.53). In a nutshell, it can be described as the culture of a period that encompasses the totality of all daily behaviors, practices, and activities in a particular time and place, which can be reflected in people of that generation (p. 53). As Williams (1961) put it:

It is only in our own time and place that we can expect to know, in any substantial way, the general organization. We can learn a great deal of the life of other places and times, but certain elements, it seems to me, will always be irrecoverable. Even those that can be recovered are recovered in abstraction, and this is of crucial importance. We learn each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole. The most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living. (p.52)

It can be said that both *zeitgeist* or the spirit of time represent the unique characteristics or aura of a specific time and space, reflecting the subtle but ubiquitous spirituality belonging to a specific era. At the same time this means that culture is “a whole way of life” (Williams, 1961, p.52), and every aspect of human lifestyle contains the aura of culture. This “living culture” can only be felt by people living in a certain area at that time and cannot be summarized in words or some art form. Raymond Williams (1961) goes on to describe it as “a particular sense of life”:

A particular community of experience hardly needing expression, through which the characteristics of our way of life that an external analyst could describe are in some way passed, giving them a particular and characteristic colour. (p. 52)

When the witnesses of that particular time and place die, the living culture belonging to that time is distilled into a few selective documents, but they are only a small part of the living culture of the original time. The past era will inevitably be distilled and selected by future generations, and the present era cannot preserve all the cultural details for future generations. Even expert scholars can only understand the culture of that era through the relatively limited documentation available. As Williams illustrates, one could argue that no one knows anything about 19th century novels because almost no one has read all of it, including individual publications and newspaper serials (p.53). Furthermore, Williams (1961) emphasizes that all that is known are selected social facts of the current era, and that the populace of the time has an aura that cannot be replicated by future generations (p.53). It is for this reason that he uses the “structure of feeling” to describe the living life in a specific time and space, providing a subtle and pervasive overview of the spirituality of each period. This concept, just like the spirit of the time or *zeitgeist* mentioned earlier, provides the theoretical basis for a precise and comprehensive distillation of the universal laws and trends that resonate with the times.

From the above discussion, we can see that although both Trend Studies and Cultural Studies are aimed at studying various fields of human life and society, Trend Studies focus on analyzing and identifying future trends or patterns of change from past and present data, concerned with the *zeitgeist* and directed toward the future; whereas Cultural Studies aims to understand and explain cultural phenomena in different contexts, including language, beliefs, values, institutions, and symbols, without necessarily having the *structure of feeling* of the current generation. However, due to the interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies and Trend Studies and many similarities and articulations in theories, particularly emphasizing keywords like *zeitgeist* or *structure of feeling*, we can say that they are closely connected to each other in terms of theoretical contents, so they have many points of reference.

From the perspective of research method

Trend Studies and Cultural Studies are not only closely related in terms of theoretical content, but also have many similarities and articulations in terms of methods.

In a manner parallel to that from a theoretical content perspective, Cultural Studies is methodologically interdisciplinary in nature. It draws on research methods from fields such as sociology, anthropology, literary studies, media studies, and philosophy to explain cultural

phenomena. Similarly, Trend Studies is interdisciplinary in its research methodology (Gomes, N. et al, 2018, p. 87), being heavily inspired by ethnography (e.g., semi-structured interviews, participant observation, etc.), cultural studies (e.g., semiotics, content analysis, etc.) (Gomes, N. et al, 2021a, p. 255; Gomes, N. et al, 2021b, p. 213).

Specifically, methods in Cultural Studies include (1) textual analysis, which involves a close reading of the life content production (films, television programs, music, literature, and advertisements, etc.) to reveal their underlying meanings and messages. For example, Stuart Hall's (1973) "Encoding/Decoding model" explores how media messages are encoded for meaning by producers and decoded by audiences in different ways. (2) Ethnography, such as conducting interviews, fieldwork, and participant observation, involves studying cultural manifestations and experiences through observation and participation in daily life in order to gain a deeper understanding of cultural practices and beliefs. Dick Hebdige (2012)'s *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* is a good example, where he uses participant observation to examine how punk rock fans in the UK use clothing and fashion to express resistance to dominant cultural norms. (3) Historical analysis, which involves the study of the historical context in which cultural phenomena emerge and change over time, helping us to understand the social, political, and economic forces that shape cultural practices and beliefs. For example, Raymond Williams' (1958) *Culture and Society*, in which he examines the historical development of culture and its relationship to social and economic structures. (4) Cultural semiotics, which involves the study of signs and symbols in cultural artifacts and how they convey meaning, can help reveal the underlying cultural values and beliefs that shape cultural phenomena. For example, Roland Barthes' (2015) *Mythologies*, in which he analyzes how cultural myths are constructed and perpetuated through the signs and symbols of everyday life.

As can be seen, these Cultural Studies methods imply looking at the everyday, subtle, superficial, and visible cultural discourses or practices to find potential points of contact that lead to a deeper, more abstract and essential level. This has something in common with the "patterns" emphasized by Raymond Williams (1961). He defines the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life (p.52), which requires discovering patterns and the relationships between patterns. Just as he put it:

It is with the discovery of patterns of a characteristic kind that any useful cultural analysis begins, and it is with the relationship between these patterns, which sometimes reveal unexpected identities and correspondences in hitherto separately considered activities, sometimes again reveal discontinuities of an unexpected kind, that general cultural analysis is concerned. (p.52)

Williams' view bridges the gap between Cultural Studies and Trend Studies by analyzing the nature of invisible change to discover "patterns" in the visible socio-cultural phenomenon. This idea of analyzing the "invisible" from the "visible" offers greater possibilities for Trend Studies to analyze long-term changes rather than fads. This is consistent with the way Cultural Studies analyzes how culture shapes and reflects social, political, and economic structures in terms of the underlying meanings and messages in texts, discourses, and practices from cultural phenomena.

Meanwhile, Els Dragt (2017) has expressed a similar view. She argues that a trend is a direction of change in values and needs which is driven by forces and already manifests itself in various ways within certain groups in society (Dragt, 2017, p.14). More specific, she considers the key elements of a trend are: direction of change, values and needs of people, forces or drivers, manifestations of change which can be observed via environmental "scan"³, and certain groups that generate innovations and lead the trend (Dragt, 2017, pp.36-37). In this way, we can spot manifestations that emerge in various places in the social and cultural fabric, often through certain styles, language, behaviors, new services or products, etc. According to Dragt (2017), analysis is about comparing your spots and noticing differences and similarities that point towards certain patterns, with the aim of better understanding what is happening in society today and how this will affect the future. During the analysis, she reminds us to be mindful of making connections and finding relationships between manifestations that may not seem related at first glance (p. 106). This also emphasizes our ability to penetrate nature and find inner "patterns".

In addition, Devon Powers (2019) also points out in her book the indispensable value of "patterns" for tracing socio-cultural trends, where the entire socio-cultural context interacts with the dynamics of patterns consisting of a set of ideas, beliefs, behaviors, and lifestyles (p. 34). She summarizes a three-step approach to analyzing trends. First, trend forecasters need to assimilate a large amount of information in a social and cultural context. Second, it is necessary for them to discover possible correlations and patterns in a discontinuous manner. Third, trend workers tend to tell a coherent story about the world through a series of patterns (Powers, 2019,

³ In Els Dragt's (2017) view, there are three key stages in studying trends: scan, analysis, and apply, corresponding to three goals: detect, understand, and act. During the scan process, researchers need to be sensitive to what is happening and use different data sources. After the first phase of gathering a vast amount of data, we need to do a deep dive into our findings and uncover potential changes in their value and demand, which may reveal meaningful patterns of change from seemingly discontinuous performance. Finally, there is the apply phrase, where trend researchers need to generate business innovations based on trend insights that have a general or specific purpose (p.53).

p. 87). In these three steps, “patterns” as a high-frequency word reveals the relationship between Trend Studies and Cultural Studies.

In the business world, the trend industry practitioners Els Dragt interviewed also emphasized the importance of finding “patterns”. Niels van der Burg, Global Category Insights Manager at Asics, said, “To me analyzing trends is about deleting and adding data, combining information and looking for an overlap.” (Dragt, 2017 , p. 106). As can be seen, the intrinsic texture of the “overlap” and “pattern” described here is similar, both looking for their similar commonalities in the ocean of information.

It is worth mentioning that Trends studies, originally more prevalent in the business world, is now beginning to be absorbed into the high-education system or as a separate course in some institutions, but still in relatively small numbers. For example, the Culture and Communication Program of the School of Arts and Humanities - University of Lisbon (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa) offers various seminars, events, activities and post-graduate training to understand changes in mentalities, attitudes and behaviors, so as to generate insights and strategic guidelines to stimulate possible social change and business innovation. The program highlights the possibility of combining Trend Studies with Cultural Studies, especially inspired by concepts and methods from the social sciences. The program has grown rapidly in the last eleven years. On the basis of the laboratory's home page⁴, the program had its roots in FLUL with a specialization program in Trends and Communication, and then a new Postgraduate Course in Creative Industries and Cultures in 2016. Subsequently, the Trends and Culture Management Laboratory (Laboratório de Gestão de Tendências e da Cultura) was also established, along with more collaborations, communications and contributions⁵ in both theories and practices in recent years. Particularly, publications in the intersection framework of Cultural Studies and Trends studies, including academic journals, master or doctoral theses, course papers, annual reports, etc. The researchers encompass not only professors, PhD and MA students from the University of Lisbon, but also many other collaborated researchers from future-minded universities or institutions. We can see in some of the next research results the possibility of a methodological interface between Cultural Studies and Trends studies.

⁴ See website: <http://creativecultures.letras.ulisboa.pt/index.php/gtc-sobre/>, consulted on March 1st in 2022.

⁵ For example, the birth of project “Creative Cultures: Cities, Trends, Strategies” cooperated with FBAUL and ESCS-IPL, the launch of the first trend report in 2020 entitled “socio-cultural Trends: A Map of Macro and Micro Trends 2020” as well as the online discussion took place among researchers from five counties in the first edition of the Trends and Culture Management Colloquium in May 2021. See <http://creativecultures.letras.ulisboa.pt/index.php/gtc-sobre/>, consulted the part of “our history” on March 1st in 2022.

Gomes, N (2020) wrote an article about the methods and concepts of textual analysis, Trend Studies and Cultural branding in the context of Cultural analysis, namely *Cultural Analysis and the Study of Trends in Brand Communication and Management: an advertising case study within a semiotic context*. On the basis of the Gucci Fall/Winter 2017-18 campaign video *Gucci and Beyond* as a case study, he proposes a methodological articulation between Cultural Studies and Trend Studies: the ability to identify not only the symbolic narrative networks that exist in brand communication, but also the cultural elements that constitute them and the socio-cultural trends behind them. Suzana Cohen (2021), a researcher in the lab, builds on the articulation between Cultural Studies and Trend Studies, by using the Circuit of Culture proposed by du Gay and many authors as a methodological protocol, with the American space company SpaceX as case study for a cultural analysis of the manifestations of trends.

In addition, the Trends and Culture Management Laboratory keeps tracking socio-cultural trends on a yearly basis, with the latest issue being *socio-cultural Trends 2022*⁶. It is known that the annual report, which has been published since 2020, is a collaborative effort between professors and students in the lab and is currently in its third year, with research findings added or subtracted each year based on the dynamic socio-cultural environment. In the report, the researchers conducted a long-term trend tracking and analysis through methods or techniques like Desk Research, Media Clipping, *Coolhunting*, Audiovisual Analysis, surveys and interviews, combining both quantitative and qualitative research. The findings include five developing or emerging macro trends, which are Anchored narratives, Protagonist identities, Ergonomic Connections, Sustainable systems and Lifestyle Redesign. Under each macro trend are contained several micro trends with different focus that serve as directions of change. All the trends represent certain shifts in people's mentalities, attitudes and behaviors in the context of social and cultural dynamics. The five macro trends have their inner complexity in that they are not merely isolated trends but can be comprehended as a combination of one or more micro trends. For example, the macro trend "Anchored Narratives" focuses on repositories of symbolic anchors and narrative construction processes, through which brands, spaces, communities are engaged to generate new relationships, experiences and stories. The socio-cultural trends map is not only a concrete example of Cultural Studies and Trends studies drawing on each other's theories and methods, but is also important for this project, since it plays a fundamental and referenceable role at both the macro and micro levels.

⁶ The digital publication can be accessed: <http://creativecultures.lettras.ulisboa.pt/index.php/gtc-trends2022/>.

Apart from annual report, in the light of systematized research, Gomes et al. (2021a) enhance the process of identifying mindsets and socio-cultural trends by putting forward a theory-methodology integrating a set of organized ideas/perspectives from various scholars within the scope of Trend analysis and strategy, in order to generate innovative ideas and practice of products and services. They classify the whole process into four clear phase, they are:

Phase 1 – Context: cultural analysis and data collection. In this initial stage, we intend to get informed of the state of art of socio-cultural dynamics, starting from principle key-words or themes to primary hypotheses (p.246). In this case, three methods/techniques are proposed to data collection, including Desk Research, *Coolhunting* and an ethnographic method urban immersion (pp.251-256).

Phase 2 - Systematization of Information. In this stage, Gomes, N. and many other authors (2021a) highlight the importance of both systematizing and interpreting data. Systematizing data means using the data collected in the Phase 1 on the basis of their similarities (p.256). That is to say, putting information into different clusters which represent correspondent patterns composed of similar meanings, mindsets, behaviors and practices. Just as Higham (2009) put it, “effective trend interpretation is a systematic process” (p.50). At the same time, we could not isolate systematization of information from interpretation since it helps us understand the inner meaning of data so that we can make connections between them. In this way, we are able to create a cohesive nature by the patterns or systematized information clusters (Gomes, N. et al, 2021a, pp.257-258), which embodies a possibility to transform these visible manifestations/information into invisible emerging or developing mentalities and ideas. Additionally, in Mason and other authors’ (2015, p.112) view, this phase contains two possible ways. One is associating new registrations to a trend that has already been identified, the other is identifying a new pattern when keeping track of new registrations.

Phase 3 - Trend Architecture. In this stage, we intend to construct trends on the basis of systematized information of Phase 2, including not only the name and brief description of trends, but also respective contexts and characteristics. Gomes, N. and many other authors (2021a) consider this phase as a way to understand the invisible field, the collectivemindset that is the basis of the socio-cultural trend and that inhabits the collective imagination (p.258)⁷.

⁷ Our translation from Portuguese. The original text is: “Isto implica compreender o campo do invisível, a mentalidade coletiva que é a base da tendência sociocultural e que habita o imaginário coletivo. A ligação entre os padrões que apontam para a mesma mudança, significado e, por fim, mentalidade, indica as várias componentes que permitem descrever a tendência”.

Phase 4 - Confirmation and Discussion of DNA and Text of Trend. In this stage, there are already several trend hypotheses, so the task here is to confirm whether a series of our judgments are rather reasonable and whether there's any part for reviewing, proving, validating and revising. During the confirmation process, it is beneficial for analysts to conduct more discussions between colleagues and specialists within the scope of Trend Studies, experts from specific areas. Meanwhile, pertinent perspectives from technology, economy, politics, to art and literature are more than welcomed in the course of discussion. Besides, the forms of discussion are also varied, such as revising individually or in a group. In the end, Nelson Gomes and many other authors (2021a) underline the importance of revising the name and description of trends, in order to guarantee a reasonable articulation of data and interpretation as well as the construction of a clear narrative that can cluster various identified characteristics pertinent to the nature of trends⁸.

In summary, although Cultural Studies and Trend Studies are different fields of study with different research focuses and approaches, they also have many overlaps and articulations that are important for understanding and explaining the complex and dynamic changes in mentalities, attitudes, and behaviors of human life and society.

⁸ Our translation from Portuguese. The original text is: “O importante a sublinhar é que tanto a titulação como a descrição da tendência e o próprio estudo devem ser revistos e discutidos entre pares e especialistas, de forma a assegurar (1) uma correta articulação dos vários dados e das interpretações e (2) a construção de uma narrativa clara que aglomere as várias características identificadas no que diz respeito à natureza da tendência”.

Part.2 Thematic Framework

2.1 Community and identity

In our lives, “community” is everywhere, such as diverse ethnic communities, geographically-defined community education programmes, the larger international community, and so on. On the basis of American sociologist George Hillery (1955)’s statistical research on community-related literature, there were 94 definitions of community in 1955 and then the figure surged to more than 140 in 1981 (p.111). It can be said that the term “community” has become one of the most frequently used and ambiguous terms nowadays. Therefore, it is not surprising that understanding a community is such an arduous task.

In the 19th century, German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) proposed two concepts *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (roughly translated as Community and Society), which is a noteworthy and remarkable dichotomy in sociology with an aim to differentiate the types of society before and after the The Industrial Revolution. In his perspective, *Gemeinschaft* emphasizes personal social interactions, as well as the roles, values and beliefs based on such interactions, characterized by a natural will (p.33). The typical example is a traditional rural community , within which a group of people share a similar system of beliefs, values, habits and rituals, representing an intimate, supportive interpersonal relationship. Whereas *Gesellschaft* is based on a significant consideration and evaluation of interpersonal interests, characterized by a rational will (p.34). For instance, in modern society people form social connections and organizational methods through interests and contracts. Despite the fact that it sounds sane and action-oriented, it can sometimes be manifested as a selfish interpersonal relationship that lacks emotional communication and care. This problem is particularly prominent in modern cities.

Along with industrialization, both developing and developed countries have entered a rapid urbanization process. The human world has moved from a “community” to a “society”, becoming more and more modern, independent and rational. However, the connection and mutual trust between people in the community have been slowly dissipating. Interestingly, the “social atomism”, which sociologists borrowed from the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus and the Roman philosopher Lucretius, expresses a similar view. It describes a more individualized society that is careless about other living people in the same world. The shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* prompts us to think: what kind of communities are urgently

needed in modern society? What kind of community is the ideal community for people to live in? In fact, it all boils down to the perspective from which we view *community*.

In this project, we argue for a theoretical and conceptual approach to the study of culture, in which *community* is seen in the context of Cultural Studies, as a follow-up to the project. In this sense, we need to take into account Bell and Newby's (1971) and Paul James and others' (2012) understanding of the definition of community.

Bell and Newby mention in their noted book *Community studies: An introduction to the sociology of the local community*, that "Community is, first, a place, and second, a configuration as a way of life, both as to how people do things and what they want, to say, their institutions and goals" (Bell and Newby, 1971, p.30). This definition attaches importance to human subjectivity and initiative, and seems to agree that the community contains the possibility of creativity. Furthermore, they consider community as a physical space as well as an arrangement of a particular lifestyle, which can exactly relate to the concept of culture as a whole way of life (Williams, 1961, p.52). On the basis of Williams' point of view, culture is ordinary and is a whole way of life, thus culture exists in every inch of our living space and the community is the closest space that fits our daily life. In this case, community is closely related to culture, and thus it is important and necessary to look at community from the perspective of Cultural Studies.

James and other authors broadly define community as "a group or network of persons who are connected (objectively) to each other by relatively durable social relations that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties and who mutually define that relationship (subjectively) as important to their social identity and social practice" (James, P. et al., 2012, p.14). For one thing, realistically speaking, a community can be established by social networks, such as blood relationship, neighbor relationship or friend relationship, etc. For another, it is particularly salient that an individual defines his/her role, values and beliefs on the basis of their relatively long-term social interaction in the community. People in the same community do not exist independently, since their values, roles and beliefs in the community are confirmed through their relationships with other people in it, which also guides them to make corresponding practices. According to Stuart Hall (1997, p.5), representation is closely connected to both identity and knowledge, and symbolic practices can give meaning or expressions to the idea of belonging or identification of a certain community. In this case, when individuals living in the same community exchange information, participate in the same activities, come across in local stores/bars and chat about things happening around, they interact with other people through

language⁹. By using language, a group of individuals give things, events, practices, people, objects meanings and values by the way they represent them. During this meaning making, producing and circulating process, a particular identity is constructed through meaning, values, beliefs and practices shared by a group of people. Once each person injects individual emotional memory into a physical place and shares his/her feelings, practices, values and opinions with other people, this place then becomes a real community shaped by collective memory consisting of meanings and values.

