

Culture-led regeneration projects in post-industrial areas: the Istanbul experience

P. Ozden

Department of Public Administration, Istanbul University, Turkey

Abstract

Culture-led regeneration has become one of the most important activities of today's governments and also the private sector. During the 20th century, traditional manufacturing activities were left behind and as a result of this, deindustrialization processes affected all cities. Especially inner neighborhoods and traditional city centers began to lose their identity very rapidly. This process caused the decrease of post-industrial urban areas. These large abandoned areas affected the city in a negative way; bringing economic burden and causing some environmental and urban problems, like urban safety issues, unhealthy urban image, etc. While urban governments and the private sector have recognized these areas as an opportunity for urban regeneration, culture-led regeneration has emerged as an effective method to regenerate the post-industrial abandoned areas. This type of regeneration would enable these areas and also the cities to gain a new image. Looking at the economic aspect, experiences have shown that, culture-led regeneration practices have added economic value to the city as well as spatial and social value. This paper aims to analyse post-industrial areas from the point of a culture-led regeneration perspective. In the scope of the study, post-industrial areas of Istanbul metropolitan city will be discussed from a culture-led regeneration perspective. By looking to new experiences some suggestions will be made in this respect.

Keywords: urban decline, culture-led regeneration, industrial heritage, post-industrial areas, Istanbul.

1 Introduction

Industrial heritage and regeneration of this heritage constitute an agenda item of the last 50 years. However, post-industrial heritage becoming a tool of culture-



led regeneration projects is a matter of more recent history. Industrial heritage is more and more becoming the subject of culture-led regeneration projects especially after 2000s. This is closely related to the desire and style of reorganization on space of the globalization and the capital having increased its strength all over the world in post-2000 period. The processes of decentralization of industrial function from downtown having been almost completed have paved the way for debates on reuse of these spaces in the city, and culture-led regeneration projects have been started to be realized as a point of exit for these debates.

2 Industrial heritage

It is not possible to give a single and concrete definition and to mention about a certain time range or limit for industrial heritage. Nevertheless, industrial heritage which is basically associated with the era starting with the industrial revolution as of the end of the 18th century is defined as follows in “Nizhni Tagil By-laws for Industrial Heritage” issued by TICCIH in July 2003: “Industrial heritage is composed of the remains of industrial culture having historical, technologic, social, architectural or scientific value. These remains include: buildings and machinery, workshops, manufacturing plants and factories, mines and processing and treatment areas, warehouses and storage sites, sites generating, transmitting and using energy, transportation and its infrastructure, and in addition, spaces used for industry-related social activities such as accommodation, prayers or education.”

Cengizkan [1] defines industrial heritage as a general concept covering all physical elements ranging from simple mechanical tools to wide industrial zones. However, the recent debates further extend the scope of industrial heritage. Handszuh [2] in the assessment report of UNWTO Technical Seminar, states that industrial heritage is classified under three main headings: “industrial and technological monuments (sites, moveable heritage and artifacts in museums, also fortifications), living industry of all types, including agriculture and food production and intangible heritage (largely cultural activities inspired by industrial development”

Feroğlu [3] further expands this approach and defines industrial heritage as the entirety of all facts pertaining to the past of industrial society. According to him, industrial heritage sources are gaining importance as an indicator of success of industrial society. Considering industrial heritage as a part of the World Heritage List, UNESCO has described ten basic criteria for World Heritage [4]. Departing from these criteria, it may be said that industrial heritage comprises artifacts having an exceptional aesthetics, being the product of creative intelligence, witnessing and exhibiting a civilization, and representing an important stage of the manufacturing and industry traditions.

In addition to UNESCO criteria, in <http://www.ERIH.de>, quoted by Kazas [5] lists the criteria required for acceptable industrial monuments/sites as: “having attractive and unique attributes as industrial heritage and constituting a symbolic value; having an important place in the European industrial history; being open

to developments and being located in an area with tourism potential and being capable of arousing interest in different groups of humans and being located in an area with adequate transportation links”, and emphasizes the tourism value of industrial structures and artifacts, besides their characteristics and attributes. As seen, industrial heritage is not a concept which can only be described by physical structure stock. Representing and exhibiting the manufacturing and industry traditions of a particular era of the history of humanity and having superior universal value, industrial heritage also covers some intangible assets as movable properties, agriculture and food production, some cultural activities affected by industrial developments, tourism potential, and links to the living traditions, ideals and beliefs.

