

TLIC PAPER

Analyzing Identity Storytelling for On-site Learning in Museums: A Comparative Study of 3 City Museums with an Identity Education Framework

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the specific designs of on-site identity storytelling in city museums, made of three case studies with an Identity Education (IdEd) framework proposed in an early conference paper by the author. Conclusions of the case studies are reached on how the city museums take advantage of different contextual factors to engage the visitors of five motivational types, whether there is any gap between the target identity expected by the city and the identity narratives presented by the city museum, and if any, how huge the gap is. The subsequent discussion, comparing the three cases, makes this research a comparative study and provides suggestions for each city museum. In general, this research sets an example of how the IdEd framework could be applied to the evaluation of on-site learning materials and opportunities in museums, thereby helping better the instructional design on the part of curators and offering guidelines for observing the museum visitors' learning experiences in future field studies with similar educational concerns.

KEYWORDS

identity education, museum education, on-site learning

1 INTRODUCTION

Education scholarship has interrogated how museums can be utilized as an educational space for both formal and informal education to happen [1], [7], [19]. Accordingly, History Education, Liberal Arts Education, Science Education have been found to be able to take advantage of relevant museums [7]—history museums, art museums, science museums, and so on. However, the author looks more into previous research that established museums as narrative tools in education. As museums are believed to depict narratives that can be crucial to understandings of the past for their visitors [12], every museum visit could be potentially healing, empowering, and therapeutic, which enables the visitors to approach self-knowledge

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or identity contents in the museum contexts. The fruitful connection between the learning/teaching of identity narratives and Museum Education could be further foregrounded and studied with specific cases.

In this study, three chosen city museums, in New York, Shanghai, and Seoul, will be examined one by one, regarding their performances in Identity Education, or IdEd—the purposeful involvement of educators with students’ identity-related processes or contents [14].

The main reason why these three museums are chosen is that each one of them is in the most representative metropolitan area within the three countries: the United States, China, and the Republic of Korea—one from the Western world, two from East Asia; one from the Socialist bloc, two from the Capitalist bloc. Besides, these three countries have been experiencing different types and degrees of international migration, statistically and empirically, which can be told from, to name just a few, data like net migration rate, press reports on migration issues, and even the author’s personal experience of living in the three countries. Despite these differences, remarkably, the three countries are considered multicultural societies, though on different levels, and contain, in accordance with Bai and Nam [2], “diverse culture-sharing groups with different political-ideological and political-economic principles.” People with diverse backgrounds will seek rootedness in metropolitan regions, and consequently the diversity of the urban population will be enhanced and call for more diversified representation of their cultures and identities [11]. Hence, for the further and harmonious development of the three cities, the three city museums, namely the institutions located in major metropolitan areas that collect and interpret the history of their cities [20], could assume an important role to address identity-based cultural issues.

By applying an IdEd framework to the studies of the three cases, the author believes that not only the usage of the framework in practice could be exemplified, but the universality of the framework could be testified to some extent, addressing whether all museums could be assessed by following a given set of criteria, no matter what cultural background, ideology, or social system stands behind them.

2 FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

The author constructed an IdEd framework for Museum Education, by tapping into recent findings in museum education, noting what has been suggested in terms of how to design museum experiences to support active learning, and combining some of the theoretical achievements with classic theories and principles from the perspective of instructional design. A key point of the IdEd framework is that the visitor’s identity end serves as a strong determinant of an individual’s motivation to engage with the content end on site. Details about the two ends and how they function, respectively and collectively, are articulated later. In general, this analytical framework advances two lines of argument to explain the differences between the visitor’s identity and the identity content on the museum’s part, as well as the dynamics of how they interact with each other and drive on-site interactions for active learning of identity. The framework will be introduced first below, followed by the methods used in the case studies.

2.1 Five motivational types of museum visitors

Starting from the learners, a museum-specific method of classification on museum visitors is adopted to provide a specialized lens to define and understand

a museum visitor's role based on a certain interaction style of multiple identities. In line with Falk [6], "visitors to museums tend to enact one or various combinations of five museum-specific identities," which is summarized and combined with the learning concern below.

Explorer: they visit a museum "because of curiosity and/or a general interest in discovering more about the subject or the content of the institution" [6; p.156]; effective learning can be expected on them, while the efficiency of their learning could vary.

Facilitator: their visit to a museum is mainly "in order to satisfy the needs and desires of someone they cared about (other than themselves)—in particular their children" [6; p.157], thus, in contrast to the Explorer group, always assuming the role of teacher; that being said, it has been proved by research that great learning potentials can be found in the process of teaching [5], which implies that Facilitators could still learn by teaching during the visit.

Professional/Hobbyist: related to but distinct from the explorer group, they possess or claim to possess "a strong knowledge, and interest in the content of the institution, and their primary motivation was not general but specific" [6; p.157]; they can delve deep into the content without assistance, and could even provide guidance for other visitors; it could be estimated that they anticipate in-depth contents as possible for their own learning, and that a strong connection exists between Facilitator and Professional.

Experience Seeker: such visitors choose a museum "primarily in order to collect an experience, so that they could say they have been there, done that" [6; p.157]; according to Falk's observation [6], they are often tourists and tend to engage with the content on site merely at a basic, shallow level, requiring interventions to boost their motivations for deeper engagement and more effective learning.

Spiritual Pilgrim: though in a small number, they visit a museum "in order to reflect, rejuvenate, or generally just bask in the wonder of the place" [6; p.158]; showing a similar inclination with Experience Seeker, they place their main focus on the place per se, from which they can gain knowledge about the museum, probably even in a Professional/Hobbyist style, but meditations are needed to encourage them to become Explorer.

It is assumed by the author that each motivational category leads to a distinct style of interaction between multiple cultural identities, which happens to a museum visitor during a museum visit, in that a museum visitor's motivation could reflect prior knowledge, beliefs and concepts, and could dramatically influence what the visitors notice about a context and how they organize and interpret it [3].

2.2 Four design-specific categories of museum contextual factors

In practice, a museum institution mainly serves to enable the visitors to guide themselves through carefully selected contents from a vast collection in a way that is often linear, thereby providing historical contextualization for the displays [13]. Nevertheless, how to arrange all the learning opportunities mentioned before is more than a matter of being "linear" or, to name another, "classification". If the learning resources in a city museum are arranged in a manner lacking a systematic mindset, it could be hard for the audience with average or below-average prior knowledge about the city, such as new arrivals, to even find a starting point. Considering this, one alternative is to think of providing a "context" for the audience, as "context" can be seen as a multilevel body of factors in which learning performances

are embedded. From this perspective, assessing the IdEd performance of a city museum is essentially an examination of IdEd contextual factors available on site.

While various contextual factors are believed to be significant in determining visitor responses, Skydsgaard, Møller Andersen and King [17] argue that four design principles serve to put the contextual factors to work in different manners that facilitate reflection and discussion among museum visitors, especially young visitors. In combination with the five motivational categories discussed before, the four design principles can be used as a design-specific approach to examining whether an ideal visitor experience could be engendered, and whether the experience design corresponds to the exhibition aims and satisfies the visitors' personal needs determined by their motivations. The findings below [17] about the four principles and their secondary concepts can be useful in the later construction of the assessment framework.

