



RECONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION AND CREATIVE SPACES CONVERGENCE: BÜYÜKADA ISLAND CASE

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ABSTRACT

Concerning the old or historical fabric of the cities, a widespread strategy of city vibrancy is the city cultural and creative spaces reconsideration. Creative space is a replacement to place transformation, which is a new policy to boost the potentials of the context via supporting indigenous and tourism products and activities. These spaces insist on overtaking each other to obtain a competitive advantage on cultural activities, participation, and a happier and more connected environment. Otherwise, the visitors' participation offers economic opportunities by stimulating environment and amenities. Thus, the place expresses openness and diversity where everyone can express themselves (Florida 2002). Such an environment formed spontaneously or deliberately paves the way for the coming tourists and entrepreneurship. In this sense, in this research, Büyükada is selected due to its historical, social, cultural attributes, and commendable cultural heritage potentials including historic buildings, traditions and local cultures, which work as means to attract tourists and creative people.

Key words: Creative City, culture, participation, creative space, tourism, creativity

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the cities compete to facilitate the expression of new ideas to get to a more cultural and creative level in the global network. In this respect, they try to move in line with the context materials, local residents' and tourists' desires and expectations. Artistic or cultural activity is something carried out in public spaces in so-called creative cities. Creative cities attempt to gather talented people together and provide opportunities to help them to do and create what they want to (Bokova, 2016). Therefore, the cities go through an incremental journey of cultural participation accomplished by different people of local or global to gain experiences. In this process, culture has a very crucial role in developing urban innovation as it is a basic resource for physical assets and urban soul (Fainstein, Hoffman, & Judd, 2003). Culture is the source of urban attraction. Landry (2008) believes that "A further route to the creative city came from an interest in culture...With the decline of existing resource and manufacturing industry, culture was seen as a saviour for many cities in Europe and increasingly elsewhere" (p. 6).

The cultural participation in a socially developed space can satisfy the local residents and manifest the tourists' willingness to involve into the cities' activities and spend more time on

recreational and cultural places. In this concern, festivals are the main reflectors of the cities' inherent habits, which ask for different cultures to share experiences. Besides, the proper management of the city social spaces' behavior can enrich the attraction of the city. Public programs managed by the government or non-government organizations can further strengthen this condition. There after, the changes of creativity can contribute to improve the cultural routes and tourism, which can also promote the economic and financial attributes of the city.

However, this paper studies the progress of cultural spaces and creative tourism from the perspective of local and global participation. The need for culture in creative spaces and developing participation is discussed in the context of Büyükada Island. Moreover, the policies to upgrade the spaces for more cultural activities and tourism attraction are taken into consideration. Public experience of the place inherent assessments like music, dance, concerts, carnivals, customs, traditions, handicrafts, and festivals are the cultural alternative means that can make the places dynamic and attractive. The major shifts to the spaces and their connection are mentioned to meet the local residents intangible urges and tourists' desires through participation. Concerning this issue, tourism sector of the island attempts to achieve new alternative shapes of tourist attraction which can support productive and creative development.

The research method is essentially based on primary data collection to look into the relationship between the creative tourism and cultural participation in cultural spaces. The major methodology is qualitative nature (i.e. observation) and in order to support data some secondary sources like books, journals, magazines, reports and publications have also been employed in the research. Afterwards, the data collected is evaluated in SWOT analysis method for more consideration of the cultural-oriented participation and creative tourism priorities and preferences. The results of the study can contribute to develop a more competitive tourist attraction space with a high potential of creativity. Furthermore, the achievements also can help to preserve the original cultures and identity.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Landry (2008) argues that “innovative places ride the paradox of being intensely local and intensely global” (p. xxiv). Likewise, Evans and Barton (2015) believe that the creative city emerges where there is participation to give the sense of belonging to the people who live and act in that place (Evans & Barton, 2015). This view highlights the role of creativity in terms of art and culture and its impact on the livability of a place (Smith & Warfield, 2008). The creative city is a holistic and complex approach, a creative intervention that tries to preserve the old and develop it in terms of new product both for residents and universal audiences. It is obvious that participation and collaboration are intense drivers of a creative city, which considerably reflects the characteristics and the talent of its people. In this sense, the bond between people and place is central to the creative city (B. Evans & Barton, 2015). On the other hand, creativity is a sense of inspiration developed by cultural activities like shared experience (Veselá & Klimová, 2014). Thus, Bacon (1967) writes that the city is the art of its people. True participation shapes when people and the designer develop the process of building a city into a work of art. Multiculturalism and diversity of ideas and creative activities of artists, specialists, and ordinary citizens can promote the social interactions, develop the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the city and result in cultural tourism assimilation (Sasaki, 2010). It is where culture and economy converge to enrich the quality of life.