Given all that, it can be summarized that a community is a group of people that share values, beliefs and meanings and that are involved in common daily practices. Meanwhile, people living in the same community create their particular identity or a sense of belonging in daily practices and interactions. This identity is different from the one in a pure “*Gemeinschaft*” in the traditional rural area proposed by Tönnies. The identity was disparaged by Le Corbusier, an architect and urban planner who praised highly on modern, functional and rational buildings without regard to any social interactions around the 1950s and 1960s. Nowadays, if we ask ourselves what is an ideal community, we may consider from a Cultural Studies perspective, that it is a humanized community, a community revitalized by constant social interactions, community that involves our values, meanings and practices, a community that we are proud of, a community shaped by our collective memories as well as a community represented and condensed by our particular identity.

⁹ Language there is not a strict meaning of written or spoken words, but a broad sense of language that refers to any system of representation, such as photography, painting, speech, writing, imaging through technology, drawing, etc (Du Gay et al., 1997, p.13)

2.2 Creative Community

As mentioned in the previous section, there is a wealth of literature on communities, so we narrow our view to *creative communities* rather than *cultural communities*.

One reason is because the word “cultural” itself has a rich and entwined meaning, which tends to make the scope of research too large, while the meaning of “creative” points more to the content of creativity and innovation, with a smaller perspective, and is more closely related to the socio-cultural trend studies. Secondly, culture and creativity are often discussed together, for example, the European Union has proposed the important role of culture and creative industries (CCI) in the economic and competitive development of developed and developing countries. Therefore, creativity and culture are closely related, and it is reasonable to discuss *creative communities* under the framework of Cultural Studies.

Our literature reviews on creative communities reveal that there is a wide variety of discussions on creative cities and creative industries, but no clear, standardized definition of creative community exists. According to Darras (2018), it varies according to historical, geographical, economic, technological, operational, and political contexts (p. 2). Therefore, this requires us to understand the meaning of creative community in different contexts in the literature in order to arrive at an operational concept of creative community in this report.

In his book, Richard Florida (2010) argues forcefully that human creativity has become the most important factor of production in the new economy, and that the era of the creative economy has arrived (p. 247). The book defines a class of creative people whose job is to create new ideas, new technologies and new creative content (p. 77). At the same time, the author finds that in a mobile world, creative people are concentrated in a few fixed places or cities. The creative communities they actively choose to live in are usually characterized by **openness and diversity**, such as different races and ethnicities, different gender groups, etc.

Arlene Goldbard (2006) presents how art works in community and changes American society in the book entitled *New creative community: The art of cultural development*. She argues that the arts are an emerging way of promoting social shifts compared to traditional ways especially for those who are not visible to mainstream society. This community-based art can help these marginalized people express and create with everything they hold dear - their minds and bodies, their histories and relationships, their deepest meanings and beliefs. In the process, they may become aware of common concerns and are more likely to act for their own benefit. This is what Arlene Goldbard calls art a compelling tool for self-awareness and self-declaration

(p. 14). Thus, we can see that for Arlene Goldbard, a new creative community is one that can use art as a means to promote social change. And there is a strong emphasis on the concern for the marginalized and their identity. Here, creative communities are closely linked to **art and social change or social well-being**.

EF Rodriguez Gomez and other authors (2017) use models to identify the development of cultural and creative industries in Madrid communities in the context of digitalization from the aspects of competitiveness, investment, employment and social cohesion, so as to understand the contribution of community culture to provide creative public policies for local employment opportunities and well-being in the Madrid community (p. 295). Here, the authors have a more macroscopic focus, going beyond the creative community itself to focus on the links among the development of cultural and creative industries, **policy and social well-being**.

Sue Kenny, Brian McGrath and Rhonda Phillips have co-edited *the Routledge Handbook of Community Development* (2018). In the book, they present a range of interdisciplinary theories and selected research examples, including contextualized insights from different parts of the world. The book is organized thematically, with *Culture and Creative Expression in Community Development* being one of the chapters related to the theme of this report. In this chapter, there are many case studies, including: (1) Crawshaw and Gkartzios undertook an arts and rural development project in an island community in northeast England. Using a community framework of practices, meanings, people, spaces and structures, the authors reveal the centrality of the **arts** in the participatory process of development. (2) Gley Atienza and Robbie Guevara discuss approaches to revitalizing Filipino communities. They argue that an approach based solely on celebrating fun is too technical, and that a reconceptualized culture-based approach may be able to stimulate community change. (3) Meade's analysis of public art projects in Irish urban communities illustrates how art can stimulate the collective imagination and create a democratic public space. In a society awash with social media, branding and narcissistic impulses, community art provides a space to celebrate and showcase the sensory character and nature of communities. As a form of inclusive community development, it aims to foster the values of empowerment, participation and process. (4) Tom Borrup is interested in exploring issues of community equity and resilience through cultural regions. He suggests that community-related practitioners and local policy makers should focus not only on the physical aspects of communities, such as land use, housing types, transportation, employment, and walkable communities, but also on the development of **social capital and civic capacity**. Therefore, he proposes to organize effective partnerships in the context of thematic neighborhoods or cultural districts, which can be achieved through

highly participatory, creative planning and community engagement practices. He proposes the idea of horizontal networks as a way to nurture the creative sector and bring about equitable, resilient communities. Through three case studies in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Miami, he explores the dimensions of creative and thematic communities and regions, and encourages other communities to integrate creative arts-based approaches into their community development efforts. (5) Inspired by the concept of cultural capital, Daniel Teghe seeks to explain how the *Anakie Gemfields* community in Australia recovered from economic decline by exploring the uniqueness of community cultural capital. This is a good study case provided by authors to demonstrate how cultural capital can be integrated with a community development approach.

As can be seen from the above overview, first, the strong association of creative communities with the arts and social well-being/social change has been validated. Second, depending on the goals of the community revitalization, different community stakeholders will use different creative approaches to revitalize creative communities. Thus, it seems that creativity is more of an approach to change, innovation and breakthrough rather than limited to a specific type of community. Third, in terms of community revitalization goals, recovering from economic decline, creating more equitable, resilient communities and a democratic public space, as well as stimulating the development of transformative communities are some of the more important reasons.

To summarize, in conjunction with the discussion of community and identity in 2.1, we define the operational concept of creative community in this report as having the following characteristics: (1) Creative communities are **open and diverse**, as evidenced by the heterogeneity of community members in terms of nationality, age, generation, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.; (2) Creative communities are often very closely linked to the **arts**; (3) Creative communities have a high relevance to **social change or social well-being**; (4) Creativity points to innovative ways of revitalize communities, so **innovation in approach** may also be a characteristic of creative communities; (5) From the perspective of the **purpose** of creative community revitalization, **economic boost, equity, resilience, publicness and social transformation** may be more predominant.

As mentioned earlier, creative communities have different goals and development methods according to different regions and contexts, so the five characteristics are only the operational concept for this report to unfold, and one of the characteristics can be considered as a *creative community*.

2.3 Community revitalization in mainland China

Community revitalization originated in Europe and the United States, but the theory has spread to many Asian regions and has changed according to different national conditions and cultures. Through keyword search, we can find that community revitalization is not only limited to one expression, similar expressions such as community building, community development, community design, community planning, community empowerment, and also place-making appear more frequently¹⁰. There are also related concepts such as urban (micro) regeneration and neighborhood regeneration. In Japan, the *Machizukuri*¹¹ movement and *chihō sōsei* (ちほうそうせい or 地方創生 in Japanese) is a community revitalization with Japanese context. In Taiwan, it is mostly referred to as community empowerment or community revitalization (“社區營造” in traditional Chinese). In mainland China, it is mostly translated from traditional Chinese to simplified Chinese, i.e. “社区营造”. In addition, Korea, Singapore, and some Southeast Asian countries have similar attempts.

The focus of this project is on China, with the goal of providing new insights and inspiration to community revitalization practitioners, brands or businesses that want to work with the creative community, commercial real estate developers, and those interested in community content in mainland China. Since many community theories and revitalization methods in recent years have been largely influenced by Japan as well as Taiwan. Therefore, this section also reviews the background and status of community revitalization in Japan, Taiwan, and China from various literatures. However, due to the limited research effort, we will focus on a narrower entry point of community, *creative community*, based on the characteristics summarized from literature reviews in the previous section. The literature search reveals that the expression *creative community* rarely appears in the contexts of China, Taiwan, and Japan, so we will first look at *community revitalization* in a broader context with regard to the topic of creative community in China and its related impact on community revitalization in

¹⁰ In spite of so many similar expressions related to community, they have historical origins and nuanced differences among them. To be more specific, community planning normally refers to a project-thinking process ahead of establishing a real physical space; community building and community development are very similar, indicating a process of improving specific aspects in a already physically established community, for example, setting up some activities or purely refurbish some facilities in the public space in order to satisfy the residents. The most important concept is community revitalization. Though many people equate it to community development and community building, the noun “revitalization” seems to us an injection of life to community, thus giving it a particular meaning. That is why the term “community revitalization” is utilized in the whole report.

¹¹ This is a localized Japanese vocabulary “まちづくり”. まち (ma ji) means neighborhood or more specifically community, and づくり (zu ku ri) means create, make or cultivate. The term is translated into town-making, community development or community revitalization. “社区营造” in the Chinese context is also derived from Japanese translation.

Taiwan and Japan. And then from there, we will look specifically at the parts that are relevant to this research theme.

In fact, most Chinese people are probably more familiar with urban planning than community revitalization. Literally, urban planning is the regulation and planning of a city, a macro top-down process. Community revitalization, on the other hand, is slightly different from urban planning in scope and form.

According to the definition of the *Community Empowerment White Paper* (2021) issued by the Taiwan Ministry of Culture, the foundation of community empowerment is “based on bottom-up decision making, starting from engaging with individuals to acting as a collective” (p.6). Pilvi Posio (2019) defines community revitalization, or more precisely *machizukuri* practice in Japan, as various forms of bottom-up citizen-initiated participation in local place governance (p.41). Nobu Yui, Ryo Yamazaki and Eiichi Koizumi have written a book about the way community revitalization works in the context of Japan, which is a popular book¹² among those who are interested in community work. In it, they give several examples of community revitalization (p. 1), that can give us a more visual sense of the more concrete dimensions of community revitalization. For example, working with local people to dig up specialty products to start small businesses, working with landowners to develop essential business buildings in the community, feeding children who can’t eat breakfast, rebuilding communities that can be more resilient in the face of disasters and so on. It can be said that these examples contain some social well-being considerations, as well as some potential and possibility for business innovation.

In Japan, community revitalization is a relatively young term born after World War II. In the 1960s, Japan was in the process of rapid urbanization. The large-scale and concentrated urban development and industrial pollution caused an environmental crisis. The living conditions in many Japanese cities were poor. As André Sorensen and Carolin Funck (2007) explain, the environmental crisis has had a significant and lasting impact on Japanese society, legitimizing protests and direct public participation in political issues. In this way, it can be seen that the Japanese people have launched bottom-up civic participation and social movements based on their own survival issues and their distrust of the government’s handling of issues.

¹² The book entitled with “A Guide to Community Revitalization: 63 Ways to Work to Create the Future of Your Community” (《社区振兴工作指南：创造社区未来的 63 种工作方式》 in Mandarin)

In the 1970s and 1980s, the left-wing government gradually lost power. The Japanese government headed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) formulated new administrative measures to give higher priority to residents' concerns and quality of life issues, which promotes the development of *machizukuri* practice in Japan.

After 2000, *machizukuri* practice has gradually formed a nationwide movement, and the focus has gradually shifted to "how to connect people". This change is not sudden, but is actually closely related to the social problems, such as lonely death, suicide, depression, etc., arising from the process of modernization and urbanization, as well as the development of technology and social media. In a news report on interpersonal relationships broadcast by Japan's NHK TV station in 2011, it introduced the *no relationship society*, referring specifically to the current situation of no blood, no social ties, and no geographical ties between people in Japanese society. This expression is very vivid, which reveals the current situation of the decline of the interpersonal network in Japanese society, and people's urgent desire to build a new community to strengthen the connection. In the book entitled *Community Design* published in the same year, Yamazaki Ryō (2011) stated that what is more important than designing a space is to connect people in a way of designing a community (p.1). Later, the book was translated and published in Taiwan and mainland China, and it also helped people who are interested in community revitalization to practice in their own regions.

According to an interview¹³ with Aiba Shin by Jing Jin in 2019, one of the co-founders of *Community Design Center Big Fish*, today's community revitalization is a practice of multi-participation, in which the government, citizens, enterprises and social organizations work together. In addition, various types of practices have emerged based on the issues of different neighborhoods, such as community revitalization for revival of disaster areas, community revitalization for shopping street regeneration, and one for tourist regions, etc. From this point of view, the *zeitgeist* in the early days of Japan's community revitalization (around the 1960s) and after 2000 reflected slightly different people's ideas. For the former, people's civic awareness raised, and they were dissatisfied with or distrust some of the government's actions, so they actively participated in the revitalization and maintenance of neighborhoods and the urban environment; while the latter focuses more on the post-modern *No relationship society*, people's general loneliness and lack of real connection.

¹³ The interview was published in November 2019. The content of the interview can be found at: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/IgA0Z168p87omwZBN92g3Q>. Accessed on 15th December 2022.

In Taiwan, the term community development was also introduced from European or American counties around 1960, but for 20 years, due to the influence of martial law, this phase of community building was top-down and government-led. There were mainly basic configurations such as the construction of community activity centers, the installation of childcare centers, and so on, characterized by a monolithic model that ignored the real needs of the residents. It was not until the lifting of martial law in 1987 that civil power gradually developed. For one thing, community residents faced with the construction of reservoirs, garbage incinerators, factories, and other issues that could potentially endanger their living environment continuously fought to save themselves. For another, residents facing a crisis of identity also actively carried out community preservation campaigns, such as setting up literature and history workshops, compiling local documents and old photographs, and promoting the preservation of old streets and buildings. In 1994, the Taiwanese government responded to the current trend and public opinion by proposing the comprehensive community revitalisation project, which attempted to promote the consciousness and mobilization of residents from the perspective of cultural reconstruction. Through this proposal, they were aimed to rebuild the harmonious relationship between people, environment and the community, thus driving the comprehensive transformation and development of local communities (Taiwan Ministry of Culture, 1998), and to integrate the five major aspects of community development: people, culture, place, scenery, and production (“人、文、地、景、產” in traditional Chinese).

In the past 30 years, community revitalization in Taiwan has gone through a process from the rise of civic awareness, residents spontaneously fighting for the interests of the community, to the government actively responding to public opinion and promoting the development of community revitalization. In 2021, the latest *Community Empowerment White Paper* released by the Taiwan Ministry of Culture states that under the huge social changes, in the face of aging, low birth rate, changes in industrial structure, uneven distribution and the relative sense of deprivation among young generations, the model of traditional government can no longer meet the expectations of the people. Community Empowerment must adapt to the new social environment and changes to solve emerging social problems (2021, p.10). As a result, the Taiwan Ministry of Culture started in early 2019 and invited representatives of industry, officials, academia, community and front-line civic actors to fully discuss and propose a white paper on community empowerment policies, which serves as an important basis for future social building governance. The white paper has formed 16 non-governmental action forums, local community empowerment forums of county and city governments, and a two-day

national community empowerment conference. The whole discussion process lasted for one year. In this way, the white paper also establishes four major principles starting from 2021, namely public governance, generational progress, pluralism and social co-innovation (p.4)¹⁴, which is different from the four principles in 2015 (resident participation, community autonomy, bottom-up and sustainable experience¹⁵). This shows that in addition to continuing the relationship between people, environment and community in the White Paper of 1998 community empowerment in Taiwan emphasizes the perspectives of different generations and minority groups in order to contribute to greater social well-being.

In the context of mainland China, the community revitalization has a shorter history of development than in Japan and Taiwan, and is still in an emerging stage.

According to *Community Building: Policy plan and theory practice* (2017, p.76-83) compiled by Wang Benzhuang and other editors., there are five different stages of community policy reform in cities of mainland China: (1) Before 1949, traditional towns and cities were populated by merchants and gentry who left their hometowns, and the level of acquaintance communities was relatively deep, continuing the blood and geographical relationship network of village communities. (2) From 1949 to before the reform and opening-up, the mainland implemented a highly centralized planned economy. In cities, people lived in work units, and every urban resident must have a certain work unit status, and people's various needs were met through work units. Therefore, people's production and living opportunities are limited to the places where their household registration was located, and there were few opportunities for free migration. (3) From the 1970s to the 1990s, the reform and opening-up initiated the economic development-oriented social transformation in mainland China, and the state began to consciously weaken its function and role in public welfare. Relying on urban communities to replace the policy idea of providing social welfare and services mainly through “units” at all levels since the 1950s has been established, and the idea of “community-based social services” has also been nurtured. (4) From the 1990s to 2010, the concept of “community building”

¹⁴ The preface of the white paper is written in both Chinese and English. English version: “Public governance refers to re-orienting the systems of power to better serve their communities. Generational progress is forged upon conferring more authority to younger generations so that they can collaborate with older decision-makers in serving their constituents. Pluralism is defined here as celebrating diversity, respecting differences, and working together to achieve equal rights, participation, and representation. The last axis, social co-innovation, emphasizes interdisciplinary solutions such as social design and civic tech.” And the original translation in Traditional Chinese is used here. “（一）公共治理：建立有利於社區營造的公共治理支持體系；（二）世代前進：青年賦權、世代協力、共榮發展；（三）多元平權：看見多元，尊重差異，促進平等參與；（四）社會共創：社會設計、公民科技、跨界連結 (2021, p.3).”

¹⁵ The original translation in Traditional Chinese is “居民参与、社区自主、由下而上、永续经验。”

emerged, and the community as a substitute for “units” became the basis for social management in mainland China. In the community revitalization led by the mainland, although civil forces such as community residents and community organizations often appeared in policies, and the necessity of their participation was emphasized, the state power was always in an absolute dominant position in the community and the civil society still played a subordinate role. (5) From around 2010 to the present, the State Council, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Civil Affairs have further issued various policies to promote community-based public services. At this stage, the community is multi-coordinated and governed; the government, society, and the market cooperate with various forces, including non-profit organizations, intermediary organizations, and other public sectors and individual citizens.

It can be seen that the community model in mainland China has undergone five rounds of changes: before 2010, in spite that the importance of civil power was also emphasized, it was still a top-down model centered on state power; beginning in 2010, the policy shift has provided the possibility for civil organizations or individuals to participate in community revitalization from the bottom up.

In addition, since the founding of New China, from the planned economy to the reform and opening-up, the market economy has flourished in just 50 years, and the shifts of the entire society have been compressed in the life course of three generations, and the sense of identity rupture and switching is particularly strong. In the era of planned economy, the identity of urban residents revolved around “work units”. For example, when greeting people, they were more accustomed to introducing themselves as part of a certain unit, not a certain block, street or neighborhood. However, under the market economy, the unit system disintegrates, and people actively or passively live in a certain residential quarter or community, but their sense of belonging and identity is difficult to change from the unit system model at once. Community revitalization is equivalent to a new way to cultivate identity around the community under the new model of the market economy.

Different community revitalizations have different focuses, from those that focus on space for renovation (e.g., renovation of community facades) to those that focus on post-disaster reconstruction, or restoration of ancient buildings. It is worth re-emphasizing that because the scope of community revitalization is relatively large, this report will focus on creative community revitalization, understanding community from the perspective of Cultural Studies.

In mainland Chinese cities such as Shanghai, Chengdu, Beijing and Shenzhen, policies are more focused on the role of creative community revitalization. For example, at the first

World Cities Day Forum held in Shanghai in October 2014, the basic concept of “15-minute community living circle” was proposed to build a community with low carbon resilience, diversity, inclusion, and fair collaboration. A total of 53 cities have joined the initiative, including Chengdu, Beijing and Shenzhen. In 2016, Shanghai launched the *Walk Shanghai 2016 - Community Space Micro-Renewal Program* to explore the transformation of community public space with deep residents’ participation, and set up more than ten pilots. In the same year, the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs issued the *Notice on the Sustainable Overall Revitalization of Urban and Rural Communities*, proposing to develop urban and rural communities into social living communities with common emotional ties, shared community sense and cultural cohesion.

