

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283259035>

AN HISTORICAL CREATIVE CLUSTER: BABIALI –ISTANBUL

Conference Paper · August 2013

CITATIONS
0

READS
136

2 authors:



Nuran Zeren Gülersoy
Istanbul Technical University

24 PUBLICATIONS 28 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Pinar Sözer LEWIS
Istanbul Technical University

4 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

AN HISTORICAL CREATIVE CLUSTER: BABIALI - ISTANBUL

Pinar Hansoy

Istanbul Technical University
Dipl.Ing. Architect, MSci.
E-mail: pinarhansoy@gmail.com

Nuran Zeren Gülersoy

Istanbul Technical University/ Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture
E-mail: gulersoy@itu.edu.tr

—Abstract—

Creative industries are among the most dynamic sectors of the world economy. The new indispensable values related to the panacea are knowledge, information, innovation, talent, transparency, trust, uniqueness, cultural heritage, tolerance, technology, new ideas, sustainability and the creativity power of human capital.

Istanbul, as one of the most rapid growing mega metro poles of the world, encapsulates these values and desires a circumspect planning agenda.

Babiali is one of the historic clusters in Istanbul, until late 1990s, known and described as the capital city of Turkish (printed) media. 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 study is to observe through the literature and a series of interviews to give an essence of an historic creative cluster and the needs of the creative people. The question we want to deal 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. By examining the area through the former workers, writers, artists and publishers, and on hand of literature we were able to contribute

to the debate between the positive effects of clustering on creativity and the ongoing decentralization process from city centers to the peripheries, where various studies argue about the dilemma that originality and diversity are important to attract and sustain the competitiveness of the cities.

Key Words: *Creative Cluster, Media, Creative Economy, Babiali*

JEL Classification: L00 – General

1. CREATIVE ERA

1.1. The challenge of creative economy for planners

New ideas, not money or machinery, are the source of success today, and the greatest source of personal satisfaction, too. (Howkins, 2001)

As 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. Images, sounds, symbols, inventions, ideas are creating new jobs, wealth and a new stand and viewpoint.

The terms “cultural industries” and “creative industries” are often used interchangeably. We can consider the ‘creative and cultural economy’ as the interface between culture, economies and technology. Creative Industries are defined by the UK DCMS in 1998 as those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.

Due to the 2010 Creative Economy Report, after the last world economic crisis in 2008 it is accepted that knowledge based creative economies showed a positive development and the employment rate at these sectors are increased. Creativity is being at the cornerstone of success for post-industrial cities, regions and nations in the globalised economy. (Mulgan 1997; Coyle 1998; Landry 2000; Flew 2011). It is also advocated that the creative economy is revitalizing manufacturing, services, retailing and entertainment industries, and it also changes where people want to live, work and learn, think, invent and produce. We as urban planners do have a great job and responsibility. Creative Studies, Faculties of Creative Industries, Creative Charters or the institutions, which are doing a lot of research are showing the growing interest for the theme.

The ongoing debate about the importance of the creative sectors for the cities, that increase the attractiveness and challenge of the cities, and thus the value adding capacity of the creative industries are widely recognized is a leading aspect for

urban planning. As the concept of the “creative economy” which is an evolving one and is gaining ground in contemporary thinking for economic development we can determine the impact of artistic creation on innovation. More companies wish to be associated with cultural life and the social function of artistic and cultural creativity, where the urban planning policies again gain ground.

To understand the nature of creative and innovative cities and the creative ecology, many international monitoring organizations are following the data of the improvement of living and working conditions in so called ‘Creative Cities.’ A wide range of discussion took place also for Istanbul, as the city was chosen as the Cultural Capital of 2010, thus a broader interest is shown also during and after the progress period.

1.2. Media as a Creative Sector

That the most successful economies and societies of our century will be creative ones, and the belief on creativity which will make the difference, and will be the essential ingredient for success brought the long lasting debate what to include or exclude from the definition of creative industries (Galloway, Dunlop, 2007). Thus publishing and media are accepted within the all descriptions as one of the most traditional and historic creative industries, we are going to exclude this debate from our study.

Among the creative industries media with a fundamental redefinition with its 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.