N: Exhibits with Narratives (N), defined as both personal (N-PN) and expert narratives (N-EN), were found effective in terms of facilitating personal reflection and prompting discussion; N-PN is implemented to reflect other people's ideas and experiences, thus acting as an important source of inspiration and information—"narratives from members of the same target group as the audience help to increase the personal relevance of the exhibition, whereas narratives from other groups or generations can serve as documentation of cultural differences and changes over time" [17; p.4]—while N-EN, on the other hand, serves to present relatively in-depth views with expertise and make them available to non-expert visitors.

P: Participation, defined as including both physical interaction (P-PI) with exhibits, and dialogic interactivity (P-DI) between visitors, is usually designed to encourage the sharing of ideas and feelings between visitors; recent findings in the fields of human perception, cognition and physiology have led researchers to propose a new conception of learning with physical interaction at its core, thereby laying theoretical foundations for the implementation of P-PI in museum contexts (interactive devices and activities on site), while P-DI is introduced to enrich the mainly unidirectional communication realized by N designs.

C1 & C2: Exhibits with factors of Curiosity (C1) and Challenge (C2) were found to attract visitors' attention, but also "work well with other design principles to engage the visitors in sustained reflection and discussion" [17; p.1]; with the help of C1, a visitor's curiosity can be aroused by "objects never seen before, new information relating to existing knowledge, and fascinating pictures or surprising effects" [17; p.3], and then help to determine which exhibit to see and where to engage, while C2 is introduced to challenge visitors to struggle, either physically or intellectually, evoking strong emotions—a challenge can even come from "exhibits that evoke emotions, confront visitors with dilemmas or address prejudices and ta-boos" [17; p.4].

Taking this design-specific approach, the author classifies the contextual factors provided in a city museum for qualitative analysis concentrating on how these factors impact learners of different motivational types.

It is noteworthy that spatial analysis on the museum space per se, or the systematic examination on the architectural elements of a museum will not be taken into account in this projection. Withstanding the fact that spatial factors are by no means irrelevant to the IdEd learning outcomes, due to the focus of this paper, the devices, interior styles, layout details and so on will be merely interpreted as certain contextual factors embodying some of the four design principles. Such interpretations leave behind a huge gap for the follow-up studies with applied spatial analysis.

2.3 Cultural Hybridization and three levels of city-related identities

Being advocated currently by some cultural scholars as an idea of cultural democracy, or “a third way between convergence and divergence” [9], Cultural Hybridization is understood as a one-dimensional cultural flow that interacts with other cultural flows, both internally and externally, to create a unique and innovative culture. It has largely weakened the culturally dominant body and presented the possibility of breeding a composite new culture, through which a new identity could be constructed. In this sense, a city museum embracing the value of Cultural Hybridization could impart a city-related identity into its visitors, which values each component cultural identity and provides a compound identity for the visitors bonding with each other. It is the kind of message that would be appreciated in the name of cultural democracy and diversity, especially in this age of decolonization.

To facilitate the examination on a city museum’s IdEd performance to achieve a targeted cultural identity—hopefully meant for Cultural Hybridization—Theory of Change should be then introduced. In line with Taplin, Clark, Collins and Colby [18], Theory of Change, or ToC, could help identify “measurable indicators of success as a road map to monitoring and evaluation,” as it “spells out initiative or program logic.” Therefore, the framework for assessment will be built upon an illustration of an IdEd targeted ToC. For a target cultural identity to be learned, a series of subordinate learning objectives must be accomplished in an intertwined manner. These objectives could be identified based on the three levels of Identity, as maintained by Schachter and Rich [14]. A city-related cultural identity could be split into the following three levels of Identity.

Social level: a person’s subjective sense of belonging to a city; this level can derive from the knowledge of the membership of a city (who can be considered as a city member) and the value and emotional significance attached to the membership, which is mainly conveyed through storytelling on local history.

Personal level: a person’s unique goals, values, sentiments and preferences that can be learned from a city, and that are claimed as one’s own and serve to distinguish oneself from others in daily interaction; it provides a valued sense of uniqueness and singularity, which implicates that even for two persons claiming to be the members of the same city they could still differentiate from one another by comparing distinct aspects of the city culture that they choose to embrace, and that an essential precondition for this level of cultural identity is the existence of cultural diversity—multiple topics encompassed in the narratives—which is perceivable to the visitors and open for them to interpret in their own ways and have related discourses with each other, instead of cultural homogeneity imposed upon them in a propaganda-like style.

Ego level: a person’s sense of invigorating sameness and continuity that could be enhanced by living in a city, or, during a city museum visit, one’s subjective feeling that “one is the same individual leading a life that is coherent, imbued with purpose, moving from a reasonably understood past to a manageable future despite the diverse and often unpredictable social situations, circumstances and life events one meets” [14; p.22], which is understood by the author as a package of an IdEd learner’s prior knowledge and motivates the learner to approach the contents on site in a personalized manner; this level is considered the underlying basis for the individual’s ability to be an active learner in IdEd, as it drives a person to “positively adopt, flexibly manage and freely commit towards personal and social identities” [14; p.23], and could be somewhat reflected by one’s motivation behind the engagement in an IdEd experience.

Moreover, while the museum provides the intermediate-level, designable context for IdEd, the larger context, or the social environment should also be taken into consideration, as identity needs and goals could be initially framed in different social systems [14] and afterwards have a huge influence on the intended identity of a city museum. Hence, for the starter of conducting an IdEd assessment, the macro-system context should be first identified, which clarifies the social expectation on the targeted cultural identity that can be brought by a city museum.

Based upon what has been introduced so far, the framework can be illustrated in a conceptual model, as shown in Figure 1, outlining the basic logic behind the IdEd process in a city museum and signifying the directions for analysis on the design-specific contextual factors. Dotted arrow-lines stand for interventions/meditations, either from the museum contextual factors or between the learners.

