

# Development of a Creative Space Network in Ho Chi Minh City in the Context of Implementing Resolution 80-NQ/TW: A Comparative Perspective with Shanghai

Dang Thi Kieu Oanh\*, Cao Nguyen Ngoc Anh<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Culture and Communication, Ho Chi Minh City University of Culture, Vietnam

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500132>

Received: 24 April 2026; Accepted: 30 April 2026; Published: 25 May 2026

## ABSTRACT

In the context of operationalizing Resolution No. 80-NQ/TW on the development of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in the digital era, this study conceptualizes creative space networks as a pivotal infrastructural component of the urban ecosystem. The study employs a qualitative content analysis combined with comparative institutional analysis, utilizing a triangulation of secondary data sources. The objective is to provide a systematic understanding of how creative space networks function as mediating structures between policy directives and urban cultural production. Findings reveal significant differences between the two cities in terms of institutional arrangements, network density, and governance effectiveness. Moreover, the comparative analysis highlights that Shanghai demonstrates a more mature model characterized by strong inter-agency coordination, whereas Ho Chi Minh City exhibits an emerging but fragmented structure. Based on these findings, the article proposes an implementation-oriented framework for Resolution 80-NQ/TW aiming to enhance network coordination and support the sustainable development of creative spaces adapted to the Vietnamese urban context.

**Keywords:** Resolution 80-NQ/TW, creative spaces, urban networks, Shanghai City, Ho Chi Minh City

## INTRODUCTION

In the transition towards a knowledge-based economy and amidst intensifying competition among global cities, the cultural industries have emerged as a key pillar of urban growth and strategic competitiveness (Throsby, 2010). Beyond their direct economic contributions, these industries play a vital role in reifying urban identity, fostering innovation, and enhancing urban resilience in response to socio-economic transformations.

In recent years, numerous Asian metropolises have actively promoted the proliferation of cultural industries through creative clusters and networks of creative spaces. Shanghai represents a paradigmatic case, characterized by a model that synergizes urban planning, policy support, and the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage. Policy instruments such as the “Shanghai Cultural and Creative Industries 50 Policies” and the “one-stop shop” administrative mechanism have substantially contributed to the rapid expansion of CCIs (China Daily, 2022). International scholarship further indicates that the development of creative clusters in China, particularly in Shanghai, is inextricably linked to proactive urban governance and long-term cultural industry strategies (Keane, 2013; O’Connor & Gu, 2014). This experience highlights the imperative of an integrated coordination mechanism spanning spatial planning, institutional frameworks, and financial instruments in establishing and effectively operating robust networks of creative spaces (Zheng, 2011).

In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City has identified the cultural industries as a strategic spearhead within its urban economic transformation process. Concomitantly, various support programs have been introduced to incentivize participation from the private sector and the creative community. At the national level, this orientation aligns with the strategic development of cultural industries toward 2030, particularly under Resolution No. 80-NQ/TW dated January 7, 2026, of the Politburo, which further underscores culture as a foundational pillar of development and prioritizes the mobilization of resources and the development of cultural–creative hubs within urban contexts

(Politburo, 2026). At the local level, mechanisms such as Resolution No. 09/2023/NQ-HĐND and the Ho Chi Minh City Cultural Industries Development Project to 2030 have fostered conducive conditions for enterprises and creative communities to engage (Ho Chi Minh City People's Council, 2023).

However, empirical evidence from Ho Chi Minh City suggests that the development of creative spaces remains in a nascent stage and is unevenly distributed across different urban areas. Previous studies, notably Mapping Vietnam's Creative Hubs (British Council, 2018), highlight a fragmented development pattern and suboptimal interconnections among creative spaces. Although the private sector plays a significant role in initiating flexible creative ventures, the institutional framework remains under construction. In particular, limitations in areas such as industrial heritage reuse and specialized financial mechanisms have stymied the connectivity and scalability of the creative ecosystem.

Against this backdrop, this article focuses on analyzing and contrasting the development models of creative space networks in Shanghai and Ho Chi Minh City. It aims to elucidate the institutional and organizational factors that could inform the implementation of Resolution 80-NQ/TW, while also offering policy implications for urban development strategies appropriate to the Vietnamese context. Accordingly, the central research question is: how can the orientations of Resolution 80-NQ/TW be effectively operationalized in organizing and developing networks of creative spaces in Ho Chi Minh City?