1.1 Cultural and Creative Spaces

Creativity asks for suitable space and environment to grow and develop. Consequently, the concept of ‘the ability of the environment’ emerges to emphasize that the individuals’ behavior is the reflection of the environment influences; i.e. the presence of a bench encourages people to sit there. People adjust their behavior with their experience and conception of the environment; sometimes this adjustment emerges in the form of creativity. The creativity betters the transformation and revives the social spaces in return. These spaces are considered to be their own economical rescuers encouraged by their residents and tourists. Since 1980s, in the developed countries, local culture development has been a vigorous plan of the cities and regions. This matter matured the background of creative city concept appearance (Greenhalgh, 1998; Landry and Bianchini, 1995).

1.2 Cultural and Creative Participation

People’s contribution in decision-making process plays an important role in producing quality products that fulfill their demands and needs. Participation is an issue, which serves to gather every creative city category together. It is an essential phase of creative city making, and is also a fundamental innovative strength in the planning process (Miller, 2016). According to Landry (2008), the creative city is a cultural procedure, which preserves the present identity and develops new and changing conditions via participation. In this line, there is a rise in the detection of creative spectacles and tourism participation in creative activities. There will be a shift to the creativity and cultural and creative spaces of active participation in the context.

1.3 Cultural and Creative Tourism

Events and activities help boosting the cultural tourism sector by drawing the skilled and curious people and fulfill their cultural requirements. Additionally, active tourists are important observers and knowledge collectors who have closer interaction with the local population and contribute to the creative and cultural tourism developments. The cultural cities establish networks of creative places, which can attract tourists or make them a center for tourist activities (Djukic & Vukmirovic, 2010). The primitive objective of this tourism is to develop economy and preserve the cultural heritage and values. This is a policy to provide an integrated and cohesive society (Stojanovic et al., 2012). Cultural activity historically addresses innovation and creativity to sustain the city. The positive Photo of the place has an intense impression on the place vibrancy; in this regard, a more dynamic cultural life has a bigger chance and opportunity to attract international companies and their mobile workforce (Landry, 2008). In this environment, people examine, participate, act, and create for deep understanding of the place and to spend time in recreational places.

3. BÜYÜKADA CASE

Büyükada, which means ‘big island’ in Turkish, is a historical and touristic island known as the city center among the 9 islands of Istanbul. Throughout the history, Büyükada has been a summer resort for the affluent people. Today, due to the influx of the tourists and daily visitors, the population gets 10 to 15-folded in summer months. In order to respond to the visitors’ accommodation need, most of the buildings turn into summer houses or boutique hotels. The context includes magnificent and historical buildings, and recreational places which give it leading position as a tourist destination.

During the history, the developments in the island are applied by creative individuals of different tastes and talents. Today, art and culture-led activities for the social context in the island are basically led by exhibitions, academies, associations, sports, festivals, street foods, touristic movements, cafes, and clubs. Plenty of summer activities and carnivals assimilate many artists and talents that make the island a center of creativity. All the business-oriented activities are contributed by the civil society organizations within the inner context of the island. The winters are calmer and only local people and domestic tourists come.