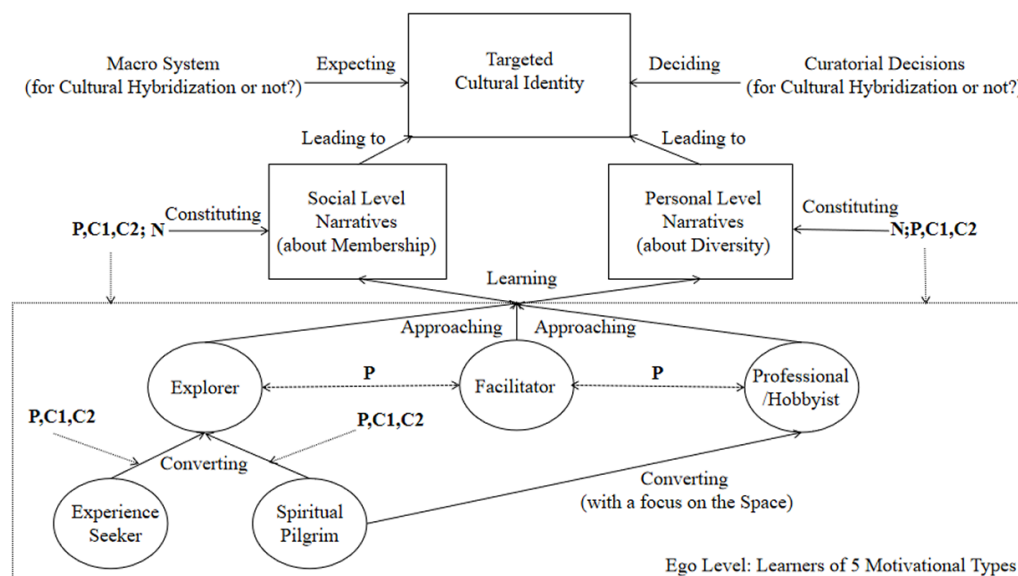


Fig. 1. The IdEd process in a museum context

Taking the form of bold text, the four types of design-specific museum contextual factors (their secondary concepts mentioned before, such as N-PN and P-PI, are not included in the illustration, merely for simplicity, but could be used in the analysis of specific cases) not only contribute to the construction of the identity narratives, but also serve as meditations for learners, which indicates two main directions for the on-site storytelling analysis. When a museum item is inspected, it could be found to assume more than one factor at the same time, making its contributions to identity narratives and mediations for the learners. The application of the framework above is supposed to help address the following four questions, preferably in order:

- What is the ultimately intended cultural identity, as expected and implicated by the macro-system context, in the city museum?
- Does the cultural identity, as presented by the narratives on site, embrace Cultural Hybridization?
- Is the city museum doing its work well in teaching visitors about the intended cultural identity by utilizing different types of contextual factors?
- What can be done, especially with the help of latest learning technologies, to better the IdEd performance of the city museum, on certain Factors/Directions?

2.4 Methods

Due to the selection of the three cases, materials collected for analysis in this paper are inevitably presented in three languages as found in the original sources. The author is trilingual in English, Chinese, and Korean, which has largely facilitated the collection and introduction of multiple types of records and other qualitative data in the three languages. For applying the framework, which has been introduced in English, to case studies, materials originally presented in Chinese and Korean were first processed and translated into English, mostly following the rules of literal translation, to prevent, or at least minimize, the skewing of the original meanings and values conveyed by them.

Media sources online, such as news articles and e-magazines that specifically cover the latest special exhibitions of the museums, along with the questionnaire, survey and interview data made public by relevant organizations, constitute the first part of data that the author initially contemplated. This part of data is plentiful and readily accessible, although being generally presented in a disorderly manner, and should be able to serve as an efficient, comprehensive, and relatively up-to-date way of presenting how a city museum is doing its job in IdEd currently. Such data might, however, stay at a shallow level. Therefore, even with a considerable amount of time invested in web browsing, data collecting, and processing, the author merely managed to generate preliminary reports on what cultural identities that the three city museums were trying to impart into their visitors, and how they were doing so.

Additionally, the author also turned to archival records and artifacts per se, such as bulletins, catalogues, photographs, as well as typical labels, text panels, brochures for visitors, and other materials available on site. Direct observations and field notes were developed through actual site visits. The author had visited each of the three city museums, more than once, prior to the writing of the present paper. However, it is noteworthy that the field notes could be, to a large extent, limited by the author's own viewpoint. Therefore, based on the author's personal experiences during the visits, what has been revealed in the direct observations and field notes should only serve as a supplementary angle to provide more personalized details regarding the author's on-site learning experiences in the three city museums.

Serving the interest of exemplifying the use of the framework for identity storytelling analysis, qualitative materials constitute the author's major concern, while a small portion of quantitative data is also collected for some necessary descriptions. Moreover, attention is paid to the political implications of recent program decisions, as the social and political interactions accompanying the institution's program decisions could somewhat demonstrate the ideological purpose of the museum in essence.

3 STORYTELLING ANALYSIS IN CASE STUDIES

3.1 Case 1: Museum of the City of New York, New York City, USA

The United States, sadly, seemingly always gets rocked by the news of mass shootings, targeting certain minority groups, like people of certain ethnic minority or the LGBTQ+ community, and resulting in multiple deaths and injuries. While people from the civil sphere stand together in condemning such malicious acts and all forms of violence, it has been proclaimed, repeatedly, through the press and documents that to foster inclusion, equity and justice is also the main pursuit of governments' policies on both federal and local levels, despite changes in administration sometimes causing fallbacks.

In recent years, as the influxes of refugees into sanctuary cities have shot up across the country, fear is rising among and against immigrants on the macro-system level.

New York City, or NYC, as one of the most populated cities in the states, has a long history of being a multicultural community composed of immigrants from all corners of the world and always attracts wide concerns when it comes to immigration issues. Located in Manhattan, NYC, the Museum of the City of New York, also known as MCNY, aims to preserve and present the history of NYC and its people, as can be found in most of its promotional materials about the curators' intent (e.g., "The Museum of the City of New York celebrates and interprets the city, educating the public about its distinctive character, especially its heritage of diversity, opportunity, and perpetual transformation," as cited from MCNY's official website [10]), and strives to teach a well-known cultural identity, the New Yorker—a byword for numerous meanings, both historically and in modern culture. Throughout NYC's history, however, there have been many moments when residents openly expressed anti-immigrant sentiments.

According to the macro-system contexts of the states and of NYC, New Yorker can be expected as a product of Cultural Hybridization, always being challenged by the fact that identity-based conflicts could easily blow up among the diverse population. The version of the New Yorker presented by MCNY, through the narratives on site, could be somewhat connected to the expected, while including and/or excluding certain values meant by the curators.

Founded in 1923, MCNY was described by an article at the time as a local museum "devoted to the presentation of the civic and commercial life of the city and the private life of the inhabitants" [16; p.32]. After nearly one century, however, now the IdEd assessment on MCNY must be based on its current identity narratives, and thus will be conducted in reference to the museum map in Figure 2.

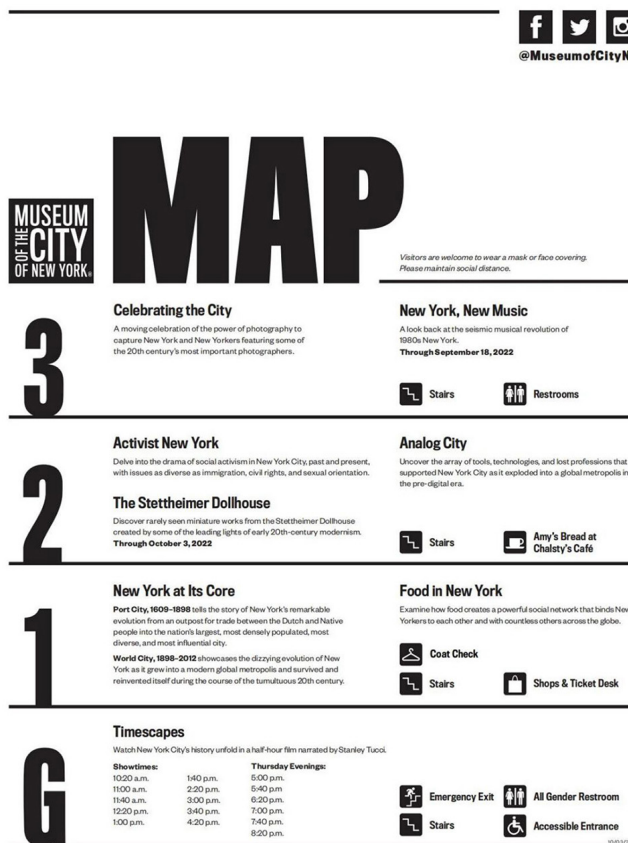


Fig. 2. Map of MCNY, downloaded from the official website of MCNY on 2022/10/03

This map, being either e-version or a pamphlet, is designed to give first-time visitors an introductory overview of the museum's core themes, features, facilities, and opportunities for hands-on experience, which also serves to catalog the contextual factors in accordance with the narrative structure intended by the curatorial decisions. It could be even interpreted as the museum's narrative structure on the general level, facilitating the author's analysis on the contextual factors by providing these neatly cut but implicitly interlocked units.

