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Analyzing the Quality of Place: Creative Clusters in Soho and Beyoğlu

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ABSTRACT This paper analyzes the spatial characteristics of some parts of cities where the creative types (i.e. companies and people) involved in creative production are densely located. It aims to identify those socio-spatial factors that attract and retain creatives. In particular, it focuses on the film industry-based inner-city creative clusters, i.e. Soho in London and Beyoğlu in İstanbul. This exploratory, cross-national, multiple case study applies the qualitative research techniques of interviews, observations, cognitive and cluster mapping. The paper concludes with the Analysis Framework for the Quality of Place which reveals the integrity of physical, socio-cultural, perceptual and visual characteristics of place. In particular, it discusses the key performance criteria and the scale of place which provides an inspiring and productive environment such as walkability, spatial proximity, and the public realm.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, creativity and its relation to urban place has become an important area of debate in economics, geography, sociology and also urban studies. Several new concepts have emerged, including creative/knowledge economy (Hutton 2004; Madanipour 2011) creative cities (Landry 2000), knowledge-based urban development (Yiğitcanlar, Velibeyoğlu, and Baum 2008), creative clusters (Evans 2009), creative class (Florida 2002), creative industries (DCMS 1998; Hartley 2005) and creative industries quarters (Evans 2009). Madanipour (2011) searched for spatial expressions of the knowledge economy on urban space, and identified new spatial structures, such as science and technology parks, cultural/creative districts, office clusters, gentrified neighbourhoods and deprived ghettos.

In this context, this research aims to identify the socio-spatial characteristics of cultural/creative districts that provide the best possible environment for creative clusters to occur. The research question is posed as: to what extent do characteristics of urban place play a role in supporting the clustering of film companies and creative workforce of it located in specific parts of cities? The paper, which consists of case studies conducted in Soho and Beyoğlu, is based on a review of literature on clustering, quality of place and the explanation of the
research methods. It presents the findings within the analysis framework and discusses these in detail.

**Clustering and Creative Clusters**

Porter (1998, 78) defined clustering as “... critical masses in one place ... and geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field”. Porter’s (1998) cluster theory claimed that the clustering of similar activities leads to economic prosperity through providing a competitive advantage. However, it is important to note that Porter focused only on industrial or commercial clustering rather than the agglomeration of art and creativity related activities and businesses. Evans (2009) termed these agglomeration zones of artistic and creative production as *creative clusters*. These creative clusters can be located in the inner city, historic quarters, socio-cultural entertainment centres, museum quarters, multi-media and design districts or music and theatre quarters (Evans 2009). In addition, in the urban design literature, Tiesdell, Oc, and Heath (1996, 11) described clusters as “agglomeration of closely related-activities of economic, artistic, and socio-cultural functions”, which are described as being key conditions for the existence of an urban quarter. These clusters could also be located in peripheral locations, such as technology parks, innovation hubs, media centres or knowledge precincts (Gornostaeva 2008). In this context, it is important to understand whether creative industries, and in particular the film industry, are inclined to cluster and, if so, to explore the locational characteristics and spatial conditions of the clustering.

**Quality of Place and the Analysis Framework**

The rise of the information technologies has transformed the conventional notion of place. Arefi and Triantafillou (2005) identified two approaches over the credibility and importance of place: one suggested that place still matters, while the other one advocated the demise of place and the death of distance (as cited in Webber 1964; Castells 1989; Hall 1996; Pratt 2000). Furthermore, research supports the debate that place also plays an important role in the development process of creative cities by ensuring the necessary conditions for creativity (Landry 2000; Florida 2002; Drake 2003; Trip 2007; Smit 2011).

While existing studies generally focus on the metropolitan level, their findings emphasize the need to research the concept on the neighbourhood level, especially with local data. In addition to this, research encompasses a variety of creative and knowledge industries, rather than focusing on just one. As the industrial dynamics of each of these creative industries are quite different (Hartley 2005), this research focuses on a single industry, the film industry, clustered in two different locations, Soho and Beyoğlu. In this context, this paper analyzes the characteristics of place at the micro-scale, focusing on the neighbourhood level, i.e. quality of place of the creative neighbourhoods.

Quality of place is also a consideration linked to a range of concepts within the urban design literature, including *good city form* (Lynch 1981), *urban quality* (Parfect and Power 1997), *quality of place* (Llewelyn-Davies 2000), *successful cultural quarters* (Montgomery 2003) and *design quality* Llewelyn-Davies 2000; (Carmona, Punter, and Chapman 2002). Canonical urban design texts have sought to develop frameworks, performance dimensions, and principles which contribute to making
successful places (Carmona et al. 2003; Carmona and Tiesdell 2007). It is important to understand how these principles are relevant to fostering creative clustering. From a review of the related literature in urban design, this research developed a framework with which to analyze the quality of place in Soho and Beyoğlu. It is based on the definitions (Rowley 1994; Madanipour 1997), theories (Jacobs 1961; Lynch 1981; Trancik 1986; Jacobs and Appleyard 1987; Sternberg 2000), principles, (CABE 2000; Carmona et al. 2003; Carmona and Tiesdell 2007) considerations and dimensions (Carr et al. 1992), and components/triads of architectural and urban place (Canter 1977; Punter 1991; Habraken 2000). It guided the data collection process, particularly the preparation of the interview questions. Based on the findings of the research, the initial framework was modified and only the characteristics that positively contribute to clustering in both cases are presented within the final framework (Table 2). Another limitation of the research is the duality regarding the scope of urban design (Madanipour 1997). One of the ambiguities of urban design as defined by Madanipour (1997) is the relationship between product and process in urban design. On the one hand, urban design is defined as the design of the product, i.e. substantive characteristics of urban space, questions of scale, visual, spatial and social concerns; on the other hand, urban design is defined as the process dealing with the procedural, place-making issues generating this product. In this context, this paper focuses on the product debate rather than the procedural place-making approaches and also seeks to identify the relationships between these two. The other debate as defined by Madanipour (1997) is related to scale of urban fabric and the right scale of urban intervention, i.e. macro or micro-scale urban design. This paper also discusses the findings in terms of identifying the appropriate scale for creative clustering.

