Postprint of the Century Project for Cultivating Creative Talent Clusters in the New Era

Authors: Jin Yuanpu

Date: 2018-01-11T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To achieve the grand development goals of the 13th Five-Year Plan period, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further emphasized the five major development concepts of "innovation, coordination, green, openness, and sharing," with innovation being the primary, pioneering, and core concept. Realizing this concept necessitates reliance on talents endowed with innovative and creative spirit and capabilities. [Method/Process] National new-type think tanks serve as the "vanguard" of national decision-making, and zhike (intellectual elites), as their high-end members, play a significant role in the country' s five-in-one development pattern. The maker-geek that has emerged prominently in China' s mass entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives has already exerted a transformative impact within the current landscape of big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, mobile networks, and self-media. In the present big data era, shuke (data professionals)—encompassing various big data specialists such as data analysts, data managers, and data operation officers—represent the most scarce and future-oriented talents. [Results/Conclusions] Transitioning from the sporadic emergence of individual innovative talents to cultivating a massive innovative talent cluster comprising millions of zhike, makers, and shuke, and ultimately fostering the formation of a creative class, requires expansive Witkey-like platforms and, more crucially, demands that we undertake a series of "century-long projects" for cultivation and enhancement.

Full Text

Preamble

ChinaXiv Partner Journal
The Century Project of Cultivating Creative Talent Clusters in the New Era

Jin Yuanpu
School of Humanities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai 200240

Abstract

[**Purpose/Significance**] To achieve the grand development goals of the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further emphasized the five development concepts of "innovation, coordination, green development, openness, and sharing," with innovation being the primary, leading, and core concept. Realizing this concept depends on talents with innovative and creative spirit and capabilities. [**Method/Process**] New-type think tanks serve as the "vanguard" of national decision-making, and zhike, as their high-end members, play an important role in the nation' s five-sphere integrated development plan. The maker-geek, highlighted in China' s "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" initiative, has already demonstrated remarkable impact in the current era of big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, mobile networks, and self-media. In the present big data era, shuke —various big data talents such as data analysts, data managers, and data operations officers—represent the most scarce and future-oriented talent pool. [**Result/Conclusion**] The journey from the sporadic emergence of individual innovative talents to cultivating vast clusters of zhike, makers, and shuke, and ultimately forming a creative class, requires broad Witkey-style platforms and demands that we undertake a series of "century projects" for cultivation and enhancement.

Keywords: zhike, maker, geek, shuke, Witkey
Classification Number: G434

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China once again emphasized the five development concepts of "innovation, coordination, green development, openness, and sharing" that must be firmly established and earnestly implemented to achieve the development goals of the "13th Five-Year Plan" period. These new development concepts outline a clear path for China' s development in the new era and depict a new blueprint for profound transformation of the overall development landscape. Among the five concepts, innovation occupies a crucial, leading, and core position. The key to innovation lies in talent, and the success of innovation depends on talent. For the cultural and creative industries, innovative and creative talents are essential for the healthy and rapid development of the entire sector. Therefore, the urgent priority is to cultivate a sufficient number of innovative and creative talents to meet the demands of economic sectors and social development, thereby advancing the development and progress of the entire industrial chain and society as a whole. This is clearly an important topic that we must seriously consider at present.

In January 2015, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of New-Type Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics" (hereinafter referred to as the

"Opinions"), positioning new-type think tanks as the "vanguard" of national decision-making. The Opinions stipulate that think tanks must continuously play innovative and leading roles in various aspects of national development —including social, political, economic, ecological, and technological domains— leveraging their unique advantages to serve China' s ongoing new round of comprehensive deepening reforms. In terms of structural layout, the Opinions categorize think tanks into several types: policy research institutions affiliated with central and state organs, national high-end think tanks, think tanks at Party schools and administrative institutes, university think tanks, science and technology innovation think tanks, enterprise think tanks, and social think tanks. The document also proposes clear development rules, directions, and effective pathways for different types of think tanks, which is highly significant for practical implementation. For instance, it sets the goal of "focusing on building 50 to 100 specialized high-end think tanks that are urgently needed by the nation, feature distinctive characteristics, institutional innovation, and leading development," and proposes detailed measures such as "improving talent evaluation mechanisms and incentive policies oriented toward moral character, capability, and contribution," all of which will accelerate the implementation of these targeted policies.

The development of China' s new-type think tanks must be "oriented toward the world and toward the future." Globally, think tanks have developed rapidly. According to the "Global Go To Think Tank Index Report 2014" released by the University of Pennsylvania in January 2014, there are currently 6,681 think tanks worldwide, including 1,830 in the United States and 429 in China, making China the second-largest country in terms of think tank numbers. However, I believe the actual number of think tanks in China may far exceed this figure, as China's think tanks comprise multiple systems—including Party and government departments, academies of social sciences, Party schools and administrative institutes, universities, military units, scientific research institutes, enterprises, and social organizations—with a substantial base quantity. This also reflects the rapid rise of Chinese think tanks from another perspective. The same report notes that seven Chinese think tanks have entered the "Top 150 Global Think Tanks" list. Nevertheless, setting aside the numbers, this indicates that there remains a certain gap between the overall level of Chinese think tanks and the world' s top-tier think tanks. In the future, Chinese think tanks should place greater emphasis on improving research quality, pursuing specialized development, solving practical problems, and perfecting the national governance system, thereby providing better intellectual support for China' s social development.

