Toward a new concept of the “cultural elite state”: Cultural capital and the urban sculpture planning authority in elite coalition in Shanghai

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ABSTRACT
The emergence of an attractive public art scene in urban public areas (termed urban sculpture in the Chinese context) is a recent phenomenon in Shanghai. The role of the local state in urban sculpture planning and development has not been critically examined. This article proposes a model entitled “cultural elite state” to conceptualize the characteristics of urban sculpture authority. The main argument is that the cultural capital held by individual political and social elites has a significant effect on the formation of the cultural elite coalition that influences decision making and execution in urban sculpture planning in Shanghai. First, the glue effect of cultural capital, rather than institutional arrangements, creates the cultural elite coalition. Second, actors in the cultural elite coalition are characterized with similar cultural disposition of “legitimate tastes” and art participation. Third, with the effect of cultural capital, the field of cultural development displays a relatively higher degree of autonomy, in which cross-hierarchy and cross-sector communication and mediation take place. Thus, the urban sculpture planning authority operates in a cultural elite coalition more as a loosely organized hierarchy of officers with individual cultural dispositions than as a solitary governing entity.

The role of the state in China’s urban development has traditionally been a major issue in Chinese urban studies. Since 1994, local governments have gained fiscal autonomy and an array of administrative powers, which led to increased importance of localities and places (Savitch & Kantor, 2002; H. K. Wang & Li, 1997; Yeh & Wu, 1999; J. T. Zhang, 2005). Terms such as growth coalition and growth machine are coined to describe the state that operates a place as a business in coalition with the private sector or one that transforms a place into a lure that attracts investment (H. K. Wang & Li, 1997; F. L. Wu, 2000). The concept of “local state corporatism” compares local governments to entrepreneurs and their prodevelopment strategies to corporatist strategies and highlights the importance of local economic regimes; that is, local entrepreneurial cadres (Naughton, 1995; Walder, 1994; J. Wang, 1995). Duckett (1998) captures the shifts from an interventionist to a more entrepreneurial regime and develops Blecher’s (1991) model of “entrepreneurial state.” It characterizes state officers’ engagement in upgrading city images by providing assorted attractions in the urban landscape to attract tourists and visitors. These strategies aim at producing profits to boost the city’s economy and to produce profits for bureaus. Zheng (2010) adjusts this model by highlighting the competition among district governments and the discrepancies between various government levels, which weaken the efficiency of the local state as a place promoter. Liu (2012) tests the applicability of a number of concepts (e.g., world city, cyber city, dual city, hybrid city, and sustainable city) and introduces the concept of a developmentalist state.
However, these concepts mainly look at the role of the state in economic and land development. Cultural development in China, which is an emerging area with rising significance, has recently attracted scholarly attention. Some scholars probe the way in which culture has been used as a strategic instrument in China’s urban development through urban planning and management (Yang & Chang, 2007; Y. Zhang, 2008). The evolution of a cultural map of Shanghai, which includes cultural venues and facilities, reveals the unique positioning of Shanghai as a global cultural metropolis (W. P. Wu, 2004). The city images that model architecture designs in Europe and the United States are examined to understand place marketing strategies associated with the middle-class lifestyle (Pow & Kong, 2007; Ren, 2008; Wai, 2006). Other studies examine creative industry clusters in China and argue for the driving role of these clusters in revalorizing property values (He & Gebhardt, 2013; Keane, 2011; Kong, Gibson, Khoo, & Semple, 2006; O’Connor & Gu, 2006, 2014; Zheng, 2010, 2011; Zhong, 2010). Despite the rising academic interest in cultural development, urban sculpture planning, as an integral part of China’s urban planning system, has not yet been explored.

This research aims to develop an understanding of the role of the state in urban sculpture planning and development in Shanghai. Public art entered the purview of urban planning in Europe as the major focus of the urban regeneration program under the government’s auspices in the late 1970s. Public art was traditionally used as an educational or didactic instrument, not least as a monument, and has been incorporated into the government’s initiatives or community grassroots movements in recent decades (Cork, 1991; M. Miles, 1989, 1998). In Shanghai, sculptures emerged in public spaces during the Republican period when returning Chinese expatriate artists imported the concept of sculpture from the West. The development of the art scene was disrupted by the succeeding wars and the Communist Party’s political movements. This movement, however, revived and prospered in the 1980s. In 1986, 180 sculptures were recorded and increased to 600 in the 1990s (Zhu, 1987). The growing quantity of urban sculptures is consistent with large-scale urban development. According to The Master Plan for Urban Sculptures in Shanghai enacted in 2004, approximately 5,000 sculptures will have been erected in public spaces in Shanghai by 2020 (Anonymous, 2007; Shanghai Municipal Government, 2003b). In a few iconic sculpture projects—for example, the Shanghai International Sculpture Space and the Shanghai Expo—the state-initiated collection of sculpture design proposals led to a high profile of urban sculpture. Thus, urban sculpture (chengshi diaosu) has become a prevailing topic in Shanghai (Xiang & Yun, 2004). Zheng (2014) clarifies urban sculpture as a term coined and tailored specifically to the Chinese ideological context and refers to state-sponsored sculptures that are designed and installed for publicly accessible spaces. Urban sculptures in China have a narrow function, such as narrating the Party-endorsed history of the nation or city and decorating the environment for aesthetic pleasure. Urban sculpture, however, excludes multiple genres of public art that are defined in Western public art theories (Lacy, 1995). Moreover, the relationship between urban sculpture and sites is affirmative (being either decoration of a site or state-led hegemony) instead of critical.

This research seeks answers to the following questions: What are the characteristics of the urban sculpture authority, and how does the urban sculpture planning authority operate? How does it make decisions and fulfill sculpting tasks? To address these questions, this research explores the institutional bases of the cultural elite coalition, as well as the participating actors and the decision-making processes. This study innovatively proposes a theoretical framework called cultural elite state, which is rooted in the sociological theories of cultural capital and elites and is adaptively applied to the Chinese context. This study particularly highlights the role of a group of sculpture officials and art consultants (e.g., intellectuals, media workers, and artists, termed nongoverning elites) in loose coalition that facilitates the party-state to produce ideological components and meet its economic goals. The cultural capital held by these actors bonds actors together and creates the cultural elite coalition. In this way, it affects the decision-making process and enhances the autonomy of the cultural development arena in Shanghai.
Developing the concept of the “cultural elite state”

A new theoretical concept of the cultural elite state has been formulated. This section begins with a review of the theoretical foundation of this concept in the tradition of sociological studies. Next, this concept is characterized in three dimensions: institution, actor, and process. Finally, the applicability of this concept in the Chinese context is tentatively assessed.