There are three long-term standing units, with no clear end date when the IdEd assessment was conducted and this paper is being written, serving as the stable, ongoing identity narratives about NYC.

Timescapes: A short film about the brief history of NYC is available on the underground floor. The N-EN design manifests itself here, in that animated maps, archival photographs, prints, and paintings from the museum collections are used along with an official-toned narration to describe how NYC manages to grow from “a settlement of a few hundred Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans into the metropolis we know today” [10] in a documentary style, which concisely depicts how the membership in NYC comes into being on a social level. For the duration of the film-watch behaviors, Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims can be found to easily quit the floor as soon as they seem to lose the interest and patience; Facilitators and Professionals can be expected to approach certain in-depth contents of this film as P-DI factors in accordance with their own concerns, and to assist Explorers to understand the film. Notably, the final chapter of this film centers on “challenging transformations the city has experienced in the first decades of the 21st century” [10], and functions as a typical C2 design to emotionally engage the audience, from which empathy and contemplation could be aroused to enhance some social level beliefs that might lead to an NYC-related identity—for example, “these are the common challenges confronted by my fellow New Yorkers,” as taken down by the author.

New York at Its Core: As one of the two MCNY's current permanent exhibits, it is designed to showcase the 400-year history of NYC in detail, and bear the four keywords ending with “y” (this interesting point could fall into the C1 category, being potentially attractive, but it is hard to tell to what extent it can be noticed by visitors)—“money, density, diversity, creativity”—conveying “the stories of innovation, energy, struggle, and the vision of generations of immigrants, politicians, tycoons, dreamers, master builders, and ordinary New Yorkers” [10], who are considered “the human energy that drove New York to become a city like no other” [10]. In this individuals-centered narrative, N-PN and N-EN factors are combined, and the “big personalities” and the “lesser-known personalities” are treated equally, for the audience to de-deify the celebrities and position themselves among those “lesser-known” personalities to understand the greatness of NYC and feel proud of being one of them. Meanwhile, N-EN factors serve to constitute two storylines being front-to-back articulated—the Port City (1609–1898), which “tells the story of New York's remarkable evolution from an outpost for trade between the Dutch and Native people into the nation's largest, most densely populated, most diverse, and most influential city” [10], and the World City (1898–2012), which “showcases the dizzying evolution of New York as it grew into a modern global metropolis and survived and reinvented itself during the course of the tumultuous 20th century” [10]—mainly making use of historical pictures, photos, video & audio materials and artifacts. In addition, interactive touch screens are introduced to assume the P-PI role and enable a static historical timeline to be delivered in an interactive manner, though being highly limited by the kernel design of merely touching on a

screen, through which Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims might be willing to dabble in the contents. All these factors mentioned above, alongside some devices for artistic expression, collectively serve to provide a rich viewing experience. In this unit, one's personal-level identity of being a New Yorker can be developed in the face of the energizing diversity regarding various personal realities presented by N-PN; the social level can be further constructed with the local history being told here in an epic, legend style, in comparison with the brief history told in the Timescapes unit.



Fig. 3. The Main Hall of the New York at Its Core; picture taken by the author on 2022/09/01

Activist New York: This is another permanent exhibit in MCNY, highlighting active voices of the underprivileged at various stages of NYC's history, past and present. The social activism in NYC is presented by showcasing issues "as diverse as immigration, civil rights, and sexual orientation" [10]. And all these city-wide issues are put together with nation-wide historic moments. N-PN, P-DI and C2 could account for the essence of most displays in this unit, as the underprivileged individuals are both the characters and the storytellers of the stories being told here. Only when it comes to some historical facts that happened in the relatively distant past, like the abolitionist movement, N-EN factors interfere by presenting the official version of certain historical details (as illustrated by Figure 4). The audience, when emotionally touched by the topics, can express approval or disapproval of a controversial issue that they cannot otherwise vote on, due to the matter just being outside its enumerated authorities. Therefore, dialogues can be easily found on site. In particular, the audience with a background related to a certain topic here could be expected to engage in the content more proactively. In this unit, while inclusiveness and activism are added to the social-level identity of New Yorker, the personal level is encouraged to embrace an individual's own legacy and difference and gain the confirmation on one's uniqueness from people with the same legacy. However, the limited space used for this exhibit and the growing complexity of the local reality led to an inevitable fact that not all underprivileged groups can be represented here.



Fig. 4. A Corner of the Activist New York; picture taken by the author on 2022/09/01

Besides, five temporary or coming-to-a-close units, with clearly declared end dates, are found to contribute to the identity narrative through the flexible selection of various topics that range from food to music to dollhouse to technology to photography. They may not or will soon no longer be the essential and persistent part within an identity narrative structure centering on the stable storytelling of local history, but, as noted in the theoretical building section, they still constitute partial reflections of the target identity from specific perspectives. Thus, quick inspections are done on them to gain the complete overview of MCNY's current identity narratives.

Food in New York: As a closing-soon exhibit on the first floor, it is located right beside the New York at Its Core. The C1 factors are flooded with its design, as food culture, a relatively fun and light-hearted topic, is presented here to attract Experience Seekers, Spiritual Pilgrims and others who feel bored about the serious topics. For the purpose of showcasing food in NYC as “a powerful social network that binds New Yorkers to each other and with countless others across the globe” [10], some daily life scenes, where certain foods are served in simulation, are set up as N-PN, P-PI and P-DI factors, for the audience to approach the social-level identity narratives in the immersive and close-to-real-life settings, and to start discussions about their foods and their identities, while walking around and exploring in the setting, which could be the personal-level identity development.

The Stettheimer Dollhouse: Like the Food in New York, the unit of the Stettheimer Dollhouse on the second floor also mainly draws on the combination of C1, N-PN and P-DI factors (but not so much of P-PI, as the delicate miniature work of the Stettheimer Dollhouse can be found in the center of the room. This 12-room dollhouse is proclaimed as a rarely seen artifact of 20th-century modernism and to “weave together the fashion and style of New York’s Gilded Age” [10] in an alluring and straightforward way for most audience to engage. However, a miniature work cannot compete with a simulated scene, for it is not capable of letting the audience step “into” the history, and the bodily participation is thus highly limited by the glass cover.

