

THE RISE AND FALL OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE CLUSTERS IN POST-INDUSTRIAL EUROPEAN CITIES; portraying critical sustainability parameters.

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Since the 90s, under the conditions of post-industrial economies, European cities have experienced an accelerating pace of growth of cultural and leisure economic activities. Culture and leisure have been regarded magic substitutes for all the lost factories and warehouses, and a device to create new urban image, to make cities more attractive to mobile capital and mobile professional workers. The rise of cultural and leisure activities is closely associated to new types of urban redevelopment and renewal: “culture-led” regeneration of abandoned inner city industrial sites, old and underused harbour sites, declined inner city residential areas, in which cultural and leisure activities have been mingling and clustering.

The following two decades have witnessed both the success and flourishing of a large number of such cultural and leisure epicentres and the decay of others. Thus, the question of sustainability of such epicentres becomes a central concern of urban planning and design scholars. The present paper examines a sample of cultural and leisure epicentres in European cities attempting to analyse spatial characteristics and reveal critical sustainability parameters.

Keywords: cultural and leisure epicentres, regeneration, sustainability

1. Introduction: Culture and leisure clusters in the post-industrial city.

Throughout urban history, cities have always exhibited a capacity to act as centres of cultural activities and generate culture in the form of various arts and styles, new ideas and attitudes. However, since the 1990s, post-industrial cities in developed regions are witnessing an accelerating pace of growth of cultural and leisure economic activities. During the last two decades, in the new milieu of economic globalisation and volatility of capital and enterprises, the relocation of traditional industries in developing regions was accompanied by an unprecedented growth of cultural and leisure industries in mature cities. Production and consumption of culture and leisure (arts, fashion, music, food, tourism) and the industries that cater to it, along with ‘creative industries’ containing design (in architecture, fashion, graphics, internet, etc.), have become the growth engine of the post-industrial city (see Bianchini 1993, Zukin, 1995, Lash & Urry 1994, Scott, 1997 and 2000, Hall 2000, Kockel 2003). Sir Peter Hall (2000) was among the first to argue that, cities have passed at extraordinary speed from manufacturing to informational economy and from informational economy to a cultural economy; and “culture is now seen as the magic substitute for all the lost factories and warehouses, and as a device that will create a new urban image, making the city more attractive to mobile capital and mobile professional workers” (Hall 2000: 640).

A large number of studies have measured particular parameters and analysed different sectors of the cultural and leisure urban economies (see for instance Hobbs et al. 2000, Hollands and Chatterton 2003). Scott (2000) interprets the accelerating pace of growth of cultural industries as a result of both the increasing disposable consumer income and the discretionary time of the middle classes in developed countries. On the same line, Clark et al. (2002) and Clark (2004) describe the pattern of ‘amenity urban growth’ – both economic and demographic – rooted in the fact that educated and talented young professionals and high-tech staff, who can locate themselves where they choose, are mainly courted by cities that compete for them with public amenities. Thus, leading urban policies are now passing from the provision of larger incentives to enterprises than the competing locations to the provision of lifestyle amenities for visitors and mainly for residents (see Montgomery 2005, Florida 2005).

The postmodern accelerating pace of growth of cultural and leisure economic activities in cities has been accompanied by a parallel strong proclivity to clustering: Before the '90s, cultural buildings and building complexes, even those representing big architectural statements and flagship projects like for instance, President's Mitterand 'Grands projets' in Paris, were more or less randomly distributed over the plan of inner Paris – perhaps realising some small and ad hoc local concentrations. Since the '90s, spatial clustering of cultural activities in inner city areas represents the dominant pattern, and as Mommaas (2004) argued, there is “*a shift from a policy aimed at organising occasions for spectacular consumption to a more fine-tuned policy, also aimed at creating spaces, quarters and milieus for cultural production and creativity*” (Mommaas 2004: 508, my emphasis). Typical such cases are the Museum Quarter in Vienna that consists of 20 museums and cultural institutes covering a surface of 60,000 sq. m; the Museum Isle in Berlin; the Museum Quarter in Rotterdam; the Museum quarter in The Hague. Such clusters of high-cultural activities including museums of various kinds, galleries, theatres, operas, concert halls, convention centres, and the like, represent ‘*signifying precincts*’ (Hutton 2004) or ‘*epicentres*’ (Gospodini 2006) of post-industrial urban economies.