3 Culture-led regeneration in post-industrial heritage areas

Differently from the 19th century, the 20th century has been an era staging a series of transformations focused not on industry, but on deindustrialization. World wars, changes in production and consumption relations, dire straits in economy, and urban redevelopment models suggested as a solution of these dire straits have all played significant roles in giving shape to the cities of this century. Here, the most basic point required to be kept in mind is that the industry, with its manufacturing type, its site selection preferences and its aesthetic and architectural values, have at all times played a very important role in the fate of all these processes. Brenner and Theodore [6] state that during the early 1970s the key link between mass production and mass consumption was shattered due to a range of interconnected trends and developments, including the declining of profitability of Fordist sectors, the intensification of international competition, the spread of deindustrialization and mass unemployment. Starting from the mid-1970s, in tandem with the route of neoliberal economy and parallel to the changes in production and consumption relations, the cities have started to play the role of a service city. In the course of this process, a serial of transformations has got off the ground in many heavy industry zones being the economic and social culture centres of the world (Zhu [7]). Some celebrated heavy industrial regions which were the economic and social cultural centres of the world began a series of transformation). This transformation is bi-directional. This transformation process has revealed itself on one hand in the vacated industrial zones and the metropolitan cities hosting them and on the other hand in the new cities to which industrial worker families migrated by time. While the vacated industrial zones became unused, vacant, unsecure and uncontrolled areas, struggle has been started against physical, social and economic problems caused by the migration in migration-receiving cities.

During the neoliberal development process, cities have undertaken a strategic role and identity in political – economic regeneration of the spaces. Particularly in 1980s when global/neoliberal urbanization policies started to gain strength and the hegemony of capital on urban spaces increased, the culture-led regeneration has been started to be used as an important tool in post-industrial urban transformation and as a way of exit from global crises. Keating and Frantz [8]



state that “cultural policy can change the image of the city serving as a marketing tool”. According to them, “in a crowded international market, it can mark the city as distinct, giving it a brand image and this can indirectly promote its economic competitiveness by increasing its position in the quality-life indexes of international investment rankings”. The approach adopted by Nijman [9] also supports this idea. From his point of view, cities are attempting to reconcile their globally-oriented economic functions with the locally-rooted effects it places on society and culture. Likewise, Miles and Paddison [10] also make contribution to the same approach by emphasizing that globalization processes laid the groundwork for adoption of the ‘culture’-oriented development strategies by cities for the sake of economic growth and competitiveness.

Culture-led regeneration looks for the ways to enable the cities to present themselves with their unique and specific differences in the course of global race. Particularly industrial heritage which has been abandoned to its faith in the deindustrialization process has undertaken an important role in this race. Due to their central positioning, waterfront, etc. site selection advantages, wide spaces and areas and similar other reasons, these structures have come to the forefront with their attributes extremely fit and convenient for implementation of culture-led regeneration policies. With all these advantages, and being at the focus of interest of global capital, the industrial heritage has played the role of an important tool in implementation of the culture-led regeneration policies and projects. In fact, this is an evident indicator in the space of a trend of transformation from manufacturing sector to service sector ongoing in all developed economies. After starting at mid-1980s, this trend has attained a broader vision and coverage with addition of concepts such as “cultural industry” used by the Greater London Council (GLC), and “creative industry” used by DCMS in 1998 and covering not only “cultural industries” but also “all cultural or artistic production, whether live or produced as an individual unit” [11]. Creative industries are defined as “...those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (DCMS [12]). Naturally, creative industries are endeavoring to create an economic value in the city. This new economy also contains such other concepts as innovation, creativity, flexibility, reflexivity, responsiveness (O’Connor and Wynne [13]). This should be taken into consideration together with the new role of culture in the city. Culture, as an investment tool, is drawing the attention of global capital looking for new spaces and markets for itself, and is creating its own marketplace through creative industries.