In terms of academic research, the *Community Revitalization Research Center (CRRC)* of Tsinghua University School of Social Sciences was established in November 2011 to build a research and promotion platform for community revitalization. The CRRC is dedicated to building a research and promotion platform for community revitalization that integrates the efforts of various parties, including communities, NGOs, academia, government and the public. Under the impetus of the director Luo Jiade of CRRC, several books related to community revitalization were published after the year of 2017, such as *Theory And Practice Of Community Revitalization In China*, *Community Building Policy plan and theory practice*, *Writing the story of our community A collection of Community Building cases in Chengdu*, *Good-neighbourliness, self-organization, and community governance*.

During this period, architects, designers, community workers, foundations, and philanthropists also began to pay attention to the power of community, and began to focus on community revitalization and related concepts. Various related social organizations, social enterprises, and media platforms have also increased one after another. For example, the community public space *Gathering Fire Lab* (Mandarin: 集火实验室), which was transformed from an old factory in 2010, and *Four-leaf Clover Hall*¹⁶, the community revitalization organization *Shequegengxin*, founded in 2019 and composed of a diverse cross-section of people, *Nice Commune*, an innovative team of young designers from Tongji University, as well as the influential community revitalization organization Big Fish (founded in 2018) and the community-oriented media platform *Seeing Community* (founded in 2020), among others.

The business community is also paying more and more attention to the community sector. In August 2021, the first China Business Community Revitalization Forum was held in

¹⁶ The full name is *Shanghai Four-leaf Clover Hall Youth Nature Experience and Service Center*, founded in 2014.

Beijing to promote small communities in every city towards a better future with more happiness, comfort and convenience. In early 2020, targeted on the surrounding areas of Island East and TaiKoo Place in Hong Kong, *Swire Properties* released its first report on the community revitalization entitled *The Creative Transformation of Island East and Development of Taikoo Place*¹⁷, placing “community revitalization” at the heart of its 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy to create more pleasant communities (2020, p.1).

With the involvement of government, design, architecture, business, social workers and the public interest, the importance of community revitalization and the practices associated with it are growing and becoming increasingly prominent.

¹⁷ The complete English version of the report can be found at: <https://www.swireproperties.com/-/media/files/swireproperties/publications/2020-places-impact-report.ashx>. The Chinese version can be found at <https://www.swireproperties.com/-/media/files/swireproperties/publications/2020-places-impact-report-zh-hk-.ashx>. (Last accessed at February 1, 2023)

CHAPTER II - METHODOLOGY

Part.3 Methodological framework

3.1 Methods

Taken from the perspective of Trend Studies and Cultural Studies, and in relation to the theme of this project, *Creative Communities*, we consider three main methods or techniques: Desk research, interview and *coolhunting*. These three methodologies are not sequential, but are all ways of collecting information, so they are flexible and complementary to each other in the research process. Next, we will analyze in detail the reasons why these three methods/techniques were chosen for the research in this project.

3.2 Desk Research

Desk research is more than a collection of published reports or statistics. Paul Hague et al. (2016) propose an extensive meaning of the term, referring it to an effective and useful technical tool to collect secondary data that already exists in the public domain, or to which can be gathered without fieldwork (p.53).

In 2015, Zofia Bednarowska (2015) presents in one of her articles that Desk research is still not fully deployed analytical technique both in social and marketing research (p.18). Despite the fact that many academics and market researchers are already using Desk Research, its significance or importance is still underestimated.

Paul Hague and his colleagues (2016) use an interesting metaphor in the book *Market Research in Practice*, seeing desk research as a very complicated puzzle and market researchers need to discover puzzle pieces in an ocean of information from different sources. In their perspective, desk research not only gives us an overview of research questions without costing a great deal of money, but also is an ideal tool for in-house or do-it-yourself researchers (p.53). Additionally, given that the typical characteristic of desk research is to gather secondary dates, secondary research is used as a synonym of it, differing from primary research. Dadhe (2016) in her book *Research Methodology* describes their definition as well as evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of primary research and secondary research. She concludes five merits of secondary research: (1) relative ease of access, mainly as a result of modern technology like the internet; (2) Low cost to acquire; (3) clarification of research questions; (4) may answer

research questions; (5) may show difficulties in conducting primary research (p.77). It is noted by the author in the third and fourth point that secondary research is often used prior to primary research with the aim to help spell out the research problems, which is also the methods/techniques orders conducted in the present report.

At the same time, Desk Research is also generally adopted by consultants or researchers in the world of business. For example, *Fjord Trends 2021*¹⁸ published by *Accenture* was based on Desk Research conducted all over the world. Followed by the result of trend context on the basis of Desk Research, the report elaborates the part of insights divided into think, say and do, through which they give suggestions to the world of business and brands. Moreover, *Trends Transformed 2021*¹⁹ by *Mindshare* also includes Desk Research as one of their techniques to present trends and brand insights Nature with both qualitative and quantitative data. Also using this technique for trend research is IPSOS in their *Global Trends 2020: Understanding Complexity*²⁰.

Therefore, it can be said that desk research is of both relevance and importance in this report. It gives us an overview of the research problem in a low-budget and convenient way, which is helpful to conduct following interviews with more deep, targeted and thorough questions.

On the basis of Dadhe (2016), there are several sources that we need to pay attention to in order to conduct a secondary research: (1) published printed sources, in which factors like writer, publishing company, time and date when published should be highlighted. (2) books, the most authentic secondary sources we have access to. (3) journals and periodicals, offering more up-to-date contents and more specific topics. (4) magazines and newspapers, effective and relatively reliable. (5) published sources and E-journals on the internet. (6) general websites with reliability check (7) government records, important for marketing, management, humanities and social science research. (8) public sector records, like NGO's survey data or other private companies records (pp.74-76). On top of it, Paul Hague and his colleagues (2016, p.65) provide a more practical vision to refer to online market reports and even to actively contact an expert.

¹⁸ https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-142/Accenture-Fjord-Trends-2021-Full-Report.pdf. Accessed on May 3, 2022.

¹⁹ <https://www.mindshareworld.com/uk/news/trends-transformed-2021>. Accessed on May 5, 2022.

²⁰ The fieldwork for this edition was carried out among adults aged 16-74 (except in South Africa, Canada, Turkey, United States and New Zealand where we interviewed adults aged 18-74).
<https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2020-02/ipsos-global-trends-2020-understanding-complexity.pdf>
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trends-2020-understanding-complexity>

Desk research for this report

In this report, the Desk research aims to contextualize the research questions related to creative community revitalization. Information collection and analysis start from the definition of creative communities, incorporating the current situation of social, economic, cultural, environmental and technological aspects in mainland China. The information collection channels will take into account the specific context in mainland China, and will be collected mainly from social media platforms such as WeChat public websites, news websites, podcasts, published books and magazines etc. During the collection process, we will also focus on documenting and tracking media platforms that are strongly associated with the creative community and will maintain a high level of attention during the research project.

3.3 *Coolhunting*

As a market research method, *coolhunting* gained its popularity in the 1990s (Higham, 2009, p.45; Vejlggaard, 2008, p.188). The most cited article in relation to *coolhunting* was written by Malcolm Gladwell in the New Yorker in 1997, in which he portrays the daily work of two experienced coolhunters DeeDee Gordon and Baysie Wightman and how they understand *cool*. Particularly, the two coolhunters he observed and interviewed were from the fashion industry, and their discovery of *coolhunting* or street fashion would be applied in the design and marketing of the company's next production line.

For DeeDee Gordon and Baysie Wightman, "cool is too subtle and too variegated to be captured with these kinds of broad strokes"(Gladwell, 1997), and that's why hunting cool depends on untrained instinct and observations. Those who don't have a sense of cool will not find any cool, only if they themselves are cool people as well.

In fact, due to the instinct observation of *coolhunting*, some authors also point out that *coolhunting* has its limitations as a method of identifying trendsetters' attitudinal and behavioral changes, resulting in its less popular use in market research. One of the limitations is that its judging criteria was whether a thing is new or not, which may lead to a miscalculation of a fad or a trend (Vejlggaard, 2008, p.188). That is to say, the former is only a hot spot for a short time, while the latter is related to changes in consumer behavior and ideas, which is more profound and long-term and is also the focus of business innovation.

Besides, some non-fashion trend companies may consider that *coolhunting* did not play a practicable role in strategic thinking or mass marketing and it was more suitable for short-term marketing planning (Higham, 2009, p.45). Nevertheless, it is valid to admit that each way of finding data has its own focus and advantages, depending on its relevance, practicability, budget, sector and business question (Higham, 2009, p.126). Some trend forecasters also insisted that *coolhunting* is in fact a small step/part of the whole process of trends identification, and therefore naturally placed emphasis on interpretation and analysis of trends, rather than merely identifying them (Higham, 2009, p.47). In this way, we can not deny the value and usefulness of *coolhunting* as a research technique to observe what trendsetters do and identify trends. In spite of its intrinsic limitations, we can adopt it as a step of a whole process to integrate identifying, interpreting and implementing trends all together, so that we can ensure scientific rigorousness to the greatest degree.

Whether William Higham(2009) or Henrik Vejlgard (2008), they depicted *coolhunting* without much elaboration. However, Peter A. Gloor and Scott M. Cooper (2007) are dedicated to *Coolhunting* in a whole book, in which they give both theoretical thoughts and practical suggestions to help us become a coolhunter. In their view, the important role that *coolhunting* plays in the business world is to stimulate vitality and innovation in external and internal markets (p.9). For example, a *coolhunting* conducted by financial analysts to find trends to generate better insights for external clients, or conducted within the organization to predict the success of an internal project with the aim to improve efficiency and creativity. In this case, *coolhunting* was not merely narrowed down to the fashion realm, but has gained a wider vision.

Within the scope of trend research, there are still some trend researchers that recognize the value of *coolhunting* and take it as a part of methodology. In the book entitled *How to Research Trends*, Els Dragt (2017) interviewed Carl Rohde, a cultural sociologist and the founder of Science of the Time, who gets in contact with a group of observers all over the world and trains them to discover cool signals that are deemed “attractive and inspiring manifestations of change with future growth potential” (p.88). Then, the network of coolhunters can post their findings on the website of Science of the Time and get correspondent feedback. As Carl Rohde put it in the interview, the worldwide network of coolhunters can help him avoid biased judgments influenced by personal experience, and scrutinize manifestations of change objectively from other people’s eyes (Dragt, 2017, p.88).

Likewise, Nelson Pinheiro Gomes as well as his colleagues and students from Trends and Culture Management Laboratory in FLUL of Portugal has compiled several reports, including *socio-cultural Trends: A Map of Macro and Micro Trends 2020*, *socio-cultural Trends 2021: The transition of collectives* and *Positive Reactions to the Coronavirus: A Digital Coolhunting Report*. To be specific, *coolhunting* is considered as a part of methodology²¹ in the first two trend reports to identify manifestations, artifacts and practices of change, while it is the only method/technique of the third *coolhunting* report.

Therefore, *coolhunting* is an indispensable method of Trend Studies or the study of trends, which brings us to the following question, what is the nature of “cool”?

In Peter A. Gloor and Scott M. Cooper (2007)’s view, there is a criteria to tell what *cool* is, including being fun, making the world a better place, altruistic and acting for the benefit of others (pp.7-8). In this case, it seems that their definition of cool embodies an affectionate

²¹ Six methods/techniques have been used in socio-cultural Trends reports, they are: Desk Research, Clipping the Media, *Coolhunting*, Audiovisual Analysis, Surveys and Interviews.

solicitude for greater social welfare and clarifies to some extent the ambiguity and subtleness of the intuitive criteria of cool mentioned by DeeDee Gordon and Baysie Wightman.

Furthermore, given that there is no clear agreement on the nature of cool in the academic world, Nelson Gomes and his colleagues conclude two criterias of the nature of cool both in 2018 and 2021. On the basis of extensive literature review of the concept of cool, researchers of the Trends and Culture Management Laboratory indicate its complexity and pinpoint six characteristics of the concept of cool. They underline the inner complexity of the concept by designating that “cool is a quality, a set of characteristics that are imprinted on objects, from artifacts to representations and gestures”(Gomes N. et al, 2021a, p.254). This is the reason why six characteristics of cool are necessary for a good understanding and later interpretation. In their point of view, cool is first **relevant** since it reflects the spirit of time and resonates with the emergent mindsets with a potential to mark and impact through different abstract and sentimental associations. Cool is **viral** as innovative ideas contained within cool signals will disseminate at a rapid speed, reflecting from different objects, representations or practices. Cool is also **actual** or pertaining to present time, in the sense that it addresses urgent and crucial challenges of current time. Cool also contains the characteristic of **irreverence**, meaning that it is often avant-garde and provocative, different from cultural orthodox. Furthermore, cool is **instigating** in that a cool signal can be seductive, attractive and causing excitement. The last nature of cool is similar to the previous one, containing within itself a proposal of **discontinuity**, and in some cases it may represent a rupture with the current pattern.

From the paper by the Trend and Culture Management Laboratory in 2018 to the up-to-date one in 2021, it can be seen that the nature of cool has extended to 6 characteristics rather than 3 relatively ambiguous features. The group of researchers consider the facets of the relevance of *zeitgeist* (**relevant**), timeliness (**actual**) and the comparison with cultural orthodox and current pattern (**irreverence** and **discontinuity**). In this way, the new-defined nature of cool portrays a holistic picture of a signal in the context of socio-cultural fabric. In spite of the fact that the new judging criteria of cool signals appear to be more complicated to analyze, it provides a more operational way to discern and evaluate if a thing/object or a practice is actually a signal or not when strictly thinking about each aspect. Nevertheless, following a relatively strict analytical standard is not saying that we deny a simple and intuitive leap in mind as we surf on the internet finding something seemingly interesting. A more sensible and pragmatic way for hunting cool can be both intuitive and rational.

To summarize, it is relevant and important to use the technique of *coolhunting* by adopting the standard of the nature of cool signals in the updated version of 2021 formulated

by Trends and Culture Management Laboratory of University of Lisbon. The detailed description and vivid picture of the cool signal and the correspondent analysis (adopted the version of 2021) will be presented in the second part of the report.

Coolhunting for this report

After determining the theme of the project, we selected a series of phrases defined around creative communities (such as community revitalization, creative communities, urban renewal, art communities, etc.) as search terms, conducted the first round of searches in Chinese Internet platforms and social media (mainly WeChat subscriptions, but also microblogs, podcasts, etc.). We recorded or secondarily searched the information collected that might be useful for the research. At the same time, as a freelancer researcher, I was also cooperating with a trend research institution in China to do long-term youth culture signal collection, and I also collected some signals related to my report during the work.

It should be noted that since the research area of this report is targeted on mainland China, the majority of the cool signals collected are from this geography. However, creative ideas do not come from just one place, but can emerge and ferment in all corners of the world at the same time. Therefore, two cool signals from Japan and two from Hong Kong are also kept in the report, in order to provide some inspiration for those who are interested in the creative community or who are working in this area. Even though the contexts are different, they can still be used as a reference for community awareness and practice. For the Japanese and Hong Kong Cool signals, we searched via Google search, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for keywords in the corresponding contexts, such as *machizukuri* in Japanese, community revitalization (“社區營造”) in Traditional Chinese. Initially, we sifted and collected information, and then specifically looked at the content related to several characteristics of creative community. At the same time, we have also maintained close contact with some Chinese experts in the field of community, so they will also provide some clues from time to time for the author to follow up the search, which is also a more important part of the Trend Studies to establish networking with professionals.

In the trend report, for each signal, there are five sections: description, citation sources, analysis of cool nature, insights and related macro trend(s), along with the title of the signal and one or two representative images at the beginning. Specifically, the description is an introduction to the signal, and the references are usually two or more links from different sources. They are also the first stage of the project “information gathering”. Next, the nature of the cool of the signal is analyzed using the new criteria version from the Trends and Culture

Management Laboratory of the University of Lisbon, proposed by Professor Nelson Pinheiro Gomes and his team in 2021. In the following is an insight that addresses the corresponding signal, sometimes combined with a business and branding perspective. Finally there is macro trend(s) related to this signal. Each signal will be attributed to one of the five macro trends belonging to the trend map of the annual report published by the Laboratory, to be studied within different domain perspectives in order to see if a similar pattern arises.

3.4 Interview

Interview is an often-used qualitative research method in social science. In essence, an interview is a conversation between interviewer and interviewee, with the aim to learn about the opinion and attitude of respondents related to research questions.

According to the source of data collection, an interview is obviously a primary research, and thus it has these advantages that a primary research has. As Dadhe (2016, pp.71-72) put in her book *Research Methodology*, there are seven advantages of primary research: (1) targeted issues are addressed, meaning a **direct focus** in accordance with research questions rather than rummaging through thousands of secondary datas; (2) a better data interpretation relying on the objective of the present research; (3) **efficient** spending for information, rather than paying for information that turns out to be unnecessary; (4) **decency of Data**, in that the author considers primary dates which can be available through interviews, is more recent and specific to the place or situation the marketer or researcher is targeting. As the author put it, the researcher can use irrelevant seeming information for knowing trends or may be able to find some relation with the current scenario, and thus primary data becomes a more accurate tool since we can use data which is useful for us. (5) proprietary issues, meaning an “information advantage” in the market competition; (6) marketing organizations are able to address specific research issues by themselves; (7) a high level of control over how the information is collected, for example, the size of project (e.g. how many responses), location of research (e.g. geographic areas) and time frame for completing the project.

In terms of the source of data collection, the interview is a first-hand gathering of information, so it also has the advantages of primary research. Among these merits, the fourth one is more relevant to Trend Studies. As one of the methods of capturing primary data, Interview provides us with fresher and more tailored information by asking questions with the aim of discovering interrelated points or patterns, and thus seeing where people’s needs, attitudes and aspirations may be shifting.

In terms of the overall methodological framework, Desk Research and *Coolhunting* are both secondary research methods/techniques, and interviewing can be the most important method to collect primary data to complement the second-hand information gathered in the processes of Desk research and Cool hunting. In this way, the research on the topic of this report will be more authoritative and reliable.

In terms of typology, there are three kinds of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Among them, semi-structured interviews, which have a certain pre-structured interview outline and also do not set strict limits on additional and supplementary questions, are the most commonly used type of interviews. With semi-structured interviews, the researcher can ask in-depth questions and follow-up questions to the interviewees in response to the research questions, which can also help us to maximize the information collected.

Forethemore, the interview as a method is also used by many experts in the study of trends. For instance, *Global Trends 2020: Understanding Complexity*²² published by IPSOS uses interviews as one of their methods, with a large age range of participants from 16 or 18 to 74 years old, with the aim to investigate the core issues of our time, including climate, healthcare and tech, reactions to inequality, capitalism and the search for simplicity, and trace the possible shifts of individuals' attitude and opinions, as well as the implications for business, government and society.

Likewise, Els Dragt (2017, p. 82) considers it is easier for the experts and frontrunners to imagine what the future would be like, rather than the general public. In this case, she suggests setting up a network of experts and frontrunners so that trend researchers can refer to their professional opinions in terms of changes. As Sam Shaw, the Head of Insight at *Canvas8* put it, "we did a project about the future of fandom in which we collaborated with experts, like a psychologist who studied sport fans and their drivers. We also researched the future of stadiums, the future of media and the future of identity and interviewed people who were working on related projects or were experts in these domains" (Els Dragt, 2017, p. 83). In addition, Els Dragt (2017, p. 71) highlights the importance of drawing information from creators, innovators and early adopters to spot change. As he put it, we need to find them, talk to them and uncover their drivers for creating or adopting change, by means of a formal in-depth interview or an informal chat on locations such as creative hubs, shops, bars and restaurants.

In this way, we can see that interviewing experts from a specific area or trend creators, trendsetters and trend followers is proven to be effective for Trend Studies, no matter a general trend research or a thematic trend one like this.

²² The report is available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trends-2020-understanding-complexity>. Accessed on 16th December 2022.

Interview for this report

For the theme of creative community revitalization, the most important thing for the objectivity and reliability of the study is to find interviewees who are highly relevant to creative communities, i.e., community research experts, community practitioners, foundations, real estate agents, community residents, etc. Interviews with this diverse group of people can help the researcher to validate the research hypotheses and finally draw conclusions or insights.