Parallel to culture, also popular leisure activities such as cafes, bars, restaurants, (ethnic and continental), popular-music clubs, etc., have also been clustering in particular inner city areas generating quarters or epicentres of leisure (see Gospodini 2006) and fuelling night-time economy (see Hobbs et al. 2000, Hollands and Chatterton 2003, Roberts 2006). As typical cases, one may refer to Temple Bar in Dublin, Baglacity in Brick Lane, London, Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, Witte de Withstraat in Rotterdam, Psiri in Athens and Ladadika in Thessaloniki, Palia in Volos, Greece.

Following classifications of cultural and leisure clusters (see Gospodini 2006, 2007 and 2009) according to spatial parameters, such as location in the urban grid, the dominant land-uses and activities clustered in, the supplementary land uses and activities, the ways space has been produced (development, redevelopment, renewal), and the architectural and urban morphology, there are three main types:

(1) ‘*High-culture epicentres*’ are usually located in conserved inner city areas and constituted by clusters of high-culture activities such as museums of various kinds, galleries, theatres, operas, concert halls, convention centres, and the like. Supplementary land uses and activities include bookshops, cafes and trendy restaurants. These epicentres are mostly produced by means of urban renewal and redevelopment. Heritage buildings are redesigned and re-used while also new buildings of innovative urban morphology and architectural design are often added to the area.

(2) ‘*Popular leisure and creative epicentres*’ are located in conserved inner city areas and constituted by clusters of leisure activities such as cafes, bars, restaurants, (ethnic and continental), popular-music clubs, etc. Supplementary, there are creative activities which include antique shops, fashion design shops, traditional handcraft workshops, art workshops, music shops, bookshops and avant-garde small theatres. These epicentres are mostly produced by means of urban renewal of conserved urban cores – usually former industrial or residential sites.

(3) ‘*Cultural and leisure waterfront epicentres*’ are mostly located in the heart of inner city, but in some cases also in the urban periphery, and constituted by clusters of culture and leisure activities such as museums of various kinds, convention halls, galleries, concert halls, theatres, parks and promenades. Supplementary land uses and activities include housing, offices, cafes, restaurants. These epicentres mostly represent development and redevelopment schemes of innovative urban morphology and architectural design – often complemented by renewal schemes of heritage buildings and urban cores. As typical such schemes, recently developed, one may mention South Bank

in London, Forum of the Cultures in Barcelona, Abandoibarra in Bilbao, Port Melbourne in Melbourne, West Kowloon in Hong Kong.

In terms of urban morphology and landscape, 'popular leisure and creative epicentres, usually hosted in conserved urban cores, generate a localised landscape. On the contrary, high-culture epicentres and waterfront cultural and leisure epicentres usually exhibit a mixture of distinctive avant-garde design schemes combined with conserved and re-used heritage buildings; and in this respect, they generate a new species of 'glocalised' urban landscape – i.e., urban landscape-collage dominated by two extremities: a) that of built heritage with rather local spatial references and b) that of design innovation having more universal or global spatial references (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004).