1.4 Cultural Activities

Events and Festivals measure the cultural and traditional expression of the city through its rituals activities and ceremonies. They turn the old habits into advanced creative dynamic ones. There are contemporary strong features expressing Büyükada as a creative city, in its plenty of outdoor festivals, music scene, celebrated craft beer scene, as well as its graphic design and literature events and organizations. However, it keeps its tradition along with its annual festivals. During the summer, many activities such as multi-lingual concerts, photography and painting exhibitions are held in the island. Büyükada's streets also are used as podiums for folklore shows and other events which are offered free of charge for the public. Büyükada was used to act as a recreation area since the local and foreign minorities of upper class preferred to spend their free time in nearby countrysides other than their houses in Istanbul. The main cultural activities of the area concentrate on main arteries with a high density of residential and commercial buildings mentioned in Figure 1.

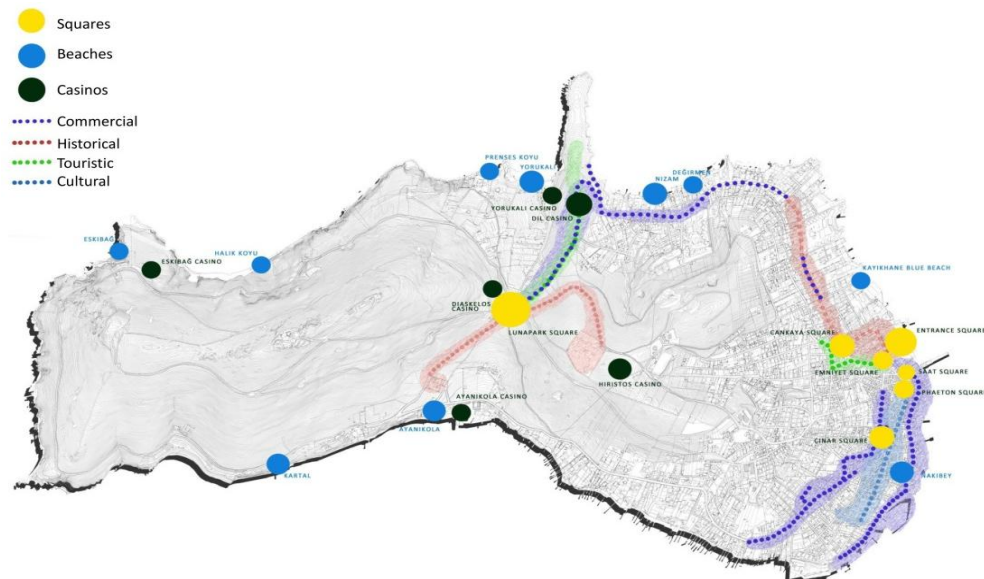


Figure-1: Historical – Cultural and Recreational – Commercial regions of Büyükada Island

1.4.1 Annually organized festivals – events – competitions

In this part of the study the festivals and events left since the very ancient of the island is mentioned and discussed to go through the deep understanding of the habits and identity of Büyükada. The annual festivals are like are following:

- ‘Culture and Art Festival’: The Prince Islands’ summer Festival of Culture and art festival is an annually organized festival lasting for two month that for the first time set out in July 2010 in Büyükada. The festival consists of different events and activities like concerts,

cinema nights, exhibitions of painting, poetry, and handicrafts, music, literature, painting, photography, scenery and performing arts, and interviews offered free of charge.