**Methodology**

**Case Study Design**

This research is a cross-national, multiple case study conducted in Turkey and England. Although it has benefits, pitfalls and challenges, it is suggested that cross-national studies are necessary to reach a more critical understanding of the research subject (Hantrais and Mangen 1996; Yin, 2003; Masser and Williams 2005). Furthermore, rather than comparison, this study adapts a two-directional none-comparative evaluation to discuss the findings, to highlight the similarities and differences in two countries relating to the relationship between clustering and quality of place (Figure 1) (Masser and Williams 2005).

The research was conducted in London-Soho and İstanbul-Beyoğlu where film companies and people working in this industry have been clustered for more than 100 years. These places are associated with bohemian life and art, accommodating many artists and creative industry companies, mainly clusters of companies related to the film industry. In addition to these main cases, the research also discussed the other film clusters where the companies tend to move to such as the Noho area, just near Soho, and Levent and Maslak on the peripheries of İstanbul.

**Data Collection and Research Participants**

This research was conducted through various qualitative data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews (face-to-face, telephone, street
interviews), and structured and unstructured observations (photo-documentation, video and sound recordings), as well as telephone and email surveys, cognitive and cluster mapping.

The research participants are categorized in two groups. The first group is film people\(^1\) and the second group are the key informants, who are the individuals, involved in the development process of Soho and Beyoğlu, such as community leaders, long-standing residents, local authorities and NGOs. In total, 107 interviews in Soho and 47 interviews in Beyoğlu were conducted, including with film people and key informants. The details of the type and the number of the interviews and other data collection methods are shown in Table 1. One of the aims was to ask the interviewees to draw a representation of their understanding of Soho and Beyoğlu; while it was only possible to obtain 12 cognitive maps from the Soho interviews, 14 were collected from interviews in Beyoğlu, including film people and key informants (Table 1).

In selecting the interviewees from film people, no sampling strategy was followed concerning the company types (i.e. production, post-production, distribution and exhibition) and the professions of the participants; rather, a practical approach was adapted and interviews were scheduled with anyone who agreed to be interviewed. More interviews were secured with the snowball effect of recommendation. The aim was to interview company managers/directors with specific knowledge about their company’s location decision. The aim was to interview both the large-scale, long-established companies and the small-scale, start-ups in order to identify and understand the cluster-specific dynamics.

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Figure 1. Design of cross-national case study (adapted from Masser and Williams 2005).
In both case studies, the same selecting strategy was applied; however, it was noted that differences existed between the profiles of the interviewees from two locations. Although they were the managers of the companies in both cases, the occupations of film people interviewed turned out to be different, which also might have affected the data analysis, the responses related specifically to the sources of creativity and benefits of clustering.

In Beyoğlu, some of the directors/managers of the companies were also the screenwriters, directors or people engaged in creative production (i.e. directors, screenwriters, production designers, sound designers, etc.), and mainly left-wing, intellectual-oriented, art-oriented people as well as some business-oriented people. On the other hand, in Soho none of the interviewees stated that they were also involved in directing or writing the plot, rather they were executive managers and producers, sound designers, a chief technical officer, project managers, runners, editors, musicians etc.

As suggested by Yin (2003), a database for each of the case studies, comprising the profiles and the contact details of the film companies, film people and key informants, was prepared. The database preparation evolved within the case studies based on the information gathered during the field work, the information provided by interviewees, through an email/telephone survey and through reviewing websites. The database was used when approaching film companies and key informants, and also when mapping the clusters. Because the two cases had different sources of data, a different mapping technique was used for each.

This research applied Jacobs’ (1961) method of direct, close observation of urban life based on personal urban experience. Observations were part of the overall research process, integrated with data collection, which took place between spring 2009 and the end of 2011. The amount of time spent in Soho and

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### Table 1. The summary of data collection in Soho (S) and Beyoğlu (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research method</th>
<th>Face-to-face interviews</th>
<th>Telephone interviews</th>
<th>Telephone surveys</th>
<th>Email surveys</th>
<th>Street interviews</th>
<th>Cognitive maps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research participants</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film companies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informants</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contacts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHERS SOHO**
- 4 Film-related: Film-makers, film director and film artist
- 7 Designers: Industrial designers, photographer, graphic designer, music company worker, fashion designer, interior designer
- 38 General: Art student, waitress, cashier, tourist, unemployed artists, bookshop seller, policeman, market trader, visitor, professor, chef, pimp, restaurant owner, homeless, waiter, security, receptionist, shop assistant, Samaritans’ receptionist, shop owner, barmen, black gay man, outlet agency, Karishna, Ambulance bike, Vintage shop sellers, Crossrail workers, sex shop worker, bar security

**OTHERS BEYÖĞLU**
- A resident
- A cafe manager
- Two real estate developers
- A waitress
- A sculptor
- A street vendor
- A journalist
- A sahhaf
- A construction manager
- A long-standing resident
- A street plumber

In both case studies, the same selecting strategy was applied; however, it was noted that differences existed between the profiles of the interviewees from two locations. Although they were the managers of the companies in both cases, the occupations of film people interviewed turned out to be different, which also might have affected the data analysis, the responses related specifically to the sources of creativity and benefits of clustering.