The model of cultural elite state is embedded in sociological studies of culture and elites. Culture within the pattern of social structure is studied by considering cultural production (e.g., knowledge production, the arts and sciences, news, and books) and cultural producers as two major focuses (Coser, Kadushin, & Powell, 1982; Gans, 1979; Kadushin, 1976; Savage & Williams, 2008). A dematerialization process in recent decades has led to the reassessment of symbolic and cultural factors (e.g., individual characteristics) in restructuring a class in British analyses of social mobility. As the form of wealth transforms, privilege values quality over quantity and culturally valued products over materially valued products. It is embodied in the form of cultural and symbolic capital (Shipman, 2004). Bourdieu (1979/1987) specifies cultural capital as attitudes, preferences, and manner of behavior (e.g., cultural practices and norms). It can be measured by cultural tastes and cultural participation (Katz-Gerro, 2008; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Cultural capital is viewed as the source of cultural elite’s power, which is embedded in individuals’ dispositions and judgmental competencies (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Here, the notion of cultural disposition is a form of aesthetic appreciation identified with innate variables (e.g., intelligence) and is created by a trained capacity cultivated through family-based transgenerational education (Bourdieu, 1984, 1996; Ljunggren, 2015). A circle of cultural elites is formed as people with similar cultural tastes and behavior patterns group together. In other words, access to groups of elites is restricted solely to those who hold similar capitals (Bourdieu, 1996). Through this cultural process, cultural capital creates the path toward the production and reproduction of social elites as the outcome of social mobility (Bourdieu, 1984; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1999; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Saunders, 1995; Savage & Egerton, 1997; Savage, Warde, & Devine, 2007; Zimdars, Sullivan, & Heath, 2009).

The theory of elites has a long tradition in sociological research and is focused on the composition of power relations and the exclusion and inclusion of social groups in the power structure (Griffiths, 2008). The existence of elites reflects an incomplete democracy, economic polarization, and social hierarchies with a significant divide between elite and the people in Europe and America. These societies are characterized by a ruling minority that dominates the social structure and comprises social elites with higher social esteem and influence (Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1901/1999). In some former communist countries (e.g., Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovenia), old and new elites coexist and have undergone the process of modernization (F. Adams & Tomsic, 2002). In both systems of society, the term cultural elites refers to elite actors who influence cultural production (Graglia, 2004; Ljunggren, 2015; Skjott-Larsen, 2012). In the Chinese context, political officers are called elites (Opper, Nee, & Brehm, 2015) or party elites (Choi, 2012; Shih, Adolph, & Liu, 2012). Cultural elite state is a new term to be introduced to the literature of China studies.

The elite theory explains who governs. Pareto (1920) maintains that a society includes two types of people, namely, those who rule (the elite) and those who are ruled (the nonelite). The elite can be divided into those who rule directly (referred to as a governing elite) and those who rule indirectly (referred to as a nongoverning elite) as a dichotomy. The former holds political power, whereas the latter exerts power in nonpolitical spheres mostly by informing and directing political power and mobilizing the public (Scott, 1985, 1991, 1997). The nongoverning elite can be described as those who possess high levels of cultural capital but inadequate economic power for purchasing cultural objects (Bourdieu, 1984). Their creative and strategic ways (with cultural distinction) of mobilizing the masses to accept certain values or attributes defines the legitimacy of their power.

Three components underpin the concept of the cultural elite state, namely, institutions, actors, and the operational processes.
Cultural elites have traditionally been active in established organizations or clearly structured institutions for cultural production; for example, research institutions, universities, news agencies, local governing organizations, and legislatures (Rado, 1982). They have been working with the state to entwine themselves with state institutions and build institutions and expand their remit and claim jurisdiction over the “apparatus of cultural governance” (Griffiths, Miles, & Savage, 2008, p. 192). Cultural elites in the United States are not confined within the scope of formally structured settings or clearly defined disciplines, communities, or organizations. Rather, they could be working in an emergent informal multidisciplinary network of various social organizations and processes; for example, communal cultural associations. They are also involved in problem-solving cultural tasks embedded in social relations (DiMaggio, 1982; Rado, 1982). The class subjectivities of the cultural elite themselves are weak, and the cultural demarcation of this group is vague (Ljunggren, 2015; Scott, 2008).

In communist/former communist countries, the institutional bases of cultural elites are mostly state-subsidized/backed semi-official organizations or state institutions; for example, performing arts associations, writers’ unions, and academic institutions; however, many of the cultural elites maintain their professional identities and become institutionally in between the state and the society. Cultural elites maintain certain autonomy in terms of interests associated with their professions and commitments to their work (L. Adams, 2004).

Despite institutional affiliation, it can be hypothesized that cultural elites are tied together more by similar cultural capitals than institutional bases (e.g., similar cultural tastes and preference for cultural participation, similar conditions of existence and competences, as well as similar trajectories and cultural practices; Bourdieu, 1984). People with these features are most likely to generate chemistry or an emotional spark of commonality at the initial meeting because they may share similar conditions (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). A discovery of such similarities serves as a powerful emotional glue that facilities trust and comfort and bonds people together in excitement (Collins, 2004; Gigone & Hastie, 1993). Cultural fit is a formal evaluative criterion in hiring, in which evaluators construct and assess merit in their own image (Lamont, 1992; Rivera, 2012). Consequently, aesthetic tastes generated by dispositions shape social distinction and create visible social boundaries (Bourdieu, 1984; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Holt, 1998; Veblen, 1899/1960, 1899/1994). This informal politics institutionalizes power relations and gathers people together with similar beliefs, values, and attitudes (Tsou, 1995).

Actors of cultural elitism have undergone limited evolution across decades. Before the 1960s, cultural elites in the United States largely referred to professors, scholar-teachers (or the intellectuals and social elites), or intellectuals. Cultural elites come from a variety of professions, including the academia in universities, physicians, lawyers, trustees on the board of art institutions, ethics, priests, and entertainment cadre that oversee media (Hanson, 2010; Himmelfarb, 1999; Ostrower, 2002; Rado, 1982). Harvard’s list of cultural elite listed 100 people, including writers, publishers, literary agents, or those who were somehow involved in the publishing world (Anonymous, 1992). Cultural elites hold political power and participate in the process of state policy making. Bourdieu (1993) emphasizes the cultural elites’ association with the relatively autonomous field of culture and power and represents a class of social and economic dominance (known as “aristocratically intellectual group” in the United Kingdom [Shils, 1955, p. 12] and the upper echelons that run government departments in the United States [Hanson, 2010]). In the United States, cultural elites are labeled as the “knowledge” or “verbal” class, whose only tools and products are words because they focus mostly on their potential to affect policy making and people’s way of thinking (Himmelfarb, 1999; Scott, 2008).

The tastes of these actors have undergone transition in the recent decades. Cultural elites no longer exclusively hold highbrow tastes; rather, they possess an added eclectic cultural taste as opposed to highbrow univores, described as “legitimate taste,” embedded in an individual elite’s cultural disposition (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 52). These actors have become inclusive and broad as the cosmopolitan elites. This transformation of cultural omnivorosity among the elite results from the effect of education with eclectic and global tastes not tied to either the local place or people (Brooks, 2000).