Media became one of the main sectors of the creative industries. 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.

2. ISTANBUL AS A CREATIVE HUB

2.1. Istanbul in transition

The creative city phenomena became a global movement especially for planners and gave us a great opportunity to rethink the planning, development and management of our cities. Charles Landry defines the creative city concept and advocates that cities have a very crucial resource: their people. The capacity of each city differs by its transition character, where old industries are disappearing and the process is directed through the intellectual capital: the innovative creative people, who are changing the way we make and exchange goods, services and culture.

Istanbul is also a mega metro pole in transition. While unpacking the historical phases of the spatial development of the city, we wanted to contribute by observing a very unique formation, evolution, transformation of a district of Istanbul, which is named after a creative sector: Babıali – Capital of Turkish Media over 150 Years.

Istanbul's implication of current development trends can only be described as disastrous (Harvey, 2008, Lovering & Evren 2011). The planning vision for the city fails to recognize the importance of justice, of social inclusion, and of the sustainability, and of the physical environment. The transition of the mega metro pole is so rapid and therefore the determination of one of the most important creative sectors transformation is instructive, as its actual task is information and creating public opinion.

2.2. Babıali – One of primer creative clusters in Istanbul

Babıali-Istanbul will be a good example in Turkey as an historical formation of Turkish Media for a very particular period. Through the literature and the interviews we made, we can observe the widely accepted principles of creative cluster concept which describes a particular urban complex, where cultural and creative activities and social life are integral components.

The relation between place and creativity is an acknowledgment. As an example of 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 as discussions about creative industries references the role of the media sector as an important contribution for economic and spatial development.

Media industry in Istanbul is one of the significant creative and cultural economy of Istanbul, where publishing, radio and television, advertising, film and video production, digital media and new media are the mainstream sectors.

Intentionally examining the cluster concept and media clusters guides us towards the need to observe 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. We want to reveal the preliminary finding of this very unique development. In 1980 the 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. Since 1840, the most newspapers, magazines, books or other publishing goods were written, published and distributed from this area. As being next to governance and censorship mechanism, the area kept its function till 1985, 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 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.

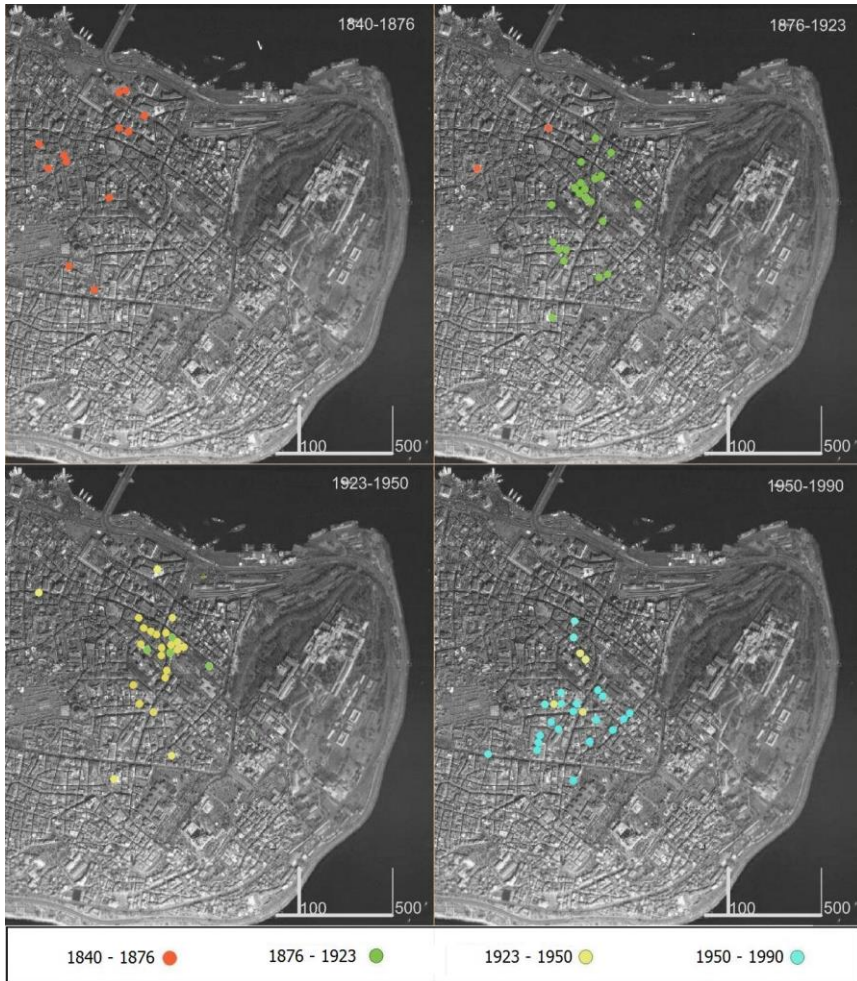
While analyzing the history of Turkish media, the rupture of the development is very much influenced by the chance of institutional structure, the progressive improvement of the technology, organization of distribution and the new communication platforms like new television platforms, internet providers (Baydar 2010).