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Creative Cities and Creative Ecosystems

The concept of the creative city is grounded in the notion that knowledge and creativity constitute the fundamental drivers of urban development within the knowledge-based economy (Landry, 2012). According to Richard Florida (2019), the concentration of the “creative class” plays a decisive role in enhancing urban competitiveness and innovation capacity. Building on this perspective, the creative ecosystem approach has emerged, emphasizing reciprocal interactions among physical, institutional, and social dimensions in cultivating favorable conditions for the production, diffusion, and application of knowledge (Pratt, 2008).

Within this ecosystem, creative spaces function as intermediary platforms where the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural goods and services intersect (Scott, 2000). From the perspective of cluster economics, creative clusters catalyze knowledge spillovers, collaboration, and innovation dynamics (Porter, 1998). However, recent studies suggest that the effectiveness of creative clusters depends not only on spatial concentration but also on the intensity of connectivity and coordination among actors within the network (Pratt, 2008). The Cultural and Creative Hubs Viet Nam project (2018–2021) further demonstrates the growing formation of creative space networks involving diverse organizations and communities, while also highlighting the critical importance of connectivity and collaboration in the development of creative ecosystems (British Council, 2021).

In this context, the creative space network approach emphasizes multidimensional linkages among spaces, organizations, and creative communities, extending beyond traditional cluster-based models. In particular, the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage has emerged as an important mechanism for forming creative “network nodes,” simultaneously preserving historical value while providing a foundation for innovation-oriented activities (Bullen & Love, 2011). This approach offers a conceptual basis for analyzing differences in the organization and operation of creative space networks across urban contexts.

### Resolution 80-NQ/TW and Implications for Creative Space Development

Resolution No. 80-NQ/TW, issued on January 7, 2026 by the Politburo on the development of Vietnamese culture, identifies the objective of positioning the cultural industries as an important economic sector, while emphasizing the requirements of digital transformation and the formation of cultural–creative clusters, zones, and complexes. These orientations extend beyond sectoral policy considerations and imply a spatial approach to urban development that prioritizes connectivity and the formation of creative networks rather than dispersed and fragmented development.

From a spatial governance perspective, Resolution 80-NQ/TW suggests the development of a creative ecosystem based on the integration of physical infrastructure and digital platforms, in which creative spaces function as “nodes” connecting cultural production, distribution, and consumption activities. At the same time, the emphasis on optimizing the use of public assets and cultural heritage highlights the potential of adaptive reuse models in transforming urban spatial functions, thereby contributing to the formation of multifunctional creative spaces.

Furthermore, the strong emphasis on digital transformation expands the concept of creative space into the digital realm, leading to the emergence of “digital cultural space” as an additional spatial layer. This layer not only supports the storage and dissemination of cultural content but also enhances the connectivity, circulation, and integration capacity of the creative ecosystem in the context of globalization.

On this basis, Resolution 80-NQ/TW can be understood not only as a policy framework for cultural industry development, but also as a conceptual orientation for an integrated, multifunctional, and network-based model of urban spatial organization. This provides an important theoretical foundation for analyzing and applying the development of creative space networks in Ho Chi Minh City.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, integrating Qualitative Content Analysis and Comparative Institutional Analysis. To ensure empirical rigor without primary data collection, the study utilizes a triangulation of secondary data sources, comprising: (1) normative legal documents and policy frameworks; (2) official urban development statistics and economic indicators; and (3) previous empirical studies and evaluative reports from international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, British Council).

The study employs a proxy-based approach to evaluate network density and governance effectiveness through the synthesis of multi-source data. Findings were cross-validated against existing evaluative reports to ensure the validity of the comparative insights. The comparison is conducted along three main dimensions: (1) governance mechanisms, (2) spatial structure, and (3) the level of creative ecosystem development.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### From Practice to Policy: A Dialogue Between the Shanghai and Ho Chi Minh City Models

Drawing on comprehensive secondary data synthesis, the comparative findings reveal significant differences between the two cities. The following table summarizes key proxy indicators of their respective creative ecosystems:

Indicators	Shanghai City	Ho Chi Minh City	Key References
Number of Creative Clusters	>150 officially recognized parks (including creative industrial zones such as M50, Tianzifang)	~145–160 spaces (including hubs, co-working spaces, and art complexes)	Chu & Kagawa, 2009; Shanghai Basic Facts, 2025; RMIT Vietnam, 2025
Network Density	High: Polycentric structure; clusters are deeply integrated with urban infrastructure	Moderate: Fragmented network nodes; highly concentrated in the central core (monocentric)	Yue et al., 2021; Pham, 2026
Governance Model	Top-down & Inter-agency: Strategically driven by the government through Five-Year Plans	Emerging & Sectoral: Primarily driven by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSEs) and private sector initiatives	Gao, et al., 2025; RMIT University, 2025

Regarding governance mechanisms, Shanghai has developed creative spaces through an integrated coordination framework with a proactive role played by the municipal government. Policies are implemented in a relatively synchronized manner across urban planning, financial instruments, and enterprise support, alongside the involvement of intermediary organizations in ecosystem operation.

The case of M50 Creative Park illustrates that local authorities not only facilitated spatial redevelopment but also established governance and networking mechanisms linking creative enterprises, thereby contributing to the formation of an internationally oriented contemporary art hub. At a broader scale, the development of more than 150 creative clusters through the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage reflects a systematic approach in which creative spaces are embedded as part of the city's cultural and economic infrastructure (SCIA, 2022).

In contrast, in Ho Chi Minh City, although policy orientations promoting cultural industries have been introduced, coordination mechanisms remain in the process of development toward greater inter-sectoral integration. Creative spaces such as The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre and independent studios largely operate on self-sustained resources, with limited interconnection, thereby constraining ecosystem scalability and network integration.

In terms of spatial structure, Shanghai has established a network of creative clusters through the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage integrated into urban planning. A representative example is the West Bund area, where former factories and warehouses have been transformed into integrated creative complexes combining exhibition, content production, commercial activities, and technological experimentation. These spaces are organized as "nodes" within a connected network, generating city-wide spillover effects (Zheng, 2011).

Meanwhile, in Ho Chi Minh City, creative spaces predominantly exist as isolated sites and have not yet been fully integrated into the urban planning structure. The Mapping Vietnam's Creative Hubs report highlights a fragmented development pattern and weak interconnections among creative spaces (British Council, 2018), and recent studies continue to identify limitations in the formation of a coherent network structure.

Regarding the level of ecosystem development, Shanghai has established a relatively comprehensive ecosystem characterized by diversified financial mechanisms, intermediary organizations, and data-driven governance systems. Creative clusters in the city not only function as exhibition spaces but also integrate content production, technological experimentation, and creative commerce, thereby forming a relatively closed value chain.

By contrast, while Ho Chi Minh City's ecosystem is dynamic, it still lacks key supporting components such as specialized financial mechanisms, intermediary institutions, and unified data systems. These limitations constrain the connectivity, scalability, and value-added potential of creative spaces.

These differences highlight the crucial role of institutions and coordination mechanisms in shaping and operating effective creative space networks. The Shanghai case demonstrates that when creative spaces are integrated into urban planning and supported by appropriate policy instruments, they can evolve from isolated clusters into an interconnected network with strong spillover effects.

In particular, the adaptive reuse of industrial heritage, as seen in M50 and West Bund, illustrates the effectiveness of heritage-led redevelopment in both preserving historical value and providing a foundation for new creative activities (Bullen & Love, 2011), aligning with Resolution 80-NQ/TW's orientation toward leveraging public assets and cultural heritage.

In addition, digital transformation has increasingly become a critical component of creative ecosystems. Recent studies emphasize the role of digital platforms and data systems in connecting creative actors and supporting ecosystem governance, thereby suggesting the need to develop similar tools in Ho Chi Minh City. This indicates that the differences lie not only in the level of development but also in the organizational logic and coordination of creative space networks within different urban institutional contexts.

## Policy Implications and Spatial Organization in the Implementation of Resolution 80-NQ/TW

Based on the comparative findings, the implementation of Resolution 80-NQ/TW in Ho Chi Minh City can be approached through an integrated framework that combines institutional, financial, and technological dimensions, in which creative space networks are embedded as a component of urban infrastructure. This approach reflects a necessary shift from the development of isolated creative spaces toward a more interconnected and coordinated ecosystem model.

Accordingly, three key pillars shaping the development of creative space networks can be identified.

