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THE RISE OF CREATIVE HUBS IN ISTANBUL

Abstract. This study investigates the emergence and the rise of Creative Hubs (CHs) in Istanbul, which as Turkey's economic capital contains most of its creative workforce and the largest number of its CHs. In the last 10 years, the number of co-working spaces (CWSs), incubation centres (ICs), labs, and makerspaces in the city has rapidly increased, following a global trend. This study aims to better understand the changing working forms of the city by investigating the motivations behind the emergence of CHs. 46 CH examples, consisting of CWSs, ICs, makerspaces, and labs, have been examined for this purpose. The study is structured around the four main categories that highlight the different aspects of CHs: *structure* (establishment structure and community structure), *focus* (sectors and professions), *services* (physical and social facilities), and *values* (motivation). The findings of the study demonstrate that members of CHs are mostly freelancers, entrepreneurs, micro SMSs, and start-ups, consisting mostly of members of Generation Y. They work predominantly in creative sectors and tend to look for flexible and cost-saving solutions, support mechanisms, and new connections for their work. The research revealed that CHs are distinguished through the services that they provide. Having emerged as new forms to respond to the distinctive needs of emerging jobs in the creative economy era, they can be considered a new landscape of the post-industrial city.

Key words: Creative hubs, co-working spaces, incubation centres, makerspaces, labs, creative economy, creative industries, Istanbul.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, cities have undergone significant changes in the organisation of workplaces. One of the main reasons for these changes in the urban form is the shift in urban economies. In the 1990s, the effects of the rapid globalisation and advancing technologies led to profound changes in different economic sectors, requiring high level financial services, technology-intensive and knowledge-based

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firms and institutions, and cultural and leisure activities (Gospodini, 2008). The principle resources of this economy became creativity and data. Creativity thus began to be considered the foundation of innovation, which itself was seen as the new primary driver of economic growth. For this reason, creative industries became the key driver of the new economy (Kong, 2014). The rise of such industries in fostering the urban economy led to profound shifts in the populations of cities and in urban morphology, as investment in creative industries also entailed investment in people, business, and infrastructure (Martin and Florida, 2009). The labour force of the creative industry sectors comprises high-tech staff and knowledge workers (Gospodini, 2008) with a high level of education and the knowledge and skills needed to make use of advanced technologies (UNCTAD, 2010). Florida (2002) described such workers as the creative class, as their presence brings economic, social, and cultural viability to the urban environment. As the built environment and social structure are intertwined, urban landscapes are rapidly changing to accommodate the new styles of work, life, leisure, and living forms emerging in cities. In this context, creative hubs (CHs) are a new type of workplace unseen until the early 2000s. With their rapid global ascent, they have become the focus of different disciplines. Governments, local authorities (Greater London Authority, 2014), policymakers (the European Commission, Creative Europe), development agencies (London Development Agency, 2004), and organisations (British Council, 2016) have highlighted the importance of such workspaces and developed policies to foster them. They support and fund CHs, create networks to help them collaborate and connect, and make investments to help them become self-sustaining. However, academic research into CHs is currently nascent and only recently developing.

The relationship between creativity, creative industries, and the concentration of these industries from an urban planning perspective is mostly discussed in the context of concepts such as the creative city (Florida, 2002; Landry, 2008), creative clusters (Bagwell, 2008; Pratt, 2004), cultural clusters (Mommaas, 2004), business clusters (Pratt, 2004), creative spaces (Evans, 2009), creative quarters, and creative districts. There are also comprehensive studies focused on the location patterns of these new working spaces and their urban effects (Mariotti *et al.*, 2017), and the relationship between proximity and knowledge exchanged between these spaces (Parrino, 2015). Other studies on CHs essentially treat them as spaces of social entrepreneurship (Toivonen, 2016), social incubators (Nicolopoulou *et al.*, 2016), knowledge hubs (Evers *et al.*, 2010), smart work hubs (Buksh and Mouat, 2015), innovation labs (Gryszkiewicz *et al.*, 2016), creative local production systems (Lazzeretti *et al.*, 2008), incubation centres (ICs), and co-working spaces (CWSs), (Fuzi, 2016; Moriset, 2014). Although the concept is discussed by different disciplines and handled from different perspectives, research on the emergence and structure of CHs is sparse. This paper aims to make a useful contribution to the understanding of the emergence of CHs in cities. It seeks to find the motivation

behind their establishment in order to better understand the changing working habits and forms of cities in a globalised world. Accordingly, it comprehensively investigates the core identities of such workspaces from the perspectives of structure, focus, service, and values. It aims to fill a gap in the understanding of CHs in a comprehensive way, which will serve as a foundation for the understanding of the economic and physical changes in the city.

This research is focused on examples of CHs in Istanbul because the city contains the largest number of Turkey's CHs but lacks any specific studies focused on them. By analysing the data gathered from CHs, the research attempts to extract the general structure of CHs through four main categories: values, focus, structure, and services. The overall structure of the study takes the form of four sections, including the introduction, which gives a brief overview of the subject. The second section reviews the definition of the CHs and the different approaches to the term. The third section is divided into four parts. It begins with an overview of the CHs in Istanbul. It then outlines the aim, scope, and methodology of the study. The last part of this section analyses the results of the field study and presents the findings from the perspective of the four abovementioned categories. The fourth section contains concluding remarks and evaluates the results that pertain to the research questions.

