

## **Parallel Session A**

### **Architecture & Environmental Design for Creative Communities**

**The Semiotics of Architecture and Visual Art  
at the Toraja *Tongkonan*:  
Reflecting The Ancestor's Conduct of Life**  
Yuke ARDHIATI A-003

**The Architectural Response of Traditional Building  
in Making the Place for Tourism-Business Activities.  
Case-study: Ki Gede Ing Suro Street,  
Center of *Songket* Handicraft Industry**  
Widya F. FEBRIATI A-008

**Sustainable Tourism in Urban Context. Case-study:  
Melayu-Colonial Corridor in City of Medan**  
Nurlisa GINTING A-016

**From Design Process to Process Design:  
Lessons-Learned from Collaborative Urban Resettlements  
in Post-Disaster Recovery**  
Bauni HAMID A-022

**Enhancing the Quality of Life of Disabled Women  
through Creative Industry:  
A Perspective on Creative Communities**  
Inge KOMARDJAJA A-032

**Flexibility of Spatial Function for Activity  
of Industry Kampong Community in Bandung.  
Case-study: Knitting Industry Binong Jati, Bandung**  
Dian KUSBANDIAH & Woerjantari SOEDARSONO A-040

**Users' Place Experience of a Contemporary *Masjid*  
Towards Urban Place-Making in Singapore**  
Amira MOHYUDDIN & Hasanuddin LAMIT A-049

**Contribution of Creative Advertising and Creative Economy  
in Deteriorating Urban Place-Making:  
Case-Study Medan City Center**  
A. Delianur NASUTION & Wahyuni ZAHRAH A-058

**Less Consumption Places for More Creative Community**  
Ece POSTALCI ALTINKAYA & Imre OZBEK EREN A-064

**Using Participatory Rural Appraisal to Investigate  
the Role of Women in Micro-Business:  
Case-study in Aceh after Tsunami**  
Wirawan E.D. RADIANTO A-071

**Human Settlements and Creative Industry.  
Community's Production Activities at Cipacing & Binong Jati  
and their Settlement: A Comparative Study**  
SAMSIRINA, Allis NURDINI & SYAHYUDESIRINA A-077

**Comparison Study: The Impact of Bandung's Fashion  
Creative Economy to Suci and Binong Jati  
Physical Environment Quality**  
Woerjantari SOEDARSONO A-087

**Creative Spaces on Affordable Vertical Housing (*Rusun*):  
A Sharing Experience**  
Deva F. SWASTO A-093

**Place-Making in Unused Urban Space**  
Julaihi WAHID A-101

**Creating the Open Space's Sense of Place. Case-study:  
Deli's Sultanate Area**  
Julaihi WAHID & Bambang KARSONO A-106

**A New Characteristic of Colonial House in Kudus**  
Arif S. WIBOWO A-112

## LESS CONSUMPTION PLACES FOR MORE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Communities that want to build a creative economy based on cultural and technological business should encourage productivity instead of consumption. While planning the future of a city with a creative community, one of the objects should be designing and building places for cultural expressions and creating technological platforms. In this context, we will discuss about the future of Istanbul, where there is a big budget for consuming places and less for cultural heritage and expressions.*

*“Creative people thrive in an environment where there is an authentic sense of place, an acceptance and celebration of cultural diversity, a variety of recreational activities and opportunities for the energetic exchange of ideas. They live in places where their creativity is welcomed and inspired and where there is rich cultural expression.” (Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy [http://www.kse50.com/vcci\\_report.pdf](http://www.kse50.com/vcci_report.pdf))*

*Istanbul, being located in a strategic place between two continents, has always been an attractive city in the past and served as the capital city of four big empires; Roman, Byzantine, Latin and Ottoman. The city is attractive not only for creative people but also for many people with its productive economy with various kind of business. Almost every place in Istanbul has a “sense”, sometimes with a monument from its long history or with a sign of both east and west cultures in where many artists, poets, writers have inspired.*

*Instead of standing out with its cultural heritage; the city emphasizes its commercial and business opportunities which attracts a large number unemployed and increases the immigration, transportation and accommodation problems. More shopping malls, big markets, entertainment places and business centers are designed and built for this new population of the city who spends less time for creative activities.*

*Although Istanbul is still the indispensable city for many artists and offers various opportunities for technological developments; such a dramatic increase in consumption places causes tendency to spend time for consuming instead of producing. In the long term, such sort cultural uniformity would not help people to develop their creative edge.*

**Keywords:** *creativity, consumption*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The creative economy, demanding on creativity in arts and technology, is critical for the competitiveness of cities that are planning to take place in the global marketplace. American economist Richard Florida states that there is a new global competition for Talent. This paper argues

about the problems of making investments in consumption places rather than supporting the growth of creative enterprises in Istanbul which already attracts creative people with its cultural heritage and authentic environment.