Respondents for this report were primarily from Shanghai City, Guangdong, Yunnan and Zhejiang Provinces. Due to specific conditions, face-to-face on-site interviews were used in Shanghai, while respondents from the remaining geographic regions were interviewed in online *Tencent Meeting*. Prior to the formal interviews, we had some informal conversations with potential respondents to better understand the target research questions. The formal interviews took place between November 2022 and January 2023. Given the different types of respondents, we interviewed two community-related researchers (including a postdoctoral professor and a current PhD student), four community practitioners (one of whom worked closely with real estate companies on community projects; Emma and Lu Sha, co-founders of *Shunde Good Things Happen*, got together for an interview.), and three community residents from diverse backgrounds.

The total length of the interviews was 11 hours and 25 minutes, averaging 1 hour and 16 minutes per group/person. Personal information about each interviewee, as well as the duration, location and date of interviews are shown in the following table.

Serial number	Interviewee	Type	Profession	Duration	Location	Interview Date
1	Sun Zhe	Researcher	Ph.D. in Sociology from the Ecole Supérieure de Paris. His main research areas are global cities and future communities.	1h15mins	Offline, Shanghai	December 9, 2022

2	Ji Danwen	Researcher	PhD student at Tongji University, Shanghai, China. She has been on exchange at Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. Her main research interests are design interventions in complex socio-technical systems and social innovation design.	1h40mins	Offline, Shanghai	November 30, 2022
3	Emma and Lu Sha	Practitioner	Co-founders of <i>Shunde Good Things Happen</i> .	2h	Online, Tencent Meeting	October 14, 2022
4	Yang Sanshi	Practitioner	He has been doing community revitalization-related work in Shanghai and Shenzhen.	1h30mins	Online, Tencent Meeting	November 2, 2022

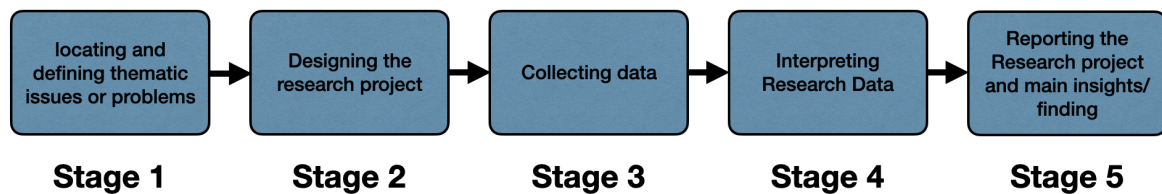
5	Jie'er	Practitioner	Former project manager of community revitalization organization <i>Shequgengxin</i> , responsible for innovative branding for creative communities.	1h30mins	Offline, Shanghai	December 10, 2022
6	Hu Hu	Resident	Residents of <i>Xinhua</i> community. She has participated actively in the co-creation activities in the community.	1h10mins	Online, <i>Tencent Meeting</i>	December 3, 2022
7	Dane	Resident	As a freelancer, She has lived in Digital Nomad Anji Community (DNA), Dali Hub, and Hainan Hub.	50mins	Online, <i>Tencent Meeting</i>	January 28, 2023

8	Lin An	Resident	The founder of <i>Freelance Community</i> . She has been a resident of Digital Nomad Anji Community.	1h40mins	Online, <i>Tencent Meeting</i>	November 21, 2022
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In terms of research questions of this report, we have made the following question design for the interview. First, we listed several basic questions based on the map of the annual trend report of the Laboratory of Trends and Cultural Management. It included questions such as the relationship between creative community revitalization and identity, the relationship with equality, virtual reality, sustainability, and with lifestyle, etc. Secondly, we will have supplementary and extended questions for different types of respondents. For example, for researchers in the field of community, we will focus more on their observations and research results in the field, and their expert perspectives may bring different insights and inspiration to the research. For front-line creative community revitalization practitioners, we will focus more on their experiences, understanding of the industry, their observations related to changes and developments, their projects, and the relationship with residents, etc. For the residents, we take into account the demographic factors such as their ages and geographies. We focused on their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, attitudes and behavioral changes when they lived in revitalized creative communities.

Part.4 Framework of the project process

4.1 Stages of project



The project is divided into five stages, namely locating and defining the issues or problems, designing the research project, collecting data, interpreting the research data, and presenting the insights or findings of the report.

The first stage: locating and defining thematic issues or problems.

The focus of this step is to delineate the domain of the research question, the boundaries and scope of the relevant definitions or operational concepts, and to articulate the question that needs to be answered or researched.

The second stage: designing the research project.

This step focuses on how to solve the identified problem, so this requires us to design a reasonable research plan to collect as much and high-quality information as possible, to validate hypotheses made about research so as to determine possible answers of research questions.

The third phase: collecting data/information.

This step is in the formal implementation phase of the project, which can roughly correspond to what Els Dragt (2017, p.63) called the “scan” phase. There are various methods of data collection, such as experiments, participatory observation and so on. In this report, the methods of data collection will include Desk Research, *coolhunting* and interview. It is worth noting that these three research methods are included in a process that is initially implemented in the order of *coolhunting*, Desk Research and interview. As the research progresses, the three techniques/methods do not strictly follow the implementation steps, but rather, when one

method or technique is used, if there are clues to guide the other two methods, they are supplemented accordingly.

The fourth stage: Analysis of systematized data.

The goal of this stage is to systematize and analyze the data collected by the different research methods/techniques, which roughly corresponds to the “analysis” stage according to Els Dragt (2017, p. 103). It is worth noting that the Sociocultural Trends 2022 published by Trends and Culture Management Lab works as a framework in the cluster and analysis of data/information.

The fifth stage: presenting the key findings or insights of the report.

The research results will be reported in written and oral form. The written part will be presented in the form of a thematic trend report, and the oral part may be presented in different creative communities in mainland China, followed by a discussion part, in order to encourage more ideas and innovations in the field.

CHAPTER III - TREND REPORT: CREATIVE COMMUNITY REVITALISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MAINLAND CHINA

Part.5 Desk research

The main research scope and application of this project is in mainland China, so the platforms, media channels, and search keywords selected for the desk research are localized. Considering this reason, we mainly focused on news reports, podcast contents, social media contents (mainly public subscriptions in WeChat), published books and magazines related to the theme of *creative community* in the context of mainland China. Throughout the research process, we also collected the media channels searched that were highly relevant to the topic, so as to facilitate continuous follow-up and observation. Regarding the time horizon, we also tried to use information sources from 2021-2023 to ensure that the results of the trend study are more current.

In section 2.2 above, I started with a literature review to define the operational definition of *creative community* in this report, i.e. one or more of the following qualities are met to be considered as *creative community*. These qualities are

- Openness and diversity
- Relevance to the arts
- Social change/social well-being
- Process sustainability (i.e., resilience and recovery)
- Innovative in its approach
- Aimed at promoting economic revitalization and equity

Since the theme of this report is *creative community*, I first chose it as the keyword and searched on various platforms, but this expression is rarely discussed in the whole simplified Chinese context, and the only discussions are mainly focused on (1) innovative ways to create product-based user communities, focusing mostly on how to obtain quick economic returns and enhance user stickiness; (2) on design and other ways to transform spaces under urban renewal, but focusing on visual and experiential forms, which are not very relevant to the change of

people's mentalities and attitudes. It can be seen that the *creative community* in Chinese context has strong commercial attributes and does not meet any of the above-mentioned qualities of this theme.

Therefore, I decided to start with the larger term *community* (Mandarin : “社区” or “社群”) and the more detailed terms *art community* (Mandarin : “艺术社区”) and *community revitalization* (Mandarin : “社区营造”), from which I filtered and collected the content with higher relevance to the above characteristics. The content of the above-mentioned characteristics was collected and recorded, and their commonalities were analyzed. It is worth adding that while working on this, I was working on a freelance basis with a Chinese marketing consultancy on trend tracking and analysis, so part of the results of Desk Research and *Coolhunting* are also part of my work output.

From my desk research, I found that *stock economy* (Mandarin : “存量经济”) is a term that is more often mentioned when looking at urban community development from a macro perspective. Along with the increasing urbanization in mainland China, the more developed cities in the east (especially the urban centers) have found it difficult to carry out more new real estate development and “have entered a more subtle stage of governance” (Hao, H., 2022, 05:35). Therefore, both the government and real estate developers have begun to focus more on the more microscopic transformation of public spaces such as neighborhoods and street corners. Some of such renovation and renewal only beautify rundown facades or streets, while others involve activities that promote community vitality in creative ways, the latter being the creative community revitalization that is the focus of this project. For example, the renovation of Yuyuan Road carried out by urban regeneration service provider *CREATER*²³ was initially focused on beautifying streets and upgrading facilities²⁴. And in 2019, the service provider incubated the community revitalization organization *Shequgengxin*²⁵ (Mandarin : “社趣更馨”) , which focuses on three core modules: community creation, neighborhood creation, and brand design. It focuses on three core modules: community revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, and brand design, and works with local merchants, residents, and functional departments to build a community ecology. It is worth noting that they have hosted a series of

²³ Official site of *CREATER*: <https://www.creator.com.cn/>.

²⁴ This article from the public subscription of Wechat called *Ideal Urban Design* was used as a reference for their preliminary project. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xDddrebyA_FSNpw_05UA1A. Accessed on 1st January 2023.

²⁵ The introduction of *Shequgengxin* is available their official subscription website: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/IgA0Z168p87omwZBN92g3Q>. Accessed on 15th December 2022.

creative activities to revitalize the community, such as *the Story Shop*²⁶. Following the clues on the Desk research, I got in touch with *Jie'er*, the former project manager of *Shequgengxin*, and she became one of the interviewees of this project from the perspective of community practitioners.

In addition to the *stock economy*, many media and scholars often cite *the disappearance of the nearby* proposed by anthropologist Xiang Biao (2021, p.155) to bring out community-related discussions, including *the True Meaning of Community* (p. 1) in the February 2021 issue of *YiMagazine*²⁷, Podcast *CityTells* in conversation with Professor Wang Defu²⁸, Podcast *Wonderers* in conversation with Jin Jing²⁹ in 2022. The *nearby* is a concept, in Xiang's view, which means the real connection between people and the world, focusing on the seeing around life. With the pandemic, people are unable to go out into the world and are forced to pay attention to what is around them, and this expression has triggered discussions and resonance within mainland China, becoming the buzzword of these three years. In fact, this lonely state of lack of human connection in big cities is also known as *no-relationship society*, a concept mentioned in a 2011 NHK film.

In fact, the growing recognition of the importance of community, the *nearby* and neighborhood, is also due in large part to the impact of the pandemic. In particular, in mainland China, where there have been varying degrees of closure and control over the past three years, people have been restricted from traveling and moving around, staying in the same city most of the time, and in areas where the pandemic was severe, people would not even be able to leave their homes or neighborhoods after the 2022 normalization of nucleic acid. In this context, a myriad of people have realized that only neighborly support is the solution.

The pandemic has not only affected people's attitudes toward their communities and neighborhoods, but also their relationships with them. The 3-months quarantine of Shanghai³⁰ last spring was an important turning point. Due to the spread of the New Coronavirus, Shanghai

²⁶ *The Story Shop* is a neighborhood event planned by *shequgengxin*. They have transformed a street-side kiosk into a storytelling store where everyone can enter and tell stories. And everyone can apply to be a "shopkeeper for a day", so that local residents, shopkeepers, new residents and passers-by can connect with each other through stories. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/BEcplowcp2CAc7hSDARvVQ>. Accessed on 2nd January 2023.

²⁷ Founded in 2003, CBN (China Business Network) is an influential financial media group in China, and *YiMagazine* is one of its products. <https://www.yicai.com/>. Accessed on 22nd Jun 2022.

²⁸ *CityTells* is a podcast published by the Papel Research Institute, and Wang Defu is an Associate Professor of Sociology Department in the Wuhan University. <https://www.xiaoyuzhoufm.com/episode/6498072d932f350aae05dba1>. Accessed on 2nd December 2022.

²⁹ Jin Jiang is the co-founder of the community revitalization organization *Big Fish*. The podcast is available on Xiaoyuzhou. <https://www.xiaoyuzhoufm.com/episode/620e541e52d497504647ce2b>. Accessed on 4th December 2022.

³⁰ Shanghai was closed from March 28, 2022, until June 1, 2022, when it began to be gradually unsealed, for about three months. <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-61657219>. Accessed on 22nd July 2023.

was closed to the public from March to June 2022, and everyone was locked in their homes for three months. During this time, people were in chaos with early morning food grabs, shortages of supplies, daily nucleic acid testing, and working from home. At the same time, the government's sweeping quarantine policy made it impossible to meet many humanitarian demands, such as the treatment of positive infected people, the forced separation of children from their parents, and the death of elderly people living alone in their homes due to lack of assistance and supplies. To some extent, the spontaneous protests that broke out in Shanghai and various locations across the country at the end of last year were also due to the public's dissatisfaction and long-standing anger over the policy. So, people started to find their own solutions.

In April 2022, *Shequgengxin* published an article entitled *Self-governance and self-help in the community as the smallest unit under the pandemic*³¹, saying that in the midst of the chaos, we saw that communities in Shanghai were exploring a path of **bottom-up self-governance** during the pandemic, and shared three different cases of community self-governance and reflections. He shares three different cases and reflections on community self-governance, hoping to give some references and lessons to those who are engaged in community work and involved in community affairs.

Other communities had a certain foundation of public participation before the pandemic due to the long-standing roots of third-party community revitalization organizations, and showed great resilience, adaptability and autonomy during the quarantine. In the same month, the article entitled "*Will this be the first year of community self-governance in Shanghai?*"³² was published by the cultural media *TChinese* (Mandarin: "T 中文版") was published, stating that the community revitalization organization Big Fish created the *Xinhua Volunteer Fleet*³³ in the Xinhua community, which was "the only known volunteer fleet in Shanghai that was initiated by the private sector, covers the entire neighborhood life cycle, and achieved a real collaboration between the street protection policy and the volunteer power of each community. Co-founder *He Jia* considers the role of the Big Fish as a handshake platform. In an epidemic situation where there may be mistrust and resistance between official, semi-official and

³¹ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Shequgengxin*: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=Mzg5ODgyMzQyNg==&mid=2247553335&idx=1&sn=334ff394e7019d04875056817bbd09cb&source=41#wechat_redirect. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

³² Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Shequgengxin*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/lwJzrFsttlcxlCwkLxUCug>. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

³³ Retrieved from Podcast *theWeirdo*: <https://www.xiaoyuzhoufm.com/episode/627e31de5ecc6b448badf18e>. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

completely grassroots teams, third-party organizations can promote understanding of policies, collect and respond to the needs of the private sector, and promote community autonomy to a whole process of participation, consultation and dialogue. The third-party organizations can facilitate understanding of policy, collect and respond to civic needs, and promote community self-governance toward a holistic approach of participation, consultation, and dialogue. In fact, there has been an increase in the number of community revitalization organizations like Big Fish, an early third-party organization in China that serves as an intermediary between the government and residents, helping to communicate and coordinate many community issues, which is more in line with mainland China's long-standing top-down context.

It is worth noting that third-party community revitalization organizations will use a number of ways to facilitate communication and connection among community residents, many times by hosting community events. In creative communities, these events or workshops have some commonality, i.e. **co-creation**. For example, *Shunde Good Things Happen* (Mandarin:“ 顺德好事发生”) is a cultural brand rooted in the local community of *Shunde*, and the platform hosted a participatory exhibition by recruiting exhibition co-creators at the end of 2022³⁴. Commercial property *Luxelakes Eco-City* (Mandarin:“ 麓湖生态城”) held a *Luxelakes Public Art Season*³⁵ in the fall of 2020, which featured not only community theater-themed art projects, but also a large number of community co-creations, with the expectation that Luhu residents would move from being temporary *immigrants* to *residents* with roots, and to live, create and share with each other, collectively building a common festival, with emotions and contemporary memories. *Aranya*³⁶, a real estate developer, held the first *Anaya Theatre Festival*³⁷ in 2021, and one of the most unique sections was the *Migratory Bird 300* program, which invited 300 theater lovers (like migratory birds) to stay in a tent camp in the wetland park for 14 days of a total of 300 hours. The interaction, exchange, practice and co-creation of this activity explored the possibilities of theater from all angles.

³⁴ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Shunde Good Things Happen*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/DdFZDyFXtvCIUoQxQNOFWg>. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

³⁵ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Luxelakes Eco-City*: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/fEFfFGxgSuiJfx8Zr4u_fA. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

³⁶ *Aranya* is a lifestyle brand that continues to build pioneering communities with culture and art as the core, carrying multiple lifestyles and exploring how a good life is possible in places with beautiful natural landscapes and profound cultural deposits, such as Beidaihe New Area, Jinshanling, Wuling Mountain, Chongli, Guangzhou Jiulong Lake and Sanya. Retrieved from the introduction of Wechat Subscription *Luxelakes Eco-City*. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

³⁷ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Aranya*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/GivQc6f25-WZOPMmADkKYg>. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

In addition, creative communities imply more social well-being and communal considerations. Along with the deepening of aging in mainland China, **community-based aging plans** have become a concern. Wang Defu points out in a podcast *CityTells* published by *the Papel* that the radius of elderly people's activities will become smaller, thus requiring better community and community-based elderly care services (Hao, H., 2022, 07:05). *Interface Culture* spoke with *Yang Fan*, an associate professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University who has long been involved in research on care service and public policy issues, who said that innovative *public care services* have been piloted, including community-based aid organizations, regular meditation and yoga classes, and *time banks*³⁸. Apart from that, parents who work in the city do not have time to bring up their children, and they are torn between “how to provide a better material life for their children” and “giving their children better companionship and nurturing”, and the **community-based parenting** may be a viable idea. According to the non-fiction media *Real Stories Project*³⁹, the *Wujiaochang* community in Shanghai is one such place where mothers have formed “alliances” and take turns becoming “surrogate parents” to look after each other's children. In the book entitled with *A Cultural Genealogy of Folk Parenting* (Mandarin: 《民间养育学的文化家谱》), the author *An Chao* points out, parenting in traditional societies is not dependent on the mother or a particular individual, but on the community. Countless adults and peers were involved in the child's development. In the no-relationship society where all neighbors are strangers, the public power of creative community parenting may be a new attempt to have the warmth of acquaintance society in the modern big city.

While creative communities provide new ideas for retirement and parenting, they can also provide a boost to the economy and business, mainly in terms of **revitalization of the regional/community economy**. The February 2021 special issue of *YiMagazine* focuses on community business-related themes. It points out that the entry point of Japan's focus on community business is Social Business, which therefore places more emphasis on solving social problems by commercial means and is essentially a non-profit business that gives priority to solving local problems, with the remaining benefits mainly used for social investment and return. From this premise, the social issues addressed by Japanese community business are relatively diverse, including not only aging and childlessness, but also healthcare, education, environment, tourism, and local activation development, etc. Diverse subjects from different

³⁸ It borrows the concept of *time currency* and provides services in exchange for labor, such as one hour of cleaning or chatting, which allows the community to have a more abundant volunteer spirit and better develop the power of the elderly to contribute to the community.

³⁹ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Real Stories Project*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/QU78pOfYQcRQXRw1zYU7dQ>. Accessed on 15th January 2023.

fields can participate in the project, and the government will also provide support and assistance. For example, the *machimori project* in *Atami City*⁴⁰, Shizuoka Prefecture, is a joint venture between landlords and real estate developers who own unused properties to renovate old houses and develop various retail stores, cafes, accommodations, and event spaces for tourists, companies, and school training groups (p. 70). In China, on the other hand, community commerce mostly refers to “solving the problem of living services around the community in the last kilometer”, and most of the subjects who focus on it are real estate developers and companies that combine e-commerce and supermarket services (p.68). Although the Japanese context is not the same as that of China, it still points us to a route of how creative communities can revitalize or revitalize the local economy. For example, the Chinese community revitalization organization *Big Fish* launched a “#buy local” campaign⁴¹ last November to support local community stores, which is also a way to promote the development of neighborhood/community businesses.

Finally, in my desk research, I also found another type of creative community that has more to do with the development of blockchain technology, namely communities organized in the form of **DAOs**⁴². For example, WBF (Women Buidl Foundation)⁴³ is a women’s programming community that was founded just last year. They believe that code is the language to build a new world, and Coder is the builder of this new world, yet at a time when new rules are being created in the web3 space, female programmers are severely absent or marginalized compared to men. Therefore, WBF plans to make its voice heard from Coding, providing women’s thoughts and perspectives to deeply participate in the building of a new world. As a groundwork for this idea, WBF held an introductory-level, high-intensity Coding Camp for female participants in the Web 3.0 field at DAO Space in Dali, Yunnan Province from September 16-18 last year. DAO Space is a shared office space in Dali, and is one of the cool

⁴⁰ *Atami* is a famous seaside hot spring resort in Japan.

