

A CREATIVE CLUSTER : BABIALI - ISTANBUL

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—Abstract—

Istanbul is one of the most rapidly growing metropolises of the world, encapsulating great values and desires a circumspect planning agenda. Babiali as one of the historic clusters in Istanbul is known and described as the capital city of Turkish (printed) media. The transformation of the area is a deductive example to observe an irreversible decision and a great loss for the emerging concept of creative city, where creative economies gain more and more interest all over the world.

By surveying the area or the interviews with the former workers, writers, artists, publishers and analyzing the secondary literature on this subject, we aimed to observe this very unique creative formation to contribute to the positive outcomes of creative clusters and the importance of the relevant urban planning decisions.

Key Words: *Creative Cluster, Media, Creative Economy, Babiali*
JEL Classification: L00 – General

1. CREATIVE ECONOMIES GAINING MORE INTEREST

The formal original description of the concept creative industries was made by Tony Blair to establish a Creative Industries Task Force (CITF). He was newly elected in 1997 and set the mapping activities at the center for the new Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Creative Industries Mapping Document was identifying the components and determining the importance of the contribution for economy and growth . The Mapping Document was also verifying the role of the creative enterprise, and cultural contribution is a key economic issue, the creation of intellectual capital is becoming increasingly important as an economic component of national wealth (Flew, 2011).

For many doctrinaires the cultural industries and the creative industries are basically the same thing. The “classic” cultural industries arose from the technological advances of the early twentieth century, the creative industries are a product of the technological change of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Galloway, Dunlop, 2007).

The new economy rely on creativity and imaginative intellectual property, and they are becoming the most rapidly growing and important part of the economy, where the new jobs and the wealth of the future are going to be generated (Flew, 2011).

The urban theory and planning practice focuses to cultural quarters for regeneration of cities. There is also more Creative Studies, Faculties of Creative Industries, Creative Charters or the institutions, which are doing more and more research, which are showing the growing interest and recognition for the issue. (Landry, 2000).

Creativity is the cornerstone of success for post-industrial cities, regions and nations in the globalised economy (Flew, 2011). It is also advocated that the creative economy is revitalizing the manufacturing, services, retailing and entertainment industries, and it also changes the areas where people want to live, work and learn, think, invent and produce. We as urban planners do have a great job and responsibility where creative clusters are subsisting or there is a potential.

2. CLUSTER CONCEPT - RELATION BETWEEN PLACE AND CREATIVITY

The cluster concept has had an important influence on thinking and policy towards the creative industries. The cluster concept has had a big influence on thinking and policy towards the creative industries. The importance of creative networks in cities, where knowledge is created, tested, collective learning is adapted and disseminated indicates to the cluster concept. That the cultural industries based on local know-how, developing original ideas, sharing information and knowledge, and learning to trust each other occur most effectively in the localized scale (Turok, 2003).

The relation between place and creativity is an acknowledgment and the links between place and creativity can be important and influential in the creative process is an evidence-based praxis.

Media as one of the main creative industries with its fundamental redefinition, new technology based transformation and the new communication infrastructure shows a spatial transition all around the world. Traditional media supply, production and distribution process and methods are being restructured. There are tendencies to overcome increased competition and desire to maintain the activity to ensure this creative industry, a future. A wide discussion and debate about the cluster policy in the sector is ongoing, as the fact that geographic or physical proximity is not enough for such developments.

Such industries, especially media publishing-newspapers require collective labour to make them happen, ensemble pieces, have retained their need to be clustered, as they are tightly like in England, London because they are ensemble projects that are short life, therefore cannot survive unless there are a lot of similar activities in the same proximity; otherwise an individual cannot work on a semi-continuous basis (Pratt, 2011).

As an example for the development of media clusters in particular for the role as place-making spatial development, and the formation of creative cities, the case study Babiali displays and deserves a special intention. Where discussions about creative industries reference the role of the media sector as an important

contribution for economic and spatial development, Babiali is an unique formation, especially among Turkish creative industries.

3. AN HISTORIC CREATIVE CLUSTER : ISTANBUL BABIALI

Creativity, knowledge and access to information are increasingly recognized as powerful engines which are driving regional and national growth and development. More and more studies in regional and urban policies are being accepted and developed to attract and sustain the synergy of creative economies, as the concept of creative industries gained ground in the last couple decades among urban planners, policy makers and scholars.

Istanbul is located in conjunction of two continents. The urban structure of the city in a remarkable transformation. One of the most important areas in the city is the Historic Peninsula which has always been the focal point of the Greater City of Istanbul containing city's principal historical, architectural and archeological sites. As a result of land use decisions the manufacturing industry is decentralized from the Historic Peninsula. First macro planning studies related to whole metropolitan area began in 1974 and approved 29th the of July in 1980 by Ministry of Public Works named Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Area Master Plan.