It is possible to see the examples of culture-led regeneration in post-industrial areas particularly in Bilbao, Glasgow and many other old industrial cities. Due to size problems, we are not going to describe the whole transformation process of these cities. However, we wish to make some reminders about very similar and successive transformation stories of two cities. During 1980s, arts, culture and image have been a way of exit for Glasgow (Gomez [14]). Many cultural events such as the annual arts festival Mayfest in 1982, and the opening of internationally well-known Burrell Art Collection in 1983, followed by cleaning

of stone buildings, illuminations, opening of new shopping centers, redevelopment of old warehouses, abandoned factory buildings and riverside docklands, and opening of Scottish Exhibition and Conference Center in 1985, and hosting of National Garden Festival by the city in 1988, and Glasgow being named as the European City of Culture, and opening of New International Concert Hall in 1990, may be described as the important steps of culture-led regeneration of Glasgow. As for Bilbao experience, “strengthening of cultural identity through culture-led regeneration” and industrial land recycling have been the important targets of transformation process which has started in Bilbao in 1992. Urban terrains, shown as the source for achievement of these targets, is defined as “Brownfields and other terrains were owned by public companies and heavy industries were strategically located on very attractive areas by the river banks”. To this end, positioned at the heart of the urban centre, the old industrial area of Abandoibarra was replaced by the new port facilities (Moura [15]) and was planned as a new cultural area in the waterfront area. In addition to a shopping center, Guggenheim Museum and Euskalduna Conference and Performing Arts Palace have also been built at this site. Gomez [14] states that *“the new image of Bilbao is regarded as crucial in helping the city to become an engaging location for advanced services, especially banking and insurance, high technology, and specialized commerce”*. These examples may further be increased through Europe, USA and Asia. Many old industrial cities have allocated the industrial heritage and the wide fields thereof for the culture-led regeneration purposes in the globalization process. These practices are examples of creating creative cities.

4 The Istanbul experience

We can discuss the industrialization history of Istanbul and the artifacts of this history in two different parts: as the Ottoman era and the Republican era. After such era-based discussion, we are going to describe the experience of Istanbul relating to the transformation of industrial buildings.

4.1 Ottoman era

Pre-Tanzimat (Reform) Era industry is composed of small handicrafts belonging to private sector industrial enterprises, while the industrial establishments of public sector are basically focused on military purposes and defense industries. Tersane-i Amire, built by Mehmet, the Conqueror, in the 15th century may be named among the important industrial buildings of that period. These initial industrial attempts have, however, fallen behind against the pressure and strength of the European Industry Revolution. It is not possible to mention strong industrialization in the Ottoman Empire until the mid-19th century. In the background thereof lies the compromises made to the European states in the form of capitulations at the end of the 16th century, making the Empire a subordinate market. Tophane-i Amire built for casting artillery in the 15th century, and Bakırköy Powder Mill and the Hasköy Lengerhane building built in



the 18th century are known as important industrial buildings of this era. The industrial ventures have been continued also during the Tanzimat Era (1839–1876). The manufacturing units built by Sultan Selim IIIrd and Sultan Mahmut IInd have come out to be nuclei for their successors (Seyitdanlıoğlu [16]).