⁴¹ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Big Fish Community Revitalization Organization*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/k8kNJ5mO7c0zoz5mjir1wQ>. Accessed on 1st December 2022.

⁴² DAOs is an abbreviated form of decentralized autonomous organizations.

⁴³ WBF has set a price mechanism for the camp, setting 0.1eth as a pledge to enter the camp. Each time a class project is completed, a corresponding amount of redemption is earned until the end of the course. When all projects are completed, the participant can get the redemption of the initial pledge of 0.1eth. At this point, participants can choose to redeem all of their ethers or choose to leave any percentage of this earned money as a donation in the pool to run more Coding Camp and other events in the future. In this case, participants have switched from being participants to being donors to the WBF and will be welcome to participate in subsequent discussions about how to use the funds and how to advance women in the Web 3.0 space. Accessed on 6th January 2023. <https://twitter.com/womenbuidl>. (originally cited website was deleted due to censorship of mainland China, see: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JmyPSUSA5AxzvIpf54GctQ>.)

signals in this report. Another example is Nomadverse DAO⁴⁴, a community that aims to connect digital nomads across time and space. It hopes to use Web 3 technology to empower offline communities, where like-minded partners can be connected in advance at various locations around the world to build a sustainable life model with second-hand exchange, co-learning, skill swap, and project co-creation to achieve parallel growth up and down the chain.

⁴⁴ Retrieved from Wechat Subscription *Nomadverse*: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/s-2m4NuN21FNf32a_mejA. Accessed on 29th December 2022.

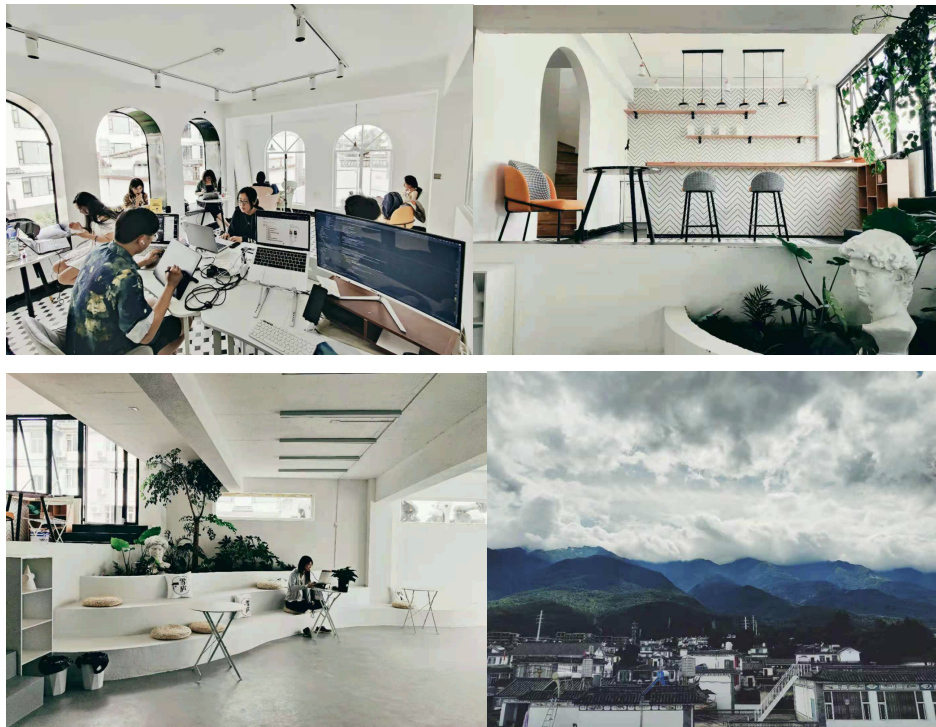
Part.6 Cool signals

The following pages display descriptions, analyses, references and related macro-trends for fourteen signals related to creative community revitalization. Ten of these are from mainland China, two from Hong Kong, and two from Japan. The specific research methodology and process can be found in 3.3. above.

Due to the Trend Studies' high demand for timeliness of information, the ten signals from mainland China all occur in 2022. While the two signals from Hong Kong occur in 2021, the two signals from Japan are between 2019 and 2021. Because the origin of creative community revitalization in Japan is much earlier and more developed, it may provide inspiration for creative community revitalization in mainland China, even if it is weaker in terms of timeliness.

Cool Signals in mainland China

6.1 Dali Hub 2.0 Digital Nomad Co-work Community



Description:

Dali Hub is a co-work community located in the city of Dali⁴⁵, Yunnan Province, Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Founded in October 2020, it re-upgraded the space after a year, which is now version 2.0. They hold regular sessions/salons to share their experiences with digital nomads or those who want to become a digital nomad across the country. They also incubated *the Wave Travel Project*, a travel-while-working program that joined digital nomads to live the life of a sojourn together in various regions of the country. The current version 2.0 space has been upgraded to include a coffee bar, terrace bar, rooftop, meeting room, yoga room, fitness area, entertainment area and book bar. Considering the weather, some of the digital nomads in the community will also travel to *Hainan*⁴⁶ for the winter en masse, working while sojourning. In addition to Dali, the founding team has also opened Hub branches in *Zhangye*, *Luoyang* and *Hainan*, China.

Reference:

Dali Hub 2.0: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/I4CeWlWbsip_6RJViD8wWw.

Dali Hub 1.0: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/kh3_hlTvUWeyml205yadZQ.

Luoyang Hub: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/6EQ1Mklsd8cH2Mtpu4zgPA>.

Hainan Hub: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ad60fK8Ce5ouLDw2VS8aMw>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

The pandemic has profoundly affected and changed our lives, and people are increasingly looking to redefine their lifestyle. In this context, a variety of work forms such as remote work, freelancing and digital nomadism have received more attention. Therefore, Dali Hub is **relevant** to the spirit of the times due to its reflection and resonance with people's emerging mentalities and aspirations. Moreover, the community represented by this lifestyle is also **instigating**, envied and aspired to by many people. It is also **viral** because the Dali Hub community is growing in size, and three more digital nomad co-work spaces have been established in other cities across mainland China within three years. Although Dali hub 1.0 was established in 2020, its upgraded version and the newly established co-work spaces in other cities are both less than 2 years. Therefore, it is **current**. Rather than living on the move in different cities while working at the same time like digital nomads, settling in one city for a

⁴⁵ Dali City belongs to *Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture* in Yunnan Province, which is located in the southwest of China. It has a pleasant climate, and is also home to many ethnic minorities other than the Han Chinese.

⁴⁶ *Hainan* is the only province in China located entirely in the tropics, making it a popular destination for many Chinese to visit in the winter.

long time is still the choice of the mainstream. That’s why the community contains **irreverent** and **discontinuous** characteristics that are avant-garde and provocative, different from the cultural orthodoxy.

Insight:

Digital nomadism and remote working are not fresh to the world, but with the pandemic profoundly changing our lives, the practice and desire for this lifestyle is rapidly emerging in mainland China, especially among the younger demographic⁴⁷. At the same time, digital nomads or remote workers are tending to choose to live in smaller cities with more pleasant weather conditions outside of first-tier cities, not only for cost savings, but also for a chance to easily get access to nature. This way of life is characterized by the integration of life and work while living and working in a more flexible location, without the restrictions of a fixed workplace. Currently, Portugal and Spain have both opened visas for digital nomads, so this change in lifestyle is not limited to mainland China.

Related Macro Trends: Lifestyle Redesign

6.2 Digital Nomad Anji (DNA) Community and Anji Creative & Design Center (ACDC)



⁴⁷ The 2022 *Employment Trends Report*, jointly released by Peking University National Development Institute and Zhilian Recruitment Ltd., presents the changes in career types, employment groups, job search mindset and work patterns in the context of the employment relationship changes in the digital era. The report surprisingly indicates that 76% of post-00s expect to become digital nomads and 65.9% expect to work remotely.

Description:

Digital Nomad Anji (DNA) is located in Anji County, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, within a three-hour drive from first-tier cities such as Shanghai and Hangzhou. Transformed from a disused factory, the community is now a combination of a co-work space and a dormitory area with all the functions needed for work and living. In short, it is a campus built according to the co-working and co-living necessities of digital nomads. DNA is based on the idea of inclusivity and integration, supporting individual digital nomad to be more powerful. Not far from the community is the Anji Creative & Design Center (ACDC), a public facility dedicated to creative design work, which includes an area of design and art library and a large area of co-work space. The community began internal testing in December 2021 and officially opened to the public in May 2022.

Reference:

ACDC introduction: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/LxBcTFDg1E6w-lkW9eAtKA>

DNA: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/k_RKrUhj-huDygMBB20u-g

New change in Anji: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/_s-4V2hawFMtHQ_ljUcqvQ

The analysis of Cool Nature:

DNA and ACDC are closely **relevant** and significant to the spirit of times, as they respond to the digital way of working that more people are choosing, while the pandemic of the past three years has accelerated this trend. At the same time, with the high level of urbanization and all the urban maladies that come along with it, there is a tendency that people are longing to escape from big cities and search for new possibilities in other places, among which countrysides are one of those options. It is also **viral**, as the commune has already attracted hundreds of residents since it opened for internal testing at the end of 2021 for five months. According to the media platform *Sandwich*, demand for DNA's dormitory was already outstripping supply. Moreover, It is also **instigating** and causing excitement. For example, since the official opening of the community, its media platform has been rotating one resident per week to share his/her life or art creation in DNA, which is called the *Digital nomad Takeover Project*. As of November 29, 2022, twenty five residents have participated. This decentralized rotation plan, where the residents are the subjects of the practice, not only draws more attention to this interesting center, but also stimulates more creativity and energy. The DNA community and ACDC are very **current** as the internal test was opened in December 2021 and officially opened to the public five months later, less than a year ago. Finally, it also contains **irreverence** and **discontinuity**, since the DNA is the first commercially operated

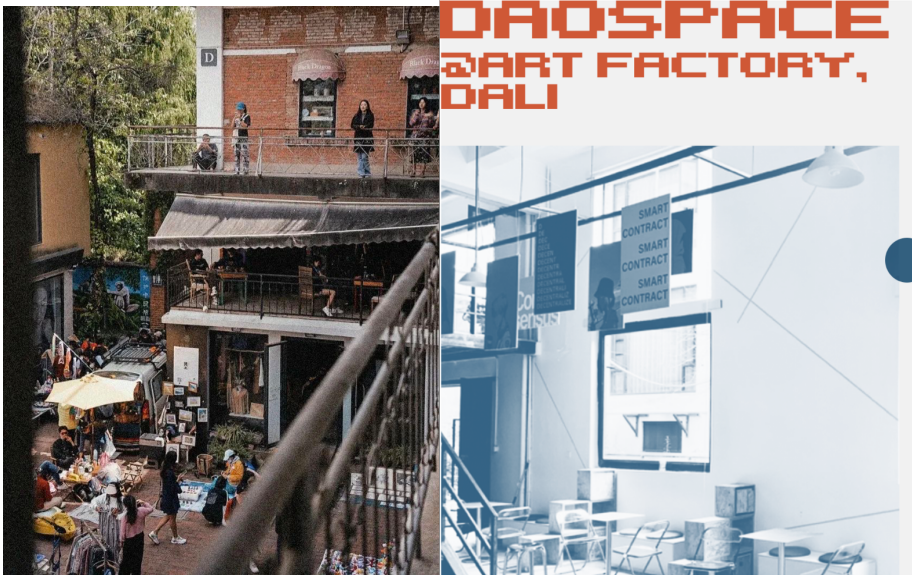
digital nomad-oriented community in mainland China, and the ACDC is the first public facility in mainland China built in the countryside specifically to serve creative workers.

Insight:

In a time of evolving technology and media, digital nomads have chosen to work and travel as a way of life. Many of this group are creative workers. They live in low-cost rural areas, while forming creative communities that attract more talented residents. They will also take over the community as an owner-principal, with a certain degree of self-expression of subjectivity. For business and brands, firstly, Anji can become a replicable business model and land in more villages around big cities, and secondly, this new lifestyle is attracting more people’s attention, and more products and services can be produced and designed to meet the greater demand in the future.

Related Macro Trends: Lifestyle Redesign; Protagonist identities

6.3 DAO SPACE - the local co-work space in Dali



Description:

Founded in September 2022, DAO SPACE is a co-work space located in the Bed Sheet Factory Art District of Dali Old Town, aiming to provide a comfortable, free, inspirational and creative community for new immigrants to Dali such as Web3.0 practitioners, digital nomads and freelancers, supporting community members interact with the local humanities. Compared

with other co-work communities such as Dali Hub, it has the following differences: (1) It is not only a space, but also a DAO⁴⁸. (2) It is equipped with a new Web3.0 social system *Social layer*⁴⁹. In this system, everyone can issue badges for community members, and every community member has an equal opportunity to create and issue non-quantifiable badges (tokens), which can transform the impact that one brings to others into recordable identity information. (3) More embodied sociality. The introductory tweet states that urban living represented by modernity encourages a productive, separated lifestyle, but DAO SPACE hopes to break this pattern. To achieve this, the community regularly organizes various events such as knowledge-sharing sessions and dance parties, as well as inspires each member to initiate activities through a variety of rewards. In this way, they hope to make everyone in the community live in an environment where they are appreciated and supported by each other. In the latest tweets, DAO SPACE is also continuing to promote the Dali Community Alliance, which contains different types of communities in Dali, aiming to complete the economic self-circulation within the whole alliance, in the form of community token. They consider it may be a solution to counteract global economic problems.

Reference:

Introduction: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/8QpHgJ9Ow2oZc5JZYxL5IA>

Notion: <https://www.notion.so/dalifornia/DAO-Space-3d4ce854fcca41b4a071babee0bd1f55>.

Dali Community Alliance : <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/CD1O0dpGlMOsHT4ISjgWwQ>.
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/A7Uz1IQhRrEtcuFavdcTNg>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

DAO Space is **current**, since it was founded in September 2022, less than a year from now. The community is **relevant** to the *zeitgeist* because it responds to the growing number of remote workers, digital nomads, and other freelancers in the context of the pandemic by providing them with a public space that integrates work, life, and social interaction. It is also **viral**, as similar co-work communities/spaces are springing up all over mainland China, with both different characteristics. DAO Space is also unique in that it is the first community in

⁴⁸ DAO is an abbreviated form of *decentralized autonomous organization*. It is a type of bottom-up entity structure with no central authority. Members of a DAO own tokens of the DAO, and members can vote on initiatives for the entity. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decentralized_autonomous_organization. Accessed on 3rd January 2023.

⁴⁹ *Social Layer* is a subjective, relational and programmable Soulbound NFT-based social network. The official website of Social Layer: <https://social-layer.typedream.app/>. And its official twitter: https://twitter.com/SocialLayer_im. Accessed on 3rd January 2023.

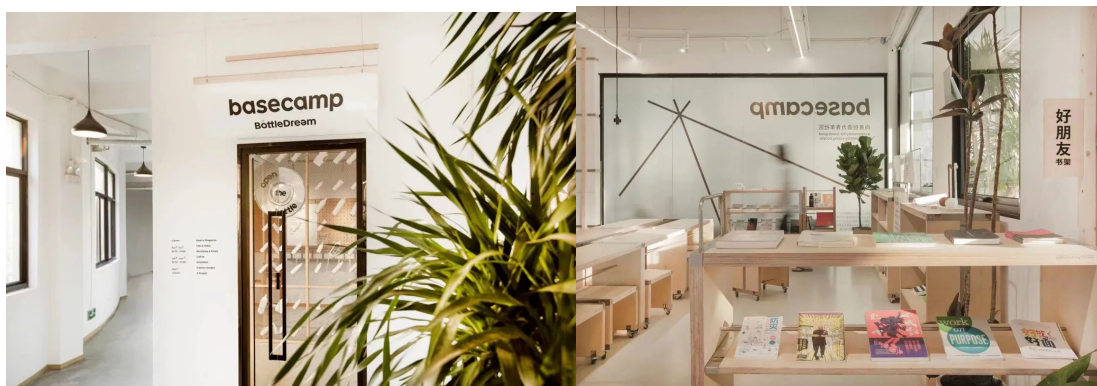
mainland China to combine the technology of web3.0 and digital nomads. This is why it contains **irreverent** characteristics with avant-garde. As the name suggests, DAO Space implements the spirit of DAO, using the *Social layer* as a new system of socialization, and badges as non-quantifiable tokens to visualize the value of members' contributions to the community, thus better enabling everyone to be seen and respected. This is very different from previous co-work communities, so it can be said that it is a breakthrough from the old pattern and has a **discontinuity**. In addition, the community has held a series of events since its inception, and many people have come to participate, which shows its **attraction and seduction**.

Insight:

The pandemic has profoundly affected the way we live, work, socialize and play. Against the background of the increasing number of digital nomads and remote workers, work-life social integration communities for such groups are increasing with a variety of forms. At the same time, we can see that some communities have started to adopt Web 3.0 technology to bind the digital identity of community members with their real/physical identities, forming an online and offline linked community support system to achieve better community development. In addition, although the Dali Community Alliance is still in the early discussion stage of the proposal, there are many correlations between its consideration for economic self-cycling and sustainable systems.

Related Macro Trends: Sustainable systems; Ergonomic Connections; Lifestyle Redesign

6.4 Bottle Dream's Basecamp





Description:

In July 2022, *BottleDream*, a social innovation company, transformed its 500-square-meter office into a creative community that responds to public issues, and named it *Basecamp*. Its introduction reads, “In an age where nothing is certain, a space should exist where people can freely express their doubts and concerns about the world, where prejudices between people dissolve and wariness dissipates, where they can discuss the possibilities of making the future better, and where they can gain the inspiration, knowledge and power they need.” *BottleDream* hopes to create more and more authentic links and make it a “Think Tank for ordinary people”. At the same time, the open space combines a library, a cafe and an exhibition space, through which they are able to shift to the direct C-side, allowing people to play, consume, feel and touch the subtle sustainable actions in the space through the medium of coffee, kitchen and balcony garden⁵⁰. Through this internal presentation, they hope to explore the possibility of promoting social innovation as a cultural context, or even as a way of life in the lives of the ordinary people.

Reference:

Introduction : <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xG7GiDwfVztiqmn09sZGuQ>

Report about Basecamp: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/BLwP97jES8TSpSGPEb_jIA

Introduction of BottleDream: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/KLJcyI0uk3Lm9dT7rGh3yg>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

The *Basecamp* was founded in July 2022, less than a year ago, so it is **current** and fresh. It is very **instigating and attractive** that *Bottom Dream* opened up its office space that had been limited to their employees to the public, allowing people to be exposed to more tangible

⁵⁰ For example, there is a discount for buying a cup of coffee by bringing your own cup in the space, etc.

sustainable practices. At the same time, in a series of experiences and activities, people may also quickly internalize this sustainable innovation in their lives and spontaneously spread it to their friends around them, so it is **viral** in nature. More importantly, in an era of uncertainty, *Basecamp* provides a space where people can freely express and respond to public issues, and encourages everyone to gain inspiration, knowledge and power through communication and connection. It can be seen that its philosophy and actions respond to the current discussion on environmental and social sustainability issues. At the same time, it combines individual innovation with social change, believing in the possibility and power of every ordinary person to change the world. For the mainstream, innovation may be limited to a small group of people, such as experts, policy makers, or employees in large corporations, so the community also contains **irreverent** and **discontinuous** characteristics that distinguish it from cultural orthodoxy.

Insight:

Creative communities are becoming incubators that stimulate the creativity of ordinary people. These creative communities usually have a physical space on the ground. Through a series of discourses, objects, experiences, representations and practices, they stimulate the creativity of normal people and promote communication or connection between people, thus leading to greater possibilities for social change.