2. CREATIVE HUBS

Hubs claim to encourage collaboration between their members and foster the serendipitous knowledge necessary for the stimulation and strengthening of businesses and projects. The term is used interchangeably with other names such as innovation labs, incubators, CWSs (Jiménez and Zheng, 2017), open creative labs (Schmidt *et al.*, 2015), start-up spaces, innovation centres, maker spaces, and research institutes (Wagner and Watch, 2017). The broadness of the term has led to other attempts at clarification, such as 'collaborative community workspace,' which was used to consolidate various forms of shared workspace where freelancers, self-employed entrepreneurs, and small businesses operate 'alone together' (Fuzi, 2016). Despite the differing terminology, all these variants of CHs generally have one feature in common: they offer environments designed to suit small and micro businesses with varying levels of business development (Greater London Authority, 2014). Most of the participants in the creative industry are start-ups, freelancers, or creative individuals, whose needs vary accordingly.

While there are certain core concepts universally associated with CHs, such as collaboration, networking, co-working, shared space, entrepreneurship, and incubation, there is no absolute consensus on their definition. One of the first

was attempted in the UK. The London Development Agency (LDA) (2004, p. 33) characterised CHs as “providing a space for work, participation, and consumption”. Considering the larger effects of CHs rather than treating them merely as incubators for small business, the LDA described a strategy to support CHs as they help creative industries develop. Similarly, the Greater London Authority (GLA) supports such workplaces as a policy for their socio-economic benefits and impact on business growth. The GLA, focusing on their important role in the provision of workspaces and support for start-ups and small businesses, develop reports and programmes to better utilise these roles in the generation of socio-economic benefits to surrounding communities (Greater London Authority, 2014). Its report highlights that these types of spaces are not always obvious and typically have overlapping features, classifying them as incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces (IACs). The British Council embarked upon a comprehensive description of CHs (2015), remarking that they come in different shapes and sizes. The CH Toolkit (2015) addressed them as both physical and virtual structures that could be static, mobile, or online and could be described in different ways, e.g. as collectives, co-operatives, labs, or incubators.

The concept of the CH is associated more with its social aspects, such as its user relationships, support mechanisms, and the potential opportunities that it provides than with its physical features. Schuermann (2014), referring to the importance of CHs such as CWSs for young entrepreneurs whose businesses are in the early years of development, claimed that CWSs supported start-ups and facilitated the transition from solo to employer entrepreneurship by opening up opportunities for partnerships, networking, and mutual support within the wider community. The physical dimension of CHs was also discussed as a part of the social infrastructure in CHs. The physical infrastructure and design of these new workplace organisations maximise the opportunities for face-to-face meetings, which enables the exchange of tacit knowledge (Moriset, 2014). Although the users of CHs, who are mostly highly flexible self-employed and freelance workers, have the ability to work from anywhere, they strongly prefer to share the same physical infrastructure with similar people. Specifically, human interaction, face-to-face communication, and serendipitous discovery are critical for such professions and cannot be achieved without a physical structure (Pratt, 2000). Moreover, the opportunity to work from anywhere can easily result in isolation and an inability to build trust and relationships with others (Spinuzzi, 2012). Social and professional interactions in places like CHs reduce these risks (Mariotti *et al.*, 2017). Informal and formal relationships in CWs also provide a basis for organisation (Blagoev *et al.*, 2019), providing networking and tacit knowledge opportunities that are as important as the physical facilities in these places. From an academic perspective, Landry (2000) classified these vital opportunities as either ‘concrete factors’ or ‘intangible factors’. Similarly, discussing the services that CHs provide for their members, Virani (2015) emphasised the importance of both hard services (i.e.

physical infrastructure such as desks for rent, online services, studio space, labs, meeting rooms, machinery, and incubator units) and soft services (i.e. informal and formal networking opportunities, knowledge exchange, business support, collaboration, transactional relationships, and participation in specific communities of interest).

3. THE RISE OF CREATIVE HUBS IN ISTANBUL

There is a growing potential in Turkey for creative industries, whose growth rate is increasing faster than that of other economic activities (UNCTAD, 2010). The creative workforce of the country is located mainly in its two largest cities, Istanbul and Ankara, which together host 64% of Turkey's total creative workforce, the majority of which is found in Istanbul, according to 2011 data (Lazzeretti *et al.*, 2014). The city also has the highest density of creative industry clustering in the country (İZKA, 2013). Although the ratio of the creative workforce to total population (0.9%) is lower than in Paris (4.7%) or London (3.8%) (Kerimoğlu and Güven-Güney, 2018), Istanbul's creative economy is growing, and the city is Turkey's incubator of creativity and innovation. Over the last 30 years, the economic base of the city has gradually shifted from manufacturing to services, providing growing potential for the creative economy (Evren and Enlil, 2012). As a result of this creative workforce and potential, a new type of workplace is not unexpectedly emerging in Istanbul. In the last 10 years, the number of CWSs, ICs, labs, and makerspaces in Istanbul has rapidly increased, following the overall global trend.