Starting from the mid-19th century, the Ottoman state has started to build industrial buildings mainly in Istanbul for satisfying the basic needs and demands. Thus, various industrial plants have been established in Istanbul and its close vicinity by the State and to some extent by private entrepreneurs. As a result, after remaining constant and static until the 19th century, the spatial organization has entered into a rapid transformation process upon emergence of new centers parallel to industrialization. It is known that total number of industrial buildings reached 256 in Istanbul of the 19th century. These buildings have generally been located at waterfronts, sheltered areas, areas with railway links, and places close to the service areas (Köksal and Ahunbay [17]). Particularly the Golden Horn draws attention as an area where industrial buildings were intensely built. Beykoz Debağhane-i Amire leather and shoe factory built in 1810 and Feshane Fabrika-i Humayun built in 1833 are among the pioneers of that era. Starting from 1842, the Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul started to develop as an area of factories. Thus has emerged a type of the first organized industrial zone and estate of that era with the factories built one after another (Seyitdanlıoğlu [16]). Parallel to the developments in Zeytinburnu, a factory area has been created also in Bakırköy, which has mainly been expanded after the 1850s. Zeytinburnu Armory in 1843, Beykoz ‘Çini ve Billur Fabrika-i Hümâyunu’ (Glazed Tiles and Crystals Factory) in 1844, Çubuklu Glass and Crystal Factory in 1845, Feshane-i Amire Building in 1851, and Hasköy Shipyard in 1861 have entered among the important industrial buildings of that era. With a view to contributing to the industrial development, masters in various different professions have been educated and trained in the industrial school opened in Istanbul in 1868. Included among the last industrial buildings of that century were Unkapanı mill started to be built in 1870s, Cibali Tobacco Factory converted from Lengerhane building in 1884, Hasanpaşa Gashouse built in 1892, and Yıldız Fabrika-i Hümâyûnu built for porcelain production in the gardens of Yıldız Palace in 1894. Galata Quay started to be built in 1892 and completed in 1900, and Haydarpaşa Railway Terminal and silo completed in 1908, and two warehouses in Salıpazarı and Karaköy (Galata) built in 1910, and Silahtarağa Electricity Factory Campus built in 1911 are also among the most important industrial artifacts of that century.

4.2 Republican era

Within the frame of the project of modernization and development of nation-state initiated by the very beginning of the Republican era, the Turkish State has opened many factories and started to build railways covering the whole country. The industrial buildings built in that era are accepted as important symbols of the history of modernization. Industrial buildings of the era are generally focused on sectors such as food (sugar), textiles and mining. On the other side, heavy



industry investments are not very many. As a requirement of the national development policy, industrial investments have been distributed equally throughout Anatolia, rather than giving weight to Istanbul. Included among the important industrial buildings of Istanbul were three new warehouses built in addition to the existing warehouses in Salıpazarı and Karaköy (Galata) in 1928, and Paşabahçe Glass Factory Campus built in 1935, and IETT Warehouse Building built in Fındıklı in 1936, and Haydarpaşa Silo built in 1950s. Among the first heavy industry complexes of Istanbul built in that era were Çayıröva plants built in 1963–1964, and Atlas-Copco Compressor Factory built in 1970. During the period of approximately ten years starting from 1960s, timing and cost-efficiency came to the forefront in the construction of industrial buildings in Turkey, and in 1978, the collapse and chaos in economy and politics caused a reduction of industrial investments, which completely stopped on the 12 September 1980 coup d'état (www.sanayiden.com [18]). As seen, the industrial heritage of Istanbul has emerged greatly throughout the 19th century (fig. 1).

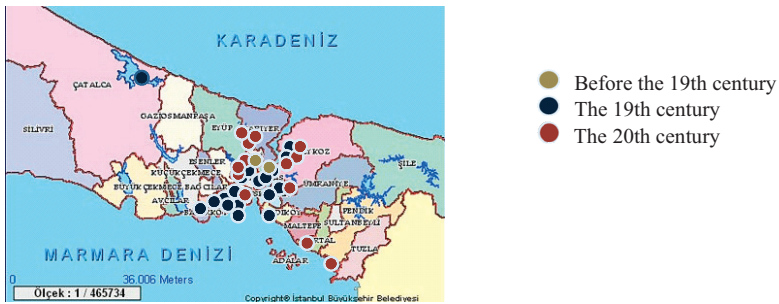


Figure 1: Formation process of industrial heritage in Istanbul.

4.3 Transformation of industrial buildings in Istanbul

The industrial heritage of Istanbul, as of today, reveals not only the industrialization adventure of the Ottoman era, but also the modernization history of Turkey. Starting from the second half of the 19th century, a modern business center has emerged in the Galata and Pera districts of Istanbul becoming more and more effective in international trade. The new post office and railway terminal buildings as required by developments in transportation and communication channels, and moving of new administration buildings and palaces to Pera, the first mass housing projects, emergence of suburbs, construction of new bank buildings as required by new financial relations, and the class differentiations in housing areas may be listed as the centers of gravity of urban transformation of Istanbul. Thanks to the existence of an adequate transportation network for transportation of raw materials and finished products, the city has, especially after 1850, become the center of Ottoman Empire industries, and as a result, the number and types of factories established by foreign capital, labor force and technology have evidently increased (Arıkanlı

[19]). To such extent that 55 percent of industrial enterprises existing within the borders of Ottoman Empire as of the beginning of the 20th century are in Istanbul (Köksal and Ahunbay [17]). Accordingly, it may easily be said that the Istanbul-focused investment tradition which is still ongoing today dates back to those times.