New York, New Music: A similar narrative strategy is also adopted by the unit of New York, New Music. This unit offers “a look back at the seismic musical revolution”

[10] that happened in NYC during the early 1980s. Defining the revolution as a community-driven musical renaissance, it employs the simulation on a mix of arts scenes, including clubs, bars, theaters, parks, and art spaces, to allow the audience to engage with more physical participation staged in 1980–1986. However, when it comes to the text panels and labels that highlight diverse musical artists, N-EN factors are put into use to give accurate descriptions on their achievements and prominence in the music industry; an expert lens is also used to explore the broader music and cultural scene, by interpreting the displayed innovative media outlets, venues, record labels, fashion and visual arts with musical expertise. For music lovers, personal-level identities could be advanced by the musical diversity on site, and on a social level, combined more tightly with NYC, a fertile ground for a wide range of music.

Analog City: This is a unit rich in P-PI factors, alongside N-EN factors for authoritative commentary. Focusing on the period between the 1870s and the 1970s, it displays the tools, technologies and related professions that is outdated now but has a glorious history of enabling NYC to reach its position as the “capital of the world” in an age before computer and today’s digital technologies. Due to this theme, some devices of the pre-digital age, like a typewriter and a telephone that needs directories, are available for interactions on site, which could attract many dabblers, like Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims, for deeper engagement. Besides, inviting the audience to imagine and experience what life would be like without digital technologies, and to learn about how NYC managed to thrive in an era before personal computers and the internet, the instructions on site also embody the C1 and C2 factors that work collectively to construct the personal-level identities by guiding the audience to associate the life of New Yorkers in the past with their own life today, and to build the social-level narratives centering on the NYC’s extraordinary development in the pre-digital age.

Celebrating the City: As implicated by its name, this unit takes a celebration style of narratives and concentrates on what is going on and worth sharing in the city, serving as “a moving celebration of the power of photography to capture NYC and New Yorkers” [10]. Dynamic curatorial decisions are made to alter the theme and content of this unit, but photos taken by photography professionals remain as the unchanged pieces on display, most of which are from MCNY’s exceptional photography collection. Recent images come from some photographers considered the most important in the 20th century. While the photos of prestigious photographers could be used as N-EN factors for Professionals/Hobbyists to delve deep in what is behind each image, Explorers and other visitors without expertise are also welcome to approach these images on the face, for the partial reflection of NYC and New Yorkers.

Aside from these units denoted on the map, the red-brick building per se, which is the home of MCNY, and the brilliant light installation named Starlight, which is suspended above the circular staircase right in the middle of the main entry space, could tempt the audience, especially Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims, to take photos, and seize their attention for more engagement in identity narratives. Moreover, an art installation named Raise Your Voice, mixes selections from a public art campaign, “We Are More,” which depicted the resiliency of Asian American and Pacific Islander community in NYC. Installed adjacent to the ongoing exhibit Activist New York, the Raise Your Voice poses a series of questions for reflection (C2) and invites audiences to embrace their own powers of advocacy and activism, thereby empowering themselves on a personal level.

Overall, some defects, in both identity narratives and the strategy used to construct the narratives, have been identified in the analysis on each unit, and could be mostly addressed by innovating visitor-facing experiences and bettering the

narrative designs regarding some details; perhaps, MCNY could place a particular focus on prototyping a more intriguing narrative structure in its permanent exhibits, which can satisfy and engage the audience of the five motivational types in the core NYC identity narratives, while leaving the promotional events with flexibility for encompassing necessary topics in appropriate ways. MCNY is considered to perform well in IdEd, as the identity narratives on site are found to serve the interest of Cultural Hybridization, which is also expected by the macro system.

3.2 Case 2: Shanghai History Museum, Shanghai, China

China is well known for both its strict policies in terms of naturalization and permanent residency for foreigners and its cultural richness as a multiethnic country composed of multiple ethnic groups. Compared with the native born settling down overseas, the cases of the foreign born settling down in China remain rare.

Shanghai, the largest city in China, has a metropolitan population of over 20 million. In accordance with Shanghai's 2021 National Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin [15], by the end of the year 2021, Shanghai's resident population reached 24,894,300, among which the household resident population, namely those who have completed the registration through the household registration system, accounted for 14,574,400, and the left 10,319,900 was made of people with various origins outside of Shanghai.

"Shanghai Ren," the pronunciation of the Chinese phrase for "People in and from Shanghai," is an identity shared among this population in daily life. Based on the fact that China is a multiethnic country and that Shanghai is well-known for its high level of internationalization, Shanghai is considered a multicultural society in many regards, and such a macro-system context could expect the cultural identity of Shanghai Ren to embrace Cultural Hybridization, especially with regard to the inner cultural richness brought by China's multiple ethnicities.

The Shanghai History Museum, SHM, also going by the name of Shanghai Revolution History Museum, is a city museum dedicated to the history of the city of Shanghai. Notably, it carries two official names at the same time: one with History and the other with Revolution, which somewhat implies the duality of its roles and narratives. The cultural identity meant by the macro system for the museum to present is thereby more clarified: Revolution should be one of the two main bodies of narratives, and the urban audience are expected to internalize the Revolution narratives into their Shanghai-related identities.

Located in Shanghai's prime location, on West Nanjing Road, SHM occupies a European classical building complex. Its bell tower often attracts passers-by and museum visitors to take pictures. This building complex per se is highly valued and protected by the local government, as a historic site—the former Horse Racing Association that was run by British colonists. In 2016, after a major renovation, the SHM moved in the complex. Today, the building complex, along with SHM inside it, is now considered by local people as an important cultural space and city landmark in Shanghai.

The complex could be divided into the East Building and the West Building, as well as an open courtyard, expanding from the landmark bell tower in the middle. Most IdEd functions are performed in the two buildings. While the West one serves more like a public service area, including a temporary exhibition hall, a curator workshop, a tech-aided education area, an oral history room, a volunteer activity room, and an academic lecture hall, the East Building shoulders the responsibility of holding most exhibitions. The overall assessment on SHM's IdEd performance will

focus on the East Main Building, where the identity narratives on site are relatively static, stable, and thus analyzable with the framework, while leaving aside the highly dynamic and complex context in West Building.

There are five floors in the East Building. The 1–4 floors are exhibition halls, while the 5th floor is for a roof garden and a restaurant, suitable for photos, just like the landmark bell tower, and attractive to Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims. Distributed on the 1–4 floors, with plenty of space for use, the major exhibition system of SHM consists of the basic/permanent exhibition and the special/thematic exhibition. Starting from 6,000 years ago to the Liberation of Shanghai in 1949 by the China Communist Party (CCP), the local history presented here has a long span of time.

The basic exhibition consists of four parts: (a) The “Lobby” for “Prologue” on the first floor; (b) “Ancient Shanghai” on the second floor; (c) “Modern Shanghai” on the third and the fourth floor; (d) “End Hall” for closing with “Unforgettable Moments”, also on the fourth floor. The basic narrative strategy here is to take a chronological order, covering the span of over 6,000 years.