The CHs defined in this study comprise examples of CWSs, ICs, labs, and makerspaces in Istanbul. Of these types of entities, the city hosts mainly ICs, 26 of which have been identified for the purpose of this study. Only 18 chains of CSW exist in the city, with a total of 84 locations. These numbers, while growing, lag behind those of some leading world cities; London has 29 incubators, 81 accelerators (both classified as ICs in this paper) (Bone *et al.*, 2017), and 20 makerspaces (classified separately as makerspaces and labs in this paper) (Sleigh, 2015), while Istanbul has only 26 ICs and 10 makerspaces/labs. Since CH statistics are available predominantly on the national level, it is difficult to make comparisons for the same time period between cities at the same Alpha ("GaWC," n.d.) category with Istanbul. Coworker.com ("coworker.com," n.d.), perhaps one of the most comprehensive search engines for finding CWSs around the world, gives 107 results for Madrid, 87 for Chicago, 82 for Toronto, 44 for Milan, and 59 for Istanbul, all in the same Alpha category. However, caution must be taken in drawing conclusions from these numbers, as they are only search engine results and cannot be extrapolated to formal statistical data. And while these results indicate that Istanbul may

not have yet fully achieved the same capacity as other similar cities in its own category, the city has a growing potential for CHs considering their positive trend there in the last 5 years.

3.1. The aim and scope

This study focuses on the investigation of CHs in Istanbul. It aims, through an investigation of the motivation behind their emergence, to better understand the changing forms of work in the city, analysing CH structure through four main perspectives: structure, service, focus, and values. The scope of this research consists of examples of CHs from Istanbul comprising CWSs, ICs, labs (design-based urban labs, living labs, and R&D and Innovation labs), and makerspaces. Istanbul was chosen as the case study area because it is the city with the most urban vitality, cultural diversity, and young and skilled labour force throughout the country (Enlil *et al.*, 2011), and thus hosts the most diverse and varied examples of CHs in Turkey. Within this context, a total of 46 CH examples, consisting of CWSs, ICs, labs, and makerspaces in Istanbul, were chosen for the case study. As these 46 CHs have branches around the city, 114 locations in total were included in the study (Table 1).

Table 1. The number of CHs included in this study

Type of CHs	Number of CHs contacted for the study	Number of CHs that participated in the research	
		Number of CHs	Number of all locations (with all branches)
CWSs	18	17	84
ICs	26	21	21
Labs	5	4	5
Maker Spaces	5	4	4
Total	54 CHs	46 CHs	114 Locations

Source: own work.

3.2. Data and methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used in this study. In the first stage, examples of CHs in Istanbul were investigated. The list of CHs was identified through snowball sampling supplemented by web searches and investigation of the Istanbul sections of international networks related to CHs. The data could not be collected from the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce or the Turkish Statistical Institute because there is no specific classification of CH in the records of these institutions.

In the second stage, survey questions were prepared. The questions posed to ICs were differentiated, and extra questions were added, to obtain detailed information on their specific cases. For example, ICs have a different application process from CWSs, makerspaces, and labs. Extensions were made to certain questions in light of this situation. The structure of the questionnaire was organised around research questions, each of which applied to one of the main categories shown in the Fig. 1. Originally, the questionnaire contained more questions covering different aspects of CHs, but the questions used in this study were limited to the main categories, and the rest were excluded. Various closed and open-ended survey questions pertaining to each category were prepared to obtain detailed information about the research questions.

During the third stage of the study, meetings were scheduled with CH leaders and comprehensive surveys were conducted. Researcher site observations were performed during these meetings. The research participants were initially selected from the co-founders or leaders of the CHs. When that was not possible, interviews were conducted with managers. If a face-to-face meeting could not be scheduled, the online version of the survey was sent to the participant. Out of the 46 participants, 24 surveys were conducted through face-to-face meetings and 22 were sent online. The data was gathered from participants on a voluntary basis. The numbers of participants contacted and included or not included in the study are specified in Table 1. Site visits and surveys were conducted from June 2017 to June 2019. In the last stage, all the data gathered from the surveys and observations was analysed according to the main categories specified in Fig. 1.

The following definition of CHs was used to select samples from Istanbul: “a CH is a place with physical and social services where freelancers, entrepreneurs, and micro SMEs within the creative, cultural, and tech sectors can work, collaborate, share, experience, network, develop projects together, and create ideas.” CWSs, ICs, makerspaces, and labs fell under this definition: CWSs provide space to work, share, network, and collaborate; ICs lend support for infrastructure, mentorship, and networking for projects and start-ups to develop their ideas and businesses; makerspaces are collaborative workspaces with different tools and equipment to create, invent, and learn; and labs provide an environment of collaboration and participation to develop solutions for problems and create ideas. Examples of CHs that could be considered virtual networks were excluded from the study, as one of the main research questions was to identify the physical services that CHs provide for their members. Therefore, only CHs with physical structures were included in the case study. Moreover, the location factors of CHs were ignored, as the study was mainly focused on their social infrastructure.