- ‘Saint George's Festival’: Every year in April 23 and September 24 thousands of people of different religions march to the Aya Yorgi Church at highest hill – Yüce Hill of Büyükada, which pretends like a festival.
- ‘Fish-Raki Festival’: It is an event set every 19-20 May of the year. It is a companion of Turkish and Greek Artist and Musicians, which consists of fishes and local appetizers.
- ‘The Prince Islands’ Street Festival’: It initially started in 2015 in Büyükada and Burgazada. The festival includes dance performances, various exhibitions, art workshops, night tours, concerts and etc. It aims to help people to learn about their ecological and cultural values, to get aware of the problems that threaten the islands and to make some art.
- ‘Prince Islands Swimming Championship’: Since 1984, it has been one of the most important events for the Princes' Islands. Primitively the race started in Kınalıada and held every year without any interruption in Büyükada.
- ‘Prince Islands Sailing Races’: First sailing races were organized by British sailors living in Istanbul in 1912-1914, which was held in Büyükada, Moda, and Bakirkoy Clubs initially (“ilk’ler - Dünyayı deęiřtiren buluşlar,” 1985).
- ‘Cultural Association Photography Contest’: Photography contest is an event occurring every year since 2002.
- ‘Prince Islands Caricature Competition’: Caricature competition is an event organized every year since 2004.
- ‘Prince Islands Short Film Competition’: Short film competition is held annually starting from 2004.
- In addition to the annual festivals, there are other important events, which are shaped by the NGOs and academies in the island as mentioned below:
- ‘International Folklore Festival’ in 2018, which exhibited colorful dance and music performances;
- ‘The Prince Islands film festival’: On World Peace Day on 1st of September, the Prince Islands International short film festival was organized by Büyükada Urban Council. Film screenings had been held at Büyükada in Summer Lale Cinema, which lasted for four days from 1 to 4 - September 2016. Along with the festival, there were other activities like short film competition under the title of ‘Istanbul’ was conducted.
- ‘14th Istanbul Biennial’ held in Mizzi Pavilion known as Al Palas in Büyükada on 5 September 2015 by over 80 participants and artists from all over the world;
- ‘Büyükada Street Food Festival’ organized in 2018 to introduce the indigenous tastes of the island.



**Photo-1: Büyükada Sailing Races in Constantinople - Regates de Prinkipo
Atatürk Library postcard archive**

In addition to the festivals as cultural activities there are also other activities like beaches, casinos, museums and clubs as tourist attraction spaces that also call for experience and participation from all over the world. In the early 20th century, clubs as new social environments enriched the daily life in Büyükada. People come to learn about Büyükada culture and they share their own culture.

1.4.2 Clubs – associations – museum

‘Seferoğlu Club’: Seferoğlu Tennis and Water Sports Club opened in 1972 that included tennis, basketball, swimming and volleyball sports for club members. The building was initially built as English Yacht Club located on Büyükada Nizam district that later was renamed as an Anatolian Club.

‘Büyükada Water Sports Association’: Also named as Büyükada Sea Club; was a self-supported association established with eleven local residents of Büyükada in 1985 for the purpose of training the water sports to the children and youth. In 1999 with the construction of an indoor swimming pool made the swimming activities possible throughout the year.

‘Büyükada Culture Association’: Büyükada Culture Association established in 1994 and started its activities in 1995. It was named as Büyükada Cultural and Mutual Solidarity Society ‘Büyükada Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği’, in 2006; it was renamed to The Islands Cultural Association that employs cultural and artistic activities. This organization targets several issues including cultural and art activities. It publishes documents about Büyükada, charity works, and environmental activities. This Association publishes books about the Islands and publishes Island Newspaper in every 15 days.

‘Prince Islands Town Council’: Islands Town Council namely as Çelik Gülersoy Culture and Art Center holds programs like: workshops, conferences, the islands philosophy days, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, and civil participatory activities like women assembly, garden waste collection day, movie days, kermis organizations, radio theaters, animal rights working group, documentary, and courses out of charge like dancing courses.

‘Aya Nikola Hangar Museum’: It is the first Istanbul contemporary urban museum located in Büyükada. In 2010, the former helicopter hangar area was transformed to museum, which has a rich collection of hundreds of objects, 20 thousand documents, 6 thousand photographs, hundreds of documentary films and sound recordings.

‘Lale Cinema’: In November 2007, Emre Ferruh Dilmaç, the owner and founder of Lale Cinema, in his speech, mentioned the existence of four cinemas in the 1960s (Hakan Cinema, Büyükada Cinema, Lale Cinema and Mehtap Cinema). Since the number of customers is very low and he has been doing this job as a hobby, not for profit (Yılmaz, 2008). Lale cinema is the only one left in the island site since 1990. After 25 years of screenings, the cinema activities continued in the open air environment. Today, there is hardly cinema activity on the island other than DVD movies that are displayed once a week within the scope of summer programs in projection technology of Cultural Association of The Islands.