Related Macro Trends: Sustainable systems

6.5 345 Social Innovation Lab



Description:

345 *Social Innovation Lab* is “a crowdsourcing world on your doorstep” (Mandarin: “家门口的众创天地”) , located in the *Xinhua* community in Shanghai. According to the initiators, we human beings are encountering more and more problems in an uncertain city, but the solutions are far from enough, and innovative people who want to do something about it always stop for various reasons. What the Lab aims to be is an experimental platform for ideas rooted in the community, where problems and ideas meet and solutions are obtained through experimentation. The directions of the Lab include but are not limited to future life, urban life, creative art, sustainable cities and communities, rural revitalization, etc. *Xinhua* Community Revitalization Center will provide venue support, creative experiment support, design interaction section, cross-border communication and dissemination actions. The initiator hopes to create a youth creative community with a sense of scene, creativity and brand power based on physical space and a series of innovative activities, and to support more creative ideas of youth to have a chance to land.

Reference:

Introduction of 345 Social innovation lab: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/L970AgR06aaV-NL8EIKIMg>.

Introduction of organizer: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/hDbh7XnLrqr5MqR30v7SJQ>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

The Lab was founded in December 2022 and is therefore **current** and fresh. It is also **viral** and **instigating** because the kernel it contains to inspire community members’ creative ideas and support them to get their ideas off the ground has a high degree of spreadability. And at the same time, according to Richard Florida, creative people are aggregative, and when ordinary people’s ideas are inspired, more people with ideas will gather over as a result, forming a special energy field that promotes wider diffusion. In addition, the Lab is an attempt to address the challenge we face today, namely the paradox between the multiplicity of social problems and the scarcity of ideas for solutions. It supports the implementation of ideas by ordinary residents through a series of approaches, which in itself is very important and meaningful, **in line with the spirit of the times**. Finally, unlike the traditional thought that ideas are generated by professionals and employees of large enterprises, it boldly chooses to believe in people with certain ideas in neighborhoods or communities “at the doorstep”, through supporting their ideas via platform building and resource provision. That why it is **irreverent** and novel in itself.

Meanwhile, this point also breaks with the mainstream of the current pattern, forming a **discontinuous** proposal.

Insight:

Creative communities are getting closer to ordinary people and their daily life. In such a community, it makes individual innovative actions easier to generate, experiment and land, through cross-border communication, resource matching and dissemination and promotion. Therefore, creative communities as an incubator to stimulate the creativity of ordinary people is on the horizon.

Related Macro Trends: Sustainable systems

6.6 *Golden Era* Co-creation Space



Description:

Golden Era is a Co-creation Space established in April, 2022 on Yulin Road, Chengdu City. The co-creation space was founded by Dada, who was inspired by topics related to community revitalization and urban renewal while studying in Japan, and wanted to create a space that is both personal and open to the public in the form of co-creation. The space is divided into two floors, the first floor is used as a private space for individuals and the second floor is open to the public. In the public space on the second floor, she designed a small private library named *Baichuan* (Mandarin: “百川”), from the Chinese idiom “Hai Na Bai Chuan”(Mandarin:“海纳百川”), which means that everyone is different and the river carries different knowledge. She has collected all her books and her friends’ books together and innovatively categorized them by person rather than by subject. In the future, Dada hopes that

in this public, open and shared space, people will have more opportunities to interact with each other, create various activities together and explore life and the world together.

Reference:

Introduction of *Golden Era*: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/aRjwGgSGA3elGJBfi9oDA>

Baichuan Library: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/pxzn6xPuzCYU2nrWTwt2yA>

The analysis of the Nature of Cool:

Golden Era Co-creation Space was established in April 2022, less than a year ago, so it is very **current**. The space is meaningful and **relevant** to the spirit of times, because as part of the city, it provides a public space for discussion of public issues and civic engagement, and encourages people to share, co-create and co-construct. Its combination of private and public attributes also allows it to be preserved in mainland China's restrictive environment of speech censorship, allowing a portion of cutting-edge people's ideas to be expressed in a safe space of communication. This space, which flows between the private and public boundaries, contains **irreverent** characteristics. It is also **viral** because the core of this kind of community lies in sharing and co-creation, which means people will be involved in it through a series of experiences and practices, thus expanding its spread. The blurred boundary between private and public makes it both inclusive and private, easily arousing people's curiosity and inspiring them to come to this space to generate more interesting conversations or other creative practices. That's why it is **instigating**. Finally, it also contains a **discontinuous** character, as the creative community encourages co-creation among people in the city, and the discussion of public issues has a certain social well-being implication, unlike interest-based community groups.

Insight:

In the city, creative communities have become a new platform for people to share knowledge, seek collaboration, and create together. And the shape of the community is in the stray zone between private and public, distinguishing it from some more public communities that are oriented to stimulate the creativity of ordinary people. In the context of mainland China, this may also be a consideration to circumvent censorship and to discuss public issues more safely and freely.

Related Macro Trends: Sustainable systems (micro - urban collaborative organisms)

6.7 Chitchat Lab



Description:

Located in Xiamen's Haicang Lotus Village, the *Chitchat Lab* was established by four young people from different professions in October 2022 and is still in need of preparation. They pointed out that when the three-year pandemic turned their lives into a “non-essential”⁵¹ one, they began to re-examine the meaning of work, refused mental internal friction, and started to focus on the quality of life and return to their heart's desires. Therefore, they hope to become new villagers in the countryside, to practice a new way of life that accompanies the city and the countryside, to talk to and care for each other through “Chitchat”, to regain the warmth of door-to-door, to reconstruct the disappearing *nearby*, and to bring back human feelings and vivid places. In addition, they plan to make a village magazine, cooperating with their friends to find the relationship between solar terms, land, culture, history and people, and record the daily life memories and thoughts in the village. Their vision is to become a community with social value: linking urban and rural life through the ecological model of content-design-industry in the long term, among friends and local neighbors. In a larger sense, it is about altruism and sharing, casting light on rural revitalization.

⁵¹ In 2022, while the world was gradually recovering from the effects of the pandemic, mainland China implemented a harsher closure and regular nucleic acid testing than ever before. In this context, many people were confined to their own cities, unable to move freely, with an official propaganda slogan of “no travel unless necessary”. In the first half of 2022, Shanghai COVID-19 outbreak was so widespread that the entire city was sealed off for nearly four months. These findings have led many in the media to explore what is necessary for living and what is not. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/O9eJM9AMJ7ysTYyxHm5n_w. Accessed on 15th December 2022. More information related to Shanghai COVID-19 outbreak: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Shanghai_COVID-19_outbreak. Accessed on 15th January 2022.

Reference:

Introduction: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/BpfuBIYFDd8nhAddys-47Q>.

Follow-up News: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/dK4jlxIaTebg3phnYUzceg>.

Fuliang Art Festival: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JlXfWVVMW739K4jY028puA>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

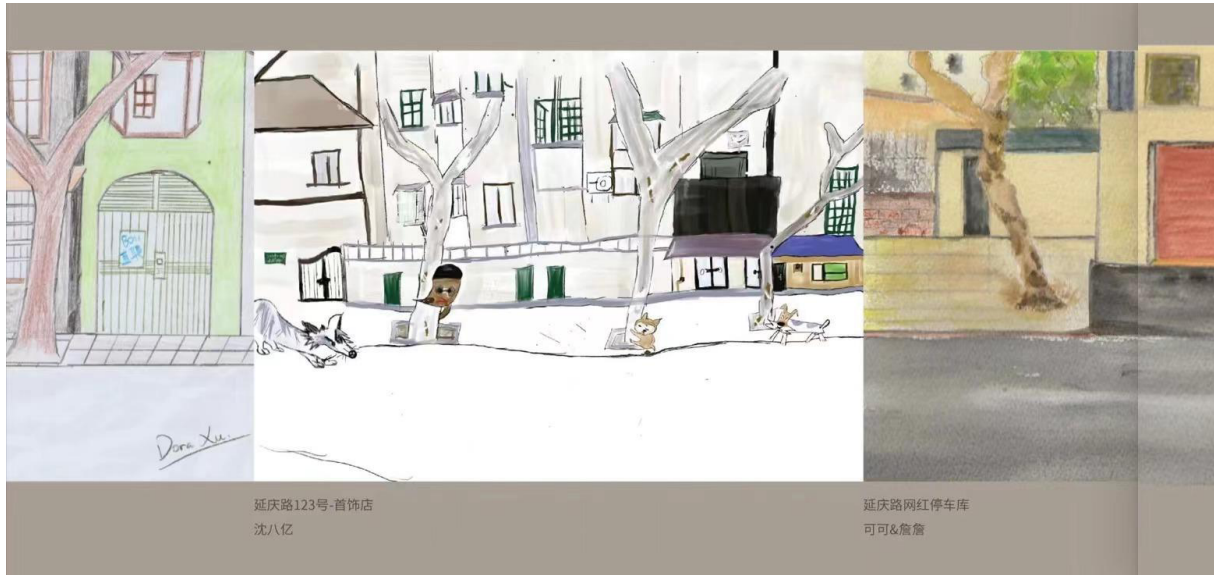
The lab was an initiative launched in October 2022, and the preparation is still ongoing, so it is in an early stage and very **current**. The launch of the lab had something to do with the three-year pandemic, as people began to think more inward, reflecting on the meaning of work and what is necessary to live because of mobility restrictions in mainland China. The founding team members resigned from their former companies and chose to start a new way of life in the countryside was also influenced by it, so it is **relevant** and resonates with the emerging mentalities. At the same time it is **viral** at its core. Because this kind of local innovation can be practiced not only in one village, but also in villages in other parts of China as a practice of a new way of life for people to start a new exploration. Moreover, the Lab is also very avant-garde and **irreverent**, and has a certain **discontinuity** that breaks with the mainstream model. In the past, rural revitalization in mainland China usually focused on economic revitalization, and even with creative projects, they were mostly short-lived art festivals (such as the *Art in Fuliang*), but the founders of *Chitchat* intend to be new villagers based in the countryside for a long time, and to record their thoughts and memories via a cultural media “magazine”, which is quite innovative and thought-provoking. Finally, according to their tweets, the idea of the lab has received a lot of attention since it was made public, and even now, before the lab has been renovated, there are many people commenting below the article, saying that they are ready to go for a small stay, which can somehow show that it is attractive and **instigating**.

Insight:

Under the influence of the pandemic, more and more people are beginning to re-examine their lives and reflect on the meaning of their work. As a result, people are escaping from big cities and going to the countryside to explore a new possibility of life. The choice of the countryside location is not so far from the city that it affects the convenience of life. At the same time, the concept *nearby* has been repeatedly mentioned, as young people who come to the countryside desire to build a connection with the countryside and the land, to rebuild warm human relationships and a community with social values.

Related Macro Trends: Lifestyle Redesign

6.8 Residents co-creation along the Yanqing Road



Description:

In February 2022, 30 neighbors on Yanqing Road in Shanghai each painted a section of the street scene on Yanqing Road, in an activity organized by Comer and Peng Peng, residents of Yanqing. The introduction to the event indicates that Yanqing Road has a 100-year history, and many famous people such as painters, architects and doctors have lived here and left behind many buildings of historical significance. The promoters organized this event to record what Yanqing Road would look like in 2022 as part of history. The creation of the first half of the road has been completed. The initiators said in a tweet that the process was arduous but everyone was working hard to complete it with their free time. The moment we put residents' drawings together, they felt a sense of accomplishment. It was a small thing, but through this activity, we really felt the support of neighbors for each other.

Reference:

Introduction: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/lHU5gxiSc4JH20IP93UyQw>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

This co-creation is **current** because it was drawn by the community of Yanqing Road, just about a year ago. The drawing was attended by more than thirty residents, and its artistic

co-creation kernel can be practiced not only in the Yanqing Road community but also in other communities, making it **viral** and **instigating**. The event also contained an **irreverent** and avant-garde character, as it was a self-organized art co-creation by the residents, which was different from previous officially organized events. A painting along with the road where residents live in a form of co-creation, representing the neighborhood's landscape and spirit, reflecting the emotional connection between neighbors and their sense of belonging to that community. It is an anchoring of a new narrative content and style, and is therefore **relevant** to the *zeitgeist* and resonates with the emerging mindset of resident's self-expression. Finally, this attempt to preserve and record local memories, create the representation of community scenes, and enhance community connections in a creative manner may symbolize a break with the current pattern, characterized by **discontinuity**.

Insight:

Co-creation seems to be an increasingly prominent keyword in creative communities. This co-creation is not only a kind of collaborative creation, but a more novel one. To be more specific, it is carried out more in the artistic form as well as content, which adopts more cultural symbols related to local culture and community identity. Moreover, the event has an unofficial, de-authoritarian character, and is a spontaneous action by residents to express their identity to the community. This connection to the community narrative and the more subjective voice of the residents is worthy of follow-up tracking.

Related Macro Trends: Anchored Narratives; Protagonist identities

6.9 Borrow a seat exhibition



Description:

The young artist Chen Fanwan and the members of his *Wan Studio* initiated the exhibition *Borrow a Seat*. The curatorial inspiration for the exhibition comes from the various small stools in the old downtown area of *Foshan City*, the *Zhuihong* community. Many of the stores facing the street have small ramshackle stools in front of their entries, which constitutes an important scene in the public life of the neighborhood. In the view of the members of *Wan Studio*, the stool has a subtle attribute at this moment, a piece of furniture that blurs the boundary between public and private, widening the limits of life. They hope that by borrowing stools, they can establish a relationship with the old residents. Chen feels that not only have the young people lost the *nearby*, but also the old residents are not curious about new things in the community any more. In order to make the neighbors feel more involved, they left a loaner's card for each store owner, so that they can come to the exhibition for free.

Reference:

Introduction: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/GRZt-N5xQePlh1_v4HNxkg

Follow-up News: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/wHdWtKrv-LIMjRKERxBo-w>.

The analysis of Cool Nature:

In the process of urbanization, the problem of “no-relationship” in modern communities is serious. People are increasingly lonely and lacking in the seeing of the *nearby*. Through a daily object that is both private and public, the activity was organized in an unintentional, interactive and intimate way to promote communication between old and new residents. That’s why it is **relevant** to the spirit of the times and responds to people's anxiety. The event was held from July to October 2022, less than a year from now, and is therefore very fresh and **current**. It was also **viral**, in the sense that the event contained a core of art as a way to foster connections between old and new residents, an idea that can be applied by other communities, and not only through curation. The exhibition was initiated by a few young and influential artists, and while it continued to attract young people through exposure on social media, they also invited elderly residents to visit. As such it was **instigating** and provocative. This use of everyday objects from the surrounding, public-private ambiguity is actually **irreverent**, since these objects are often overlooked, while artistic interventions can make them visible. In other words, they may seem insignificant, but they are in fact important condensed collective memories of the community. Finally, this way of telling community cultural stories is also different from the previous ones, as the latter focuses more on aspects such as visual design and facilities hardware. That’s why it contains a proposal of **discontinuity**.

Insight:

Creative communities become centers of discourse, storytelling and narrative, while daily objects in the ambiguous zone of public and private become symbols, through which community memories are recorded, stories are circled and narratives are anchored. Similar innovative ways of using art to revitalize may emerge in different communities.

Related Macro Trends: Anchored Narratives

6.10 Comupage - Metaverse community applet



Description:

Comupage was founded in June 2022 by a group of academics, architects, designers, artists, and cryptographic engineers in Shanghai. Real community, digital badge and value social interaction are its three key-words. The core function of *Comupage* is to mint NFT⁵² (digital badges) for the community on the *Conflux* chain⁵³. Each community contribution can be recorded with a digital badge, and rewards for community contributions are not commended by the authority or official organization, but are self-motivated by the connection of community members. There are also various types of digital badges, such as a child-friendly badge, a tech-friendly badge, a delivery helper badge, etc. Currently, users can access *Comupage*'s interface in the WeChat applet, where we can see various community self-organizations (DAOs) that have partnered with *Comupage*. For example, *Xinhua Community* is one of the larger DAOs that have been established earlier, within which there are different small DAOs such as *Xinhua Volunteer Fleet* (see the second picture of the signal above). The volunteer Fleet was initiated

⁵² NFT stands for Non-Fungible Token. It's a unique digital asset that verifies ownership and authenticity of a specific item or piece of content, stored on a blockchain. NFTs allow creators to sell their digital works and ensure they are one-of-a-kind, making them a new way to monetize digital creations..

⁵³ *Conflux* is an open-source blockchain platform that was created by a group of Chinese researchers and engineers. The platform aims to improve on the scalability and decentralization of existing blockchain networks.

by the residents of *Xinhua Community* during the three-months quarantine period in Shanghai this year. When all public transport stopped, this fleet of more than 120 volunteers helped other residents in need of medical treatment, making more than 200 trips between hospital and where they live. This digital badge was proposed by the team members as a testimony to this special community.

Reference:

Official Description of Comupage: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/IZxvt27_WPUQ48uvC7JtOw
In the 35th issue of *Xinmin Weekly* in 2022 (published on August 29), *DAO: A New Organization* (p.49) took *Comupage* as an example to give an in-depth introduction to the DAO organization in the field of public media. (Reporter: Wang Zhongyun)

<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/laR267Grv6n3AP1C21UgRw>

Xinhua-Beautiful Community Festival | Season 5:

<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/wLd3R3TmJTFoNjZPfyofqA>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

Comupage was initiated in June 2022, so it is relatively **current**. Less than four months after its launch, the tool has already attracted three communities to join, and digital badges for various events and projects continue to be issued online. It is also featured in the 5th season of *Xinhua-Beautiful Community Festival*, one of the largest community events in Shanghai 2022, attracting the attention of more ordinary residents in different communities, so it is **instigating** and **viral**. This is fundamentally different from the awards given to contributors by superiors or officials, which indicate that members are officially recognized as individuals, while the former indicates that the proof is made by the community members together, via the chained digital badge. In this case, the community self-organization is a subject, and each community member in the organization is also subjective in nature. It can be said that the combination of blockchain technology, or specifically NFTs, with creative communities is innovative, and therefore also has the character of **irreverence** and **discontinuity**. Under the influence of the pandemic and long-term closure and control, it is increasingly difficult for people to trust official and authoritative discourse. A small group of people have seen the power of community spontaneity and formed a bottom-up self-organization for more self-empowerment and self-expression. The *Comupage* acts as a tool for creative community revitalization, connecting online and offline, real and virtual, which is significant and **relevant** to the spirit of the times.

Insight:

Comupage is not only a metaverse product that spans the real and the virtual, but also connects community members and unites their social values. At the same time, it is organized in an autonomous and decentralized way, enabling members to feel more involved in community activities and to belong and identify with their community identity through the digital badge as an object (thing).

Related Macro Trends: Ergonomic Connections; Protagonist identities

Cool Signals in Asia

6.11 Chiica - Community token electronic payment Platform



Description:

Chiica is a local currency platform service supported by blockchain technology launched by Trust Bank in May 2019. As of May 2022, 31 regions in Japan have joined the service. District governments and organizations can contact trust banks to open *Chiica* services and create their own regional currency to promote the circulation of the local economy. Residents can earn e-tokens by topping up money, participating in health activities or volunteering activities, and after downloading mobile apps or storing e-money with a regional currency card (for those who are not good at using smartphones), they can shop at local supermarkets, restaurants, groceries Stores and other indicated locations to use. According to

the platform, the original intention of creating the service is to make the connection between local communities and people stronger, wider and larger, so as to better develop the community. According to the Google Play Store, the app has been downloaded more than 100,000 times as of May 2022.

Reference:

Official site: <https://chiica.jp/>

Google Play:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jp.co.trustbank.furusatocalcurrencyuser&hl=ja>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

Chiica is **instigating** and attractive as the app has been downloaded more than 100,000 times on the Google Play Store after its launch in mid-2019, with 31 regions in Japan joining the service. It is the first app that combines multiple regional currencies/tokens into one digital platform, helping local governments and organizations to issue regional e-currency in a one-stop shop. In this way, it stimulates the circulation of regional economies and promotes interpersonal communication in regions through blockchain technology, thus *Chiica* has the characteristics of **irreverence** and **discontinuity**. As an innovative platform for comprehensive business of regional token management, it is also attracting more regions to open their own regional currencies. Meanwhile, the kernel of gathering regional currencies in one platform for management is spreadable and can be adopted in other countries. That's why it is **viral**. Although the platform was created in Japan more than 3 years ago, the nature of its innovation is still relatively new to other countries such as mainland China, which can be seen as a **current** thing. Besides, *Chiica* is also significant and **relevant** to *zeitgeist*. For one thing, we can see the consideration for a more sustainable environment behind the promotion of regional economic cycles. When we emphasize more local production and consumption, we can reduce the large amount of carbon emissions caused by large-scale logistics circulation under globalization. For another, the border between reality and virtual is becoming increasingly blurred, and blockchain technology is increasingly being integrated with the real world to solve the challenges and problems of modern society in innovative ways.