In some cases clusters of cultural and leisure activities are spontaneously clustered due to the advantages and economic benefits produced by spatial neighbouring, but in most cases such clusters are stimulated, encouraged and planned by the public sector and the city's authorities. This is rooted to the fact that clustering of cultural and leisure activities may work as a catalyst to processes of urban redevelopment and renewal in declined and underused inner city areas – mostly former industrial areas. The phenomenon of culture-led-regeneration of inner city areas has produced new urban forms and landscapes contributing to the economy and image of the post-industrial inner city (see Gospodini 2006). The advantages and benefits of clustering of cultural and leisure activities may be conceived in relation to the particularities of cultural industries in terms of production relations and distribution methods, as described by Scott (1997): Labour processes in cultural industries involve considerable amounts of handiwork complemented by computer technologies; production is organised in dense networks of medium to small sized establishments strongly dependent on one another for specialised inputs and services; these networks form multifaceted industrial complexes that may reduce for both employers and employees the risks deriving from frequent recurrent job-search; cultural industries are invariably replete with external economies, many of which can only be effectively appropriated via locational agglomeration which gives rise to mutual learning and cultural synergies; agglomeration also facilitates the emergence of institutional infrastructure that can ease the functioning of local economy (Scott 1997: 333).

Following two decades experience on cultural and leisure epicentres, there is nowadays a clear witness that a large number of such epicentres are a success story whilst some others show signs of decay. Thus, the question of sustainability of such epicentres has lately become a central concern of urban planning and design scholars. The present paper will analyse a sample of cultural and leisure epicentres in Greek cities in terms of spatial and economic characteristics; and in comparison to cultural and leisure epicentres in other European cities, it attempts to reveal critical sustainability parameters.

2. Cultural, leisure and creative clusters in Greek cities: Spontaneous formation, and 'lessez-faire' urban policies.

During the last two decades or so, cultural, leisure and creative clusters (quarters) have been developing in large Greek cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki, but also in middle-sized cities like Volos. Most of them have been spontaneously generated by private initiative and informally developed – i.e. without spatial planning and financial incentives by local authorities or the state. As typical such clusters, (a) Piraeus Avenue and Psiri, both in Athens, (b) Ladadika in Thessaloniki, and (c) Palea in Volos, have been analysed in earlier research (see Gospodini 2006, 2007, and 2009). The area of Valaoritou, Thessaloniki, has recently been studied. Table 1 presents the main spatial and economic characteristics of these clusters.

Table 1: Spontaneous clusters of cultural, leisure and creative activities in Greek cities

Table 1	Type of cluster	Spatial character & geographic location in the city	Size & Degree of cluster's formation	Kind of development	Dominant land uses & activities	Complementary land uses & activities	Architectural and Urban morphology, & urban landscape
Piraeus Avenue, (Athens)	Incipient precinct of high-cultural activities	Linear zone along the main road artery connecting Athens' centre to Piraeus centre	Sparse linear formation , not covering the whole street axis	Renewal & redevelopment	High-cultural activities (Museums, galleries of modern arts, University College of Fine Arts, concert halls, avant-garde theatres, popular music clubs, bars and restaurants)	Housing for new middle classes, and office buildings for other services	- conserved urban grid , mostly heritage buildings (mostly old factories) restored and reused, with episodes of innovative architectural forms added to, - glocalised urban landscape
Psiri (Athens)	Mature epicentre of (a) popular leisure & (b) cultural and creative activities	heritage urban core , close to CBD	dense and robust formation covering almost the whole area	Renewal	Popular leisure activities (restaurants ethnic and continental, cafes, bars, music clubs) creative activities (design firms, dance schools, art galleries, handcraft workshops)	Housing for new creative middle classes,	conserved urban grid , neoclassical buildings (mostly old houses, workshops & warehouses) restored & reused, with sporadic episodes of Modern four-storey buildings added to. - mixt urban landscape of heritage and Modern character
Ladadika, (Thessaloniki)	Mature epicentre of popular leisure activities	heritage urban core , adjacent and well connected to CBD and the old harbour pier	dense and robust formation covering the whole area	Renewal	Popular leisure activities (restaurants ethnic and continental, cafes, bars, music clubs)	Office buildings, hotels, and very limited creative activities (art galleries, design forms) + vacant spaces	conserved urban grid, heritage buildings restored & reused (mostly old houses, workshops & warehouses), heritage urban landscape
Valaoritou (Thessaloniki)	Incipient precinct of popular leisure activities	heritage urban core , adjacent and well connected to CBD	extensive but not robust formation covering a number of streets in the area	Renewal	Popular leisure activities (restaurants ethnic and continental, cafes, bars, music clubs)	very limited creative activities (art galleries, design forms) + many vacant spaces & vacant buildings	conserved urban grid, heritage buildings (mostly old workshops & commercial shops) restored & reused, heritage urban landscape
Palea, (Volos)	Incipient precinct of (a) popular leisure & (b) cultural and creative activities	heritage urban core , adjacent to CBD but separated from it by the train railways	extensive but not robust formation covering a number of streets in the area	Renewal & redevelopment	Popular leisure activities (restaurants ethnic and continental, cafes, bars, music clubs)	Housing for new creative middle classes, traditional workshops, creative activities	conserved urban grid, heritage buildings restored & reused (mostly old houses, workshops & warehouses), heritage urban landscape