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Beyoğlu was 65 and 20 days, respectively. This imbalance was due to resource and the time constraints.

**Data Analysis**

All the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed by means of coding and thematic analysis according to the categories such as Clustering (factors on location decision, advantages/likes, problems, benefits of clustering), De-clustering (location change, advantages of new location, disadvantages of new location), Creativity (sources, processes, place and creativity, inner-city/periphery), Networks (links, local/global interactions, film-making, technology) and place-making processes. This was accompanied by a spatial analysis of the urban pattern, maps and plans, and content analysis of images and text from documents, planning reports, magazines, books, films, photographs and postcards (Figure 2).

**Findings**

*The Soho Cluster and Beyoğlu Creative Hotspots*

As discussed in detail below, the research findings indicate that both areas can be named as *film-industry based inner-city creative clusters*. The research finds that Soho has 280 film companies in the core sector activities of production, post-production, distribution and exhibition. Soho accounts for 6.5% of all film companies located in London (UK Film Council 2010). Despite this small percentage, it is recognized as the main core of the film industry in London, as attested by the interviewees, and corroborated by Nachum and Keeble (2003) and Pratt and Gornostaeva (2009).

Since the 1900s, Soho has always been the centre of film, TV and media-related activities in London. The primary locations of the film industry were narrow streets or courtyards where many film companies are located (Warwick Court, Gray’s Inn Road and Cecil Court) (Figure 3). As the industry grew, it expanded into Soho itself, which probably provided more options, as it consisted of many narrow streets and different sized buildings and office spaces.
Companies are densely clustered within a one square-mile area around the mews and lanes in the middle of Soho. They are particularly concentrated in certain locations, such as Wardour Street (45 film companies), Dean Street (17), Poland Street (16) and around Soho Square and Golden Square. The location of these companies is shown in Figure 4, and some of the buildings used by the film companies, especially those which are located on the ground floor, are shown in Figure 5.

It is not only the clusters and co-location, but also the networks that make Soho a valuable location. Soho is networked with a strong underground fibre-optic network called Sohonet. Established in 1995, this network connects the Soho media and post-production community to Pinewood and Shepperton Studios, and to other major production centres in Rome, New York City, Los Angeles, Sydney and Wellington in New Zealand:

We have to have Sohonet. We are moving big files around all the time. We forward sections of films, never ship the whole film in one go because of security reasons … Technology is absolutely important; but meeting with people is always gonna be important … (Int-S7)²
Figure 4. The Soho Cluster (base map: Edina Digimap Service 2011).
There are also other locations in London, such as Notting Hill, Clerkenwell, Islington, Camden (Gornostaeva and Cheshire 2003; Gornostaeva 2009), East London such as Hoxton (Pratt 2009), Shoreditch and Noho (North of Oxford Street). Noho companies are the former Soho companies which relocated due to high rents and the small size of offices in Soho. However, proximity to Soho was still important, and hence they preferred to remain within walking distance.

Beyoğlu has also been the location of the film companies, and currently there are 138 core sector film companies in Beyoğlu, 46% of all film companies located in

Figure 5. Some of the buildings used by the film companies in Soho.
Istanbul (Özkan 2009). The companies in Beyoğlu are dispersed across a nine square-kilometre area along İstiklal Caddesi (the main thoroughfare) and are also located in different places without a specific concentration. It is possible to group these locations into three areas, Area-1: Pera, Area-2: Galata and Area-3: Cihangir and Galatasaray (Figure 6). The buildings in which these companies are located are shown in Figure 7.

The first film companies started to cluster in Beyoğlu around the 1920s and numbers peaked in the 1960s. The companies were particularly concentrated around Yeşilçam Street, a narrow street connected to the main street, İstiklal Caddesi, and from there they expanded to Gazeteci Erol Dernek Street (Figure 8). However, due to socio-cultural, economic and spatial transformations, the film industry started to de-cluster at the beginning of the 1980s, as companies ceased or re-located in other districts. As well as the problems encountered in Beyoğlu, the spatial strategies of the municipality and technology also accelerated the decentralization process. Rather than remaining in central historic districts, many companies moved out to the peripheries, into new business districts with prestigious high-rise office blocks which emerged along newly-built roads. On the metropolitan scale, the companies dispersed into different areas in the cultural triangle (Enlil, Evren, and Dincer 2011), i.e. Beyoğlu, Kadıköy and Şişli districts which include Levent and Maslak new business districts, and are scattered randomly throughout these districts (Figure 9). On other hand, within the last decade there has been a tendency towards re-clustering in Beyoğlu, in Area-1 and Area-2, due to the historic image and bohemian atmosphere of these places.

Our foreign customers find Beyoğlu very interesting. I think they would not enjoy coming to Levent which would be very modern and generic for them. For them visiting us here in Beyoğlu, in the Tunnel is much more fun; because they are interested in this culture, heritage. (Int-B23)

Quality of Place in Soho and Beyoğlu

The research findings indicate that there is no single dominating factor, but an overlapping of many different layers, including physical, socio-cultural, perceptual and visual characteristics of place that support clustering. Together these factors contribute to the complexity and creative atmosphere of Soho and Beyoğlu. They are outlined in Table 2, which is explained in detail below supported with the interview quotes from Soho and Beyoğlu.