Insight:

Regional economies have been the focus of recent issues related to the Japanese community, and regional tokens are an integral part of the regional economic system. On the one hand, the circulation of regional economies can significantly reduce carbon emissions in the global transportation of commodities, which has a positive impact on environmental sustainability. On the other hand, we can see a greater use of blockchain technology into the real world and more attention among community builders or practitioners. However, while the issue of regional currencies may not be realistic for mainland China, there are still lessons to be learned in the direction of individual communities or regions using points/tokens to facilitate the circulation, communication and exchange of all aspects of a geographic area or community.

Related Macro Trends: Ergonomic Connections; Sustainable systems

6.12 Revisit: A Tiny Art Festival in Sanya 2022

The poster for 'Sanya Revisit' provides comprehensive details about the festival. It includes the dates (October 22-23, 2022), admission (free), and screening times. The '再来さんや' section explains the festival's focus on revisiting art from the Sanya area. The '上映プログラム' section lists 11 art pieces, including 'Un-titled' by Manqashit, 'Sanya Road' by Takami Chisa and Ogawara Tomoko, and 'Song of Corruption' by Liang Jie. The 'お店情報' section lists participating stores like Tamahime Inari Shrine and Sanya Cafe Tokyo. The '個人支援者' section lists names like Wang Zhengyi and Luo Sijia. A map shows the festival location near Minami-Senju Station.

Description:

Revisit: A Tiny Art Festival in *Sanya*⁵⁴ 2022 is a community artistic program. The first edition was held in October 2021 and the second edition in the same month of 2022 for 2 days.

⁵⁴ Located between *Arakawa-ku* and *Taito-ku* in Tokyo, *Sanya* (さんや), which has a distant view of the Tokyo landmark Skytree from the street, is an urban village area in Tokyo. However, the place name is no longer in use today. In the 1950s, when Japanese society was growing rapidly after World War II, the demand for labor for civil engineering and construction as well as port handling increased, and day laborers from all over the country poured into the valley in search of work. They gathered in *Sanya*, and thus turned this place into a lively and prosperous urban area. In 1963, the year before the Tokyo Olympics, about 15,000 workers slept in more than 200 simple private houses. But after the bubble economy burst (1990s), people who lost their jobs flowed in, and *Sanya* became the only place for them to go, and therefore became synonymous with the low-income group and the homeless. Slum, dangerous, and dirty are how Tokyoites living outside *Sanya* described the area - even though

The festival invited artists who have an interest in regional art to participate in a study that will create works in the context of the *Sanya* region, examining the region's way of life through the lens of foreigners/others. Participating artists from multicultural backgrounds asked questions about the local living situation and worked with local residents to develop artistic festival plans. It was explained that in the *Sanya* area, on the one hand, the former day laborers are becoming older and need care and welfare. On the other hand, the area is also becoming a destination for young backpackers. That is why the organizers hope that this festival will make people feel the diversity of the region and encourage them to rethink the differences in society, thus eliminating to some extent the discrimination that comes from different origins, ages, disabilities and economic status.

Reference:

Exhibition information of 2022: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/pXHtJ0YUcBbO9Gd9ee5rIA>

Exhibition Record of 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlfTc8kw-78>

“Revisit: A Tiny Art Festival in Sanya 2021” Report : <https://iloveyou.geidai.ac.jp/project17/> (Japanese Version); https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/RL6vi_85ka3XFG1mNhNHlw (Chinese Version)

Documentary about *Sanya*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBgxrV1fO6U>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

Revisit: A Tiny Art Festival in *Sanya* has only been held twice in total, with October 2022 being the most recent one, so it is very **current**. Moreover, the first festival has attracted the attention of some Japanese and overseas media since its launch, so it is **instigating** and provocative to hold the second festival this year. The festival was initiated by international students from Tokyo University of the Arts, who also invited artists of different backgrounds and nationalities, as well as residents of the *Sanya* area to participate in this local art creation. The project has such a diverse and inclusive composition of people, which is relatively uncommon in Japanese community artistic projects, with **discontinuous** and **irreverent** characteristics. In terms of **relevance** to the spirit of the times, the festival focuses on long-neglected and even stereotyped immigrant groups in Tokyo and the communities they inhabit. The project started from their lifestyles, telling their own stories in a creative and artistic way, expressing their sense of identity and belonging in a form of co-creation. It can be seen that

they had never set foot on the land. Today, the number of new young immigrants is increasing and urban mini-markets are opening in *Sanya*.

individuals are increasingly eager to express themselves in a way that is different from the official discourse. The Art Festival in *Sanya* is a self-identification and self-expression of the long-neglected residents/immigrants. It is unique in itself, with its inclusive artistic expression and co-creation qualities, a spiritual core that can constitute a **viral** spread and be learned and practiced by people in other parts of the world.

Insight:

People’s constructions of identity are not limited to race and gender, but extend to the particular place, neighborhood or community in which they live, as well as reflections on stereotypes and inequalities in the history and culture they experience. Business should see an increasing number of people who are not satisfied with the limitations of official discourse. People’s growing need for personal expression and identity requires a deeper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the segments in marketing. However, the context of the signal is in Japan, where the main consideration is the diversity of nationality or cultural background. As in mainland China, the appropriate diversity and inclusion adaptation factors need to be chosen to meet the identity expression needs of different residents/community members according to the characteristics of the region where the community is located.

Related Macro Trends: Anchored Narratives; Protagonist identities

6.13 Hong Kong To Kwa Wan Ceramic Plate Workshop



Description:

In November 2021, Hong Kong's *MakingOnLoft Community Organization*⁵⁵ and the Hong Kong Design Center will organize *Unearthed Artifacts* activities (In Chinese 出土文物), including a series of guided tours, workshops and sharing sessions, to take participants to discover hidden unearthed creative groups in downtown To Kwa Wan to promote historical stories and traces of culture and art. One of the important activities is the ceramic plate workshop. They worked with more than 40 neighbors to make a To Kwa Wan-themed ceramic plate. They painted and printed their impressions and cultural characteristics of the area on the hand-made ceramic plates. Above, the memories of everyone in To Kwa Wan are recorded in the form of art. After the glaze firing, 40 ceramic plates with unique colors were exhibited in the *Sparrow Inn* in January 2022, so that more neighbors could appreciate these works and connect everyone's community memory.

Reference:

Media report: <https://www.idk->

[hkdc.org/blog_knowledge/case14?fbclid=IwAR12L0Ua7wh8qeX4XqPQGWlyZkhVTy8msnXtypfdipgUwF3Ey1xP-OKzIjo](https://www.idk-hkdc.org/blog_knowledge/case14?fbclid=IwAR12L0Ua7wh8qeX4XqPQGWlyZkhVTy8msnXtypfdipgUwF3Ey1xP-OKzIjo)

Activity Introduction:

<https://www.facebook.com/MakingOnLoft/posts/pfbid0cax9ryG3EV6QVQeqTGaPb8tAXbNRzcESWfaSQT4jokrxBP1qMT2abYUcBzjKw15fl>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

In the “no relationship” society, what is more important than simply designing a community is the connection between people. Forty neighbors made a To Kwa Wan-themed ceramic plate together, reconstructing the community memory in a creative way and promoting the formation of a cultural community, which is **relevant** to the spirit of the times. Understanding communities in a cultural way, creating shared meaning in the form of artistic co-creation, and building connections with each other has also emerged in other community projects, is **viral** and has the potential to continue to emerge in the future. It is **current** since the series of activities for the unearthed cultural relics was launched in November 2021, and it

⁵⁵ MakingOnLoft (In Chinese "樂在製造") is a space jointly established by different creators and artists. It is located in the On Loft Factory Building in To Kwa Wan. Each unit creates in different media and forms, but can communicate, inspire and interact with each other (see "Making on Loft" Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/MakingOnLoft/> and official website http://www.makingonloft.org/?fbclid=IwAR0w-vx4RLR2Yjt6NL5wkYnABEUtAu0_yegKtM1EftokwpWILpZrQqQ_Cfw, accessed May 1, 2022).

has not been more than a year. The *MakingOnLoft Community Organization* was established in 2017, but in the first three years, the focus was on courses such as design, maker thinking education, and handicraft workshops. In 2020, activities and ideas about building community culture began to emerge, and the activities also focused more on creating a community shared by community residents through common memories, historical stories and cultural imprints. That's why this contains the characteristic of **irreverence**. The creation of the pattern on the ceramic plate is based on the common memory of the neighbors of To Kwa Wan, which condenses their feelings for the local culture. At the same time, after the ceramic dishes are fired, there will be a community display event to connect everyone's community memory, and at the same time to promote local history, culture and art, so it is **attractive** and **instigating**. The ceramic dish workshop is not an ordinary pottery workshop, or a hand workshop for the purpose of cultivating the maker spirit. The purpose is to allow residents to recall the cultural symbols of To Kwa Wan in the process of co-creation, and gradually form a sharing system of cultural significance in the process. Therefore, this also has the characteristics of **discontinuity** compared with the model of mainstream culture.

Insight:

With the rapid development of modern society, the original society of acquaintances no longer exists. In its place is the “No-relationship Society”, where people’s living conditions, neighborhoods and social networks are separated, and people's identities are separated from the community as well, which manifests an increasingly atomized relationship. In *To Kwa Wan* community, the art co-creation activities initiated by community organizations link up the meaning system shared by community members, and to some extent, help build the community identity and sense of belonging for residents. In this sense, it is a kind of narrative re-anchoring and story retelling.

Related Macro Trends: Anchored Narratives

6.14 Via North Point - Hong Kong Community Artistic Project



Description:

*Via North Point*⁵⁶ is a community art project initiated by the Hong Kong Arts Centre and the community in late 2021. The project was designed as a series of community engagement workshops and creative artworks to connect new and existing residents, enhancing their awareness of the public space and showcasing the unique local cultural charm of North Point. In this way, residents' awareness and sense of community belonging can be cultivated. According to the project website, they include a community magazine *Via Community Zine*, *Community Recipe*, which documents community food, and *Shoreside Planting Crew*, which can create a series of films through design. Moreover, there were a series of sustainable art-making workshops and community tree-planting activities, as well as the Community Wanderer, a themed guided tour created by neighborhoods. For example, Community Wanderers organized eight community walks, including City and Architecture, Arts and Culture, Recreation and Crafts, and Community Treasures. There was also an online exhibition *Our City Our Home*, which examined Chun Yeung Street in *North Point* and the surrounding communities through a number of community-themed research workshops and co-learning

⁵⁶ *North Point* is located in the central part of Hong Kong's Eastern District and was one of the first districts to be developed in Hong Kong.

design workshops to understand the quality of urban life by focusing on the community through an empathetic lens.

Reference:

Official site: <https://www.via-northpoint.hk/en/>

Youtube video sites: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz20dDmB8In4IfQ1vu3Z5vw>

Via Hidden Gems - Video Series: <https://www.via-northpoint.hk/en/via-hidden-gems/>

Official facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vianorthpoint/>

Shoreside Planting Crew: <https://www.via-northpoint.hk/en/shoreside-planting-crew/>

Community Wanderer: <https://www.via-northpoint.hk/en/community-wanderer-2/>

Our City Our Home – Online Exhibition of Urban Design Lab: <https://www.via-northpoint.hk/design-lab/>

The analysis of Cool Nature:

In the introduction to the first issue of the magazine *Via Community Zine*, the director-general of the Hong Kong Arts Center, Lin Shuyi, said that the most important thing about the project is to connect people and people, people and regions through art, as well as establish a kind of unique cultural landscape of the community. In this sense, this is related to the background of the no-relationship society where people are too rational, indifferent and alienated in the modern era. In this case, most people actually expect more connection, so this project is **relevant** to the *zeitgeist*. Likewise, the project is **viral**, as many of the activities within the project are aimed at connecting people in artistic and creative ways, such as neighborhood guided tours, community magazines, and film recordings. The number of activities with this as the core is increasing in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and other places. In addition to that, *Via North Point* launched by the Hong Kong arts center is mainly focused on 2021. According to its Facebook and Instagram tweets, some of the activities are still ongoing, so it is **current**. At the same time, the signal also contains the characteristic of **irreverence**, because the revitalization project in this area is to revive the old area with art, which is completely different from the nature of many previous activities led by social welfare organizations and cultural conservation organizations. The difference is a new attempt with a pioneering meaning. To this extent, it also means that it is different from mainstream culture and has **discontinuous** qualities. This signal is also **seductive**, and has provocative and appealing qualities, since North Point is an old district in Hong Kong, the local residents are

relatively older, and there is also a low penetration rate of social media. Even so, the project has more than 5,000 Facebook followers.

Insight:

The event is a series of artistic and creative activities to show the local cultural charm of *North Point*. In the different creative activities, residents of *North Point* get to know more about the neighborhood they live in and enhance their sense of community belonging in various practices. Meanwhile, the series of community activities such as documentaries, recipes, magazines also have a certain external public nature that allows people from other regions or communities to learn about *North Point* as a place with a unique cultural charm. Therefore, it is also a kind of re-anchoring of the narrative, not in the sense that people make friends based on hobbies or interests as before, but in the sense that they see the community as a part of their belonging, and see the collective memory shared among the residents of the community.

Related Macro Trends: Anchored Narrative

Part.7 Interviews

In this report, a total of nine people have been interviewed, all from mainland China. The interviewees can be divided into three categories: experts, community practitioners and residents. The first group includes (1) Professor Sun Zhe, a long-time community researcher, and (2) Ji Danwen, a doctoral student studying community from a design perspective. The second group is comprised of (3) Emma & (4) Lu Sha, co-founders of *Shunde Good Things Happen*, a community revitalization organization from *Shunde*, (5) Yang Sanshi, a long-time community issue thinker and practitioner, who has worked on community revitalization in Shanghai and Shenzhen, as well as (6) Jie Er, former project manager of the community revitalization organization *Shequgengxin*, representing perspectives from a real estate side. The third category is residents, covering (7) Huhu, a resident of the Xinhua community in Shanghai who has actively participated in co-creation, as well as (8) Dane and (9) Lin An, representatives of freelancers or digital nomads.

From the demographic point of view, there are three male and six female interviewees (two of them were from *Shunde Good Things Happen*), including experts, community practitioners and residents, covering multiple regions such as Shanghai, Shenzhen, Shunde, Anji, Dali and Hainan, making the data sources as diverse and comprehensive as possible.

A total of eight interviews were conducted, starting from October 2022 and continuing until January 2023, for a total of 11 hours and 25 minutes, with an average of 1 hour and 16 minutes per interview, except for 1/2/5 of the interviewees who were interviewed on site, the rest were conducted in the form of online voice interviews. A series of semi-structured interview questions were designed based on the 2022 Trends Map of the Laboratory of Trends and Cultural Management (Laboratório de Gestão de Tendências e da Cultura), and informing interviewees in advance of the purpose of the research.

Once the information was collected, we coded and categorized the content with commonalities mentioned by the interviewees, and structured and analyzed the information according to the frequency of occurrence of commonalities, from high to low, presenting a total of nine different clusters, justifying with the relevant citations of interviewees.

The result of structured interview data

After structuring the interview data, it was surprising to find that eight interviewees mentioned the concept of **co-creation**, seven of whom directly mentioned the expression, while the remaining one expressed a similar concept by giving an example of their own practice in a creative community. For residents or community members, co-creation makes them feel closer to the community, meaning that they are connected to other community residents through co-creation in the community, and as they become more involved, they also feel a greater sense of identity and belonging to the community. For example, HuHu, who participated in the Xinhua Community Magazine *Xinhua Lu* (Mandarin: 《新华录》), said, “I [participated in it and] got to know many of the surrounding neighbors, merchants... connections with these stores of this kind, which I think is also quite meaningful and interesting”⁵⁷. However, if the co-creation process involves the issue of economic distribution, it may cause disagreement among the co-creation team, which may have some negative impact.

Meanwhile, six interviewees mentioned that co-creation is only the idea of a small number of people in the community. Nevertheless, as Professor Sun Zhe said, “It is important to see that the residents involved in co-creation have their own autonomy and peoplehood, and even though only a small number of people are now involving in, this group of people is actually the critical mass, and by them more residents can be reached again.”⁵⁸ Thus, while acknowledging that co-creation at the beginning was only the focus of a small group of residents, we can also see that it has the potential to expand, whether by having more people join co-creation, participate and contribute, or simply by attracting more people to watch.

In addition, four respondents have mentioned the creative community’s support for community members/residents’ co-creation, which includes idea stimulation, help with resources, and support for dissemination. For example, Lu Sha from *Shunde Good Things Happen* helped their member Candy to incubate a safe space for women to express themselves freely in the creative community, and they supported her to start activities and spread the word, and keep growing this community, which is part of *Shunde Good Things Happen’s* position

⁵⁷ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “[我参与其中]认识了周围很多街坊，商户、邻居，包括跟这些店的这种产生一些联结，我觉得也蛮有意义的，也蛮有意思的”。

⁵⁸ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in mixed by Mandarin and English: “重要的是要看到参与共创的居民是有自己的自主性和人民性的，即使现在只有少部分的人 involve 进来，但这群人实际上是 critical mass，由他们又可以触及到更多的居民。”

itself, “We may step back and become a supporter behind the local youth in *Shunde*, to accompany them and try to put some ideas and actions they want to take into better practice.”⁵⁹

Among them, four interviewees mentioned the **autonomy and subjectivity** of residents, the power of bottom-up and the publicness embedded in creative communities and other related contents. Combined with the situation of communities in mainland China, residents are usually objects to be served or consumed, while Prof. Sun Zhe emphasized, “When we talk about creativity, it is not for the purpose of consumption, but a maker, a creator, to make the community more valuable and fun.”⁶⁰ For him, the subjectivity and creativity of the residents are closely linked; everyone in the creative community is a creator and artist, and creative communities make up the society of the future. Yang Sanshi cites the *nearby* proposed by anthropologist Xiang Biao (2021, p.155) to illustrate the necessity of a non-landscaped or non-commercial public space. He says, “the *nearby* is not something that is physically close, but a tangible physical participation in public discussions and actions that are relevant to you,”⁶¹ which is why he opened his home as part of the city’s public space. Jie Er, who works as a practitioner for a community revitalization organization, believes that non-standardized mastermind businesses will become more prominent in the future. In her words, masterminds are actually a small number of people with ideas and spontaneity. With whom, “together with the businesses/stores and residents, a community can gradually self-blood and self-run, just like an ecosystem”⁶².

Five other respondents (two of them from the same organization) also mentioned content creation that uses the **community as the center of the narrative**, including community publications, community exhibitions, community events, and residents’ co-creation to record the community stories. This kind of creation is also very much related to the spontaneity of residents mentioned above, as it is possible that the co-creation of community content may give rise to the power generated by the residents themselves. Professor Sun Zhe also points out the impact of artistic co-creation in creative communities on residents’ spontaneity and autonomy.

⁵⁹ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “我们可能退后一步，会成为顺德本地青年背后的一个支持者，去支持他们，陪伴他们，把他们想要的一些想法跟行动去更好地落地”。

⁶⁰ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in mixed by Mandarin and English: “当我们谈到创意，它就是不以消费为目的的，而是一个 maker，一个 creator，是为了让社区变得更更有价值更好玩。”

⁶¹ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “附近不是物理上距离很近的东西，而是肉身切实地参与到和你相关的公共讨论与行动中。”

⁶² The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “社区中的商业、居民等一起组成一个生态系统，有行动力的人作为主理人，社区就可以逐渐自我造血与自我运转，就像一个生态系统一样。”

He emphasizes the importance of public art⁶³ in the creative community can be assumed as the education of aesthetics in the community. Art is the equivalent of a public medium to get a message out, where people gather because of art or come together to make a public art project. In the creative community, “art is a public education in which those who participate can contribute their abilities and those who watch can contribute their time.”⁶⁴ Compared with ordinary communities, creative communities have many more public events because “residents are trained to self-organize and self-mobilize through public events”⁶⁵, so they are more resilient even in times of crisis.