There are four beaches in the island which actually refer to the fashionable life in the island including: Nakibey Beach in Maden District, Kumsal Beach in Kumsal District, Yörükali Beach (shown in Photo2) and Prenses Beach reaching with motor boats. Distance and social facilities of clubs, beaches, and hotels made the Prince Islands appealing in the 19th century.



**Photo-2: Istanbul. Büyükada. Yürükali Beach
Atatürk Library archive**

Other social areas and activities like squares, restaurants, and bars, dance and music, and number of the hotels trigger the cultural appearance of the island. A tango dance club in Photo3 shows the life style of the residents. Despite tourist influx and fund-holders' destructive impacts, Büyükada is still an attractive and lovely place for many. It is still possible to see the previous silhouette of Büyükada. Büyükada also is a meeting place of art and literature. It is an inspiration center for poetry and novel. Many authors have written about Büyükada or inspired from it. In the books, Füreya, Aşk-ı Memnu, Kiralık Konak, and İstanbullular, for example, the author has a slight glance and attention to Büyükada.



Photo-3: Gürmen, S. (Photographer). (2000). Tango nights in Büyükada in the recently retorted and transformed Fabiato Mansion into Cultural House of the Island [digital Photo].

Büyükada, Istanbul: Hürriyet Istanbul Newspaper taken from Taha Toros personal archive.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

In this part of the research the strengths and weaknesses of the island are elaborately described in order to figure out the natural potential and the creative pulse of the context. The subsequent step is to drag out the opportunities and threatens of the conditions to acknowledge the desired multiculturalism of the spaces, enhance participatory, and instigate tourist attractions of the land.

Table-1: Internal – Present, strengths and weaknesses in the SWOT analysis

| STRENGTHS - Helpful | |
|---|---|
| NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: Topographic Features and Geological Condition / Open and Green Areas | Spectacle natural landscape and resources A wealth greenery of pine forests, beaches, and picturesque sea The widespread gardening culture |
| BUILDING ENVIRONMENT: Land Use, Building, Transportation, Infrastructure | An outstanding man-made environment Considerably appreciated historical heritage The presence of the coastal areas used for several aims of swimming, sailing, sun bathing, and etc. Different cultural and recreational spaces Dazzling cultural heritage of mansions, houses, Different tourist services like bays, beaches, casinos, bars and restaurants, hotels, shops, open air cinema, contemporary urban museum, squares, and etc. Various means of transportation vehicles including cards, phaetons, donkies, horses, and bicycles, and the prevention of fuel vehicle use for the public. |
| SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT: People Characteristics, Social Services, Local Organizations, Education, Emergency Services, Local government capacity | The Islands Cultural Association, which carries out cultural and art activities, environmental researches and charity works. Historically and identically an important context both for Turkish and European Preservation of traditions, festivals, and habits Historically being a cradle of culture and art that has held many famous people A vast range of recreational potentials and tourist attraction alternatives including music and dance, festivals and events, tastes and gastronomy, hotels, bars and restaurants, casinos, beaches and bays, museum and cinema, cultural squares, libraries, and original cultural heritage Various types of experience shared areas Management of local and formal groups in developing and boosting cultural participation by organizing different events containing workshops, conferences, the islands philosophy days, exhibitions, lectures, concerts, and civil participatory activities like women assembly, garden waste collection day, movie days, kermis organizations, radio theaters, animal rights working group, documentary, and courses out of charge like dancing course. |
| WEAKNESSES-Harmful | |
| NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: Topographic Features and Geological Condition / Open and Green Areas | Extreme seasonality and practically being out of settlement in winter seasons |
| BUILDING ENVIRONMENT: Land Use, Building, Transportation, Infrastructure | Environmental pollution Unlawful coastal uses |
| SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT: People Characteristics, Social Services, Local Organizations, Education, Emergency Services, Local government capacity | Lack of entertainment place for the young to spend time Overriding concern of summer arrivals increase and daily tourist density with limited service means Lacking an appropriate management and programs to unify the tourists to the existing land and culture Ignoring the local residents in the economic beneficial programs |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Insufficiency in the natural and cultural assets protection</p> <p>Insufficient economical support of the governmental and official agencies</p> <p>Having no specific rules and management to gild the new individuals to the island</p> <p>Lacking adequate governmental role in attaching the local and foreigners cooperation for the cultural health and social cohesion of the island</p> |
|--|--|