Socio-political structure of Turkey in the post 1980 period influenced the media sector constitutional and structural, which led at the end to a spatial deployment. The relocation decision of the publishing sector from Babiali to new Media District Ikitelli executed in 5 years period.

Till to the relocation, more than 150 years, described as one of the creative industries, publishing, journalism and printing capital for Turkey Babiali used to host most popular writers, editors, journalists, poets and graphic artists. After researching the literature and holding conversations with the sector workers, who used to work before 1990 at the area, we better understand the importance of the area for the Turkish Media History. As the cultural quarter from 1840 to beginning of 1990 the area was a cultural quarter not only for the publishing and printing sector, but also the meeting point for creative people as well as media was one of the major distribution of arts, crafts and literature.

We have done a series of interviews with the former writers, publicist, editors, producers and journalists. Most of them war unhappy with the transformation, the decentralization, but most about the abundance of the area without a trace. The new settlement in Ikitelli for the media was a total wrong decision, as we see in the last 10 years period all the sector is moving back to inner city, where a clustering is no more possible.

Figure-1: The spatial transformation of Babiali 1840-1990

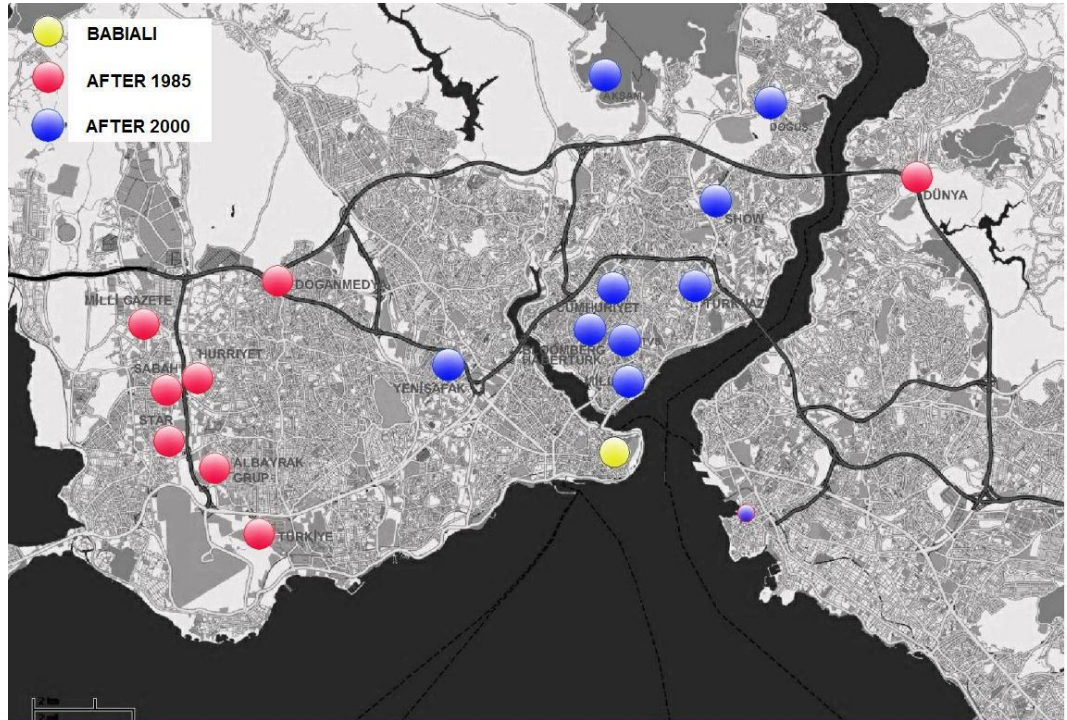


To determine the spatial needs of this creative sector the interviews were again pathfinder. Also the rich literature about Babiali enables us to realize the magnificent nascence of the district.