Neoliberal policies emerging all over the world since the 1980s have speeded up the urban transformation process, whereupon the lands in the central sites of the city have quickly risen in value. In this process, the first modern industrial buildings of Istanbul which have already become ruins – which are at the same time the buildings of the history of labor of the city according to Arıkanlı [20] – have become the targets of global capital. During the process of re-functionalization of the industrial buildings of Istanbul, these buildings, especially those on the coastal areas, have greatly been the subject of culture-led regeneration and turned into museums, universities, culture centers, etc. However, at the inner areas which at the same time developed as Central Business Districts, the wide lands of these buildings have made it possible to build high-rise office and shopping centers thereon. Transformation, re-functionalization, conversation and reusing principles for industrial buildings in Istanbul have brought along some different debates as well. These headings of debate will be described with some examples here below.

4.3.1 Scientific and appropriate conservation and reusing policies

In transformation of industrial heritage, the general expectation is the implementation of conservation and re-functionalization policies which exhibit their original purpose of use, thereby serving to the urban memory. Silahtarağa Power Station, built in 1911 and used for electricity generation until 1983 in the Golden Horn, the oldest industrial district of Istanbul, has remained dormant for a long time after that date, and has then been converted into a contemporary arts museum and a culture and education center with SantralIstanbul project in 2007, together with its old engine rooms, repair shops and warehouse buildings. Furthermore, the Energy Museum, included in that complex and created by conservative transformation of old engine rooms, is the first industrial archeology museum of Turkey and contributes to remind the past functions of the building. Again, Istanbul Rahmi Koç Industry Museum, created by combination and transformation of Lengerhane and Şirket-i Hayriye in 1991, is also one of the best examples thereof, due to its contributions to industrial heritage.

4.3.2 Sense of belonging

One the basic problems faced by the abandoned and dormant industrial buildings is the sense of ownership or belonging by the neighborhood thereof. They generally stand as ghost buildings passed by and forgotten recklessly and regardless by the city-dwellers aftermath the declining process. Only a few are owned by the city-dwellers. Hasanpaşa Gashouse, built in 1892 to meet the gas demand of and to illuminate the streets of the Anatolian side of Istanbul, draws our attention as a good example of this ownership. After stoppage of coal gas



production, this industrial building has been used as coal depot, bus garage, IETT warehouse, etc., and has thereafter been projected to be demolished for construction of modern buildings and automobile parks on this industrial heritage, but this process has been diverted by a social initiative of volunteers. “Gashouse Environment Volunteers”, being a self-organization by the neighborhood inhabitants, has started to carry a corporate identity by foundation of Gashouse Environmental Culture and Operations Cooperative in 1998 (Arıkanlı and Kurtuluş [21]). This self-organization experience of the neighborhood inhabitants is considered as one of the most specific examples of the ownership of industrial heritage. The Gashouse Volunteers have produced projects for re-functionalization of this area both as a green-field and breathing space, and as a culture-arts and sports/play area for the neighborhood inhabitants.