The research questions that made up the framework of the study were chosen to aid in the understanding of the structure of CHs and the reason for their emergence. The definition of CHs described in this research addresses the support mechanisms,

networking opportunities, and social structures of CHs, as well as their physical structure, for all of which the main categories were selected to cover.

The first category, i.e. structure, contained two subcategories. The subcategory of establishment structure aimed to determine the establishment year of CHs, which would help to clarify when CHs started to emerge in Istanbul (Q1). The subcategory of community structure was meant to illuminate the member profiles of CHs, which would help to ascertain their users (Q2). The second category, i.e. focus, aimed to determine the professions and projects involved in CHs from a sectoral perspective (Q3). Both the physical and social facilities that CHs provide for their members have been taken into consideration in the category of services (Q4). Lastly, questions in the category of values aimed to understand the motivation behind creating a hub (Q5) from their founders' perspective. These main categories and related research questions were described in Fig. 1.

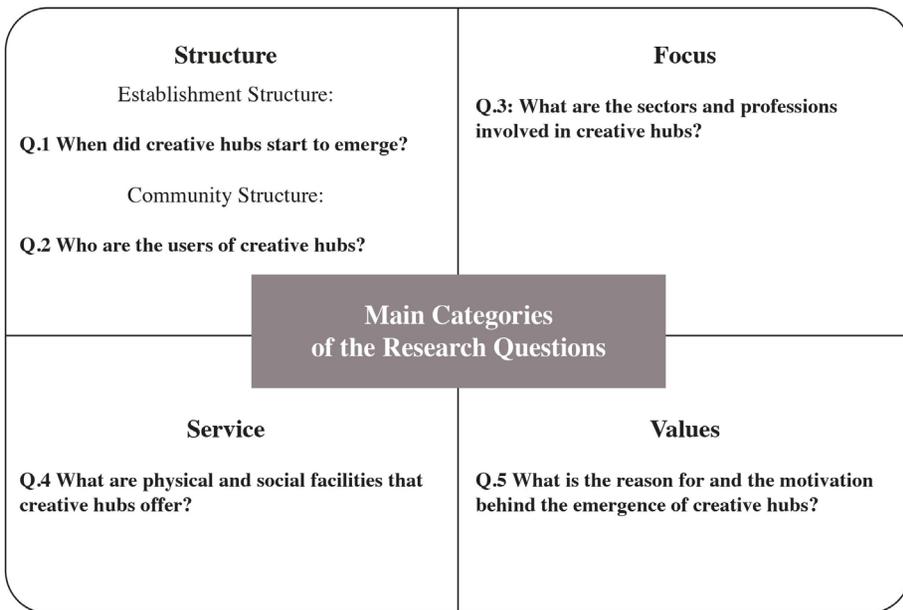


Fig. 1. The Main Categories of the Research Questions

Source: own work.

3.3. Empirical results

As the research questionnaire was organised around the four main topics that address the research questions, the empirical results have been evaluated according to those topics.

3.3.1. Structure

Establishment Structure

CHs are an emerging concept in Istanbul. The city’s first CH was established in 1999 as a branch of a global co-working and serviced office chain. However, this particular company is well known for its serviced office services, and included a co-working option in its services only in its later operations, for which specific data is not available. Local instances of CHs have risen rapidly, especially in the last 5 years. The years of establishing the CHs interviewed are shown in Fig. 2. Although the numbers of new CWSs spiked in 2006 and 2010, they have had an especially positive trend since 2015. Labs and makerspaces also began to emerge after 2013. Interestingly, the establishment of ICs has begun to rise rapidly after 2011.

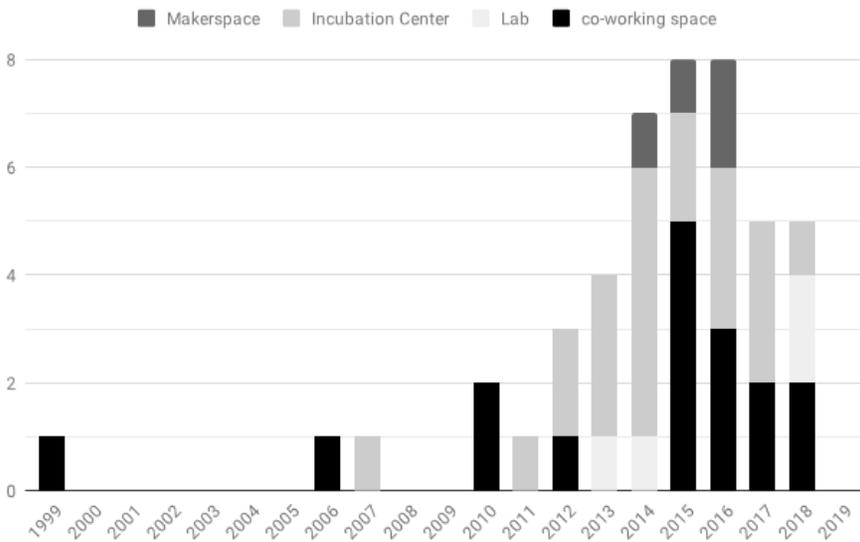


Fig. 2. Year of establishing creative hubs

Source: own work.