The conversations hold with the 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 change overlapped with the longlasting 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, computerising the system, the security system or administrative dispositions took place collateral, as the transformation took not only at the place but also through the whole operational system.

Figure-1: The spatial transformation of Media Firms in Istanbul 1840-2013



The young generation of media workers took the transformation as a gift, as they were working suddenly in high-tech buildings, and modern infrastructures. But

the main issue and need of the sector, as a creative one, being in the city center, face-to-face communication, reaching to cultural, educational or intellectual scene was missing. After a very short time, the new modern environment transformed to discontent.

3. EPILOGUE

Since a couple of years ago; almost after 20 years of decentralization from Babiali, there is a strong tendency shown amongst the Turkish Media Groups towards the inner city. Most of the giant media firms have returned and have settled again in the city center, thus coming back to the historic Peninsula seems almost impossible for the media firms, but the participation to the yearly organizations like Babiali Festival seems improved. If this nostalgia for the former traditional Babiali cluster makes it possible for a retransformation at Babiali is a question and wish or the proposals for the abandoned newspaper building transforming to contact offices of media firms, news studios, museums, seminar centers, remain as further questions. The usage at this time is more touristic purposes like carpet, gold stores, restaurants or even park houses.

For a sustainable, creative urban regeneration it is important to understand and respect the social, cultural economic complexities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Galloway, Susan, Dunlop Stewart (2007), “A Critique of Definitions of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Public Policy”, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 1

Hansoy, Pınar , (2012), “Bir Yaratıcı Sektör olarak Babiali Basın Yayın Kümesinin Desantralizasyonu ve Sonuçları”, Istanbul Technical University

Karaca, Emin (2003), *Kaybolan Babiali'nin Ardından*, Kekeme Yayıncılık

Kolođlu,Orhan (1998), Bir Zamanlar Bab-ıali, Türkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları

Lovering, John, Evren, Yiđit (2011), Urban Development and Planning in Istanbul, *International Planning Studies* Vol. 16, No. 1, pp.1–4

Pratt, Andy C. (2008), Creative Cities: The Cultural Industries and the Creative Class, *Geografiska Annaler: Human Geography* 90 (2), pp. 107–117

Şahin, Haluk (2004), İletişimde Karavanadan Kafeteryaya, 145 – 149, Dünya Kitapları

Terry, Flew, (2010), “Toward a Cultural Economic Geography of Creative Industries and Urban Development: Introduction to the Special Issue on Creative Industries and Urban Development’’, *The Information Society*, 26 : 85–91, 2010

Topuz, Hıfzı (2003), II Mahmut’tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi, Remzi Kitapevi

Yücesoy, Eda Ünlü (2011), “İstanbul’da Medya, Coğrafi Dağılım ve Üretim’’, Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Please prepare your full paper in accordance with the following instructions. Please take into consideration the following format:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>FONTS</p> <p>Font Type: Times New Roman Font Size (text) : 12 Font Size (Tables and Figures) : 10</p> | <p>PARAGRAPH</p> <p>Alignment: Left Outline Level: Body Text</p> <p><u>Indentation</u> Left: 0 Right: 0</p> <p><u>Spacing</u> Before: 6 After: 6 Line Spacing: Single</p> |
| <p>PAGE SETUP</p> <p><u>Margins:</u></p> <p>Top: 2,5 cm Bottom: 2,5 cm Left: 1,5 cm Right: 1,5 cm Gutter:0</p> <p>Paper Size :Special size Width : 17 cm Height : 24 cm</p> | <p>PAPER LENGTH 10 pages maximum</p> |