During the transformation, gentrification and regeneration of the peninsula after the Master Plan a very unique district Babiali is also decentralized. Babiali was the place for the historical formation of Turkish Media for a remarkable period: over 150 years.

Babiali is accepted one of the historic creative hubs of Turkey. It is the district named after the sublime port- high port - ottoman port: Babiali Port, where the printed media was settled since 1980s. The transformation of the area is a deductive example to observe an irreversible decision and a great loss for the emerging concept of creative city.

The very unique development in 19th and 20th century in Istanbul, Babiali which was the capital city of Turkish media, with the optimum empirical conditions. The formerly classical and traditional printing and publishing center became at the end of 20th century the media capital of Turkey (Koloğlu 1998, Karaca, 2010).

While most state-run radio and television stations are based in Ankara, Istanbul was and is the primary hub of Turkish media. Babiali area on the historic peninsula was the place where Turkish media was emerged, established and improved. The first newspapers, printing and publishing houses for books or periodicals were founded in this area. As publishing was one of the most important distribution channel of literature, most of the writers, poets, performers, artists and other elitists were also the visitors of the area frequently. There were a good number of cafes, restaurants hosting these creative people.

In 1980 the decision of decentralization of the sector caused an irreversible movement of the whole creative cluster towards the peripheral of the city. Babiali area - Istanbul is known and accepted since the beginning of 19th century till recently in 1990, the center of Turkish Journalism and Publishing. The publishing sector was settled and located next to the governance during Ottoman Empire (Sahin, 2004).

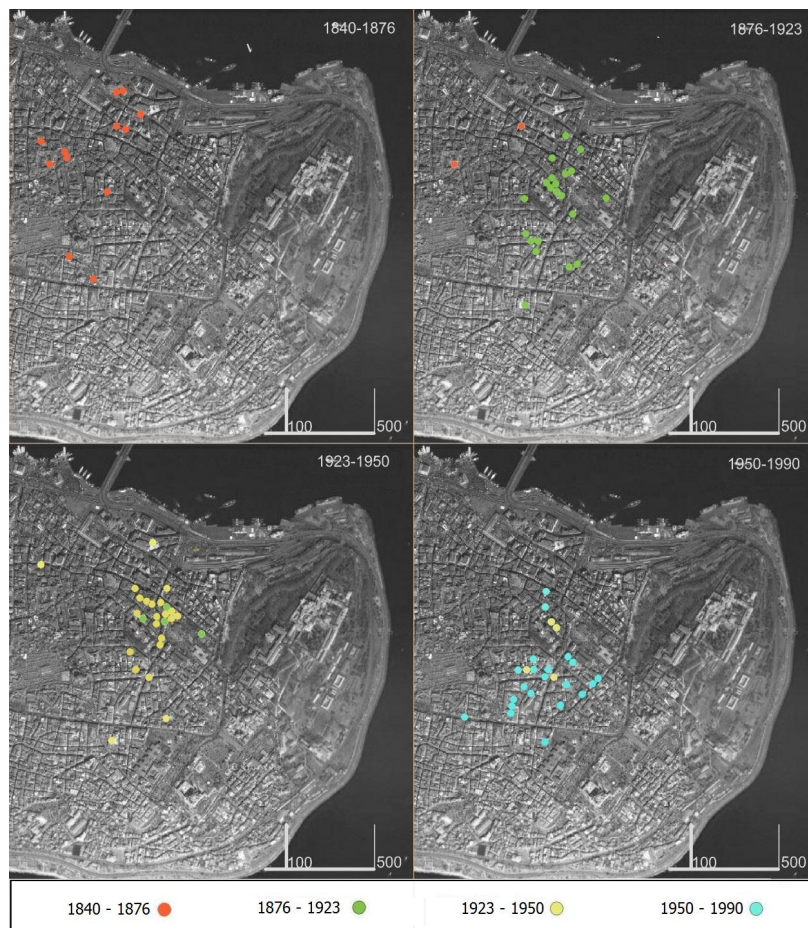
The area hosted since 1840, the most newspapers, magazines, books or other publishing goods were written, published and distributed. Although the governance of the country moved to Ankara after the Turkish War of Independence, where Ankara became the capitol city of the new nation, the area kept its function till 1985. The publishing sectors preference was to keep the existing settlement, and play the opposition. After 1985 Turkish journalism was developed and combined with publishing, distribution, broadcasting, television production and called as media industry, and the need for a broader, vast areas, where they can enlarge, so a development area for publishing was supported and subsidized by the state (Topuz 2003, Baytar, 2010).