The vast majority of the CHs (63%) in Istanbul were established as private sector initiatives, which have focused their investments mostly in CWSs and makerspaces. Almost all of the city’s CWSs were established by the private sector, with only one CWS established by a district municipality. All of the makerspaces were also established as private initiatives. The investments of the public sector have mostly been concentrated in ICs, most of which are housed at universities, including 24% of the ICs participating in this study. Outside of the academia, a small percentage of ICs are supported by district municipalities and the central

government. District municipalities have also taken an interest in labs as a part of their local development projects. Three out of the four labs in Istanbul – a living lab, a design-based urban lab, and an R&D and innovation lab – have received investments from the metropolitan and district municipalities.

Community Structure

CHs are mostly structured around registered membership. A significant majority (85%) require membership to benefit from their services. Those that do not require membership are mostly makerspaces and labs. Similarly, CWSs with only a hot desk option have no membership obligations, being based instead on a daily or hourly use. However, the membership process varies between ICs, CWSs and makerspaces. All ICs have application processes for their programmes and require membership. Approved applicants become part of an IC, obtaining access to all services that an IC offers. The membership process works differently for CWSs. Most, however, are based on the membership model in order to build a stable internal community. In queries involving average number of members, only CHs with a membership model were included in the assessment.

The findings, shown in Fig. 3, indicate that CHs are mostly small communities, with most possessing fewer than 50 members. Those with more than 500 members are all CWSs with many branches around the city. The number of branches varies between 6 and 23, with locations in the most accessible areas of the city.

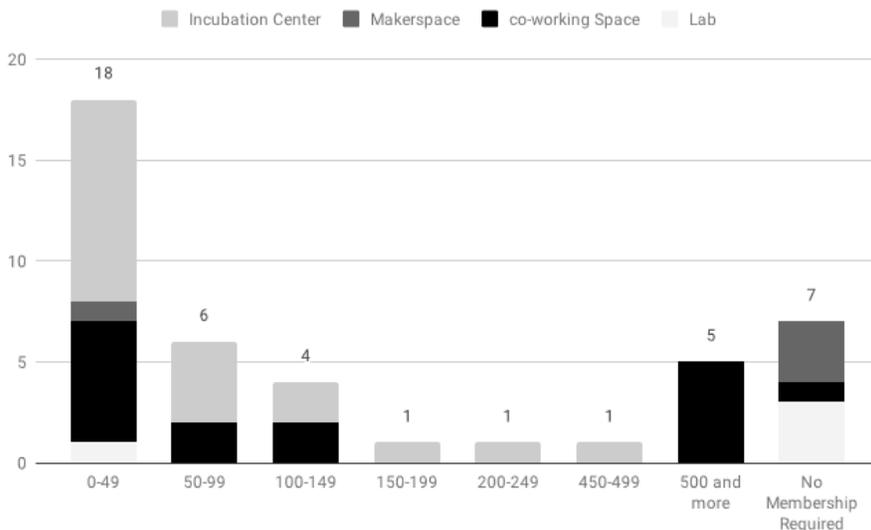


Fig. 3. Number of members in CHs

Source: own work.

The membership application processes generally revolve around face-to-face interviews, with CH leaders deciding on a new members' inclusion according to their potential contribution to the community or rapport with other members.

Research findings concerning age and gender were classified separately for ICs, makerspaces, CWSs, and labs to highlight the difference between their ecosystems. Members of the CHs are predominantly from Generation Y. The distribution of age groups is outlined in Fig. 4.

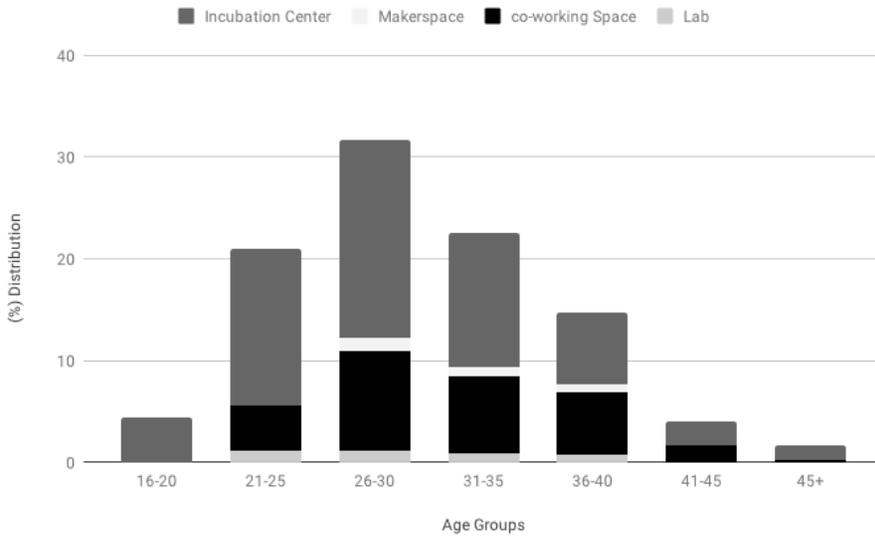


Fig. 4. Distribution of age groups in CHs

Source: own work.