Table-2: External – Future, oportunties and threats in the SWOT analysis

| |
|---|
| OPPORTUNITIES - Helpful |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proximity to work force, the dense population potential - Isolation from the mainland – openness and transparency for artistic and cultural activities - Numerous tourist attraction areas - Spaces suitable for different alternative uses - Preservation of the protected areas - No motor vehicles use permission - The opportunity to be away from the city crowd - Creating alternative thematic areas - Increased awareness of environmental issues |
| THREATS-Harmful |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The transformation of many mansions to boutique hotels for serving the visitors and tourists - No specific path for bicycling - Intense and uncontrolled summer arrivals and daily visitors - Unsustainable tourism business - Prohibitive rents of the houses - Traditional and cultural activities reduction and disappearance - physical, environmental, and socio-cultural destruction - Difficulties in controlling and management - The intense pressure over the use of the space - Nature destruction for commercial and investment benefits |

As considered in the SWOT analysis, the potentials of the island are fair enough in providing a favorable area for the people who live there and the tourists, as well. The natural environment, the cultural identity made in a long course of time, and the tourist-oriented dimensions indicate the wealthy pulse of the context. These features can be used in favor of creative spectacles in spaces. The recreational areas when combined with cultural and creative activities shape an attractive stage for tourist attraction and capital increase. Restoration and preservation of the original culture especially the historical buildings is also an important fact that should be considered. The gaps among the city spaces provide an opportunity for the creative people and artistic group to design, produce and reflect their spirit to the space. Establishment of the clubs, academies, associations and organizations whether local or official can contribute in setting systematic and strategic programs. These programs reflect the requirement of people cooperation and participation for better cultural results. However, the solutions are mostly temporary as they imply only for seasonal programs.

5. CONCLUSION

In the long term, the objective is to bring about sustainable tourism development. It also aims to improve the local residents' lifestyle and grow the economic conditions of the place towards sustainability. Creative and cultural and creative space making is an incremental process. In these spaces, creativity and art work as mediators to merge the whole neighborhood together and retain the place culture and locality. Thus, the whole enacts like a huge artistic and creative space representing new opportunities and places of interest. These spaces are recently issues of demands especially in the tourism sector. The cultural and creative spaces respond to the tourists whom are curious to know, discover and experience the new. They are places that tourists can have accessibility to the local cultures rather than the sole mainstream products. The tourists can express themselves, be free and find the freedom. In this sense, festivals and other cultural activities are the means to reach this desire. In the case of Büyükada, festivals contribute to generate economic benefits for local residents and preserve the local cultural forms. In the creative contexts, the events and the activities mostly are conducted by the creative people of artists with new ideas, strategies, act, technology and content. The context and the programatized organizations call for visitors who contribute, share, and pay for their requirements and costs; therefore, benefit the economy and culture of the context. Their participation connects the bridge between cultures. The coming of the tourists to the place contributes to the economic growth and as the result of this process the whole space continues to develop. The development of the place means the entrance of the new jobs that highlights dynamic and complexity to the area. The island's regions undergo a minor change process towards cultural activities and the new lifestyles; new and old come together. It is not only the local contribution that helps to the creativity development. It is mostly the effects of the artists' activities to the area which make it more attractive. The creation of the creative quarters produces economic opportunities for the host city to develop and service to all businesses and the leisure and tourism sector.

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