4.3.3 Sharing the resulting rent

The fate of industrial buildings which have remained within the central business district of cities by time is more critical than those located on the coast. They wait for being reused, under a great threat of rent. These projects generally aim the wide land of the industrial building, rather than the building itself. As a result, though the industrial building becomes reusable as a result of the project, it does no more belong to its own land. It has got stuck in the dense and high housing and settlements around it. So, it does not give a clue about its history. The best examples of this may be seen in Bomonti Beer Factory and Mecidiyeköy Liquor and Cognac Factory both located at the central sites of the city. Upon allocation of wide lands of the industrial buildings to high-rise office buildings and shopping centers, these examples have converted into complexes which disregard and do not show respect to the industrial heritage therein, and do not join the industrial building to the project as an industrial heritage, and of which value contributed thereto is limited by the increase of rent therefrom. Included along the most important industrial heritage transformation projects of 2000s are seaport transformation projects as well. The transformation project being composed of hotels, business and shopping centers and covering the historical Haydarpaşa Railway Station and Seaport has given the danger signals of a project of rent on this area where railway station and railways are integrated with a great importance for Istanbul. On the other side, Galataport project located in Salıpazarı has also included within its limited area some purposes of use such as shopping center and office buildings which are not fit for this district. This project has also been the focus of great reactions and accusation of being a project of rent, just like Haydarpaşa project, creating risk such as heavy traffic for its close vicinity.

4.3.4 Effects of transformation on its close vicinity

Istanbul Rahmi Koc Industrial Museum is shown as a positive example not only due to its theme fit to the industrial heritage concept but also due to the transformation process it has triggered for its close vicinity. Since the foundation of the museum, in Sütlüce district which was a district of ruins for almost 30 years, renewal activities have started, and branches of leading hotels, pastry shops and restaurants were opened one after another, and the abandoned



buildings were restored for use as houses and offices. Another similar good example is Cibali Tobacco Factory which was transformed into the theme of university, and was restored within the frame of modern conservation principles, and made positive contributions to physical and social development of its close vicinity. Opening of the University in that neighborhood has led to opening of restaurants and restoration of the buildings in its vicinity which was a district of ruins. Furthermore, by its own means, the University has made contributions to the community by projects such as improvement of the roads, afforestation of park area, and training of the community and especially the youth and children thereof.

4.3.5 Public benefits

One of the basic expectations from transformation of industrial buildings is the public benefits. One of the best examples of it is Istanbul Contemporary Arts Museum. This has been created upon construction of a modern museum in one of the customs warehouses in Salıpazarı in 2003, and is since then serving as an important culture and arts center of the city. Being the stage of many national and international activities, this building is conducting culture-led activities for many different groups of the community. It is of course possible to increase the number of industrial heritage transformation applications in Istanbul, and to explain the debates thereon. To assess these applications basically within the frame of their public benefits and contributions to industrial heritage is extremely important for clarification of transformation principles of industrial heritage. It is noted that the industrial heritage transformation projects have been implemented in Istanbul mostly after 2000 (fig. 2).



Figure 2: Periods of industrial heritage transformation in Istanbul.

When the transformation process is assessed from the perspective of 1/100 thousand scale Environmental Organization Plan of Istanbul, it is noted that the applications have greatly been located in historical, archeological and urban registered areas, and in the Central Business District (fig. 3).

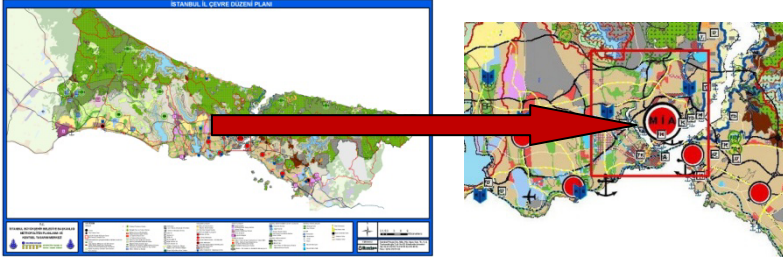


Figure 3: The environmental organization plan of Istanbul metropolitan area.

5 Assessment and conclusion

One of the key elements is to transfer and hand down the industrial heritage to the next generations in the best way possible, which is at least as important as the use of the industrial heritage by the community of today. This means to say that in the course of transformation of industrial heritage, the applications must make contributions to creation of an urban memory, and must own the history of labor and heritage, and must ensure that they are transferred truly from the past to the future. It must always be kept in mind that by increasing the access to arts and culture, it is possible to reduce the social and economic inequalities, and to create awareness and sense of belonging in the society and particularly in the local community. The social benefits of culture-led regeneration should be understood and transferred well by central and local governments, and volunteer organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should also be made a natural component of the culture-led regeneration process.

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