The majority of the members of CWSs, makerspaces, and labs were between the ages of 21–40. Members are mostly from Generation Y, and interviews with IC managers indicated that applicants were mostly young professionals who have decided to focus on their own projects after a period in the private sector or newly graduated young entrepreneurs. CWS managers, who did not keep data on the age groups of their members, shared their own observations that most of their members were under 40 years of age (and, in particular, were between the ages of 31 and 35). Additionally, their members in the 21–25 age range were mostly students or newly graduated young people. Entrepreneurs running their own start-ups generally fell between the ages of 36 and 40.

Gender was evaluated for CHs with a membership option, 78% which kept data about gender. CH leaders generally considered the ratio of women to men

a natural phenomenon, not letting the question of gender influence the member selection process. While there were some CHs more concerned about the distribution of gender that tried to maintain a balance between women and men, they did not significantly influence the numbers. CH members were significantly more likely to be men, with women accounting for 29% of CH members overall, and only 22% of IC members.

3.3.2. Focus

The establishment manifestos of many CHs (further discussed in the ‘values’ section) defined the aim to gather members from different disciplines. The findings of this study indicated that 76% of the participants were in fact multidisciplinary institutions. Sector specific CHs were mostly makerspaces, incubators, and some of the labs. Although focused on specific niche areas, the goals of these more narrowly focused CHs were still connected with the creative industry sector. While all CWSs multidisciplinary places encompassed a wide range of professions, makerspaces were focused on specific areas such as technology education and the DIY culture. Only 24% of ICs were focused on one specific area such as social entrepreneurship, software, health, football technologies, and defence technologies. Although most ICs were not focused on any specific area, they could have priority sectors.

Multidisciplinary CHs, which consist of members from different sectors, comprised the majority of the research participants. As CWSs and ICs are much more commonly interdisciplinary in nature, makerspaces and labs were excluded from investigations of the professions involved in CHs. The results for CSWs and ICs were presented separately (Fig. 5 and 6) to highlight the differences between them. The top 5 professions in CWSs were software development, advertising, web design, consulting services, and digital and other related creative services. According to UNCTAD’s classification of creative industries (UNCTAD, 2010), 70% of top 20 professions in CWSs belong to creative sectors (Fig. 5).

The results for the distribution of professions in ICs were evaluated from a different perspective. Taking into account the ongoing debate on whether science and R&D are components of the creative economy (UNCTAD, 2008), the main professions involved in ICs were categorised more broadly than in UNCTAD’s classification in consideration of science-related sectors. ICs host mostly entrepreneurs and start-ups that operate at higher levels of technology-related services and science. Interestingly, the result for the top sector involved in ICs paralleled that of CWSs. ICT sectors, which include mainly software development related businesses such as SaaS, mobile applications, advertising technologies, industrial software and automation, marketplaces, the development of

e-commerce sites, big data, communication and transportation, fintech, portals, web-based technologies, platforms, VR, and IT, were the dominant professional category in ICs (64.5%). Health and bio-technologies, the next most popular category, covered only 11.1% of the projects and start-ups in ICs. As is shown in Fig. 6, other categories, such as electric&electronics and machinery (advanced electronics, advanced materials, advanced technology machinery and electronics, hardware, machinery, mechanics and electronics, nanotechnologies, and material technologies), nourishment and chemistry, education and governance (education, governance, and social entrepreneurship) and others (finance, accounting, creative and cultural, maritime, textile, defence, and aerospace) constituted only 24.4% of the areas supported in ICs.