Physical Characteristics

Physical characteristics are grouped under the rubrics of location, land use, urban form and visual characteristics. Location and land use are the primary factors driving companies’ initial location decisions, and the interviews suggest that urban form and visual characteristics are secondary factors. Participants emphasize the importance of these secondary factors in retaining the creative workforce and also in facilitating the inter-company relationships. In addition to these urban factors, location decisions are influenced by the architectural factors such as building characteristics, the interior office space qualities, the location of the office space within the building, the architectural style of the buildings, and environmental factors such as heating, cooling, electricity and the use of natural and artificial light.
Figure 6. Creative hotspots in Beyoğlu (base map: Beyoğlu municipality 2011).
One of the most important physical factors is location, which includes proximity, centrality and accessibility. Both Soho and Beyoğlu are central locations and have good public transportation links, surrounded by major roads and underground stations, making them easy to access from any part of their respective cities. An inner-city location is therefore highlighted as the primary advantage for film companies. Both clusters are also in close proximity to many urban facilities, other offices and cultural venues. Being within walking distance of home, particularly in Beyoğlu, is stated to be of importance (Figure 10). These locational factors facilitate the daily working process, increase efficiency, promote collaborations (in the case of Soho) and provide sources for individual inspiration.

During the Yeşilcam Period, it was not possible to get a job if you did not locate your office in Beyoğlu. It was a great potential for getting jobs or making co-productions ... Everybody used to gather, meet in Beyoğlu. The proximity between the offices used to provide the opportunities for interactions between people. (Int-B25)

Another positive factor related to location which supports clustering is accessibility and the ease of walking, particularly in Soho. There are three different aspects of accessibility, combining its physical and social aspects: accessibility on a metropolitan level, accessibility on a neighbourhood level, and social accessibility.
to film people. Soho meets all of these effectively, with a city-wide transportation network, a permeable street fabric having a one-way traffic system, compact and fine-grained urban pattern and a vibrant public realm. The flow of pedestrian movement supported with vehicle access may also have a positive impact on clustering, as it contributes to intra-company interactions, data sharing/exchange. In addition, it facilitates access to offices for loading and unloading the film-making equipment and access for transportation-related matters. In terms of social accessibility, the vitality public realm contributes to social interaction and a sense of community (Lund 2002), through its public squares, cafe culture (Tiesdell and Oc 1998; Montgomery 1997) and small-scale sites of social interaction. There are spaces which encourage chance encounters, informal meetings and serendipity (Pratt 2000).

I like engaging in local life in Soho. It has a village atmosphere. Because of this village atmosphere you feel familiar with people and the spaces. You know more people and consequently you interact, and share ideas and jobs. (Int-S12)

Similarly, Beyoğlu works well in terms of accessibility at the metropolitan level. However, at the neighbourhood level, congestion causes difficulties for car access to offices. Pedestrianization, introduced in 1990, also created problems for pedestrian and vehicle access to offices, due to the congestion created by pavement cafes and shopping flows. In addition, car access to the entire area is limited. In terms of accessibility, Beyoğlu has greater potential due to the local culture,
which encourages ‘pop-in, drop-by,’ i.e. the lifestyle, although it should be pointed out this is a general feature of Turkish culture, not only confined to Beyoğlu. As well as the locational, physical and social aspects, place-management strategies could affect the accessibility; a positive factor in Soho and negative one in Beyoğlu.

The public realm of Beyoğlu is just as vital as Soho. Research participants emphasized that they are very much inspired by Beyoğlu’s chaotic atmosphere, cosmopolitan, diverse environment, especially by passive interactions, such as people-watching, voyeurism and observations. However, compared to Soho, it is less supportive of direct social interaction and less conducive to collaborations. The differences in size between the two areas are potentially a factor here, as people and companies in Beyoğlu are more widely dispersed.

I am inspired by the social environment, the immediate surrounding feeds me; observing the community I am living with contributed to my projects; it gave me a new perspective. (Int-B18)

You can get whatever you need from Beyoğlu; İstiklal Caddesi is a potential source for creativity, sometimes I just look down from the window and choose the actors from the people walking on İstiklal. (Int-B15)

**Land Use**

Both Soho and Beyoğlu have a mixed-use, which was cited by the research participants as one of the reasons for their location decision. The cafe culture,
The diversity of ground floor uses (Figure 11), clusters of other creative industries, and in particular residential characteristics, were stated as being important influences on location preferences.

Table 2. Analysis framework for the quality of place of inner-city creative clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Characteristics/Product</th>
<th>Quality of Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical/Spatial</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Land use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-Cultural</td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors/Process</td>
<td>Planning/Design Intervention</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>Hard Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creative entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residential characteristics and living in close proximity to work provide the opportunities for developing a sense of community. Beyoğlu has an advantage in having many different residential neighbourhoods that are attractive to film people. Beyoğlu is their habitat, a lifestyle choice. This proximity of home and workplace provides an opportunity for observing daily life in the different neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu (Figure 10). Engaging with their residential location increases familiarity with the local environment, and this is stated as a source of inspiration in local film-making. In Soho, by contrast, none of the interviewed film people themselves reported living in the neighbourhood or having colleagues there. People generally live in other suburbs, which involves commuting by public or private transportation, alternatively by bicycle, but not usually on foot.

Other existing film companies and creative industries were stated as another positive factor for location decision, particularly in Soho. Co-location and spatial proximity encourage job growth, save money and time, bring confidence, and allow contacts to be made: “Economically good; because you can find facilities you need to use right outside the door, so you do not have to travel an hour to go somewhere” (Int-S12). As there are both large and small-scale companies, in relation to production, post-production and distribution, all services can be obtained within Soho: “Soho works as a one-stop shop; if you come to Soho you can have all your work done” (Int-S14). The agglomeration of these different services in close walking distance increases the quality of production, as each process is performed by a specialist company. As well as small-scale companies and start-ups that can share work, the large-scale distribution companies are especially important as these create an atmosphere of confidence: “Especially, during the last 30 years companies have moved to Soho; big companies attracted others” (Int-S15).