The cities, in order to involve in this creative economy should highlight its cultural heritage, authentic places where artists, designers are inspired and should make places where their expressions are encouraged and tolerated. Art works and technological investments should be covered by intellectual property and copyright protection.

Istanbul with its history, technical facilities, universities, lively cultural life already attracts and welcomes creative people in arts and science and provides many places and facilities for them. Today, it is observed that too many investments are made to build consumption places especially in last ten years. Although the dramatic increase of these investments and consumption spaces provides a market for the products and ideas of the creative class, it also entertains a risk to direct young population towards consumption instead of being creative.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE COMMUNITY AND CONSUMER SOCIETY**

The difference of characteristics of creative community and consumption society is important to describe the places they enjoy to spend time or the cities they prefer to live or work. Since the ideas are more important than the production; the creative ideas are the most important capital of the Information Society. An information society is a society in which creation, distribution, diffusion, use, and manipulation of information is a significant economic, political and cultural activity. The information economy and the knowledge economy emphasize the content or intellectual property that is being traded through an information market or knowledge market, respectively. [1] The economy of the information society depends on information technologies. Intellectual property and copy protection are the important issues, since information, ideas; products can be easily reproduced and be distributed. In his book "Creative Economy", John Howkins claims that in order to involve in this new economy which based on selling creative ideas, the countries should build environments that improve creativity. [2]

Florida defines the Creative class anyone whose work function is to produce new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content. Creative class includes people in engineering and science, architecture and design, education, music, arts and entertainment. Syndicated columnist Neil Pierce believes, the future will see "the creative class seek out cultural variety", neighborhood art galleries, eclectic music venues and exciting nightlife. The premium placed on authenticity, real and historic neighbors and natural settings, will continue to grow. In general, strong growth of high-tech infrastructure and industry has been characteristic of cities that embrace and promote all manner of artistic expression and cultural diversity. [3]

3Ts of Florida for economic development are: technology, talent and tolerance to understand the new economic geography of creativity and its effects on economic outcomes.(Florida 2004:9) He claims that creativity and members of creative class take root in places that possess these critical factors. He defines tolerance as openness, inclusiveness, and diversity of all ethnicities, races and walks of life. Talent is defined as those with a bachelor degree and above. Technology is a function of both innovation and high-technology concentrations in a region. (The urban sociology reader, Whose culture?Whose City?, Zukin sayfa 281-290).

So according to Florida, a place should have these three features to attract creative people.

Intersection of commerce and culture in creative sector includes:

- ◆ entrepreneurs who produce creative products (eg designers, artists, writers, filmmakers)
- ◆ those who turn creations into commercial products (eg manufacturers, printers, studios)
- ◆ and those who distribute or market them (public relation firms, publishers, galleries, clothing stores, bookstores, movies, theaters)

10 basic fundamentals for creating a creative economy are: Leadership, proprietary, education,

cultural variety, technology, legal arrangements for formation of companies, banking business, government sponsorship, and auditing of government. Cultural variety is especially related with multicultural fabric of the city. The countries in order to enhance creative economy should follow these principles and have to make legal arrangements and laws in order to turn ideas into products. [2]

Florida points out that creative sector accounts for the lion's share of all wealth generation, combining with manufacturing sector and service sector.(Florida,2005:29) The focused sectors; advertisement, architecture, art, decoration, handmade, fashion, cinema, music, performing arts, publishing, science, software, television, toys, video games are already in creative economy. The trademark selling sectors that can be called as the "others", like automotive, tourism, real estate, construction, clothing which compete with trademarks instead of price and quality focused sectors, will also merge into creative economy by time.. [2]

The effects of consumption culture on the city will be discussed through consumption places in this paper. The real issue is not the consumption itself but its patterns and effects. As Baudrillard describes it:

We are standing at the point where life is surrounded by consumption, where all the activities are chained in the same bonding form, where the way of awarding is already arranged, where the "environment" form a whole, completely acclimated and organized. In consumption phenomena, the general acclimation of life, goods, objects, services, social behaviors and relations, passing from articulated network of objects and organizing behaviors and time totally; represents a completed stage in evolution starting from pure and simple abundance, articulated and lying to of the cities of future systemically lost in ambience network represented by consumption spaces. In the essence of life integrated in this form, in this universal abstract, there is no "meaning" anymore: the thing that forms the philosophy, poetry; that is; the big schemas of sliding on joining of elements separately, the big figures of metaphor and contradictions are not possible anymore. (Baudrillard, 1970:20,22)

Urry, in his book "Consuming Places", describes the features of consumption. The time can be affordable, that means avoiding from working and spending leisure time or other kind of working. Veblen studied the social dynamics of this idle class:" the distinguishing characteristic of "idle class" is to be exempted from all kind of useful work. Today, in west societies, the need of vacation is accepted as a standard of modern life. "I need a vacation" is clearly the reflection of modern approach to consume time far from working. (Urry, 1999:179)

The most distinctive feature of consumer society is building identities mostly of things. Some say that, in a consumer society, consumption has replaced work as peoples central life interest and modern consumer culture has been admonished because large sections of the world population are excluded, the sacrifices entailed by producers are unacceptable and materialism compromises spiritual values.