In terms of processes, cultural elites exert influences in making and implementing decisions. In Uzbekistan, for instance, the party-state has little tolerance for diversity of political expression or
dissident activity, and the regime ensures its support with ideological instruments (L. Adams, 2004). Political communication consists mainly of one-way transmission of ideology from state to citizens and the latter passively receive information and are unified by deceptive public discourses. Cultural elites are working closely with the state to conduct politics on a symbolic level. They are in a coercive relationship with the state and aim to promote the domination of the state over the shared meaning of the concepts related to collective cultural patrimony, using propaganda and other ideological instruments to facilitate the government to enhance social solidarity and promote state legitimacy (L. Adams, 2004). Thus, using the service of cultural elites is a symbolic strategy (Bourdieu, 1996). Cultural elites affirm the role they play in supporting the regime, and they please their political leaders without intent to transform the authoritarian state. They are not independent thinkers but partially play with nation-building projects to serve the ideological goals of the state (L. Adams, 2004).

In this process, cultural elites are not simply transmitting the words of the government but are also exploiting their autonomy within the state to exert their influences on their own interests (L. Adams, 2004). With Pareto's (1920) framework, these cultural elites can be conceptualized as nongoverning elites. The unique role of cultural elites is to mediate state–society relations. They retain their status, composition, and power by integrating valuable skills into initiatives to prevent conflicts between groups. Accordingly, they may create alternative unforeseen consequences that potentially deviate from the direction of the state. Essentially, they fail to provide any real aid to people searching for meaningful belief systems, and their creativity and art demands are restrained within the limitation of the ideological context (Pareto, 1901/1991).

The cultural elite state concept is tentatively applicable to the Chinese context because it could be connected to the ongoing discourse of the role of the party-state. The concept of entrepreneurial-style authoritarian state describes the post-Mao market-oriented reforms that caused the transition of the state from totalitarianism to authoritarianism (Liu, 2012; F. L. Wu, 2007; J. Zhang, 2013). The authoritarian state holds highly concentrated and centralized power on the one hand and selectively withdraws itself in some aspects on the other hand; this process allows for deeper engagement of a broadened professional executive and consultancy body (J. Zhang, 2013). In Chinese studies, the term elite state describes the prodevelopment coalition of political, economic, and intellectual elites who work at the top level of the state (Ma, 2009). Shin (2013) observes that the expansion of China’s political landscape is strongly associated with a particular urban vision held collectively by local elites. The effect of cultural capital is also hypothetically applicable to China. According to Opper et al. (2015), leadership promotion in China’s political elite relies on homophily in the form of joint origin, education, and work experience.

**Research methods**

Qualitative research methods are most effective in exploring the nature and characteristics of an authority. Nonprobability purposeful sampling is used to achieve the representativeness or typicality of urban sculpture planning authority (Maxwell, 2005) to identify individuals and cases that could provide the most relevant and adequate information for in-depth interviews and case studies. The author interviewed two chief officials (one current and one retired) at the current municipal urban sculpture planning authority and the former chairperson of the Art Association, all of the chief officials in charge of urban sculpture tasks in the 10 district urban planning authorities, and six officials in other district government departments. A similar sampling method was applied in selecting art experts in the Art Committee. Twenty interviews were conducted with Art Committee members, including art experts and artists who actively participated in state-led projects. Twenty-one case studies were conducted; these cases studies were urban sculpture projects with deep involvement of district or municipal planning authorities. The government partners, which include the business sector and the nonprofit sector, in these projects were interviewed.

Semistructured in-depth questions were used to elicit answers in interviews with the government officials. Detailed information about the interview subjects and questions can be found in the Appendix. Site reconnaissance was adopted to facilitate the case studies.
Data analysis in qualitative research follows the principle of “custom-built, revised, and choreographed” (Creswell, 1994, p. 142). The analyses began with reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, and written and site analysis documents and then proceeded to making notes and memos. Theoretical categorizing was then performed by coding these notes and memos.

**The urban sculpture planning authority in elite coalition in Shanghai**

The main argument of this research is that cultural capital (held by individual elites) significantly influences the formation of the cultural elite coalition, which shapes decision making and execution in the urban sculpture development in Shanghai. The new model of cultural elite state characterizes cultural elites in three aspects. First, the institutional bases for cultural elites are state-backed or semi-official organizations or state institutions subject to the indigenized policy context. In Shanghai, the term cultural elite state is created to conceptualize local cultural development authority that adopts urban entrepreneurial policies. However, this elite coalition is created by a similar cultural capital instead of institutional arrangements. Second, the cultural elite coalition engages sculpture officials of the municipal urban sculpture committee and a wide range of art-related professionals who hold legitimate tastes. Third, cultural elites mediate the party-state, artists, and the public and serve to meet the political and economic goals of the state.

**From the artists’ association to the urban planning bureau: The institutional bases the urban sculpture authority in formation**

Cultural elites in the sculpture sector are based on semi- or fully state-backed cultural organizations and institutions. The process of institution building is found to involve policy transition. Conversely, forming the cultural elite coalition is not created by institutional connections but is affected by a similar cultural capital.

**Institutional foundation and transition of the Urban Sculpture Planning Authority**

Consistent with the theory on the institutional foundation of cultural elites, the transition of urban sculpture authority from the Artists’ Association–led model to the Urban Sculpture Planning Authority–led model mirrored the shift in urban policy toward prodevelopment urban entrepreneurialism in Shanghai.

The Artists’ Association (Meixie) was in charge of urban sculpture projects from the 1950s to the 1980s. It was established as a state-backed semi-official organization, mimicking its counterpart in the Soviet Union as an embodiment of the Communist Party’s direct leadership and control over the art sector. The duties of this association ranged from coordinating artists’ participation in state-led urban sculpture projects to setting up artistic criteria and exercising politics through leadership (interview with the ex-head of the Artists’ Association, December 16 & 23, 2013). Most sculptures produced through this system were didactic monuments that affirmed the dominant political values of the Communist Party. Representative artworks are monuments of historical figures. The statue of Marx and Engels in Fuxing Park, the statue of Song Qingling, and the group statues of martyrs in Longhua Martyrs’ Park are examples.