(a) *Piraeus Avenue*, the main road artery (28.5 km) connecting Athens to the harbour city of Piraeus, was originally developed in 1835 as industrial estate. In the 1970s, following the decline of traditional industries and the relocation of flourishing industrial plants in planned industrial zones in the exurban periphery, most industrial estates along Piraeus Avenue were abandoned. In the meantime, Athens and Piraeus had been merged into one urban agglomeration as a result of mass internal migration to Attica in the '50s, '60s and '70s, and the ensuing urban expansion; and the industrial character of Piraeus Avenue became incompatible with the surrounding residential areas. The 1986 master plan of Athens enacted laws for the removal of all industrial enterprises from Piraeus Avenue while about 170 old industrial building

complexes were by law protected as built heritage. These policies accelerated the removal of all industries from Piraeus Avenue and made this artery an abandoned but protected heritage-axis ready for renewal and redevelopment. Among all approved land uses¹, culture and leisure started to spontaneously cluster in virtue of large-sized heritage edifices with great potential for re-use, conserved environment of high cultural value, easy access to both Athens and Piraeus, and low real estate prices. In the last decade, Piraeus Avenue has been gradually and spontaneously redeveloped into a cluster of high-cultural and popular leisure activities (see Gospodini 2009): the New Benaki Museum of Modern Arts (Fig.1), Technopolis cultural centre of the Municipality of Athens; Hellinikos Cosmos (Fig.2), a museum and a cultural centre run by the Foundation of Hellenic World, and accommodating virtual reality shows and interactive technology-intensive education for pupils and adults; The School of Fine Arts, University of Athens; Bios Centre, a multimedia art-centre for innovative arts and experimental performances; Zigos art gallery; and five theatres. In between the sites of cultural institutions, bars and night-clubs of popular music are located.



Fig.1: Piraeus Avenue; The New Benaki Museum of Modern Arts.



Fig.1: Piraeus Avenue; Hellinikos Cosmos – cultural centre

(b) Psiri was originally developed as residential area of low-middle classes in the mid-19th century. The social identity of the area and its adjacency to both Athens' CBD and the industries along Piraeus Avenue encouraged the development of family-operated workshops and small factories - mainly for leather goods, small furniture and small metal fabrication. By the end of the 19th century, Psiri had both a residential and industrial character; and until the mid-20th century, it was attracting new inhabitants who were in seek of proximity to productive

¹ As approved land uses were established housing, commercial shops, offices, restaurants, cafes and bars without live music, cultural activities, and car parking.