As well as film-industry related uses, there are other clusters in both cases, in particular graphic, media, fashion, printing and theatreland in Soho, and antiques, music and fashion in Beyoğlu. Both locations have various cultural venues which provide stages for creative activities to take place, particularly in Beyoğlu. The existence of different types of cultural venues, e.g. the local-art house cinemas and cinema unions, contribute to clustering by providing spaces for interaction, job sharing and job hunting.

Another factor contributing to clustering in both areas is the cafe culture (Montgomery 1997), what is often referred to as having a vibrant, lively urban atmosphere with various eating and drinking venues. Both places have various types of indoor and outdoor cafes, bars and restaurants, such as wine bars, live
music venues/blues bars, tea/coffee houses, breakfast bars, jazz bars, sandwich bars, chain cafes (Starbucks in both cases, Nero, Costa, EAT. only in Soho, etc.), pubs/taverns, clubs/dance bars, pavement cafes (Montgomery 1997) and different types of local and international restaurants. In both cases, the interviewees highlighted that these places are important in terms of assisting job hunting, as a gathering place for lunchtime meetings and socializing, and as places for business meetings. The overall cafe culture provides spaces for interaction and the exchange of ideas and information. In particular, the direct relation between the streets and the pavement cafes nurtures the ‘pop-in, pop-out’ lifestyle. This
contributes to creativity by providing chance encounters, interaction and passive people-watching opportunities (Figure 12 and 13, 14).

The cafe culture in Soho offers perceptual factors, i.e. a sense of community. This is significant for a creative industry such as the film industry, in which it is important to be a ‘regular’ or a ‘denizen’, which in turn creates a sense of attachment and belonging. This familiarity with place is important for interactions and also creativity. In contrast, Beyoğlu cafes are only used as venues for meetings or job hunting, rather than being seen as contributing directly to a sense of community. The cafes have a significant impact on clustering; however, the differences in the management of cafes between the two locations also affect the clustering, positive in Soho, negative in Beyoğlu. In addition to these findings from this research, it is important to mention that the contribution of the cafe culture to a

Figure 12. Pavement cafes in Soho.

Figure 13. Pubs in Soho.
safe and vibrant public realm is also highlighted in the urban design (Oldenburg 1989; Montgomery 1997; Tiesdell and Oc 1998; Roberts and Turner 2005).

One of the main advantages of being in Beyoğlu is to be able to have face-to-face meetings with screenwriters, actors, musicians and directors. These people live just nearby in Cihangir which is a new fashion, gathering place of these people … They come to our office or we meet with them at the nearby cafes. These cafes and bars that these friends go, attracted more artists and the cafes have become very popular—trendy artists clubs. (Int-B3)

Roberts and Turner (2005) defined Soho as the first neighbourhood to operate successfully as a 24 Hour City (Bianchini 1995; Heath 1997). However by 1997, many complaints were received from the residents and businesses regarding the noise, social disorder and the crime, especially at the weekends, due to the late-night licenses of the bars, cafes and restaurants along Old Compton Street, known as the high street of Soho (Roberts and Turner 2005). Other scholars have argued that Soho is losing its continental style of cafe culture since it is catering for commercial rather than social needs (Tiesdell and Oc 1998; Roberts and Turner 2005).
When the problems emerged, the Council declared that Soho should be part of a West End Stress Area. According to this decision, new permissions were not granted and liquor licensing hours were not extended (Roberts and Turner 2005). The Council aimed to prevent the congestion-related problems by regulating opening hours, the boundaries of spillover of tables and chairs, limiting the amount of furniture being used on the pavement, as well as controlling the style and the material of which it was made.

In contrast, in Beyoğlu, the lack of street management resulted in conflicts between residents, businesses, visitors, cafe/bar/restaurant owners and the Municipality. The increasing number of cafes in Beyoğlu, especially the pavement cafes, created congestion-related problems. Most of the interviewees complained about the access problems to the offices because the tables and chairs have extended out onto the pavements and streets. In addition, residents also complained about the noise and alcohol-related problems. As there is no street management plan, the conflicts increased and the Beyoğlu Municipality commenced a series of actions in July 2011, removing the tables and chairs of these pavement cafes. These so-called table operations sparked protests and discussions about the public realm of Beyoğlu and its management.

**Urban Form**

There are some characteristics of urban form that contribute to clustering, such as permeability, traditional street pattern, porosity, micro-public places, legibility and compactness. They stimulate inter-company relations and facilitate the daily working process of the creative workforce. Both cases have a permeable street pattern,
including many alternative routes, short cuts, and various street types which make them easy to walk through. In Soho, micro-public places, such as building alcoves, niches, mews, lanes and courts, provide permeability; in Beyoğlu the passages, short cuts and many alternative routes and arcades provide porosity and permeability. The street pattern is also highlighted within the cognitive maps drawn by interviewees (Figure 15). Even the digital-based companies reported a need to be able to walk to other offices, as not everything is transferable through the Internet. In particular, the runners, whose job is to carry tapes and materials between the companies, stated that being able to find their way easily saves time and increases their efficiency.