2. Makers and Geeks

The term "maker" originally referred to groups focused on using internet digital technologies to design product prototypes, possessing innovative talents and hobbies. It later extended to encompass all innovative groups passionate about

innovation, creativity, and creation, who take pleasure in sharing the latest technologies and exchanging cutting-edge ideas. Their similar counterpart is known as "geek" (American slang), among whom those most obsessed with finding bugs in all network systems become hackers. They are all young, with curiosity and a desire to show off being their essential characteristics. Since 2007, a wave of maker culture has swept across the globe. In 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama elevated "maker" to the strategic height of "building a new round of national innovation competitiveness" and declared June 18 as the "National Day of Making." Undoubtedly, the maker movement is a booster for disrupting the real world in the new era and represents an epoch-making significance.

2.1 The Establishment of Makerspaces and the Strategic Significance of "Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship"

The journey from the sporadic emergence of individual innovative talents to cultivating millions of makers in creative clusters, and ultimately forming a creative class, requires us to undertake a series of cultivation and enhancement "lessons." American scholar Richard Florida stated in *The Rise of the Creative Class* that "this book describes the emergence of a new social class" [1]. Specifically, the rise of creative talents and the intellectual support and creative services they provide for economic and social development have fundamentally transformed the old landscape of cultural industry development. "Human creativity has become the decisive characteristic of today' s economic life." Therefore, it is necessary to firmly grasp the fundamental "line" of cultivating creative talents, build creative teams with strong combat effectiveness, problem-solving capability, and intellectual power, consolidate the comprehensive capacity and development foundation of "intellectual capital," and continuously promote the rapid and healthy development of the cultural industry. In fact, whether for enhancing a nation' s comprehensive strength or for a company' s growth and expansion, creative wisdom and innovative thinking play an immeasurable and crucial role. Many forward-looking and broad-visioned renowned entrepreneurs are advocates and practitioners of "creative wisdom" or "creative thinking." Data shows that in key industries related to economic and social development—such as film and television media, telecommunications networks, industrial design, and architectural planning—a large number of high-quality creative talents with higher education have made and continue to make important contributions to industrial upgrading and sectoral development.

In fact, the foundation of creative industry development is education. The prosperity of creative industries relies even more on the general improvement of national quality and the continuous progress of national creativity. In 1998, a report by the British Parliament stated that "the people' s imagination is the nation' s greatest resource. Imagination breeds invention, economic benefits, scientific discoveries, technological improvements, superior management, employment opportunities, community and a more stable society. Imagination mainly stems from literary cultivation. Literature and art can make mathematics, sci-

ence, and technology more colorful without replacing them. The prosperity of the entire society thus emerges." This demonstrates that active educational development and creative wisdom development are the fundamental prerequisites for the sustainable development of creative industries, and the rise of creative talents cannot be separated from an increasingly solid educational foundation. In contrast, China' s current cultural and creative industry development often exhibits a mentality of "pulling up seedlings to help them grow" and seeking quick success, resulting in chaos and counterproductive outcomes, much like the development of Chinese football.

2.2 China Needs Geeks

In the development of creative industries, the role of "geeks" is crucial. "Geek" is a transliteration of the American slang "geek," representing the technical explorers and supporters of new operational models in the entire creative industry. Through continuous technological innovation, they constantly change the fundamental landscape of the internet, mobile networks, and the cultural and creative industries/cultural economy. With the rise of internet culture, the term "geek" has come to imply extraordinary intelligence and is used to describe those who have great interest in computer and network technologies and invest substantial time in studying them. At the recently held 2015 "Geek Park Innovation Conference," Baidu founder, chairman, and CEO Robin Li made his third appearance at the Geek Park Conference, interpreting Baidu' s mobile internet strategy as a top-tier geek: investment in technology is both a belief and concerns the future of industrial development.

In short, the future three-dimensional creative industry will continuously emerge with new development coordinates marked by new models and new "situations," widely connecting key areas of economic and social development such as industry, universities, government, and trade, achieving comprehensive development and integration, thereby promoting the rapid and healthy development of the economic industry.