activities— especially to the gas factory and the silk factory. The deterioration of these areas started in the 1970s due to the decline of traditional industries; the restrictions on new building constructions because of existing archaeological sites; narrow street pattern; car traffic and air pollution; land-use conflicts (see Gospodini 2009). Stabilisation of the population levels came in the early 1990s with foreign economic immigrants and creative middle classes being the first newcomers. The former were attracted by vacant spaces and low housing rents, while pull factors for the latter were, the proximity to CBD and inner-city amenities; low real estate prices and the perspective of urban regeneration during Athens' preparation for the 2004 Olympics (see Gospodini 2009). Renewal and regeneration in Psiri started with the 1991 Regeneration Plan of Athens, the control of land use conflicts, and the by-law protection of built heritage. However, regeneration was mainly facilitated by inherent spatial factors, such as conserved urban fabric of high cultural value, proximity to CBD, abandoned large industrial buildings with great potential for reuse, vacant spaces, and low rents and real estate prices. Appreciating these virtues, cultural, leisure and creative activities, such as cafés, bars and restaurants, theatres, design offices and art galleries, have been clustering in the area in the last decade; and creative middle classes have been buying heritage houses and moving into the area (Fig.3 and 4).



Fig.3 and 4: Psiri, Athens.

(c) *Ladadika* is a well-preserved 18th and 19th century urban core in the historical centre of Thessaloniki. The area was originally developed as a wholesale trade area – mainly for oil, spices and cereals – and the built fabric consisted of warehouses, workshops and commercial shops. Ladadika was a flourishing trade area until the mid-20th century. Deterioration started in the 1970s - mainly in virtue of the increasing competition with supermarkets but also due to the narrow street pattern with inherent difficulties for large vehicle circulation. In the 1980s, the decay reached a peak and most commercial spaces were vacant while illegal and marginal activities (e.g. drugs smuggling, prostitution, etc.) were taking place in the area. In a joined effort, local and state authorities by-law recognised Ladadika as heritage urban core and carried out a renewal and regeneration plan (see Gospodini 2007): all public open spaces, streets and squares, along with 87 heritage buildings were by law protected and reconstructed (see Fig.5) through the EU programme of *Urban Pilot Projects*. The renewal and regeneration scheme failed to control possible over-accumulation of approved land uses, while it did not provide any economic incentives to landowners for reconstruction. Left over to initiatives of private entrepreneurs, Ladadika exclusively attracted popular leisure activities such as cafés, bars and restaurants that fast covered the whole area and generated a robust cluster.



Fig.5: Ladadika, Thessaloniki

(d) *Valaoritou* is a conserved built heritage core corresponding to the 19th century declined commercial centre of Thessaloniki. Until the mid-20th century, clothing workshops, wholesale and retail commercial activities of cloths, linen and household goods, stationary, and spices, have been flourishing in the area. Deterioration started with the gradual weakening of handmade-tailored clothes and the booming of industrial production in dressmaking in the '70s, and reached a peak in the 90s under the conditions of economic globalisation and the relocation of clothing workshops in neighbouring Balkan countries with low wages and attractive taxation system. The area turned down to a deserted place with many vacant commercial spaces and entire buildings abandoned (Fig.7). Despite the valuable built-heritage, and some planning attempts for regeneration, there has been no state intervention for more than a decade, leaving the redevelopment perspectives to private initiatives. In the last five years, popular leisure activities such as cafés, bars and restaurants fast covered ground level spaces in the main streets of the area - generating an incipient leisure precinct (see Fig.8). Lately, creative activities such as design offices started to cluster on upper floors.



Fig.7: Valaoritou, Thessaloniki.



Fig.8: Valaoritou, Thessaloniki.