... We still have lots of tape coming to our office ... We get commercials submitted online but also we have commercials coming in tape or disk, finished or made in this area. If they cannot be uploaded, they just bring them in. (Int-S 11)

Being able to walk; it allows interaction; people bump into each other on the streets ... Yes there are very many stimulants ... Soho is a fantastic place. Very lively, I see all my clients; by the window, in front of the office or they just walk in. I think this is a very good spot for us. I see people just walking outside the door. (Int-S17)

I like being here because it is just very easy to access. My partners, colleagues, pop in when they come to Beyoğlu. I like chatting, exchanging ideas with these people who just drop by ... This mutual conversation benefits both of us. Customers also like Beyoğlu; they walk in to the office just to chat not for commercial reasons or business relations. (Int-B6)
Compactness/Boundaries help to form mental images. As Tiesdell, Oc, and Heath (1996) suggested, boundaries designate a cultural quarter. In Soho boundaries are well defined, and people recognize that; as well as physical limits, the boundaries set the perceptual limits (Figure 16). This, together with place attachment, enhances the sense of being part of Soho. In contrast, Beyoğlu lacks this defined shape. This is why the perception of being ‘in Beyoğlu’ may not be so strongly felt. The larger scale of Beyoğlu might also be an important factor in this respect.

Visual Characteristics

In terms of the visual characteristics, in both case studies people appreciated the built heritage, the history, the architectural diversity, landmarks and embraced these as a source of new ideas and creativity. Landmarks are important both in Soho and Beyoğlu in terms of giving directions and offering help in way-finding, especially for the film companies that have foreign co-producers and clients whom they meet at the offices. The important benefit for companies is to be close to urban landmarks, which reflects in a company’s image, and is therefore an important factor in the location decision. The other positive factor, spatial diversity, was stated as one of the assets of Beyoğlu for film-making, but was not mentioned in Soho. Beyoğlu has many different styles of urban places, such as edgy urban areas, and busy crowded shopping streets, bohemian streets and many different styles of historical buildings from different eras, residential neighbourhoods with different characteristics and a wide variety of non-residential uses (Figure 17).

Socio-cultural Characteristics

The socio-cultural factors, such as community, have a direct and indirect effect on clustering, either as a primary factor influencing location decision, or as a
secondary factor on retaining the creative workforce. In both cases, the interviewees highlighted the importance of community (both film community and residential community), cosmopolitan life-style, the high-level of skill and relatively low average age of the population, high levels of tolerance and social life. They also stressed the importance of cafe culture in terms of the opportunities for face-to-face meetings, mutual support, sharing sources and information, and also intra-company relationships.

There are two main reasons why people are in Soho: drinking and socialization. There are many pubs around the corner. People like that everybody is in this place. Film/media crews like Soho. They like being in the Soho community; they like to be in the mix, being around, just being part of the crowd. (Int-S31)

This cosmopolitan life inspires me a lot. I love communicating with these different ethnic background people. The scripts of the movies, my stories are usually influenced by these cosmopolitan stories and characters. (Int-B11)

Perceptual Characteristics

Impressions associated with place are very important; these drive location decisions and influence daily working processes. Perceptual characteristics considered as significant include sense of community, place attachment and sense of belonging in both cases, image in Soho and tradition/nostalgia in Beyoğlu. Both areas have a bohemian atmosphere, with a rather seedy, ageing and eccentric appearance, and both have strong connections with art and cinema. In Beyoğlu, most interviewees mentioned the issues of place attachment and tradition linked with Beyoğlu as “being a cinema place” as part of the factors on location preferences. Some companies, especially long-standing ones, have strong psychological ties with Beyoğlu. Personal attachments are also highlighted in cognitive maps drawn by interviewees (Figure 18). However, the film-related image of Beyoğlu as a centre for cinema and art has been declining since the 1980s due to the de-clustering of the film companies.

I thought about moving from Beyoğlu but I could not. I hate crowds but also it attracts me; a conflict in me. (Int-B26)

… Being in Beyoğlu is something psychological, it becomes a habit, a costume; it is also a tradition; Beyoğlu is the psychological centre. (Int-B3)

Cinema cannot detach from Beyoğlu; organic and traditional ties, the roots are here. Recently some companies have tended to re-locate in different locations; but still Beyoğlu is the place in which we are influenced by each other. It is a place of creative sparks. (Int-B15)

Image and reputation is much more important in Soho, and contributes to forming and sustaining the clusters. The film industry contributes enormously to the image of Soho as the “little-media village and the media centre of London” (Int-S16). It is known as “the heart of the film industry; it is a perfect slot” (Int-S17), with various screening rooms, in which people can see their finished work in a proper cinema atmosphere, and the laboratories, post-production houses, sound studios, animation companies, editing offices, visual effect studios, distribution companies
and studio chains. The image of Soho is frequently reported as one of the driving factors for location decisions. Being located in Soho and having the Soho address is crucially important, especially for attracting customers. A positive image, credibility and prestige provide economic advantages. A Soho address brings business, helps in getting jobs and attracts talented people. Soho as a location delivers an invisible profit which some interviewees noted as impossible to quantify: “Not being in Soho is expensive; even sometimes just being in Soho wins the jobs” (Int-S2). A post-production company manager stated that Soho is similar to Burbank, Los Angeles:

We started in New Molten which is absolutely nowhere … Then we moved into Soho and within a year or two our business grew by 30 per cent; absolutely, we got really key clients like Warner Brothers. If you are in Soho, it is a badge you wear—and people say ‘Ooh! You are in Soho’ … People rely on you. (Int-S7)

The Impact of the Film Industry on the Environment

As well as characteristics of place that contribute to clustering, film industry clusters in Soho and Beyoğlu have a considerable effect on the urban environment, i.e. image, public realm and the physical environment. The film industry increases
the activity in the area (film screenings, events, film festivals, cinemas, location shooting), provides a talented young workforce which frequents cafes, pubs, restaurants as places of social interaction, and hence contributes to vitality of the cafe culture, enhances the community ties (some film companies involved in community projects in Soho, cinema unions in Beyoğlu build networks between film people), builds a positive image, promotes the area through the TV-series and films shot on location, contributes to the physical environment by renovating old houses and converting them into offices. In addition, the creative entrepreneurs contribute to perpetuating the clusters through some projects such as Sohonet in Soho, and Erman Han, Plato Film School and the Cezayir Street Project in Beyoğlu.