The succeeding shift in the focus of policy and its influences on institutional transition and building are evident. In the late 1970s, in line with the central government, the Shanghai government adopted prodevelopment policies to advance urban entrepreneurialism through planning and urban design. Urban sculptures were no longer solely value-laden political didactic objects but also aesthetic objects for urban beautification. The first sculpture project from the perspective of urban development was during the Shanghai government’s plan to redesign the People’s Square and decorate it using sculptures. The Artists’ Association submitted a proposal aimed at advancing the development of urban sculptures; this proposal was endorsed by the Central Government Publicity Department (No. 90) on July 12, 1982. In 1982, Zhao Ziyang, the premier of the State Council, endorsed the Artists’ Association’s proposal for commissioning the Cultural Bureau and Cultural Ministry and Artists’ Association to supervise urban
sculpture projects with the assistance of the Construction Bureau. He suggested merging this organization as a functional part with the Urban Planning Bureau in the Construction Ministry (Central Government Publicity Ministry, 1987). In response to this national policy, a state-backed organization known as the Urban Sculpture Planning Group was established under the direct leadership of the vice mayor in charge of urban development in Shanghai. This organization supervised the planning and management for urban sculpture projects (Urban Sculpture Policy Document, No. 0008, 1982). During that period, approximately 50 sculptures were produced and installed in public spaces every year. In 1985, the Urban Sculpture Planning Group was upgraded to the Urban Sculpture Committee (USC; Chengshi diaosu weiyuanhui) under the leadership of the municipal Publicity Department and Construction Commission. In its second year, the municipal USC (MUSC) set up the Art Committee (yishu weiyuanhui). According to the official document entitled Urban Sculpture Construction and Management Methods (issued by the Cultural Ministry and Construction Ministry, 1993), the two ministries collaboratively worked together in overseeing the nationwide sculpture development; in local areas, the Cultural Ministry implements cultural policies, whereas the Construction Ministry facilitates the planning, construction, and management of the urban sculpture projects (Cultural Ministry and Construction Ministry, 1993). The USC assists authorities in managing and coordinating urban sculpture-related affairs in nationwide areas. In 1990, Zhu Rongji, the city mayor of Shanghai, issued a directive stating that “Shanghai should develop urban sculpture” (Xu, 2004). Following this directive, an office was set up under the MUSC called MUSCO (Municipal Urban Sculpture Committee Office).

The complete handover of urban sculpture planning to the Urban Planning Bureau took place within the new development-oriented context of urban entrepreneurialism. The focus of the policy was upgrading urban images and boosting property-led real estate development through planning. The MUSC and MUSCO were merged into the Urban Planning Bureau in 2003. Consistent with China’s two-tier urban planning system (F. L. Wu, 2007; Yeh & Wu, 1999), the urban sculpture planning system includes two tiers. The first tier is the urban sculpture master plan conducted by MUSCO and the second one is the detailed urban sculpture master plan by DUSCO (District Urban Sculpture Committee Office; or Landscape and Historic Conservation Section in district planning bureaus if DUSCO does not exist). The urban sculpture plan at the municipal level is a concept plan that proposes the total number of sculptures within the planning period and the iconic pattern of their distribution in the city. The DUSCO in the planning bureau at the district level takes charge of more detailed arrangements in the form of regulatory detailed plans (kongzhi xing xiangxi guihua), which allocate sculpture tasks to specific land plots (interview with senior officials in MUSCO, February 7, 2013). In addition to making urban sculpture plans, MUSCO implements key projects. MUSCO takes charge of three categories of urban sculpture projects: (a) key projects assigned by the municipal political leaders; for example, the city mayor or chief secretary; (b) cross-district projects; and (c) sculpture projects located in 12 accredited historic quarters (Changning District Urban Planning and Design Institute and Tuji University Art and Design Department, 2007).

This initiative of setting up the two-tier planning system indicates the recognition of urban sculpture planning as a specialized task in urban development. However, this cultural sector is not placed on equal footing with the rest of the mainstream urban planning system. Urban sculpture planning is a special add-on cultural component of less importance, being merged into the mainstream urban planning system. Financially, it is separate from other parts of the bureau and is devoid of regular funding allocation and other resources. The MUSC relies on special funding (zhuanxiang bokuan) of RMB 10 million that was allocated in 2003. In terms of accounting, no line item has been set for urban sculpture. No clear guidelines that concern funding allocation for urban sculpture projects have been set up either. The expenditure needed for devising the urban sculpture plan, enacting key sculpture projects, and the daily operation of the committee in the years following has relied on this fund without further injection (interview with government officials in MUSCO, August 8, 2013).

At the district level, 5 out of 10 districts in the central city (zhongxin chengqu) have established a district Urban Sculpture Committee (DUSC) within the sector of MUSCO for professional and political
advice. They rely on funding allocation from their respective district governments. The importance of the urban sculpture planning section in the urban planning bureau varies across districts. The former Luwan District established the first DUSC that coordinated 14 government agencies and departments; for example, the Garden and Greenery Department, Education Department, Planning Bureau, Cultural Bureau, and Bursary Bureau. The former vice head of Luwan District acted as the head of the DUSC and was tasked with coordinating planning and implementation. In other four districts with DUSC—that is, Changning, Putuo, Jing’an, and Pudong districts—a Landscape Section (Fengjing Yuanlin Ke) was set up under the DUSCO. This section is tasked to execute detailed duties related to urban sculpture projects (interview with government officials in MUSCO, August 8, 2013; Table 1).

**Cultural capital that bonds elites together in urban sculpture planning**

Shared cultural capital, instead of institutional arrangements, bonds people together; this argument is consistent with the literature on cultural capital and cultural elite. Shared cultural capital has led to the formation of a project-based, if not long-term, elite coalition that includes political leaders (ruling elites), sculpture officials, and art professionals (nonruling elites). One consequence associated with the cultural capital determining effect is the weak class subjectivity of the cultural elite coalition.

Given its lack of institutionalized decision-making procedures, it largely depends on key party leaders’ personal judgments in deciding whether advice from MUSCO should be taken. In other words, political leadership with cultural vision, aesthetic tastes, and art appreciation and understanding is a powerful impetus for urban sculpture projects to take place. Around 2004, Chen Liangyu acted as party secretary. With a background in architecture and personal aesthetic tastes, he backed urban sculpture development and allocated RMB 60 million to MUSC. During Chen’s administration, Wu Jiang was appointed as the head of the Planning Bureau. Interviews with officials at the Urban Planning Bureaus show that Wu Jiang’s personal interest in art and his professional background in historical conservation led to his dedicated support for urban sculpture planning and projects. Interviewed officials verified that under Wu Jiang’s leadership, urban sculpture plans were enacted on both municipal and district levels. Certain political leaders in district planning authorities—for example, Jing’an District government—followed the paragon of the municipal government. They allocated specialized funding (RMB 5 million) to the urban sculpture sector and assisted in forging closer relationships between the public and private sectors (interview with an official at the Jing’an District Planning Bureau and businesses, May 23, 2013).

Furthermore, compared with other political leaders, Chen and Wu shared a much closer relationship with officials of MUSCO and art consultants of the Art Committee. Similar to Chan and Wu, the two chief officials of MUSCO (who began to work on urban sculpture projects before the institutional merge) have backgrounds in art teaching and practice in addition to urban sculpture administration. Wu and the two chief officials share both artistic tastes and experience in art participation. Interviews with 50 people in this circle reveal that the two chief sculpture officials of MUSCO serve as the magnetic core that gathered other art consultants, artists, and intellectuals in the Art Committee, thereby assisting the formation of an elite coalition. The shared cultural capitals enabled them to break the bureaucratic hierarchies and disciplinary boundaries and to develop closer personal ties and informal networks by which they share views on urban sculpture projects. According to the interviews, people in the circle consider such close ties with the political leaders a privilege and that the outcome was the actualization of a number of key urban sculpture projects. The Shanghai International Sculpture Space, or the Red Town, is an iconic example of an urban sculpture project initiated by the municipal Urban Planning Bureau in collaboration with a private corporation. When Wu stepped down, urban sculpture projects were no longer prioritized, and no succeeding institution building initiatives were made (interview with an official at the Jing’an District Planning Bureau, May 23, 2013).