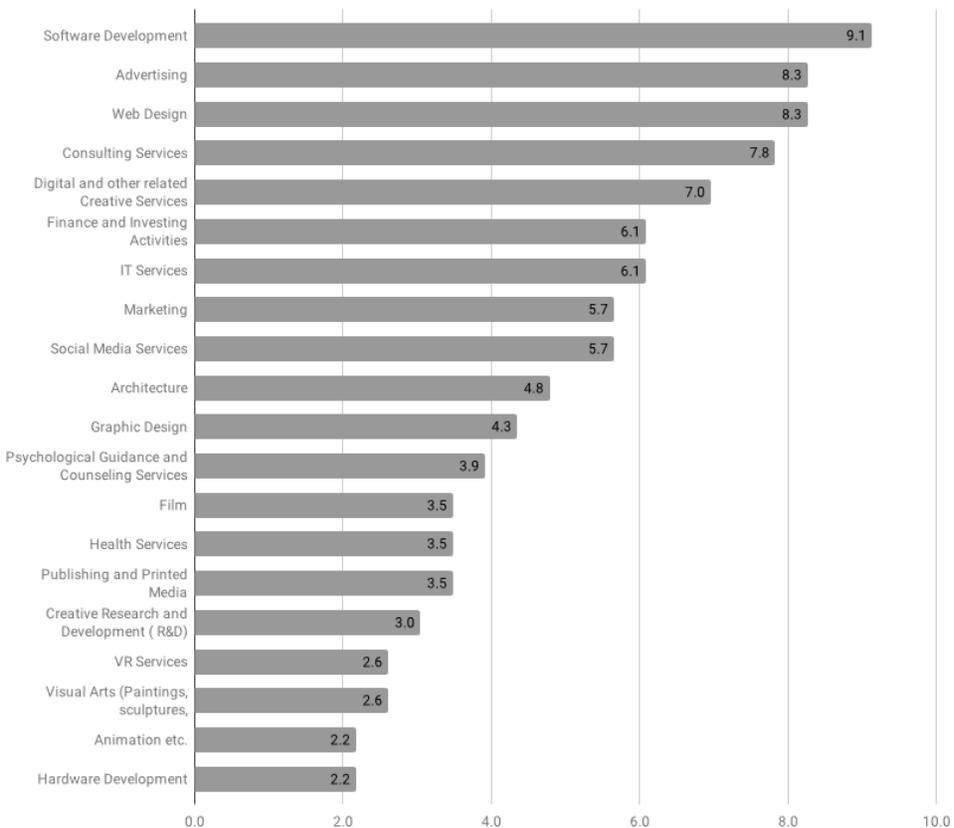


Fig. 5. Distribution of the top 20 professions in CWSs

Source: own work.

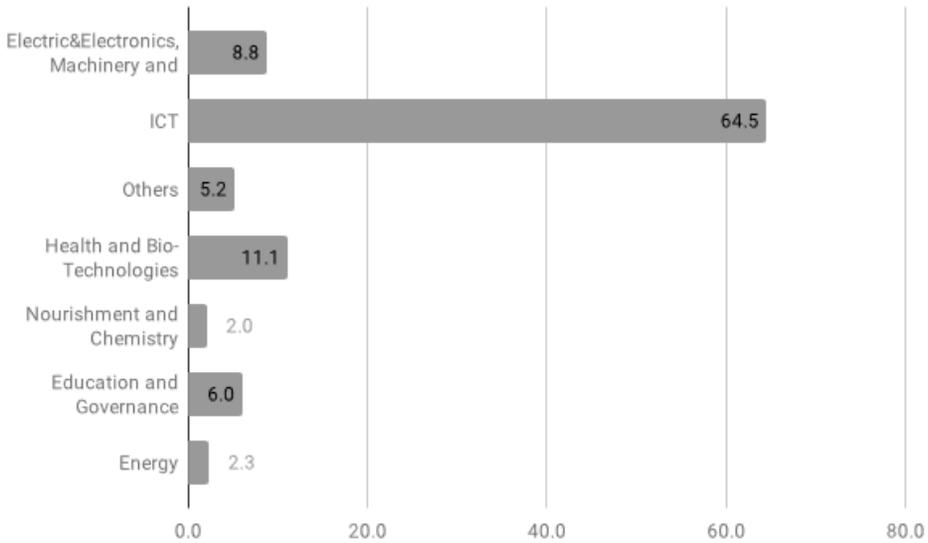


Fig. 6. Categories of supported projects in ICs (%)

Source: own work.

3.3.3. Services

One of the main aims of CHs is to build a community among members. Therefore, CHs are dominantly membership-based spaces. Only 15% did not require membership to benefit from their services, almost all of which are labs and makerspaces. All CWSs, except those that offered only hotdesk options, offered inductees different membership options. The membership processes for ICs differed, with an open call over the year or for a limited period of time. After a committee-based selection process, applicants could elect to join an accelerator, pre-incubation, or incubation program. The program provides support in the form of office space (desk and computer), mentorship, training, networking, workshop, or laboratory according to the organisational needs of the applicants. ICs are known more for their support mechanisms, such as mentorship, training, etc., rather than physical support such as office space, though there are examples of ICs in which space is as important as other support mechanisms. Such ICs provide support for projects which require a laboratory or makerlabs for research or prototyping and are generally nested at universities. CWSs also offer varying membership options. The information gathered in the course of the study indicated that the most common option was the flexible desk. Fixed desk, closed office, virtual office, meeting room/venue, hotdesk, and community membership are other options provided by CSWs.

The facilities that CHs offer their members vary widely. Some offer meditation rooms and yoga sessions. They also offer additional services such as access to digital community networks, IT support, childcare, and use of the hub's mobile app. All CHs generally offer the physical office materials that a person needs for office work, such as a desk, printer and coffee.

CHs, however, promise more than physical services for their members. In fact, physical services are just a stimulator of services and interactions. Accordingly, CH leaders consider themselves providers of an environment conducive to the development and implementation of new ideas. Just as Parrino (2015) underlined the importance of proximity for knowledge exchange, this study demonstrates that CHs provide a creative environment through tools such as the physical space itself (the design of the space and the atmosphere) and events.