(e) *Palea*, is part of Volos' historical core. Archaeological excavations in different sites of Palea have revealed archaeological ruins belonging to settlements established from prehistoric to the Ottoman period. The implementation of the 1883 grid-patterned master plan radically changed the morphological and spatial character of Palea by demolishing vernacular old houses and the organic street patter. However, due to its neighbouring to both the harbour and the railway station, Palea quickly acquired a new character as an industrial

and wholesale area: a large number of small and large factories, workshops, warehouses, wholesale trade and commercial activities developed in the area in the first half of the 20th century. Deterioration started in the 1970s as a result of a) the decline of traditional industries, b) the segregation of Palea from the fast developing CBD due to the railways boundaries (see Gospodini 1999), c) the decline of small family workshops and commercial shops in virtue of the increasing competition with large commercial firms, and d) restrictions in buildings construction due to archaeological ruins. The decline lasted for more than two decades; and a large number of factories, warehouses, workshops and commercial shops were abandoned. The 1992 master plan of Volos by law recognised Palea as a heritage urban core requiring renewal and regeneration. Despite efforts by local authorities to regenerate Palea by allocating public services and municipal cultural activities in abandoned old industrial buildings like the Museum of industrial heritage in Tsalapata factory, it was indeed the dynamic market of night-time entertainment and private funds that steered renewal and regeneration in Palea (Fig.6). Since the mid-1990s, cafes, bars, music clubs, restaurants and the like, have gradually settled in the area while ad hoc conserving and re-using abandoned edifices, thus, impelling the formation of a popular-leisure cluster in the central and southern parts of Palea. High-culture and creative activities, such as multiplex cinemas and shopping centres, art galleries, and a radio-television channel, followed night-time entertainment and created a sub-cluster of culture and leisure in the northern part of Palea.



Fig. 9: Palea, Volos.

3. The question of sustainability.

Following the spontaneous formation and growth of all the above cultural, leisure, and creative clusters in Greek cities, as resulted by minimal state intervention in planning and design as well as lack of specific urban policies and incentives for encouraging growth of such clusters and epicentres, the question of sustainability becomes critical. In the framework of the recent and ongoing economic crisis in Greece, sustainable development of epicentres of leading-edge post-industrial economies is a challenge and a key parameter for the economic prospects of Greek cities. More specifically,

- **Psiri**, Athens, following constant gradual development for almost two decades, has passed from the stage of 'incipient precinct' to the stage of a robust cluster formation of leisure, cultural and creative activities in the last five years. The main land uses generating the cluster's identity are popular leisure activities (cafes, bars, restaurants, and music clubs) located in the heart of the Psiri. But supportive and complementary high-culture activities (e.g. theatres, art galleries) and creative activities (handcraft workshops, design firms, dance schools) show a parallel significant growth and expansion. As Newman and Smith (2000) argued in their study of Southbank London, a major indication of advanced phase of the cluster's development is the formation of distinct sub-clusters in it. And this is true for Psiri

which appears well-integrating sub-clusters of (a) popular leisure, (b) high-culture, (c) creative industries, have been shaped (see map in Fig.10).

- **Piraeus Avenue**, Athens, has shown slow but constant expansion and development during the last decade. However, this linear cluster exhibits *'black-gaps'* along Piraeus avenue due to the lack of economic incentives for the reconstruction of all abandoned private industrial buildings. Besides, apart from high-culture activities (theatres, museums, art galleries), there is a lack of other supportive activities (e.g. creative activities). Therefore, it has still not yet reached a robust cluster formation.
- **Ladadika**, Thessaloniki, following an admirable quick peak of formation immediately after conservation and renewal in the early 90s, has shown strong signs of decay during the last five years. A large number of enterprises of night-time entertainment (cafes, bars, restaurants, and music clubs) have closed down, thus, vacant spaces, even entirely vacant buildings have emerged (see map in Fig.10). The rising question is whether the lack of land-use mix and the mono-functional character of the cluster as an exclusive epicentre of popular leisure activities creates constraints, and threatens sustainable development.
- **Valaoritou**, Thessaloniki and **Palea**, Volos, both recently generated, are now characterised by fast processes of formation and growth. But they are still away from achieving a robust cluster structure since only a few streets have been regenerated, and only ground spaces (former commercial shops) are now occupied by night-time entertainment activities (cafes, bars, restaurants, and music clubs). Upper floors remain vacant and badly maintained. Although there are starts of supportive creative firms moving in, both areas follow the pattern of Ladadika, are characterised by mono-functional over-growth of popular leisure, and therefore, their future is ambiguous and sustainability is under question.