Similarly, individual political leaders’ cultural dispositions work as the decisive factor in initiating urban sculpture projects at DUSCO. An official of the Huangpu District Planning Bureau cited an example of a sculpture entitled “Ox” (mimicking the Ox sculpture on Wall Street) that was installed at the Financial Plaza at the Bund. The entire process of producing this sculpture, from design to installation, was under the support and supervision of a vice secretary of Huangpu District. This statue is protected by
Table 1. The institutional structure of the urban sculpture planning system on both municipal and district tiers.

| District       | Xuhui                      | Putuo                      | Jing’an                    | Changning     | Huangpu                  | Luwan (pre-2010) | Zhabei                   | Yangpu                  | Pudong                  | Hongkou                  |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Institutional arrangements | No independent agency in charge of urban sculpture planning. A section combining the landscape and architecture management was set up | DUSCO; the historic preservation section takes charge of execution | DUSCO, landscape section | DUSCO; the urban sculpture sector was separated from the Planning Office in 2006. However, one officer concurrently acts as the head of the urban sculpture section and the landscape section at the Urban Planning Bureau | DUSCO chaired by a vice-district head in charge of construction projects. This system is in line with the institutional arrangement of the municipal Urban Planning Bureau | A combined section of landscape and urban sculpture was set up in 2005 | A section in the district planning bureau is devoted to urban sculpture planning | DUSCO, three sections combined, including building management, landscape and sculpture and historical preservation | No DUSCO; two sections combined; that is, the landscape section and the planning section |
| Governmental funding allocation mode for urban sculpture | No devoted funding; apply for project-based government funding | Urban sculpture line item in the district government’s annual budget | The initial devoted funding of RMB SM was allocated in 2006. No new injection is instilled into the account | The urban sculpture line item in the district government’s annual budget was set up | Project-based funding allocation; supported by the Luwan District’s devoted initial funding after the two districts were merged | The district government allocated RMB 1 million to the urban sculpture sector. Regular funding allocation was made after that | The initial funding was allocated by MUSCO in 2006; no new injections since then | Specialized initial funding was allocated. The following funding allocation is based on a project-based mechanism | Project-based funding allocation, termed yishi yiyi (case-by-case funding application) | No devoted funding allocated for urban sculpture projects |

Note. *One discrepancy is noted between the official in the Huangpu District Planning Bureau and the Luwan District Planning Bureau. The former said the initial funding in the Luwan District was RMB 5 million and the latter said it was RMB 1 million. The latter is adopted here waiting for further confirmation.*
an electronic monitoring camera and a guard. The statue was produced and maintained at a significant cost, with funds allocated with the support of a deputy district chief (interview with an official at Huangpu District, December 18, 2013). Thus, officers at MUSCO believe that an ideal model for advancing state-led urban sculpture projects would involve setting up a committee coordinated by a major/vice mayor, such as Wu, who understands art and can communicate with art professionals (interview with the chief official at MUSCO, February 7, 2013).

In addition, during the development of the coalition, connecting governing cultural elites and nongoverning cultural elites in different fields relies on a similar cultural capital as interpersonal ties. When Wu Jiang and MUSCO officials selected developers for collaboration on the Shanghai International Urban Sculpture Center project, the developers’ cultural backgrounds and experience in cultural projects were seriously considered. Zheng Peiguang’s company was eventually selected as the partner of the Planning Bureau because of Zheng’s sound professional and academic background in the arts rather than the financial strength of the company (interviews with Zheng Peiguang, March 3, 2006, and August 25, 2014). Based on their shared interests in the arts, interpersonal chemistry was elicited and bonded people together to work on sculpture projects.

The above details show that cultural capital plays a key role in creating the cultural elite coalition. Political support for urban sculpture projects, the determining factor in the process, is often not the result of an institutionalized arrangement but of political leaders’ personal cultural dispositions. In other words, the coincidental marriage of power and cultural disposition enables urban sculpture projects to be actualized.

**Actors in the cultural elite state coalition**

The composition of the cultural elite coalition in Shanghai urban sculpture planning can be conceptualized by using concentric circles (Figure 2). The urban sculpture planning authority includes the core cultural elites, among whom the nongoverning cultural elites have been serving the political and economic goals set by the governing elites. Consistent with the literature on cultural elites, such elites come from a variety of art-related professions of practice and consultation. Their distinctive legislative tastes are noted.
The nongoverning elites involved in the urban sculpture authority are not restricted to government officials but include a pool of art consultants and sculpture experts in the Art Committee (yishu weiyuan hui). The Committee has a long-term collaborative relationship with the authority and either provides consultancy to the political leaders (or governing elites) or conducts urban sculpture projects. Such an arrangement complements art professionalism by engaging intellectuals, including academics in fine arts-related subjects (60%), independent artists (18%), art consultants (15%), and others (7%).

The institutional bases of these members range from state institutions to private corporations; however, all of the members are deeply involved in state-led sculpture projects. Over the decades, membership has been stable, although the boundary of this coalition is flexible in principle. The following are some of the committee members: Tang Shichu is a nationally renowned senior sculptor who is known for his academically realistic sculptures. He is the earliest member of the Urban Planning Group, serving as a consultant and artist for urban sculpture planning and projects for 30 years. Yu Jiyong, an established sculptor, worked at the state-subsidized Oil Painting and Sculpture Academy (Youdiao Yuan) for 20 years and then left the institution.
and operated his own commercial sculpture company. His works have received numerous awards since the 1980s, and he has participated extensively in state-led sculpture projects. Wei Tianyu is a sculptor and professor at the East Normal University who gained an art education background in the United States. He was involved in numerous state-led public art and art consultancy projects. He led one of the major urban sculpture projects in the Shanghai Expo 2010. Zhou Xiaoping is a returning expat artist who operates her own environment design company and has been active in state-led urban sculpture projects (interview with members of the Art Committee, August 23 and December 12–14, 18, 20, 2013). Notably, the governing and nongoverning elite circles are connected to the media and businesses.

The sculpture officials interviewed in Shanghai exhibited their distinctive cultural disposition in terms of artistic professionalism, cultural sensibility, dedication to artistic qualities, and sophistication in maneuvering cultural resources for urban beautification, as well as their legitimate tastes, viz. local culture–rooted global tastes of eclecticism.

The interviews show that some of the sculpture officials’ understandings of public art is consistent with that of the international academic literature. For instance, an official of the Huangpu District Planning Bureau expressed his awareness of the conflicting purpose of the government and the real estate sector in selecting sculptures. The real estate sector exploits sculpture projects as symbolic resources to leverage commercial revenues in conformity with the principle that beauty can be profitable. This point is consistent with scholars’ concerns about the low degree of “publicness” in commercial sector-led public art projects. This official offered the following reflection on public art administration: the current urban sculpture managerial guidelines in Shanghai cover only those located in publicly accessible areas (out of the planning red line of properties) under the jurisdiction. However, the degree to which publicness is derived from the physical location of the statues should be more related to the psychological feeling of the audience. He suggests that visually accessible objects within the red line areas on project properties should also be subject to urban sculpture management guidelines (interview with an official at the Huangpu District Planning Bureau, December 10, 2013). These concerns are consistent with international literature of public art (M. Miles, 1997; M. Miles, Borden, & Hall, 2000; Phillips, 1995).