The first floor is introduced as the Lobby for the Prologue part, intended to prepare the audience well to engage the other parts of the exhibition. A short film, “A Brief History of Shanghai”, can be watched here. This film is designed mainly as an N-EN factor to quickly narrate the major historical points and events in the development of Shanghai, and to hopefully stimulate the audience’s emotions and spark their interest in exploring the contents of the exhibition. No C1, C2 or P-DI was found from the film, at least based on the author’s on-site observation conducted on 2017/07/11. Visitors can also notice a pair of bronze lions, one of the most important collections, which were custom-made from the Britain during the construction of the HSBC building in Shanghai back in 1923 and assume a main tourist attraction in the museum, especially to Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims. Besides, the hall for special exhibits is also located on the first floor, displaying contents not necessarily connected with Shanghai but usually more about Chinese traditional culture, according to the record of the past exhibits.

Notably, the huge “Shanghai History Clue Search System” wall on the first floor can be operated by 20–30 people at the same time to search for the topics of their own concerns by tapping on the wall, which serves as a combination of P-PI, P-DI and C1 and is found to effectively engage the audience of all the five motivational types. A scene of the audience engaging with this interactive device is, a group of them gather around the wall, tapping on the wall to address their curiosity and having discussions with people next to them. This interactive device also allows the audience to get informed and accordingly customize their own tour experiences within the museum.

After the preparation in the Prologue, going upstairs to the second floor where the Ancient Shanghai is located, one can officially start the tour following the historical line; moving on to the Modern Shanghai on the third and fourth floors and ending at the End Hall, one is surrounded by N-EN factors for the most part, as the social-level identity of Shanghai Ren is approached through the display of artifacts, accompanied by text panels for authoritative commentary, in charge of demonstrating the over 6,000-year local development in the political, economic, cultural and social concerns. Due to the lack of other explicit contextual factors for meditations, if without company and interventions by other learners, even the passionate Explorers could find it difficult to insist on the long journey. But at this point, the audience could turn to the Shanghai History Clue Search System on the first floor, maybe again, to navigate themselves through the narratives in a highly selective manner.

The Ancient Shanghai follows prehistoric civilization, ancient development, and the rise of towns as clues, displaying human activities, municipal prosperity, cultural flourishing, distinctive regional characteristics, and brilliant achievements

in the ancient Shanghai area. In this part, some implicit C1 factors can be found in forms of some fun questions that are asked in some texts. For example, who is the first human in Shanghai? Where is the first house in Shanghai? Why is Shanghai called “Hu” in short? Such questions can be helpful in arousing curiosity. Besides, the inclination of stressing the “first”/“number one”-related facts can be noticed (Figure 5), supposedly serving the purpose of imparting the pride into the visitors who self-identify as Shanghai Ren and enhance the firmness of their belief in the membership on the social level.



Fig. 5. The Light Box placed in the Ancient Shanghai; picture taken by the author on 2017/07/11

Upon entering the Modern Shanghai, an installation can be seen on the one side of the hallway, which mainly assumes the P-PI role. Walking from one end to the other of the hallway, the audience could see the Huangpu River view (Figure 6), a representative cityscape in Shanghai, turning from past to modern, or from modern to past, and immerse themselves deeper in the context of history exploration in Modern Shanghai. Some of the audiences are found to walk around and watch the two sides of this installation repeatedly.



Fig. 6. The history hallway of modern Shanghai; picture taken by the author on 2017/07/11

It is in the Modern Shanghai that the narratives start to take Revolution as a focus, especially on the fourth floor where the narrative ends in the year 1949. Politics, economy, culture, and social life in modern Shanghai have been weaved under a Revolution-centered narrative. Connected with a nation-wide context, the important contributions of modern Shanghai to the development of modern China are emphasized, as Shanghai is presented as the base camp of the Chinese working class, and the birthplace of the CCP—both of which are claimed to be the driving forces during China’s revolutionary pursuit for national salvation and rejuvenation.

Interactive factors, including P-PI and P-DI, are found to become richer on the fourth floor, especially in comparison with the third floor. The “Red Culture” (associated with the CCP) of Shanghai is presented through the juxtaposition of real-life objects, photo materials and interactive exhibits. Along with the presentation of historical material about the founding of China, these Red Culture narratives are intended to render patriotism synonymous with the loyalty to CCP and its endeavors, turning out to be propaganda serving the interest of a certain political party. But there are also non-revolution narratives embodied by P-PI factors on site. For example, the interactive wall of Shanghai’s modern transportation development, very similar to the Shanghai History Clue Search System wall, allows the audience to approach the history of the development of modern transportation in Shanghai through animation and interactive buttons; likewise, the interactive display of “100 Schools and 100 Songs” incorporates the images of local universities, high schools and elementary schools—100 schools in total—and their school anthems, recording the development of Shanghai’s modern education system.

Finally, in the end hall, the visual exhibition “Unforgettable Moments” presents more than 70 affective moments of social progress, economic development, and people’s happy life (the only N-PN noticed by the author so far) from the liberation of Shanghai in 1949 to the present, indicating the great and glorious achievements of today’s Shanghai.

To sum up, the main diagnosis for the problems of the SHM’s IdEd performance is that Cultural Hybridization is only being pursued in a narrow sense—as a product of internalization and modernization—without representing the multiple cultural groups in the local community, and that N-PN factors are found highly scarce and only authoritative narratives are presented by the monopoly of N-EN factors. Consequently, cultural diversity available on site is not enough for the robust development of personal-level identities. On the other hand, the main advantage of SHM could be the introduction of various multimedia interactive devices, with a particular focus on the application of new media and visual technology to present history in the virtual-real interaction. In future work, SHM could continue with its attempts to make complex topics and contents accessible by supporting the development of digital learner experiences and should try to represent various groups now living in the city, probably starting with temporary, special exhibits.

3.3 Case 3: Seoul Museum of History, Seoul, South Korea

South Korea, being bothered by its aging population, has largely loosened its policies for permanent residency and naturalization. A rapid increase in immigrants has been witnessed since the late 1990s [21]. In the meanwhile, the rise of multicultural families, characterized by the family members, like the couples, from different nations and cultures and the offspring growing up in a multicultural context, is attracting wide social concerns and has brought changes to the immigration policies

for the interest of social integration [8]. The transition toward the multicultural society from a monolithic society with one language, one history, and one ethnicity seems to be happening in South Korea at an ever-accelerating pace [4].

Seoul, known as the capital of South Korea and a huge metropolis, has a population that accounts for about one fifth of the national population, and keeps attracting people with diverse origins. In this regard, “Seoul Sa-ram,” the pronunciation of the Korean phrase for people living in Seoul to identify themselves with this city, could be expected to be a cultural identity that acknowledges the diverse groups and embraces Cultural Hybridization, as implicated by the macro system.

As the city museum of Seoul, opened in May, 2002—overlapped with the dates of the FIFA Korea Japan World Cup—the Seoul Museum of History (SMH) aims to present the narratives about the history and culture of the Seoul city, through which the audience can experience Seoul’s culture and deepen their understanding and knowledge of the city, so as to, hopefully, enhance their cultural belief of being a Seoul Sa-ram on a social level.