Fig. 10 Psirri, Athens; Map of sub-clusters. Popular leisure is coloured dark blue; high-culture is coloured yellow; creative industries is coloured red; commerce is coloured green; and light blue shows non-regenerated parts.



Fig. 11 Ladadika, Thessaloniki; Land-use map showing (a) night-time entertainment with red colour, (b) conserved but vacant buildings with grey colour, and (c) not yet conserved and re-used buildings with black colour.

Regarding sustainability of such clusters in European context, there are lessons to be learned from cities with rich experience and mature cultural, leisure and creative economies. Studying London's experience, Evans emphatically notes that "we are now in the creative age", explaining that in our era "economic value in a growing number of sectors depends directly on the ability of firms to embed creativity and cultural content within the goods and services they produce" (Evans et al. 2006: 4). This means that mono-functional clusters – whether clusters of high-culture like museum quarters and museum islands, or, clusters of popular leisure like night-time entertainment quarters – cannot secure sustainability. As Evans & Foord (2009) believe clusters with a variety of post-industrial economic activities represent a more workable model of living quarters, rather than "museumified quarters". Land-use mix, and especially the presence of **creative industries forming sub-clusters in cultural and leisure clusters can increase the degree of sustainability**. Strong evidence to this is provided by Southbank, London, Temple Bar, Dublin, but also by Psiri, Athens. Evidence to the opposite is also provided by cases like Ladadika, Thessaloniki – a popular-leisure cluster which experienced a quick rise, but deprived from the support of creative industries, has then experienced a rapid fall entering a new phase of decline.

Again from London's evidence, Evans (2009) presents '*integration*' - **spatial, economic and social** - as a major parameter of the cluster's sustainability. In particular, he suggests the following:

1. Cultural, creative and leisure clusters formed in areas where they can draw on existing authenticity and inheritance of former cultural and creative activities and production have a more sustainable future.
2. Cultural, creative and leisure clusters with strong spatial integration with adjoining areas and neighbourhoods create a greater sense of ownership of quarters by stakeholders (residents, entrepreneurs). On the contrary, when urban planners and designers propose clusters that are on purpose divided and clear-cut off from the surrounding areas, there is a risk producing ghettoization or sterile zones.

Evidence to the theoretical approach of Evans and Floord (2006 and 2009) on sustainability parameters may elsewhere be provided. For instance, Westergasfabriek (Fig.12), Amsterdam, is a cultural and leisure cluster located at the old gas factory site, at the city's periphery, with relatively poor transport connection to the city centre and also a weak integration to Jordan area – an immediately neighbouring quarter which represents the liveliest quarter of creative industries and leisure in Amsterdam. Jordan draws on inheritance of former cultural and creative activities and production and so far, exhibits sustainable model of growth. On the contrary, Westergasfabriek, as *clear-cut sterile zone*, shows signs of decline after twenty years of development. For instance, in mid-July 2014, I have witnessed as visitor that there was not any music, theatrical or other performance on, and any art exhibition.



Fig.12 Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam

Porter (2000) presents **the spatial scale** of cultural and leisure clusters argues as critical parameter for sustainability. He argues that the scale of a cultural and leisure cluster relates to the distance over which information, transactions, incentives and other interactions occur. Therefore, specifying this argument, it may be said that in global cities like New York, London, Paris, etc., with great economic and cultural impact at local, regional, national, and global level, the sustainability of large-scaled cultural and leisure clusters may be quite secured. But in large and medium-sized cities, large-scaled such clusters have limited potential for sustainable growth - unless great efforts and investments are made by local authorities and the state to attract particularly popular activities. As evidence to this, one may refer to the 1998 World Expo site, Lisbon. It is a linear cluster in Lisbon's east-end periphery alongside the Tagus river (Fig.13).