Practical experience in art and constructive consultancy skills are considered important in the process of social inclusion of elite consultants. Candidacy screening for the Art Committee excluded those who are inept at communication despite their abundant art making expertise and theoretical depth. By this logic, art theorists without practical experience in state-led ventures would not be included (interview with the ex-head of the Artists’ Association, December 16, 2013). In reality, a large proportion of sculpture officials in the municipal- and district-level urban sculpture authority has practical experience in art or design. For instance, the sculpture official at the Pudong Planning Bureau has a background in fine arts. The district urban sculpture plan for which he was responsible reveals a particular concern with regard to the relationship of artworks to the sites and their aesthetic qualities. He also set up a mechanism to collect information on emerging urban sculptures both in public spaces and privatized estates (interview with an official at the Pudong Planning Bureau, May 25, 2013).

In contrast to the gap between the taste of cultural elites and local people in the same contexts as reported in literature, cultural elites in Shanghai are rooted in local culture. The dominant majority of sculpture officials and members of the Art Committee are local Shanghaiese. Some interviewees impressed me with their dedication to preserving local culture. The former vice head of the Luwan District in charge of the Luwan District urban sculpture plan, who specializes in assessing and approving construction project proposals, grew up in Luwan District and has extensive knowledge of its history and culture. In the detailed urban sculpture plan of Luwan District, sites were selected carefully with particular concerns about their aesthetic and symbolic qualities. He said that noisy places should not include too many dazzling components, whereas quiet sites should avoid tedium. Sculptures were employed to create a sense of dynamism as a way to symbolize “life in Luwan,” thereby enhancing environmental compatibility (interview with an official at the Luwan District Planning Bureau, December 18, 2013).

Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) concept of legitimate taste is applicable to cultural elites in Shanghai because they have displayed cultural dispositions that appreciate not only the aesthetic criteria of highbrow culture but also the cultural pattern that marks ordinary people’s lives. Moreover, careful elimination of
explicit political didacticism from these sculptures can be observed. One telling example is a project led by MUSCO in 2001, which featured 10 winning sculptures installed along Duolun Road that represent a group of prominent writers who once lived in that area during the 1920s and 1930s. These sculptures demonstrate high aesthetic attainments along with the Western academic tradition of realism in representation. However, signs that may indicate heroic or revolutionary monument—for example, plinths or large-scale sculptures—are cautiously removed. Cultural celebrities are represented as ordinary, life-size people within the context of community-based daily lives, which is a more approachable way of reproducing the historical scene (Sun, 2006). Such democratized monuments associated with ordinary people’s daily lives have represented one major subject matter in the past 2 decades.

Presumably different from other Chinese cities, the cultural elites in Shanghai have displayed a certain degree of unique aesthetic tastes in step with the global trend. One example is Yu Jiyong’s iconic artwork of revolutionary monumentalism entitled “May 30th,” which is representative of abstract modernism and created in the early 1980s. The two Chinese numerical characters are represented with twining steel spirals, a modernist artistic language similar to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao designed by Frank Gehry (Figure 3) but created 10 years prior. Recent urban sculpture projects—for example, the Shanghai International Sculpture Center and Jing’an Sculpture Park—are dedicated to introducing contemporary overseas representative works to Shanghai. Most artworks displayed at the Jing’an Sculpture Park and International Sculpture Center avoid traditional realistic artistic language. Instead, abstract artistic language and surrealistic vocabulary with exaggerated representational skills are applied (e.g., works by Salvador Dali, Arne Quinze, Barbara Edelstein, and Philippe Hiquily; Figure 4; on-site investigations from December 2013 to August 2014).

**Figure 3.** Yu Jiyong, “The Memorial Monument of the May 30th Movement,” 1986.

**The process: Cross-hierarchy and cross-sector communication and mediation between art, politics, the public, and urban entrepreneurialism**

The main argument about the effect of cultural capital on the formation of an elite coalition can be supported by the fact that opinions of the district-level sculpture authority are more likely to be adopted by the municipal authority via in-circle communication. This section argues that the nongoverning cultural elites at MUSC not only execute directives by the governing elites (as the cultural elite literature suggests) but also exercise the autonomy of their expertise. These actors mediate the state, media, and the public; they balance ideological production and artistic quality.
Cross-hierarchy “bottom-up” influences on decision making

Because cultural capital affects the formation of the elite circle, the nongoverning cultural elites in the urban sculpture planning authority enjoy higher autonomy in influencing decision making and execution. This situation occurs in the context of cross-tier planning structure of governance.

Unlike in the top-down approach of execution in mainstream governmental practices, district-level sculpture planning authorities have greater discretion in deciding whether the directive from MUSCO should be adopted. Extra tolerance would be given by the municipal authority. The district planning authorities often selectively follow the directives given by MUSCO despite their “lip service” in the sculpture plans (interview with the chief official of MUSCO, February 7, 2013). In one case, the Jing’an District Planning Bureau declined a sculpture donated by a U.S. sculptor assigned by MUSCO because the bureau considered the sculpture to be of low artistic quality (interview with the chief official of MUSCO, February 7, 2013).

Furthermore, advice from the district level (based on practical experience) is more likely to be taken by MUSCO. Two DUSCO urban sculpture plans were produced prior to the municipal urban sculpture plan, and this experience provided lessons to MUSCO with regard to planning guidelines and methodology. A typical example is Luwan District, which experimented with a detailed regulatory urban sculpture plan in 2001. This plan inspired the municipal Urban Sculpture Master Plan in the aspects of plan concepts, the content to be included, and the extent of details (interview with the former head of the Luwan District Planning Bureau, December 18, 2013). In addition, the Pudong District Planning Bureau conducted three rounds of sculpture planning. The first round took place in 1998 and had implications for the municipal plan; the plan selected 20 or 30 sites for inventory and analysis and laid out initial guidelines for sculpture development (interview with an official at the Pudong District Planning Bureau, May 25, 2013). To address the difficulty in implementing urban sculpture plans, the Yangpu District Planning Bureau has been improving the mechanisms; one solution is including the requirement of plan...
implementation into land lease contracts with private developers (interview with Yangpu District Planning Bureau official, December 16, 2013; February 24, 2014). Upon recognition of this mechanism, it will be adopted by the municipal authority. The official in charge of urban sculpture planning in Yangpu District would be promoted to the municipal level to be responsible for sculpture plan implementation (interview with the chief official at MUSCO, February 7, 2013).

Mediation between art, power, and urban entrepreneurialism

Consistent with the literature, the nongoverning cultural elites mediate the state, artists, and the public. They also balance political purposes, artistic qualities, and entrepreneurial urban policies.