Mort (1995) stated that the 1980s introduced contemporary developments in Soho and this attracted more media companies. There was an increase in the number of the media companies in the area, and Soho came to be recognized as ‘medialand’. Mort (1995) added that the film industry played a pivotal role in the transformations taking place in Soho during this period. Moreover, the research findings confirm that these film companies renovate buildings and contribute to their maintenance and hence prevent physical obsolescence. The creative workforce forms a community and contributes to the vitality of the public realm in Soho. The offices located on the ground floor enrich the streetscape, attract people, provide safety and balance the consumption-related uses. The film screenings in the public places, film galas in nearby Leicester Square and social events of the film community, particularly in Soho and Golden Square, enrich the vitality in the area.

Film clusters in Beyoğlu also contribute to the vitality of the public realm. In particular, in Cihangir the film companies have acted as catalysts for urban change. Many TV-series and films are shot in Cihangir, which increases the popularity of the area. The increasing number of cafes in Cihangir and the bohemian lifestyle attract actors and especially those employed in the film industry. They moved into the area after the 1990s when it became popular as an alternative place to live. The year 2000 was a time when many new cafes opened in Cihangir due to the increasing demand of the film people and other artists who used the cafes, bars restaurants to meet colleagues, discuss their projects, to be visible in the public, and to find work. One could argue that the film industry and cafe culture can play a major role in transforming a neighbourhood, particularly as seen in the case of Cihangir.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that overall quality of place is important for a location decision because it provides economic advantages, contributes to the quality of productions and provides an inspiring environment, in particular in Soho. In this sense, the findings from the Soho study support Porter’s (1998) argument that clustering provides economic advantages and competitiveness. Soho companies use collaboration to increase competitiveness and thus benefit from co-location; in contrast, the clustering in Beyoğlu is due purely to locational factors and companies do not have business-related interactions between each other. On the contrary, they compete as rivals and do not appreciate being in close-proximity.
Most of the research participants believed that Soho and Beyoğlu have an inspiring environment, and most informants reported being inspired, not by the buildings and the urban pattern, but by the people they meet. Thus, people are mainly inspired through interaction, whether active (talking) or passive (people-watching). People share knowledge, exchange information and news, give advice to each other, share offices, facilities, equipment and also jobs through place-based interactions. As well as individual inspirations, social interaction is also important for inter-firm collaborations.

The findings indicate the places of social interaction are streets, squares, cafes, pubs, bars, restaurants, interactive micro-urban public places (see below), offices and cultural venues. As well as the overall quality of place, movement and physical accessibility between these places facilitate social interactions. Therefore, walkability is the key issue that eases accessibility at the neighbourhood level. Furthermore, due to the technology and Internet, some of these interactions are built over the networks; therefore, connectivity and virtual accessibility is also important but place-based face-to-face interactions make the difference, win the businesses and are stated as the needs of a creative workforce.

... Creativity is also about socialization, communication; these talks help you to have a vision. To talk, to communicate, to be in touch with, to be influenced by others, change ideas. This is the only source of creativity. (Int-B15)

You never come up with ideas by yourself; you need to be inspired by other stuff; because you bump into people. (Int-S9)

Technology is a great advantage; wherever I am, I can compose and design something and send it via email ... But when it comes to winning business, face-to-face meetings are crucial. (Int-S3)

Ewing and Handy (2009) identified qualities of the street environment that support walkability, e.g. imageability, enclosure, human scale, transparency and complexity. In addition to these, the current research argues that spatial proximity, permeability and the interactive micro-urban places, a vital public realm supported by a cafe culture, and a diverse range of land use, people, architectural styles and urban places enrich the walking experience.

The organic street pattern of both locations is important in supporting walkability. As such, it is possible to argue that Beyoğlu and Soho, which both have an organic street pattern, are livelier so they attract creative clusters rather than new settlements, such as Maslak and Levent.

Beyoğlu’s historical atmosphere and the organic structure can feed these new-generation young professionals. (Int-B22)

Beyoğlu was a good location for us as we have international relations. We have another branch in London near Soho, and these two places are very similar to each other. As the buildings are generally old, these historical buildings have high ceilings ... There are many art-related activities around Beyoğlu just like Soho. (Int-B14)

As well as perpetuating the clustering through social interactions as discussed above, streets are an important element in the emergence of the clusters; they are the urban elements where clustering first started in both cases. Clusters in
both locations have historically developed along streets—Warwick Court, Gray’s Inn Road, Cecil Court and Wardour Street in Soho; Yeşilçam Street and Gazeteci Erol Dernek Street in Beyoğlu—and then the companies spread to other parts of the districts. These narrow streets have good connectivity with the entire urban network, with small buildings that provide convenient office spaces for start-ups.

Walkability is critical to clustering of the film industry rather than being a general quality of place. Most people state that they are inspired by their environment as they wander around the places or as they walk to the offices from home. Spatial proximity and the small-scale places ease walking and promote intimacy. Small-scale places contribute to clustering through encouraging interaction, providing spontaneity and flow for inter-company and face-to-face social interactions (e.g. Soho). The importance of creating spontaneity of social experience is reflected in various concepts, such as Sennett’s (1970) multiplicity of contact points, Gehl, Kaefer, and Reigstad’s (2006) close encounter architecture and Stevens’ (2007) ludic city.