Fig.13 Left :World Expo site, Lisbon. Right : Vasco da Gama Bridge.

All building complexes for hosting Expo '98 were fully built from scratch and the total surface was 50 hectares. For Lisbon city with 2.7 million people and weak economic impact, a cultural site of 50 hectares represents a giant cluster. Every building was planned for after-Expo reuse, thus, ensuring that after the Expo closed, the site would not be left semi-abandoned, as had happened with previous expos, particularly Seville Expo '92. To support influx of visitors, major access infrastructure projects were made by public funds, including: (a) a new bridge across the river, the Vasco da Gama Bridge (then the longest in Europe); (b) a new line along the Lisbon Metro, with seven stations; (c) Gare do Oriente - the new main multi-modal terminal, featuring trains, metro, buses, and taxis.

However, despite public investments and major transport projects, master-planning for re-use, the site lost its economic activities and liveliness after Expo closed. To regenerate the area, renamed later as 'Park of Nations', there were great efforts by local and state authorities for over a decade, aiming at attracting particularly popular activities – shifting the character of the cluster from entrepreneurial epicentre to leisure and consumption epicentre. To mention the most important ones,

- The main entrance building converted to Centro Vasco da Gama, a regional shopping mall (opened on 27 April 1999);
- The main exhibition pavilions, converted to Lisbon International Exhibition Fair;
- Utopia Pavilion, converted to MEO Arena - Lisbon's main multi-purpose indoor arena;
- Knowledge of the Seas Pavilion, converted to science museum;
- Another exhibition pavilion, converted to a bowling centre, but subsequently demolished;
- Future Pavilion converted into Casino;
- The Observation tower (Vasco da Gama Tower) was converted into luxury hotel and conference centre, mainly addressed to business world, and opened in September 2012.

Finally, **'territorial governance'** is suggested by Neto and Serano (2009) as another significant parameter for sustainable growth of cultural, creative and leisure clusters. Drawing from the experience of French clusters, they argue that a successful governance model lies on attracting a

combination of economic activities and enterprises: training centres, research, public and private units engaged in a partnership and focused on creating synergies around common innovative projects and on knowledge production and sharing processes. Public policies aimed at creating regional processes of competitiveness, based on intervention models with a strong emphasis on a coordinated action industry-territory are proving to be particularly effective in terms of ensuring sustainability for territories and clusters where they operate and to economic sectors addressed to (Neto and Serano 2009).

3. Discussion.

Following two decades experience on the rise of cultural and leisure clusters, there is nowadays a clear witness that a large number of such epicentres are a success story whilst some others show signs of decay. Thus, the question of sustainability of such epicentres has lately become a central concern of urban planning and design scholars. International experience and the analysis of a sample of cultural and leisure epicentres in Greek and European cities in terms of spatial and economic characteristics reveal certain parameters as critical for sustainability.

- Land-use mix, and especially the presence of creative industries forming sub-clusters in cultural and leisure clusters can increase the degree of sustainability.
- The spatial location of the cluster and its 'integration' - spatial, economic and social – with the adjoining areas, local societies, existing economic activities and economic heritage, can increase the cluster's sustainability.
- The spatial scale of a cultural and leisure cluster has to match with the population size and the economic status in the hierarchies of the global urban systems.
- An effective governance model for cultural and creative clusters has (a) to focus on attracting a combination of economic activities and enterprises, and (b) to put a strong emphasis on a coordinated industry-territory action.

Turning onto Greek cities and the cases earlier analysed, key points among the above guidelines for sustainable development of cultural and leisure clusters, are (a) land-use mix, and especially the presence and encouragement of creative industries, and (b) effective new governance models focused on a coordinated industry-territory actions.

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