The ultimate role of cultural elites is to produce ideological components to secure the power of the state. An official at the Huangpu District Planning Bureau stated that he carefully executed each sculpture project assigned by political leaders, from design to interpretative text writing, especially monuments on the Shanghai Bund. To represent the political and historical significance of the Chen Yi\textsuperscript{14} statue, the first Communist city mayor of Shanghai, he spent 2 months studying and composing the biography of Chen, as inscribed on the plinth (interview with the official at the Huangpu District Planning Bureau, December 10, 2013).

On another level, sculpture officials who are well versed in both politics and art attempt to protect artistic qualities from the intervention of political leaders’ unprofessional preferences. The chief official at MUSCO noted that presenting political leaders with exactly two options of artwork (that meet art experts’ standards) to decide on the final artwork selection is a workable strategy.\textsuperscript{15} Consulting more than two authorities can be problematic. In one experience with regard to selecting the material for a sculpture, officials consulted four authorities; for example, the district government, the People’s Political Consultative Committees at the district and municipal levels, and the People’s Congress. Two authorities voted for stainless steel, and two others voted for glass. In reality, glass was not feasible. This result hindered the project from proceeding. The chief official concluded that many poor decisions ascribed to political leaders were the result of inadequate communication skills of sculpture officials (interview with the officials of MUSCO, February 7, 2013). To fulfill duties, they must be able to handle conflicts between politics and art professionalism.

Moreover, sculpture officials at MUSCO assume the role of mediator, serving to maintain the state-dominant art selection system, coordinating and communicating with art professionals, and leading the opinion of the public in coalition with the media (interview with the ex-head of the Artists’ Association, December 16, 2013). Unsurprisingly, public opinion is shaped in a top-down manner by the elite coalition. In addition, the goal of public education is to foster an audience of world-class aesthetics with global tastes. The former chief official at MUSCO provided an iconic sculpture entitled “Dynamics,” located at the Luoshan Road overpass in Pudong District, as an example (Figure 5). Installed in the early 1990s, this abstract sculpture in the shape of rising flames symbolizes the dynamic development of Pudong District. In the early 1990s, the Shanghai public was not used to appreciating abstract forms of artistic representation (interview with the ex-head of the Artists’ Association, December 16, 2013). A newspaper article reported negative reviews of the sculpture through a random interview with a cleaning clerk who thought that the sculpture was difficult to comprehend and looked frightening in the evening. The journalist thus raised a question of how artwork could be installed in a public space without public consultation. This report influenced other media to attempt to find answers from MUSCO. The then-head of MUSCO was interviewed by a number of local TV reporters about the sculpture in question. He answered the question as follows:

This is one of the iconic public artworks with an abstract style in Shanghai. Diversified artistic representation is the key characteristic of the city. If the Shanghai people are not tolerant of the abstract artistic style and choose to stick to the traditional representational style, then how can the city embody the spirit of “embracing hundreds of rivers into the sea (hai na bai chuan)?” Art follows the incremental principle; many great artworks
were considered inferior at their inception. It takes time to cultivate the artistic eye of the public. On the second
day, there was a flood of positive reviews about the sculpture. One review said, “This sculpture exemplifies the
exact type of artwork in public spaces that the city wants!” (interview with the former head of the MUSCO,
December 12, 2013; May 5, 2014)

In this case, the undemocratic art selection system was maintained, and the cultural elite promul-
gated diversified modernist artistic styles within the tolerant attitude of the party-state in the context
of entrepreneurial urban beautification programs in Shanghai.

MUSCO officials actively participate in the art circle; they are extensively engaged as consultants
in various public and private urban sculpture projects and thus help to effectively bridge the
government, artists, the business sector, and the public. They advise on artistic representation, the
feasibility of urban sculpture proposals, and the security issues of specific projects. An example
involves a Hong Kong company’s sculpture project in the form of a piece of wrapped cut paper.
MUSCO officials advised the client to use two different colors to differentiate the two sides of the
sculpture (interview with a government official at MUSCO, December 16, 2013). Another artwork
with a number of pointed angles in its design was controversial in terms of public safety. The
MUSCO officials advised the company to place it in a fountain, thereby making the sculpture
visually pleasant and physically safe (interview with a government official at MUSCO, December
16, 2013).

The elite coalition is an intermediary between the government and artists. The Art Committee is a
consultancy body that works with MUSC on the panel that selects artworks in two rounds of entry.
Their duties cease when the number of artworks are narrowed down to four in the second round of

Figure 5. Zhao Zhirong, “Dynamics,” 1990.
selection, thereby leaving the cultural officials and political leaders to decide on selected works (interview with a government official at the MUSCO, May 5, 2014). The participation of a group of external experts convinces artists that their works are professionally and fairly assessed rather than being decided by a single political leader, which was the practice in the past. The artists who participated in the government-organized projects appeared to trust in the fairness and effectiveness of the expert selection procedure.

Artworks that do not meet the requirements or are artistically inferior would be taken out. Comments for revision would be generated and forwarded to the artists through the USCO. The comments for revision and the decisions are no longer political dictates by a particular political leader. Rather, they are raised by a group of professionals and experts who understand art. Most comments are not superficial and are communicable to artists. This is totally unlike processes in the past, when the head of a certain bureau made mandatory but unprofessional orders for artists to make amendments. Moreover, today’s officials are concerned about public reception of sculptures. No local government wants to spend money and time making artworks that only elicit disgust from the public. (Interview with Luo Xiaoping, August 23, 2013)

Conclusion

Recent decades have witnessed a burgeoning number of urban sculptures in diversified artistic styles; such a flourishing has led to an attractive art scene in Shanghai. This article aims to explore the role of the state in producing urban sculptures by using the instrument of planning, as exemplified by the urban sculpture planning authority in Shanghai. This article proposes a new model—that is, the cultural elite state—which includes the three descriptive components institution, actor, and process to formulate the characterization of the state in these regards. This new concept is based on the theories of cultural capital and elites. The leading argument is that shared cultural capital held by Shanghai political and social elites significantly affects decision making and execution in urban sculpture planning and development. The cultural elite state model conceptualizes the characteristics of the state in three aspects: (a) the glue effect of cultural capital (rather than institutionalized arrangements) creates the elite coalition for urban sculpture projects; (b) actors in the cultural elite coalition reveal similar cultural dispositions, characterized by legitimate tastes and practical experience by art participation; and (c) the influences of cultural capital are mirrored in the field of cultural development, in which cross-tier bottom-up communication and cross-sector mediation take place. Thus, the urban sculpture planning authority in the cultural elite coalition is less a solitary governing entity than a loosely organized group of elites with individual cultural dispositions.

This research contributes to filling a knowledge gap in the literature of (a) China’s urban studies with regard to the role of the state in cultural development in Shanghai and that of (b) cultural elites by providing a case of urban sculpture planning authority in Shanghai.