The study shows the transformation of the area in four periods:

1. Period : 1840-1876 Before and During the First Constitutional Era
2. Period :1876-1923 Constitutional Era, Young Revolution and After The Turkish Independence War
3. Period :1923-1950 Turkish Republic – Atatürk and İnönü Era

4. Period: 1950-1990 Multiparty Democracy till to Dezentralisation

Figure-1: The spatial transformation of Babiali 1840-1990 (Hansoy, 2012)



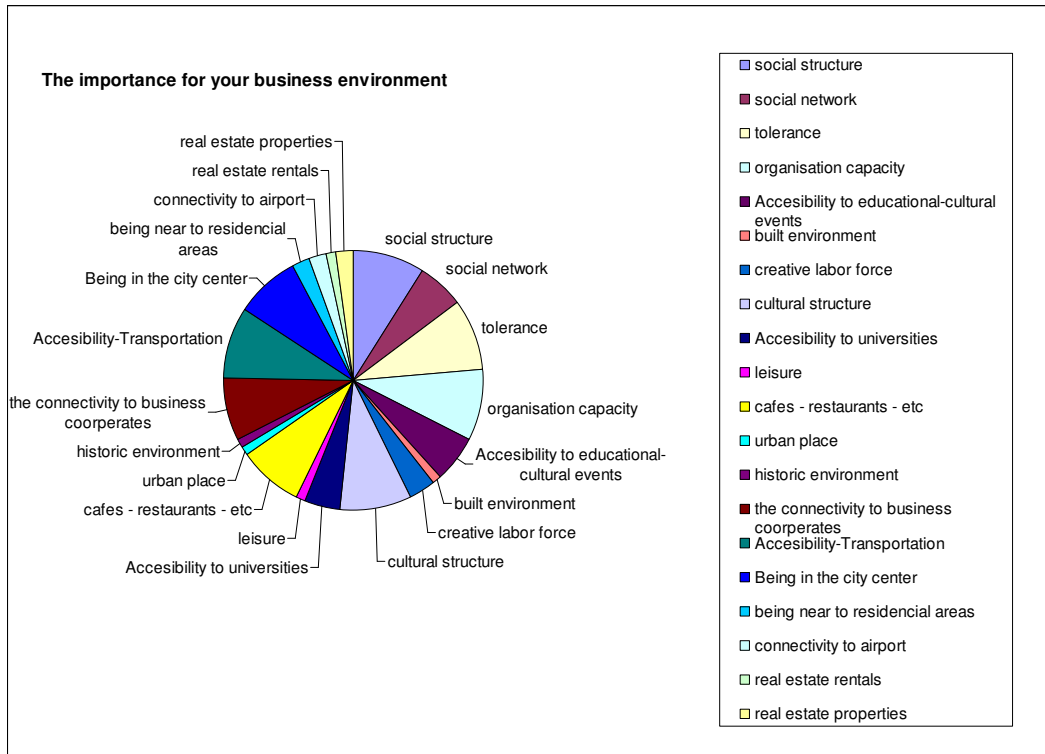
4. THE INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER LOCAL ELITE

The question to be dealt with will be whether if the originality, uniqueness and value of this very special formation of Istanbul is a loss after the decentralization of the Historic Peninsula. The method of the study is to observe through the literature and through series of interviews to give an essence of a historic creative cluster and to understand the needs of the creative people. Especially to determine the spatial needs of this creative sector, the interviews were again pathfinder.

We have done a series of interviews with the former writers, publicists, editors, producers and journalists. Most of them were unhappy with the transformation, with the decentralization, but mostly about the disappearance of the sector, from the area without a trace. The new settlement for the media in Ikitelli was a total wrong decision, as we see in the last 10 years period all the sector moving back to the inner city, where a clustering is not possible anymore.

In the period of 1985-1990 almost all Media Sector is relocated from the area. Figure 2 is showing the dispersion beginning with 1985. Babiali area with a

Figure-3 The outcome of the questionnaire (Hansoy, 2012)



The interviews hold with former journalists, writers, editors or other sector workers intend to show a great affliction, moving to a totally new development area, outside the city center. The cohesion to the new areas for most of them who used to work at Babiali, was uneasy. Beside the traditional, conventional way of operations, the technological and infrastructural changes overlapped with the long lasting driving, travelling difficulties. Compared to the historical peninsula, where the change and development took place over 150 years, the move to the new media plazas seem to be fast, sudden and unexpected. Beside the technological change, computerized systems, the security systems or administrative dispositions took place collateral. The transformation took not only at the place but also through the whole operational system.

The importance of place where they prefer to work, and the most desire was: to be in city center, accessibility to cultural events, social structure and diversity spatial accessibility-transportation, tolerance, the organization capacity, cafes-restaurants-etc. to meet and interact with the creative milieu.

4. EPILOGUE

The relocation and transformation of Babıalı was a dramatic change for the urban character of the area. The creative milieu was dispersed. The interruption of the traditional character and values of media-publishing practice changed rapidly, and the failure to recognize the unique spirit of place occurred.

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