**Institutional dimension,** the Shanghai experience highlights the importance of establishing a legal and regulatory framework for spatial functional conversion and for standardizing “creative park” models. Cases such as M50 Creative Park and West Bund demonstrate the effectiveness of industrial heritage reuse in forming multifunctional creative complexes that integrate production, distribution, consumption, and technological experimentation. This approach is consistent with Resolution 80-NQ/TW’s orientation toward optimizing the use of public assets and cultural heritage. In the context of Ho Chi Minh City, the application of flexible mechanisms—such as temporary planning frameworks or policy sandbox models—may serve as a suitable approach to facilitating the transformation of existing industrial sites into creative “nodes” within the urban network.

**Financial dimension,** international experience shows that multi-layered support mechanisms play a critical role in the formation and scaling of creative ecosystems. In Shanghai, instruments such as investment subsidies, tax incentives, and operational cost support have contributed to the development of more than 150 creative clusters, encompassing approximately 20,000 enterprises and 500,000 workers (SCIA, 2022). In contrast, in Ho Chi Minh City, cultural industries accounted for 3.54% of GRDP in 2020 and increased to 5.7% in 2025 (Government News, 2026), a share still lower than that of many developed cities, indicating significant growth potential. This suggests the need to further develop specialized financial instruments, including creative funds, tax incentive mechanisms, and rental cost support schemes, in order to facilitate the formation of creative clusters and enhance ecosystem competitiveness.

**Technological dimension,** the integration of digital platforms into ecosystem governance and connectivity has become increasingly important. The Shanghai experience demonstrates that data management systems and “one-stop” administrative mechanisms can improve coordination efficiency and enable real-time policy support. In this context, the development of digital data platforms and spatial mapping systems in Ho Chi Minh City can be considered a key solution for connecting fragmented creative spaces, while also enabling the formation of a “digital cultural space” as an additional layer complementing physical space.

On the basis of these three pillars, the organization of creative space should shift from a dispersed structure toward a networked model of spatial connectivity. Creative spaces can be positioned as “nodes” within the urban network, in which key creative clusters function as catalytic hubs for diffusion. This approach not only improves spatial efficiency but also contributes to urban restructuring toward a more creativity-driven model.

In addition, the development of a creative ecosystem requires the active role of intermediary organizations in coordinating and connecting stakeholders. These entities can function as bridges between the public sector, enterprises, and creative communities, thereby enhancing access to resources and fostering collaboration. Empirical evidence from spaces such as The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre demonstrates the potential of independent creative initiatives, while also highlighting the need to integrate such models into a more structured and strategically oriented ecosystem.

Finally, the implementation of Resolution 80-NQ/TW should be situated within a flexible network governance model that combines strategic orientation with the adaptive capacity of creative actors. In this configuration, the public sector plays a guiding and institutional framework-setting role, while the private sector and creative communities act as drivers of innovation and ecosystem operation. This combination enables the formation of a highly connected creative space network, contributing to enhanced competitiveness and sustainable urban development in the context of the knowledge economy.

## CONCLUSION

This study conceptualizes creative space networks as a strategic infrastructural component of the urban cultural industries ecosystem in the context of implementing Resolution 80-NQ/TW. Through a comparative analysis of Shanghai and Ho Chi Minh City, the paper demonstrates that spatial organization, governance mechanisms, and the degree of policy integration play decisive roles in shaping the operational effectiveness of creative ecosystems.

The findings indicate that in Shanghai, creative spaces have been developed as an interconnected network closely integrated with urban planning, financial mechanisms, and digital infrastructure, thereby forming a relatively complete creative value chain. In contrast, although Ho Chi Minh City's creative ecosystem is dynamic, it remains in an emergent stage, characterized by a fragmented spatial structure and limited levels of connectivity. This divergence reflects not only differences in resource endowment but also variations in institutional coordination capacity and network governance.

On this basis, the study argues that the implementation of Resolution 80-NQ/TW should be operationalized through three integrated pillars: (i) the completion of an institutional framework for the organization and transformation of creative spaces, particularly in relation to the utilization of public assets and industrial heritage; (ii) the development of specialized financial instruments to facilitate the formation and expansion of creative clusters; and (iii) the establishment of digital infrastructure and data platforms to enable ecosystem connectivity and coordination. These pillars do not operate independently but interact as an integrated system, enabling the transformation of fragmented creative spaces into a network capable of generating spillover effects and higher value creation.