2.3 Crossing and Integration

Today, creative talents have become an important force in promoting economic and social development. Florida also proposed in *The Rise of the Creative Class* that, different from traditional industry classification logic, creative talents represent an important "new occupational army." Rather than using traditional, outdated perspectives of sectoral talents to position professional groups across society, it is better to adopt a long-term vision and new thinking in career positioning and talent planning to consider current entrepreneurial industry development. He further pointed out that entrepreneurial teams have become an emerging professional class with a "super-creative core" as the backbone and relevant industrial talents as important participating forces. Specifically, within this "core," most are engaged in occupations related to cultural venture capital, high technology, leisure, and entertainment. Their main work is

to constructively develop "new content" and scientifically create "new energy" based on their creative thinking and innovative concepts, and they are widely connected with other industries closely related to their work, such as finance, commerce, healthcare, and law [1]. These creative talents fully integrate into their industry development, pooling ideas and pioneering innovations, continuously researching new situations and solving new problems, effectively becoming the "navigators" of current economic and social development.

3. Shuke Talents and the Witkey Model

In the contemporary world, most people are connected to a massive digital network, and humanity has entered the era of big data [2]. Consequently, human destiny is increasingly interconnected and shared through digital technology. Xi Jinping recently pointed out that big data represents a new stage in informatization development. As information technology converges with human production and life, the internet rapidly proliferates, and global data exhibits explosive growth and massive accumulation, exerting significant influence on economic development, social governance, national management, and people' s lives. China is accelerating the construction of Digital China.

Currently, China' s digital economy, with new business forms and models such as online shopping, mobile payments, and the sharing economy, is flourishing and has already taken a leading position globally. During the 13th Five-Year Plan period, China is targeting the world' s technological frontiers, concentrating superior resources to break through core big data technologies, and accelerating the construction of an independent and controllable big data industrial chain, value chain, and ecosystem. Under this development trend, talents in digital technology, particularly in big data research and application—such as data analysts, data architects, data managers, and data operations officers—have become the "critical few" contested globally. They engage in data mining, scientific computing, information processing, technology expansion, trend forecasting, and precision services across various levels and industries. We may call them "shuke."In the current big data era, shuke have become the most scarce and most future-oriented talents, with demand estimated to reach several million.

Current internet enterprises increasingly emphasize the configuration of Chief Data Officers (CDO) and Chief Information Officers (CIO). These talents play important roles in corporate development foresight and predictions of future trends and prospects. In today's world, whoever possesses more data owns more "assets" and "capital" enriched with economic and cultural value. Therefore, implementing the latest central strategic deployments, cultivating a large number of urgently needed high-end shuke talents for the new era to lead China' s internet in gaining advantages in new global competition; constructing a batch of big data talent incubators to continuously enhance industry-wide development levels through data practice; continuously conducting cutting-edge theoretical research on big data to create, improve, and deepen relevant scientific research systems; and continuously developing and utilizing the latest technologies to

maintain China' s big data technology at the world' s forefront—these are the current priorities in this field [4].

How can creative talents with different time schedules, locations, and professional expertise collaborate and trade with each other? China' s internet community has invented the "Witkey model," such as "Zhubajie.com." This model represents a completely new "virtualized" platform. On this platform, creative talents extensively exchange ideas and cooperate closely with talents from other industries and sectors, particularly through online and offline reorganization and collaboration, to achieve synergistic platform operation of composite talents and composite groups. Through cross-boundary integration, they seek new growth points, promote cultural creativity and technological innovation, and realize the cultivation of composite talents and the collaborative development of composite teams in practical operation. Moreover, by promoting creative activities throughout society, they facilitate reforms and innovations in economic, social, and cultural mechanisms. In future industry competition, we must comprehensively build an international high-quality talent team, promote transnational personnel mobility, advance the construction of industrial clusters, broaden existing digital information network channels, and create a new situation of integrated development encompassing cultural development, network technology, and talent growth.

The cultivation of innovative and creative talent clusters in the maker era is a great "century project." It will forge an innovative "class" for national rejuvenation. To achieve this goal, I believe we must further implement the important principles emphasized again at the 19th Party Congress: letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, with academic and artistic democracy. We must allow different viewpoints to voice their perspectives and enable different policy recommendations to engage in equal debate and contention. This requires our society to continuously strive to create an inclusive environment, requires us to possess a scientific spirit, and more importantly, requires maintaining academic freedom and freedom of thought, thereby creating equal discussion spaces where different types of talents can express their suggestions and viewpoints in a fair and equal atmosphere. This is also an important aspect of implementing the spirit of the 19th Party Congress.

References

[1] Richard Florida. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Translated by Situ Aiqin. Beijing: China CITIC Press, 2010: xxxv-xxxvi, 22-23.
[2] Nicholas Christakis, James Fowler. *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* [M]. Translated by Jian Xue. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2013: 4-5.
[3] Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, Kenneth Cukier. *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think* [M]. Translated by Sheng Yangyan, Zhou Tao. Hangzhou: Zhejiang People' s Publishing House, 2013: 16-17, 28-29.

[4] Zhang Yongjin, Wang Jingxuan. A Comparative Study of Big Data Policies in Major Developed Countries [J]. *Chinese Public Administration*, 2014(12): 113-117.

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.