With regard to the inter-firm interactions, being within walking distance of other companies is crucially important. It provides efficiency and increases productivity as it eases transferring the materials and data, and managing the different stages of a film project. The film-making process involves a six-stage sequence of inputs/activities: finance, pre-production, production, post-production, distribution and exhibition (Coe and Johns 2004). Companies involved in these interlinked stages specialize in visual effects, light, sound and editing; there are also other sub-sectors such as costume providers, make-up, printing, transportation, logistics, equipment providers and recording studios. Therefore, particularly in Soho, film production is collaboration between multiple companies and being in close proximity to companies involved in these stages speeds up the film-making process and hence reduces the costs. Therefore, of crucial importance is the fine-grain small-scale urban fabric support, which means that companies are within walking distance of each other.

Another issue that supports walking is interactive micro-urban public places. Soho provides an adequate number of examples to allow some categorization of these places (Table 3 and Figure 19). Such places may have a defined shape, as is the case with mews, courtyards, alleys, pavements, alcoves and niches, or they may be undefined, under-designed spaces around the buildings. These are in-between, interstitial, dynamic or static public places which have a dialogue with buildings and the public realm. Their form can change depending on factors such as the activity occurring within and around them, the number of people interacting, the speed of their movement, the length of time spent there and the type of activity they are engaged in. In addition, the architectural elements and

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<td><strong>Dynamic/changing shape</strong></td>
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Figure 19. Interactive micro-urban public places in Soho.
street furniture such as a small step at the entrance to a building, a doorway or even a simple windowsill can form these spaces of interactions (Figure 19).

Interactive micro-urban places enrich the walking experience by providing spaces for active and passive interactions. They provide spaces which could retain people and provide spatial variety for different social events and human activities to take place such as stationary, sustained and lingering activities, as classified by Mehta (2006). These places increase the physical accessibility by providing short cuts which allow people to weave their way between places and choose alternative routes. Furthermore, they offer horizontal spaces for public seating and are used as public furniture such as chairs, tables and desks; they provide a focal point for standing with urban and architectural elements that can be leaned on (Figure 19).

These findings validate the findings by Gehl, Kaefer, and Reigstad (2006), Mehta (2009) and Whyte (1980) regarding the importance of seating spaces in supporting social interaction at street level. As defined by Mehta (2009, 44) articulation of buildings’ facades at street level provides spaces for “incidental integral seating”. Furthermore, these findings draw parallels with Gehl, Kaefer, and Reigstad’s (2006) findings on the contribution of the ground floor design of buildings to a lively, vibrant public realm, and Montgomery’s (1990) findings about the role of transitional spaces between the public and private in facilitating movement and encouraging the flow of activities. Stevens’ (2007) arguments for a ludic city that gives shape to playful possibilities, which in turn contribute to spontaneity, serendipity and creativity, lend further support to this thesis. As Stevens (2007) suggested, fun and play are very important aspects of public places. They can also be argued to be essential for the growth and sustainability of creative clusters.

Conclusion

This research analyzed the quality of place of the film industry-based inner-city creative clusters, focusing on Soho and Beyoğlu. It identified the various layers of quality of place within the analysis framework, which together contributes to the complexity and creative atmosphere of places. This research proposes that the resulting framework could also be used to analyze the quality of place of the other film-industry based inner-city creative clusters. As Brown and Mczyski (2009) also argued, it is this overall context and atmosphere that makes these spaces feel creative. Based on these findings, it was argued that if urban design needs to take account of these characteristics and overall quality of place, it is possible to support creative clusters. In addition, it is the combination of the characteristics/product and the processes that make the overall context which also involves the place-making process, not just the product it represents. In this regard, Florida’s (2002) quality of place does not take into account the integration of these different aspects; rather, it focuses solely on the characteristics of places on a metropolitan scale without discussing the place-making processes and how these might affect the qualities associated with place. Furthermore, at the macro-scale, Florida’s (2002) suggestion that companies follow talented people needs to be amended. The research findings here suggest that this is an oversimplification because rather than simply following workers, companies prefer locations that enable workers to function effectively, in particular by providing an environment that allows place based face-to-face interactions.
One of the important findings of this research is related to the matter of scale (Madanipour 1997). As Gehl (2010, 118) posited, “the battle for the quality is the small-scale”. This is also important for designing inspiring environments and places which are conducive to creative clustering. At this point, Whyte’s (1980) study about the importance of small urban spaces contributing to the social life of cities supports this argument. This paper argued that the small-scale spaces contribute to creativity, and provide the appropriate density and proximity for critical mass to occur (e.g. Soho and interactive micro-urban public places). Hence, when urban design needs to take account of designing creative places, the focus should be on improving the quality of place, taking a micro-scale urban design approach on the design of the public realm and also a pedestrian-friendly street environment, rather than concentrating on the large-scale projects and strategies towards cluster development.

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Notes

1. The term refers to the creative workforce, i.e. people working in the film industry in Soho and Beyoğlu.
2. Int-S/B is the abbreviation for ‘Interviewee Soho and Interviewee Beyoğlu’.
3. Erman Han is an office building renovated by a film company manager. It attracted other film companies to locate their offices (1960s). Plato Film School is located in Cihangir and it is a private film school founded by a well-known film director by renovating the old residential buildings (2000s). Cezayir Street Project is a streetscape project initiated by an entrepreneur. The project is also supported by a film company located around this area and a private university.
4. The popularity of new Turkish cinema, affordable rents, nostalgic ties with the film industry, centrality and a sea view
5. A person who sells old-second hand books.

References