Zukin claims that the visual consumption of time and space is both fastened and abstracted from industrial production mentality. This situation caused the reconstruction of the city as a postmodern consumption center; it turned into a display, "a visionary landscape of visual consumption".

It is clearly observed that today's global economy imposes the increase of consumption places in the cities.

## **İSTANBUL: A CITY THAT INSPIRES CREATIVITY**

Creative people prefer to live in places where they are inspired, where they are supported, where they can benefit from technology, where they are tolerated for their any kind of expressions. They inspire in environments that thrill them with its "authentic" places and spatial identity.



Figure 1: Bogaziçi Bridge, Istanbul. (Postalçı, 2008)

As Shaukland states: “The spatial identity of an old city lies in its' monuments, different quarters or in its' places born in different ages. This identity cannot be moved. The impression of history is different. Cities, different places of cities, streets, even the houses of individuals all have a historical impression”. (Shaukland,1996:24)

Istanbul takes meaning with its geopolitic, cultural, geographic elements that form the city; as Marks stated it: “any kind of reality in the space can be explained in its formation process; in its history, the space is considered neither subject nor object; but a social reality”. In formation process of the city, different places of the city have affected each other. These places have affected the artistic approach of both individuals and the society, especially the regions like Galata, Haliç, Boğaziçi and Suriçi that have cultural and historical background. In every period of the city, this affect and meaning have always been a motivating force in creative fields of architecture, painting, and sculpture. The economic and cultural dimensions of globalization is experienced in last 20 years, has changed the social and physical profile of the city. These transformations weakened the artistic ground of the city and while the authentic cultural values and spaces are disappearing by time, the city stands out with its commercial and consumption places.

In the history of civilizations, it is observed that the creative process occurs primarily and intense in cities which have artistic, intellectual and cultural aggregations. The position of cities in different periods contributes the developments in design and plays a key role in contemporary culture. Vienna when Adolf Loos was living there, just before the First World War, Dessau in which the famous design school Bauhaus is built, the capital of visual culture in 1930s, Paris when Picasso and Le Corbusier were living, Los Angeles where American design century is defined when Eames couple have designed their studio and home, Milano when it was leading the contemporary design in 1960, and London where many pioneer designers, Zaha Hadid, Jasper Morrison live. It is not a coincidence that the designs contributed the universal design culture, are raised in these cities. [7] Similarly, the architecture of Architect Sinan in 16th century, the works of Pierre Loti in 19th century cannot be considered separately from the infrastructure of Istanbul that supports the creativity in history.

Kurtarır and Cengiz have compared Florida's and Montgomery's conditions for creative place. Florida defines these factors as employment opportunities, low entry barriers, openness to new comers, greater diversity, higher levels of quality of place, night activities, active participatory recreation, pack the time full of dense, active outdoor recreation, environment open to differences, authenticity and uniqueness, historic buildings, established neighborhoods, a unique music scene or specific cultural activities. Both of the authors emphasized the day and night activities and the permanence of activities. Space for artists is another important issue, as they help to create a successful cultural quarter. Florida stressed that spatial quality is a motive to prefer the place to live for creative people, as they enjoy active outdoor facilities and enjoyable areas. The openness and freedom for any kind of expressions is another characteristic of creative places. Montgomery suggests that a successful cultural quarter should be designed with stakeholders and the facilities should be organized for the whole year, unique and local shops should be supported instead of chain store. Living cultural elements of space should be protected. He made point of that “not every urban area can or should be a cultural quarter.



Figure 2: Historical Peninsula, Istanbul. (Postalci, 2008).

Cultural quarters only work where there are venues, work places for cultural producers and working artists”. (Kurtarır & Cengiz, 2005). Istanbul's heritage, arts, and culture serve as foundations for its brand, make it desirable city to live in and work for the creative class.