There are two landmarks outside the museum building: a fountain and a tram car. At the bottom of the fountain is a metal engraving of a famous Seoul map that dates to the Joseon Dynasty; and the tram car represents a milestone of Korean society’s modernization. The two landmarks serve to attract passers-by to take photos, and to seize the interest of Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims for more engagement in the museum.

The museum building is a four-story structure. The first floor assumes the lobby that holds auxiliary facilities for the most part, such as information desk, Children’s Study Room, Café and so on; and the second and fourth floors, similarly, do not participate much in the presentation of the city-related narratives. The third floor, divided into five exhibit halls and arranged through a clearly historical timeline from the founding of the Joseon Dynasty to the present, is therefore the focus of the IdEd assessment on SMH.

The first hall is titled as “Seoul of the Joseon Dynasty, Establishment of the Joseon Capital,” and presents Seoul as the 500-year kingdom’s capital of the Joseon Dynasty, covering the period from 1392–1863. Historical documents, calligraphy, paintings, and other artifacts are displayed, along with expert commentary (N-EN), to present how Seoul—called Han-Yang or Soo-Seon then, with special meanings of being the capital—was selected as the capital of the Joseon Dynasty by the first king and constructed and enriched then. A reproduction of a large traditional painting of the ancient Seoul cityscape of that time is easy to catch the attention of the audience and can be used for C1 and P-DI purposes. Another form of visualization on site, even more eye-catching than the large painting, is a large-size miniature of Seoul’s Central Avenue at that time, the Yook-Jo-Go-Ri (Figure 7). The audience could stand around the miniature, taking about some light topics such as where a certain place in the model is in present-day Seoul, thereby relating to their personal experiences of living in Seoul and helping advance their personal-level Seoul-related identities. Similar huge items on display, like another miniature depicting a shopping street and a huge model of a wooden boat implying the port-city aspect of Seoul, serve as a remedy for the monotone of N-EN factors in the historical narratives. The narratives in this exhibit tend to establish the Joseon Dynasty’s Seoul as the starting and ending point for the flows of civilization and culture, and as a place where thoughts, learning, etiquette, rites, and arts were advanced, and as a model of living culture that influenced food, clothing, and housing at that time. Pride can be thereby conveyed to Seoul Sa-rams on the social level.

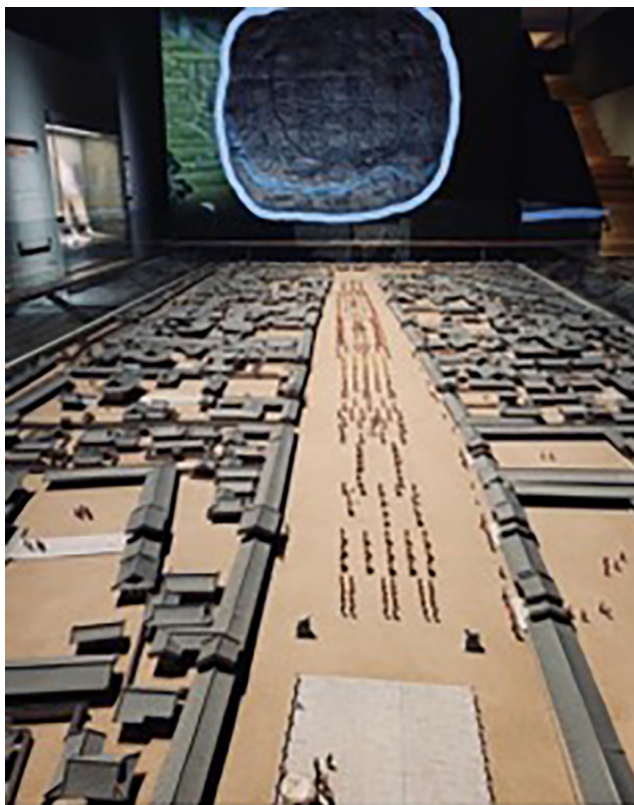


Fig. 7. The Yook-Jo-Go-Ri Avenue Miniature; picture taken by the author on 2022/10/11

The second hall, named “Seoul during the Korean Empire, Opening of the Port,” carries a subtitle “Based on tradition, with the dream of an empire’s capital” and covers 1863–1910. Photos taken at that time begin to appear in the display and serve as N-PN factors for the audience to construct their own understandings on that historical period, with no need of expert voices; N-EN factors are always available when the audience turn to the text panels around. During this period, Korean traditions began to coexist with Western modern lifestyles, and nearly all aspects of life were changed dramatically—the rise of Western-style buildings, the permeation of new products such as electricity, oil, matches, and glass into every corner of the daily life—as reflected by the small-size miniatures depicting the life scenes of people at that time (N-PN & C1). After the Joseon dynasty proclaimed to turn into the Korean Empire in 1897, Seoul undertook massive urban renovations to equip itself with the prestige of an imperial capital. Regarding this, a large-size miniature of the renovated Seoul is presented, with interactive screens around it. Compared with other miniatures in SMH, it enables P-PI and enhances C1, as any today’s place selected on the screen will be illuminated on the miniature. Thereby, deeper engagement in the charm of the renovated Seoul could be expected.

The third hall, bearing the name “Seoul during the Japanese occupation, the shadow of modernization,” spotlights the national sufferings of Korea under the Japanese colonial rule (Figure 8), as well as the modernization driven by the colony—two controversial topics especially when put together. Thus, C2 factors are rich in this exhibit and are expressed in affective, artistic ways, emotionally engaging the audience in strong empathy for this dark history. As nation-wide issues are intertwined the city-wide changes (Seoul was renamed as Kyung-Sung by Japanese colonists), as well as the fights of the national heroes and heroines on a personal

level (described by N-PN), the N-EN factors on site serve to present that Seoul quickly turned into a modern city during the Japanese occupation, and that this colonial city tried to seduce Koreans without integrating them into it. Through the narratives in this exhibit, one's social-level Seoul-related identity could be advanced in a high morale ignited by nationalism and heroism presented on site.



Fig. 8. The installation expressing national sufferings; picture taken by the author on 2022/10/11

The fourth hall, “Seoul during the high growth period, a huge city growing on top of ruins,” displays the post-war reconstruction and development of Seoul, starting from 1945 and ending at 2022, the opening year of SMH. It is in 1945 that Seoul became the capital of a sovereign state after the liberation from Japanese occupation. At that time, Seoul was a poor city, and many parts of the city were in ruins, especially in the wake of the 6×25 War, which is showcased by historical pictures and items on display and narrated by the text panels and audios (N-EN). After the “Miracle of the Han-gang River”; however, Seoul witnessed the upgrading of the industrial structure, the economic development, and the democratization, as long as local autonomy—these topics of changes are all addressed in the form of N-EN factors—and the life of Seoul Sa-ram has changed thereafter. N-PN, P and C1 factors are employed to present these changes in daily life. For example, the replica of an average middle-class Korean family’s residence allows the audience to walk in, exploring and interacting with the setting, so does a replica of an old restaurant. Meanwhile, C2 factors are also incorporated into this narrative, as the “big city syndromes,” such as the polarization of social wealth, has become a priority to be addressed on the urban and the national levels, after a “compressed growth period.” The audience are thereby invited to reflect on the urbanization in Seoul.