In the long term, the development of creative space networks should not be understood merely as a matter of physical planning, but rather as a process of ecosystem construction that integrates physical space with digital platforms. This opens new research directions regarding the role of data, digital governance, and intermediary organizational models in the development of cultural industries in the digital era.

In sum, the development of cultural industries in the current context should not be viewed solely as a sectoral policy agenda, but rather as a process of urban and ecosystem restructuring governed by network logic, in which connectivity and coordination capacity emerge as core drivers of growth.

## REFERENCES

1. British Council. (2018). Mapping Vietnam's creative hubs. <https://www.britishcouncil.vn/>
2. British Council. (2021). Cultural and creative hubs in Viet Nam (2018–2021). <https://www.britishcouncil.vn/>
3. Bullen, P. A., & Love, P. E. (2011). Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. *Structural Survey*, 29(5), 411–421. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02630801111182439>
4. China Daily. (2022, May 24). New one-stop service for film and television companies launched in Shanghai. <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>
5. Chu, J., & Kagawa, T. (2009). A study on spatial difference of the creative industrial zones in Shanghai. *Human Geography*, 2, 23-28.
6. Florida, R. (2019). *The rise of the creative class*. Basic Books.
7. Gao, et al. (2025). Digital creative industries in the Yangtze River Delta: Spatial diffusion and response to regional development strategy. *Sustainability*, 17(16), 7437. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su1716743>
8. Government News. (2026, March 20). Ho Chi Minh City develops cultural industries into a spearhead economic sector [TP.HCM xây dựng ngành công nghiệp văn hóa trở thành ngành kinh tế mũi nhọn]. *Bao Chinh Phu*. <https://baochinhphu.vn/>
9. Ho Chi Minh City People's Council. (2023). Resolution No. 09/2023/NQ-HĐND on regulations for interest rate support for investment projects prioritized for socio-economic development [Nghị quyết số 09/2023/NQ-HĐND về quy định hỗ trợ lãi suất đối với các dự án đầu tư ưu tiên phát triển kinh tế - xã hội]. <https://taichinhketoan.medinet.gov.vn/>

10. Keane, M. (2013). *Creative industries in China: Art, design and media*. John Wiley & Sons.
11. Landry, C. (2012). *The creative city: A toolkit for urban innovators*. Routledge.
12. O'Connor, J., & Gu, X. (2013). Developing a creative cluster in a postindustrial city: CIDS and Manchester. In *Creative industries and urban development* (pp. 43–55). Routledge.
13. Pham, J. (2026, March 24). Ho Chi Minh City moves from vibrant streets to a global festival stage. RMIT University Vietnam. <https://www.rmit.edu.vn/news/all-news/2026/mar/ho-chi-minh-city-moves-from-vibrant-streets-to-a-global-festival-stage?utm>.
14. Porter, M. E. (1998). Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review*, 76(6), 77–90.
15. Pratt, A. C. (2008). Creative cities: The cultural industries and the creative class. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 90(2), 107–117.
16. RMIT University Vietnam. (2025, October 15). MSEs and their growing role in Vietnam's creative economy. RMIT News.
17. Scott, A. J. (2000). *The cultural economy of cities: Essays on the geography of image-producing industries*. Sage Publications.
18. Shanghai Creative Industry Association. (2022). *Annual report on the development of Shanghai's cultural and creative industries*. SCIA Press.
19. Shanghai Basic Facts 2025. Shanghai People's Publishing House. <https://en.shio.gov.cn/TrueCMS/shxwbgs/upload/9432dca3-2e55-468c-93a5-3f99f66845cb.pdf>
20. The Politburo. (2026). Resolution No. 80-NQ/TW on the development of Vietnamese culture [Nghị quyết số 80-NQ/TW về phát triển văn hóa Việt Nam]. <https://xaydungchinhsach.chinhphu.vn/>
21. Throsby, D. (2010). *The economics of cultural policy*. Cambridge University Press.
22. Yue et al. (2021). Identifying urban vitality in metropolitan areas of developing countries from a comparative perspective: Ho Chi Minh City versus Shanghai. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 65, 102609. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2020.102609>.
23. Zheng, J. (2011). 'Creative industry clusters' and the 'entrepreneurial city' of Shanghai. *Urban Studies*, 48(16), 3561–3582.