## CULTURAL CENTERS

As Istanbul has a concentric and multi-centered form, there are many focal points for commercial and cultural activities. Galata, Beyoğlu and Cihangir, conserving their historical structures, and having places and providing spaces for artists, galleries and cultural events, are the most well-known places for creative people. They prefer to live and work in this area if they can find the chance, and by time, the insecure profile of this area which is known with its purse-snatchers, roughnecks, bouncers is changed. There are more than 60 cultural centers in Istanbul of 12,5 million, and almost half of these cultural and art centre take place in this area. Galata-Beyoğlu-Taksim line is a lively artery of culture and entertainment with its theaters, art galleries, cinema and cafes which pave the way for cultural activities, theatre festivals, film festivals and biennales. Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation is established in 1970s supported the cultural life of the city, and both with the organizations of firms, Istanbul became the city of festivals.

The environment in this region is so impressive that, many artists are located here and moved their offices and studios as well. Zukin points out; artists themselves have become a cultural means of framing space. We can observe the same process in Galata area where their presence puts a neighborhood on the road to gentrification. (Zukin)

Today, the new commercial center of the city is Levent and the cultural activities in this area are supported by commercial firms, or banks in their own concert halls or galleries; like the Issanat in İş Bank Towers founded by İş Bank, or Borusan Art Gallery (1997) and Borusan Art and Culture founded by Borusan Holding.

Many of the museums in Istanbul placed in Sultanahmet and Beşiktaş region, opened around at the end of 19th century and at the beginning of 20th century, are in or close to mosques, churches or palaces. Archeological Museum (1891), Hagia Sofia Museum, Hagia Irene Museum (1908), Mosaic Museum, Turkish-Islamic eserleri Museum (1914), Old East eserleri Museum (1914) are in Sultanahmet area, and The Sea Museum (1897), Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Painting and Sculpture Museum (1937) are in Beşiktaş, Dolmabahçe area and Military Museum is in Harbiye. [4]



Figure 3: New Commercial Centre of Istanbul, (Postalci, 2008).

The new museums are founded private foundations in different places of the city; Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum (1994) in Eyüp, Sakıp Sabancı Museum (2002) in Sarıyer, Pera Museum (2005) in Beyoğlu, and İstanbul Modern (2004) in Karaköy. It can be observed that new cultural centers are not in different quarters of the city.

## CONSUMPTION SPACES

Istanbul attracts many people with its commercial opportunities, and the growth of the city is uncontrolled; about 10 million of population in 2000 has reached 12 million in 2007. It is interesting that the population in this cultural centre of İstanbul, Beyoğlu and in business centre, Beşiktaş did not increase in past 7 years, while in historical peninsula, in Eminönü, it decreases %40, and in new residential areas Ümraniye, Kartal it increases at the rates %44, %40. [5]

Eminönü was once the commercial centre of İstanbul with its Covered Bazaar (1461), Egyptian Bazaar (1660) and Mahmutpaşa Bazaar (1462). Today, both real estate and commercial investments are mostly realized closed to business centre in Mecidiyeköy, Levent, Etiler area for rich consumers. Starting from the middle of 90s, the investments for shopping centers and malls are fastened in 2002, after the economic crisis in 2001. In Levent; more than 300.000m<sup>2</sup> area is built only for consumption. It is determined that, at the end of 2003, the total offer/supply for shopping malls in Turkey is almost 1.532.000 m<sup>2</sup> and İstanbul owns the significant amount of this area. [6]

## CONCLUSION

The consumption places motivate people to spend more, to consume more and serve as places to spend leisure time, meeting points for young population, and places to make show off. The consumer society is the profile of people that is directed with advertisements for commercial growth. The consumption society culture gives children the messages like: everything is yours, everything, anything you want everyone has to serve you, buy everything, you are what you own, the more you own, the happier you will be, want everything, own everything. The future of a young generation that is cultivated in a consumer society should hardly be creative. The city can offer places both to produce, to create or to consume. The point is that, when the rate of the consumption places to creative places is too far, the city wouldn't be so inviting for creative people. So, if the plan for the city is to put it in a creative economy, there should be more investments for technology and cultural platforms. While planning the future of the city, the investments for the "focused sectors" should be more than "trade selling sectors". We need to cultivate creativity instead of consumption in our children if they are to hold the jobs of present and future.

Istanbul is elected for "European capital of culture" for 2010, with its creative energy and transformer dynamism sourced from its media, culture, communication and service industries and being a financial centre of Turkey. It is a motivating force for making investments for art and culture. The inspiring environment and architectural values of İstanbul should be presented well. The conservation of the cultural heritage is a significant issue as there is a risk for İstanbul not to be on World Heritage list of UNESCO anymore, since it is observed by specialists that the works for conserving the historical sites of the city are insufficient since 2003. The government should create funds for conserving these archeological and historical sites, and architecture of the city, instead of encouraging investments for building new shopping malls, markets in every quarter of the city ignoring the characteristics of the historical city.

## ENDNOTES

[1] <http://www.wikipedia.org>

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