At the same time, local symbols, representations and discourses are also present in the artwork. For example, *Shunde Good Things Happen* used Cantonese dialogue in its living room conversations, and the theme of the 2022 community exhibition used the very local word “gacang”(Mandarin: “嘎仓”), which means “tool for making a living” in Cantonese. They believe that in addition to the mainstream Mandarin that we all use day-to-day, they “still want to say that there will be [other] language preservation as much as possible”⁶⁶.

Four interviewees (two of them from the same organization) also talked about the possibility of combining **creative communities with business**. Attracting the youth in a fun way became their concern, and creative experiences, participation and interaction integrated with the local community are increasingly important. At the same time, non-consumerist creative community activities are also one of the important factors influencing the degree of people’s willingness to live there. For example, when Huhu retweeted the creative activities of Xinhua community, some of her friends who live in other districts realized that this seems to be a treasure area, and it may become one of the target places for them to rent or change apartments next time.

Three interviewees pointed out that the background of creative community revitalization in cities in mainland China is because we are in the “**era of stock**”(Mandarin: 存量时代). This is the result of a certain stage of urban development, as there are no more plots

⁶³ Public art, in Professor Sun Zhe’s view, is the one not for consumption, or not for profit. It normally charges very low or no fees and opens to the public.

⁶⁴ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “艺术就是一种公共教育，参与到其中的人可以贡献能力，观看的人可以贡献时间”。

⁶⁵ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “居民通过公共事件训练了自组织和自我动员的能力”。

⁶⁶ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “还是希望说能尽可能的有[其他]语言的保育”。

of land for new developments and spaces in the heart of big cities, so upgrading old neighborhoods and combining various businesses to bring more experiences becomes the focus.

In terms of the relationship between virtual and reality, the impact of the pandemic is very strong, making the community revitalization that was originally focused on offline transform more to online. However, two interviewees also mentioned that creative communities revitalization gradually combines an online form with an offline form, but the latter one is still the main way. At the same time, three respondents mentioned that they have recently been focusing on ways to combine **web3.0 and creative community revitalization**, such as developing NFT based on community, accumulating points/token through members' contribution to the community, or acting as a meta-community revitalization in a post-globalized mobile society to realize the rapid connection between resources and identity.

In addition, two respondents had concerns about political factors affecting the space for public expression, and the consequent fragility of the industry's and team's ecosystem, "not knowing when there is a policy direction [against us and our team] might not work"⁶⁷. This shrinking publicness has been an increasingly prominent feature of recent years in mainland China, where distrust of systems and structures, and doubts about officialdom and authority are on the rise and expanding, but under the increasingly intense and ubiquitous censorship of information on the Internet, these parts of publicness can only shrink into more everyday and private lives.

Another two interviewees also mentioned the **relevance of the creative community vision to sustainability**, not only in terms of ecological sustainability in specific activities, such as focusing on the use of recycled materials or promoting sustainable diets, but also in terms of social sustainability, the connection between communities and the values formed by interconnectedness, the focus on the resilience of human relationships, and the ability to inspire innovation among community members. A good example of this is the vision of *Nice Commune* mentioned in the interview with Ji Danwen, "to make communities a source of innovation"⁶⁸. They believe that "the biggest problem facing humanity now is the problem of sustainability"⁶⁹, and that it is not only the so-called professionals or creative workers who can solve this problem. As they considered, the real change makers are closer to everyday life, they may be ordinary

⁶⁷ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: "不知道哪一天有一个[不利于我们的]政策导向[, 我们团队]可能就不行了".

⁶⁸ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: "让社区成为创新的源头".

⁶⁹ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: "人类现在面临的最大的问题就是可持续发展的问题".

people who have no idea of how to make creative things step by step. According to Ji Danwen, the *Nice commune* is in tandem with a variety of resources, as well as to help ordinary people's ideas into some specific small prototypes, including activities, events, etc. "In this process, for one thing, is to release the social innovation, for another, is to let these parts of the innovation solve the problem of sustainable development."⁷⁰

In the end, two respondents referred to the practice of being a **digital nomad or freelancer** outside of big cities. Among them, the pandemic had a greater impact on lifestyle. Lin An was originally working as a freelancer in Shanghai, but after the city was closed in 2022 due to the quarantine in Shanghai, she remained in a state of not going out and working from home day after day for a long time, which was very depressing. Therefore, she decided to explore a new possibility of life in and around Hangzhou. She spent a few weeks working and living in the Anji Digital Nomad Community, where she was very impressed by the excellent infrastructure, interesting people and natural environment. In particular, she referred to that "for freelancers, [DNA] can balance work and life socially better"⁷¹, and she also expressed her willingness to go back. As for Dane, another freelancer, compared her experience of being a digital nomad in Dali, Anji and Hainan, she also shared similar views with Lin An. "If you have a good working state all day, a good output, and at the same time it meets the social needs of the environment and aura, it is actually very good."⁷² From this, we can see that creative communities where socializing, entertainment, living and working are integrated become the focus of people (especially freelancers), and living in such communities means satisfying one's personal life while ensuring that one is not disturbed at work. As it is in the countryside, it saves the expenses of various costs such as transportation, food, rent, etc. It fits the requirement of lifestyle change and life and work balance in the context of the increase of freelancers and digital nomads nowadays.

⁷⁰ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: "在这个过程中里面，一方面是释放社会创新力，一方面是让这些这部分创新力去解决可持续发展的问题”。

⁷¹ The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “对于自由职业者，[DNA]可以把工作和生活社交平衡的比较好”。

⁷² The current English version was translated by the author herself. Original content was in Mandarin: “如果你整天有一个很好的工作状态，有一个很好的产出，同时它又能满足社交需求的氛围环境，其实是很好的”。

Part.8 Conclusion

In summary, creative community, serving as a medium, has incubated numerous innovative ideas pointing towards future changes, manifested across various aspects such as narrative, identity, technology, sustainability, and lifestyle. We observe that the creative community is not only a breeding ground for the creativity of ordinary individuals but also embodies the potential to inspire residents' subjectivity from the bottom up. The significance of symbols between public and private, the historical and cultural stories of the community itself, and public art are highlighted in creative community revitalization. The application of blockchain technology is quietly sprouting in its role of recording the contributions of community members. Simultaneously, creative communities are not confined to urban areas; they are also emerging in picturesque, habitable small cities or villages, becoming a new lifestyle choice for individuals whose workspaces are not limited by location.

Next, I will present detailed conclusions within each of the five macro trends outlined in the *socio-cultural Trends 2022*. They are Anchored Narratives, Protagonist Identities, Ergonomic Connection, Sustainable systems and Lifestyle Redesign.

Anchored Narratives

1. Telling community stories in an innovative way becomes the center of the narrative. Everyday objects that lie between the public and the private become cultural symbols for depicting community stories and constructing shared meaning in the practice of recording, creating and exhibiting, in a way to strengthen community residents' sense of proudness, belongingness and identity in their communities.
2. In the context of mainland China, residents in communities with physical boundaries have long been the objects to be served as part of administrative planning. In recent years, however, with the development of creative community revitalization, public art that does not aim at consumption has the potential to become a kind of public education in the community, serving to stimulate the subjectivity of residents and transforming more people into conscious creators, starting with telling community stories and transmitting community culture.
3. Communities that are cosmopolitan or have a high immigrants rate tend to exhibit more complexity. People of different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, nationalities, genders and identities come together, and various cultural symbols and meanings flow through

them, coupled with the fact that some communities have strong historical and cultural imprints. Therefore, in the process of creating creative communities, we can consider incorporating the perspectives of people from different backgrounds and identities. In this way, the recoded symbols and meanings can be integrated into the narrative of the community through practice, thus making it more likely to create a community atmosphere with diversity, harmony and tolerance.

Protagonist identities

4. Creative communities usually have many co-creation practices that carry the symbols of the community's own culture and history. This leads to the transfer and sharing of meaning among residents, a greater sense of connection among them, a greater sense of identity and belonging to the community, and the gradual development of an identity as a member of a certain community.
5. We have observed that some products are already using web3.0 blockchain technology for creative community revitalization, condensing the individual value contributions of community members through digital badges that enable the act of contributing back to the community to be recorded. This approach reverses the more centralized and authoritative official way of recognizing individuals at the top, and instead turns residents into individual digital subjects, allowing their positive and spontaneous practices to be recorded.
6. In some creative communities with commercial nature, decentralized operation and communication has become a novel form. Such operation characteristics can fully respect the subjectivity and self-expression of residents. At the same time, content created by own community residents can be spread to more people on social media, as an effective marketing communication.
7. Under the grassroots administrative jurisdiction model in mainland China, residents have long been the object of service. In recent years, more third-party creative community service organizations have gradually emerged in Shanghai, Chengdu, and Shenzhen, taking on the role of bridging the gap between the government and the private sector by organizing a series of workshops, community co-creation, and other activities to stimulate residents' sense of agency and participation in public life.

Ergonomic Connections

8. The connection between blockchain technology and creative communities is getting closer. It can be seen that various explorations under the web3.0 concept have emerged, such as DAO⁷³, tokens, etc. However, the current practices in mainland China are still at a very early stage. In the future, with the gradual development of web3.0 and metaverse, there may be more creative communities connecting the real and virtual borders and managing things inside and outside the community by blockchain.
9. Tokens, regional currencies, points⁷⁴, and other expressions with similar qualities have become the focus of some creative communities. And a currency platform service (APP) has even emerged in Japan that allows for the storage and consumption of regional currencies.
10. Non-Fungible Token (NFT) have a special significance in the creation of creative communities. The chained digital badges become virtual symbols that condense the individual value contributions of community members and become part of the subjective value evaluation system in digital identity, intertwined with the real world.

Sustainable systems

11. Globalization is slowing down under the influence of the pandemic, and people are starting to pay more attention to geographic, regional, and local development.
12. Many areas have introduced regional currencies (often using blockchain technology), which can, to some extent, enhance the contribution of residents to the local area and facilitate the circulation of the local economy (production and consumption) and reduce the negative environmental impact of global logistics. Due to censorship, some creative communities in mainland China use tokens as a proxy for points, but serve the same purpose as a regional/communicative currency.

⁷³ DAO is an abbreviated form of Decentralized Autonomous Organization, which is a more decentralized form of community organization. It is said here that the practice in mainland China is still at an early stage because some creative communities claim to be practicing DAO, but they only remain at the conceptual level of understanding and do not really adopt the very core element of DAO: the adoption of smart contracts for the administration of the organization in a de-trusted way, including the distribution of ownership, the calculation of charter votes, the distribution of revenue, etc. (Ball, M. , p. 277)

⁷⁴ Token becomes a digital material as a circulation within the creative community; regional currency becomes a digital material passable within the region; and points, a proxy for currency in the creative community under the censorship mechanism of mainland China. Tokens are divided into homogenized tokens and non-homogenized tokens. Community members can get homogenized tokens by contributing to the community, and can also use tokens to spend or exchange services within the community; non-homogenized tokens are unique records on the blockchain, condensing community members' inputs and contributions to the community.

13. Sparking the creativity of ordinary people and supporting them to carry out their ideas have become important concerns in creative community revitalization. In the past, large companies, such as Silicon Valley, were considered to be the concentration of creativity, while it was difficult for ordinary people to get support in resources if they had some innovative ideas. And now, creative communities have become incubators that inspire creative ideas and support the realization of activities, products or services that ordinary people with ideas want to do, like providing idea guidance, human and material support, perhaps even a portion of financial support.
14. Recent years have witnessed an increasing tightening of speech, restricted public expression, and pervasive censorship on social media in the context of mainland China. In the process of investigating the present theme, it can be found that some of the youth with ideas and actions open their private space, invite friends to join them in a screening way. In this way, friends bring other friends together, gradually form a public discussion spaces semi-privately in the city.

Lifestyle Redesign

15. The problems of pollution, congested traffic, and high housing prices in large cities have become more and more serious in recent years. Meanwhile, during the 2022 pandemic, people were subjected to long periods of quarantine due to political factors, such as the three-month-long quarantine period in Shanghai, which triggered many mental health problems and even trauma. Therefore, people's perceptions and attitudes toward big cities have changed very dramatically. The big city is no longer a representative of the good life, people increasingly expect to escape from big cities, and "Run"(Mandarin: "润") has become the most popular cultural expression or meme.
16. In livable, lower-cost-of-living areas of mainland China (such as Dali), a number of shared office spaces have sprung up specifically to serve remote workers, freelancers and digital nomads, which are attracting a growing number of young people. These spaces often bring together a diverse group of participants who work together, play together, and sometimes co-create events or projects.
17. As a result of the pandemic, more and more remote workers and digital nomads are starting to emerge. Creative spaces for live-work integration have emerged in some places as a commercial solution.

18. With the increasingly sophisticated infrastructure development in mainland China, such as a convenient logistics system, public transportation that connects urban and rural areas, and the development of the Internet, the vast countryside outside the big cities is beginning to be noticed by more people. They are moving away from big cities to the outskirts of cities or villages, working remotely through the internet, exploring the relationship between the local environment, culture, festivals, land, history and people, and forming socially innovative creative community explorations with friends from different industries.

Part.9 Insights

In the final Part, insights with more practical guidance for creative community revitalization are presented in terms of content, formation, people, location and technology.

Content: New community narrative

- **Story:** For brands and businesses that are interested in community, whether it's a physical or virtual community, you can find a community that matches your tone (or within your own community), select objects that carry both public and personal meaning, and invite consumers/users to co-create them. In this way, you can be more approaching your consumers, and also have the opportunity to tell them a more attractive brand story.
- **Symbol:** Community industry practitioners can consider designing more co-creation practices related to the community's own culture and historical symbols to stimulate community members' sense of belonging and identity to the community, and can also consider organizing public art projects or co-creation projects for the public.
- **Object:** The reconstruction of community stories can be told or recreated from the perspective of daily life and ordinary people, using everyday objects with both public and private attributes as part of the story.
- **Opinion:** For communities (usually physical ones) with a distinctly international or immigrant character, community practitioners should pay more attention to the differentiated perspectives of people of different backgrounds, identities, races, ethnicities, nationalities and genders when creating creative communities.

Technology: Decentralized Update

- **NFT:** Some brands have already started to use blockchain technology to create their own meta-universe communities, but few have considered using NFT as a way to record the value contribution of an individual user as a digital subject with a way to give back to the community. This may be a way for businesses or brands to consider in the future to revitalize their communities.
- **DAO:** Creative communities can consider using blockchain technology to connect the real and virtual borders for the management of things inside and outside the community in order to stimulate the autonomy and creativity of community members. In other

words, it can be completely transformed into a DAO form of organization, or partly adopt the DAO form for small-scale experiment.

- **Meta-DAO:** Against the background that the development of the *nearby* is getting more and more attention, it is suggested to consider uniting multiple local creative communities to form a cluster of meta-creative communities (or a more decentralized form of organization, i.e. meta-DAO), so that the regional currency by means of blockchain can flow in the production and consumption of local residents and form more exchanges and communications.

Formation: A community-based form of marketing communication

- **Decentralization:** Decentralized operation and communication has already started to be adopted in few creative communities with commercial nature, and it has formed effective and warm marketing communication. This means that brands and businesses can give more consideration in the future to a form of communication that is mainly based on community members.
- **Offline:** Businesses and brands are more likely to consider holding offline communication activities that build interpersonal connections, with the following two points to consider: one focuses on activities that give people a sense of security, privacy and support; the second is co-creation activities that stimulate community members' autonomy and creativity.

Location: The future of work and living

- **Outside big cities:** Considering the trend that emerging work patterns such as hybrid work, remote work, flexible employment and digital nomads may gradually become popular in the future, business can consider establishing creative communities that meet the emerging model of work, life and entertainment integration, especially on rural areas within 3 hours' drive of first and second-tier cities with lower cost of living and pleasant climate. Co-living is also a direction that can be considered.
- **Inside big cities:** In the context of everyone wanting to “escape” from big cities, most people still have to stay in big cities to work and live. Community practitioners can create a sense of “neighborhood” in big cities, and brands' marketing campaigns should also take note of people's changing emotions and attitudes, and make some changes in public communication.

People: creative incentivisation

- **For community residents:** they can always resort to creative communities when they have any ideas. Any ordinary person can inspire creativity through community co-learning and co-creation. And the creative community has all kinds of resources and support to help them get their ideas off the ground and become part of social innovation.
- **For creative community practitioners,** they should realize that people are the most critical element of a community. Any ways and practices that enable community members' contributions to the community to be better documented, displayed and preserved should be emphasized. They can also consider the use of new and emerging technological tools with a human-centered approach.
- **For brands and businesses:** they can also cooperate deeply with such creative community revitalization organizations, such as opening a series of competitions and co-creation workshops, so that ordinary people with ideas can also participate in product innovation. This can also serve as a gateway to a better understanding of brand concepts.

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Appendix 1

Interview Outline

For residents:

- **Personal information**

Could you please give a brief self-introduction?

When did you start living in this community?

- **Practical experience**

How would you describe your community in three keywords?

What are three common images of your life in the community?

- **Main Questions related to five macro trends**

- **Macro: Anchored Narratives**

Have you participated in some activities/projects in the community?

If so, what activities/projects are there? Which one impresses you the most? Why?

- **Macro: Ergonomic Connections**

In addition to activities in the physical space of the community, do you follow or participate in any online activities/content of the community?

- **Macro: Protagonist identities**

According to your observation, do you think more residents will actively and spontaneously participate in community activities? What kind of people are there?

During pandemic, how is your living situation in the community?

- **Macro: Sustainable systems**

Have you heard of the concept of sustainability? How do you understand sustainability in relation to you personally/family, and how it relates to the community in which you are a part?

- **Macro: Macro: Sustainable systems**

Has the pandemic affected your choice of where to live and how to live? If so, what was it like?

- **General attitudes**

What do you think is your favorite thing about living in this community? Can you give an example?

If you could cast a magic spell, what would you most want to change about your community?

For community practitioners and experts

Note: The experts we interviewed were all doing field research or long-term studies in communities with a specific focus, so the interview questions for the experts overlap with those for the community practitioners, but the former will incorporate more of a research perspective than a practice perspective in follow-up questions.

● **Personal information**

Could you please give a brief self-introduction and talk a little about your work or research related to community?

● **Practical experience**

Can you briefly talk about your practical experience (work, study, and spare time)? In addition to the practice, you are doing now, did you have any other practices before? Does it have any impact on the practice of creative community revitalization that you engage in later? (Summary the following questions from the narrative, if not mentioned, add questions)

(1) How did you learn about creative community revitalization?

(2) What was the opportunity for you to start practicing creative community revitalization? Why do you want to do creative community revitalization related practice?

(3) What are the main contents of your usual work?

● **Concept and Perception of Present Situation**

What do you think is creative community revitalization? What do you think are the most important traits/keywords for community revitalization? What does creative community revitalization mean to you?

What is your perception of the external environment in the past two years? Did you feel any changes?

● **Outlook**

How do you understand the future development of this industry for creative community revitalization? What is the future development plan of your organization or community?

How do you view the development of creative community revitalization in China?

What are the differences or commonalities of creative community revitalization between your city and other cities in China?

Can you imagine the possibility of combining creative community revitalization with future business? Such as scenarios, products, services, etc.

Appendix 2

The following pages are a visually designed version of the output of this project, i.e. Trend Report on the Creative Community revitalization in the context of mainland China. The report is organized into the following eight sections:

Section 01 Preface: focuses on the research objectives, research context, research methods, target audience of the report and research framework.

Section 02 Creative Community revitalization: starting from the definition of creative communities, this section explores the development history and current status of creative community revitalization in Japan, Taiwan and mainland China.

Section 03 Result of Desk Research: focused on secondary information related to creative community in the context of mainland China, collecting sources including news reports, podcast contents, social media contents, published books and magazines.

Section 04 Cool signals – Result of *Coolhunting*: through the method/technique of *coolhunting*, this section focuses on the collection and analysis of 14 signals (including 10 from mainland China and 4 from Hong Kong and Japan). Each signal has associated macro trends.

Section 05 Result of Interviews: through interviews with 9 research experts, community practitioners and community residents who are highly relevant to creative communities revitalization, this section categorizes and analyzes the data from the interviews.

Section 06 Conclusions: by analyzing the results obtained under three different research methods, the conclusions are presented in the form of bullet points, based on five macro-trends published by the Trends and Cultural Management Laboratory of the University of Lisbon.

Section 07 insights: insights with more practical guidance for creative community revitalization are presented.

Section 08 Bibliographic References: all literature used in the report will be listed.