In Chinese urban studies, the cultural elite state model is a conceptual innovation with rich references to the existing literature. The cultural elite state is adherent in nature to the concepts of authoritarian state and entrepreneurial state. The cultural elite state retains the characteristics of the authoritarian state in that political leaders make the final decisions to actualize urban sculpture projects. This new model also embraces the characteristics of the entrepreneurial state in that the state assumes the planning approach to advance urban entrepreneurialism by developing an attractive urban image. This research shows that the formation of the urban sculpture planning authority (undergoing the transition from the Artists’ Association–led model to the municipal Urban Planning Bureau–led model) indicates the rising importance of entrepreneurial urban strategies apart from ideological controls in China’s urban policies. This article complements the entrepreneurial state model with the finding that urban sculpture planning was adopted as a new instrument to upgrade urban images. The cultural elite state model supplements the authoritarian state model by arguing that cultural development—urban sculpture planning in particular—is a field that the party-state selectively withdraws itself from because the cultural elite coalition (as an alternative way of aligning human resources) is active. On the other hand, the discrete nature of cultural capital embedded in
individuals' aesthetic tastes and intellectual levels renders the cultural elite coalition instable. In most conditions, the coalition is project based and unstable, subject to changes of political leadership.

The cultural elite state concept modeling on the urban sculpture planning authority in Shanghai also provides theoretical implications to the literature on cultural elites. This research shows that most theoretical components about cultural elites on the dimensions of institution, actor, and process are applicable to the Shanghai context. In particular, nonruling elites advance cultural hegemony for the party-state in the field of urban sculpture and mediate different interested parties. On the one hand, cultural elites balance producing hegemonic instruments and protecting artistic qualities from political interferences. On the other hand, they lead public aesthetic cognition in a top-down manner and foster global aesthetic tastes in the context of urban entrepreneurialism. Variations from the literature in five aspects with specificities of urban sculptures in Shanghai are highlighted below.

First, compared with cultural elites in other communist countries, the concept of cultural elite state refers specifically to the cultural development authority in Shanghai in the entrepreneurial urban context. It not only fulfills political goals of ideological guidance but aims to meet prodevelopment economic goals by maneuvering cultural assets to realize the entrepreneurial city idea and practice.

Second, despite rising strategic importance with prodevelopment pragmatic implications, culture is treated as a special area of relatively low importance. The status of MUSC as a separate section in the Urban Planning Bureau without regular funding allocation mirrors the mindset of the communist party leadership that treats culture as an add-on component. Incomplete institution building of the urban sculpture planning authority is evident.

Third, actors in the cultural elite coalition circling around the urban sculpture planning authority demonstrate sound art background, extensive practical experience, and sophisticated understanding and deep reflection on public art issues. Particular importance is attached to political experience and consultancy skills. This situation reveals high expectations on the competency of nongoverning cultural elites in facilitating decision making and execution.

Fourth, Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) legitimate taste of eclecticism and globalism is applicable to the Shanghai context. Cultural elites in Shanghai demonstrate adequate intellectual sense that understands and is concurrent with global aesthetic trends. However, unlike in other communist countries, cultural elites in Shanghai do not lack sympathy for the local culture of Shanghai. Rather, their cultural disposition is characterized by deep rootedness in the local culture in addition to having a global vision.

Fifth, a two-tier urban sculpture planning mechanism across the municipal and district governmental levels is unique to Shanghai. MUSC conducts urban sculpture master plans, whereas DUSC enacts detailed urban sculpture regulatory plans. Within the coalition, advice from the district urban sculpture planning authorities is more likely to be taken by the municipal authority. Thus, bottom-up influences across the two-tier apparatus, as the outcome of the relatively higher autonomy of the urban sculpture planning field, have partially reshaped the vertical relationship between the municipal and district urban planning authorities.

Notes

1. Walder (1994), for instance, argues for the rise of local corporatism and care entrepreneurship in China’s townships and villages and believes that governments at the lower levels “are able to exercise more effective control over their assets than are governments at higher levels” (270).
2. A slight difference is noted between cultural elites and academia/intellectuals ("science researchers" and "intellectuals"); that is, cultural elites dwell somewhere in between a narrowly defined research specialty and the broader cultural, political, and social criticism of intellectual work. Their work is intellectual in nature and yet highly specific and brief in duration (Crane, 1972; Rado, 1982).
3. According to Tang Shichu, an established sculptor and member, the group proposed and undertook 10 sculpture projects, including the sound art background, extensive practical experience, and sophisticated understanding of the statues of Pushkin, Nie’eer, Xian Xinghai, Xu Guangqi, and Huang Daopo (Tang & Zhu, 1981; interview with Tang Shichu, December 12, 2013).
4. The project pertaining to Nie Er’s statue (Figure 1) required the surrounding site to be redesigned, which involved a planning issue. Finally, a green belt was created to provide a suitable site for the statue. This project
resulted in the governmental consensus that urban sculpture development should take place within the framework of urban planning (interview with Tang Shichu, December 12, 2013).

5. The output of the public art planning is the “Shanghai Urban Sculpture Master Plan, 2004–2020” (Shanghai Chengshi Diaosu Zongti Guihua), enacted in 2003 (Shanghai Municipal Government, 2003a).

6. The municipal-level urban sculpture planning committee coordinates large-scale projects across multiple districts. For example, 2 years ago, a series of sculptures with the theme of “revolution” was planned along a route across a few districts.

7. Chen Liangyu (1946–) acted as the secretary-general in Shanghai from 2002 to 2006. He was embroiled in the Shanghai Social Security Incident and prosecuted for illegally appropriating public funds. When he was in power, he upgraded the city image of Shanghai through historical building conversion and urban sculpture development programs.

8. Wu Jiang (1960–) graduated from Tongji University and specializes in architectural history and urban planning. He acted as the deputy head of the municipal City Planning Bureau from 2003 to 2008 and is currently the vice principal of Tongji University. He played a key role in sculpture and historical building conservation projects in Shanghai.

9. The municipal urban sculpture master plan was completed and implemented in 2004. Ten inner-city districts completed their urban sculpture plans in 2006 and 2007.

10. Huangpu District urban sculpture planning was formally initiated in Huangpu District in 2006 (interview with an official at Huangpu District, October 10, 2013).

11. Members of the committee have overlaps in identity; for example, simultaneously academia and artist.

12. “Publicness” is defined as the nature of engagement with the personal interests and wider cultural patterns that mark out civic life (Miles et al., 2000).

13. The chief official of MUSCO is clear about this process because the Luwan District’s experimental initiative was the first project that he oversaw after MUSCO was merged with the Urban Planning Bureau (interview with the chief official of MUSCO, December 2013; Luwan District Urban Planning and Management Bureau & Tongji University Urban Planning and Design Institute, December 16, 2013).

14. Chen Yi (1901–1972) was the first Shanghai mayor.

15. The “two-option” insight came from the sculpture officials’ past experience. MUSCO used to submit only one artwork to political leaders. One time, one leader asked with a smile, “Why don’t you give me two options for selection?” Since then, two options have been presented.

16. MUSCO is responsible for cross-district sculpture projects and key projects within historic districts; the municipal government leaders assign projects (interview with a government official of MUSCO, 2003).

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