The fifth hall is the City Model & Image Gallery, with the theme “Seoul, today and tomorrow.” A miniature of the Seoul city in 1/1,500 scale, with more than 700,000 buildings and sculptures on it, is installed, above which the audience standing on a walkway could have the panoramic view of Seoul. This miniature model is lit up to interpret the day and night of Seoul by the flashing of the lights; and the Han-gang River seems to be really flowing, giving the audience a strong sense of reality. It could

be understood as an integrated use of P-PI, P-DI and C1 factors, as the audience can be found to walk freely on the walkway and have conversations between each other, while exploring the Seoul underfoot according to their own curiosity. In practice, this hall also assumes a multi-purpose exhibition space for educational seminars and other activities based on and inspiring new thinking about the city.

Through the analysis above, it can be noticed that no specific work has been done in these permanent exhibits to respect and promote the ethnic, cultural, and social diversity growing in the city. In other words, it has yet to manifest any curator's intent to do so in response to the growing multicultural diversity. However, in the context of Seoul, the modern city culture here is presented as a high degree of fusion between Korean traditions and Western cultures, which can be understood as Cultural Hybridization completed in the past historical phases. Having a good record of utilizing visualization, in the future, SMH could start with incorporating the multicultural topics into its temporary displays and would be supposedly able to engage diverse groups in an effective way, powered by its visualization strategy.

4 MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Through the case studies on the three chosen city museums, conclusions have been reached on how the city museum takes advantage of different contextual factors to engage the urban audience of five motivational types, and whether there is any gap between the target identity expected by the city and the identity narrative presented by the city museum—if any, how huge the gap is. The closing part will land on the reflection upon this project, then the suggestions about what can be further done by future research to help museums better function as educational institutions.

4.1 Findings and implications

The main findings of the case studies bear repeating here. In sum, by utilizing N factors, especially N-EN factors, all the three museums manage to condense the local history into bite-sized chunks for average Explorers to learn, which takes a chronological order and circles around two themes—the city's achievements and the life of local people.

Among the three museums, MCNY excels at the integrated use of N-PN, P-DI & C2, as the controversial topics concerning underprivileged groups, like the civil rights campaigns for the immigrants of certain race and/or gender, are presented from the individual viewpoint of activists, witnesses, and other stakeholders of the events, for Explorers, Facilitators and Professionals to engage in critical thinking and dialogues.

SHM relies on N-EN factors for authoritative storytelling, in an attempt to unveil an achievement-centered version of the local history, with a clear intention to convey the pride of being a local resident to the audience, and also tends to impart patriotism into one's mind by presenting Shanghai as a center of the Chinese Socialist Revolution that is claimed to be led by the CCP, only at the cost of cultural diversity, necessary for the invigorating development of personal-level cultural identity;

SMH, taking a similar strategy to the SHM's, makes use of N-EN factors for the most part of its historical narratives, but instead of Revolution, National Liberation and Modernization are highlighted in its narratives.

C1 & C2 constitute the essence of most temporary exhibits and promotional activities in the three museums, mainly taking the P-PI form and thereby providing a playground-like context or an adventure tour for Experience Seekers and Spiritual Pilgrims to better engage on site, while further instructions concerned with P-DI could be added to the C2 design, so as to enrich group discussion among the audience, for more active dissemination of the shared identity information.

Speaking of Cultural Hybridization, MCNY takes the lead in the pursuit of this ultimate target, as the racial heritage and cultural legacy of the minorities in NYC—though not all of them—blend well into the New Yorker identity narratives, while SHM and SMH are intended to pose any culture with no local origin as exotic, and foreground no issues about minorities of any kind in their populations—even though this could be considered only a phrasal limit of social development, a city museum could and should assume the flagship to spotlight the outnumbered groups that already live in the community.

These findings are supposed to have practical implications on future plannings of exhibits and activities in each of the three city museums, in terms of addressing the current gap between the cultural identity embracing Cultural Hybridization and the current identity narratives presented on site, as well as how to better engage their urban audience by utilizing different contextual factors in an integrative way, most of which have been discussed in the case studies, as recommendations have been made separately, in response to each problem that is revealed during the assessment. Generally, in order for all city museums to more effectively grips with the multicultural issues emerging in urban areas, common attempts for positive institutional changes could be, to name but two here as more will be addressed in the next section, the designs of more interactive edutainment experiences powered by new museum techniques, and the closer interrelationship with all sorts of learning facilitators, from both inside and outside of the museum context.

4.2 Limitations and reflections

Due to a narrow focus on a single city museum in each case, this project could be accused of missing out “the bigger picture.” When the IdEd effectiveness of a city museum is being discussed, the city planning and development should have been taken into account, for the specific role assigned to a city museum largely counts on the city’s museum system, or even the cultural institution system. The municipal office provides space for permanent museums on certain topics for school groups, business rentals, and public visitors; on the other hand, temporary or long-term educational access to certain occasions for on-site learning (just think of a factory tour), or to specific cultural institutions, like libraries, parks, creator workshops, etc., could be granted by the authorities in charge. They could all be supplementary to the role assumed by a city museum. For example, in NYC, there are so many ethnically specialized museums, such as Museum of Chinese in America, Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts and so on, representing and empowering certain ethnic minorities; likewise, in the case of Shanghai, the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center actually plays a role partly intersected with SHM, in charge of displays centering on the city history of development; in Seoul, the Seoul Urban Life Museum shares an overlap with SMH, showcasing the daily life of Seoul residents. The point is, in an urban area, especially a metropolis, the museum system of a city could have a highly

interlocking structure, in which every museum works in concert to serve a common narrative, and to have symbolic influences over the urban audience and even people around the nation.

Besides, the author is interested in the design of identity storytelling, presented by the museum and open for the visitors to do personalized learning, namely what can be learned from the design, rather than what is learned in fact or what a specific group of learners think of this learning experience. The latter two questions cannot be simply addressed without large-scale samples of museum visitors.

When it comes to the theoretical framework per se, the author contends that the framework applied in this paper is by no means impeccable, due to the lack of empirical studies on the visitor end, and that further research is needed to develop more sophisticated measures of the actual output of museums on the part of visitors. Surveys, for example, could be taken in the form of questionnaires that cover various aspects, like the display structure, learning aids, guidance, etc., to collect feedback directly from visitors; based on that kind of data, curators can enhance their visitor-oriented curating skills, and help improve the quality of the museum's performance with a visitor-centered mindset. On closer and deeper inspection, which could start from the overall assessment on learning materials and opportunities with the framework, more details could be revealed about a museum's IdEd performance.

Even leaving aside IdEd, the framework could also be used to analyze and assess the design of a museum visit experience with other concerns, in that the framework incorporates the learner-centered aspect and the design-specific dimension, thus supposedly having general implications in terms of how a museum can make practical use of different contextual factors within its space for certain educational purposes. In this sense, the framework could hopefully help continue conversations among stakeholders, to advocate for and lead up to positive institutional changes in museums, which constitutes another goal of this project—paving the path for future evaluations on museum education practices.

5 NOTE

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