Most events are organised for the purpose of creating connections between members. ICs organise such events as part of their programmes; other CHs organise events not only as a promised parts of their programmes but also to foster community-building within the hubs. These events can be either member-exclusive or public. Member exclusive events differ between ICs and the other types of CHs. ICs organise events such as training programs, entrepreneurship events, and mentorships sessions, while other types of CHs organise events for skill sharing and brainstorming. Moreover, all CHs emphasise that social interaction events are as important as training, skill sharing, and education programmes. The main reason to organise such events is to create an environment for members to come to know each other better, have a good time, feel at home, and build community through interaction. Public events are an important part of such interactions. In fact, most CHs focus on public events in order to improve their images, reach more people, and create networking opportunities between members and visitors.

Organised events have a significant effect on possible collaboration projects among members. Although some CHs have dedicated events for these purposes, such as feedback and brainstorming sessions, most collaboration arising from events occurs organically. In such cases, ICs should be evaluated differently from the rest of the examples, as the structure of ICs is focused on supporting projects and ideas through mentorship and training programmes when help or collaboration is needed at a strategic point. The drawback to such a rigidly defined structure is that working together with other teams in the same environment or participating in events always offers the chance for future collaboration.

3.3.4. Values

A description of the values embodied in CHs is key to understanding the motivation behind their establishment, given their prominence in establishment manifestos. When asked to describe their motivation to establish their hubs, many CH leaders

gave similar answers: building networks, creating multidisciplinary environments, supporting creative processes and entrepreneurship, sharing knowledge, finding solutions to problems together, gathering creative individuals, and participation. In short, they described their hubs as more than regular office spaces, emphasising the importance of network connections and the social environment of their space over the physical environment. Indeed, the concepts used to describe these hubs, often highlighting the importance of social connections within a space, correspond to the reasons behind their establishment. ICs were excluded from queries concerning the motivation to establish a CH, as their reasons are specifically outlined, e.g. the provision of services and environments for start-ups and entrepreneurs. Most leaders of CWSs, makerspaces, and labs (48%) decided to establish their hubs after similar personal experiences of being part of a CH or experiencing the same needs, such as networking, office space, or like-minded people, while they were developing a new idea or business. Their ideas thus formed around people with the same needs. Participation in a CH before forming their own hubs also had a positive effect on their motivation. In this context, CHs themselves can be considered examples of start-ups and entrepreneurship. Similarly, the second most common reason (20%) to establish a CH was to bring similar minds together by creating a physical or virtual place for interaction.

Other motivations behind the creation of CHs were:

- To provide a space and an interdisciplinary network for generating projects and new collaborations,
- To build better collaboration over changing working conditions/systems,
- To find solutions to urban problems with the participation of the local population and decision-makers.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

CHs hold a growing importance for Istanbul. The findings of this study suggest that any definition of these cooperatives should highlight that they provide an environment where people can work, share ideas, find solutions to problems, cooperate, socialise, access knowledge, make connections, and create networks. The results of the study are summarised according to the four analysed perspectives in Fig. 7 below.

The aim of the present study was to understand the reason for the emergence of CHs in order to gain a perspective on the changing forms of work in the city. The emergence and the growing importance of these new forms of work are closely connected to changing economic trends, as creative industries, along with the service sector, are driving factors behind economic growth in advanced economies.

<p style="text-align: center;">Structure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Establishment Structure:</p> <p>Q.1 When did creative hubs start to emerge?</p> <p>CHs began to emerge especially in the last 10 years, and their numbers have rapidly increased in the last 5 years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Community Structure:</p> <p>Q.2 Who are the users of creative hubs?</p> <p>The members of CHs fall between the ages of 21 and 40, and are concentrated mostly between the ages of 26 and 40.</p> <p>CHs are mostly private initiatives.</p> <p>Most members of CHs are men.</p> <p>Creative hubs are mostly small communities with less than 50 members.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Focus</p> <p>Q.3: What are the sectors and professions involved in creative hubs?</p> <p>CHs mainly serve freelancers, entrepreneurs, micro SMSs, and start-ups operating in creative industry sectors.</p> <p>For membership based CHs, software development is the top profession in CWSs, and ICT is the top profession in ICs.</p>
<p>Main Findings of the Research Questions</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Service</p> <p>Q.4 What are physical and social facilities that creative hubs offer?</p> <p>CHs provide basic physical services for work such as desks, chairs, and internet connections. Beyond physical services, creative hubs design the space to stimulate creativity, social interaction, and networking.</p> <p>They provide social facilities such as brain storming meetings, idea exchange, skill sharing, mentorship, and networking options.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Values</p> <p>Q.5 What is the reason for and the motivation behind the emergence of creative hubs?</p> <p>Co-founders experienced the same needs, such as a network or office space, while while developing new ideas or businesses</p> <p>To bring similar minds together</p> <p>To provide a space and an interdisciplinary network for generating projects and new collaborations</p> <p>To build better collaboration over changing working conditions/systems</p>

Fig. 7. Research results

Source: own work.

Istanbul has limited data available for the analysis of the creative industry in the city. Despite this lack of up-to-date statistics, the city has experienced a consistent shift in its economic base from manufacturing to services since the 1990s (Evren

and Enlil, 2012). Corresponding to this shift, there has been an emergence of a strong base for most of the creative industry sectors. The city is home to 59% of total employment in the advertising industry, 45% in publishing and printing, 42% of architects, and 47% of the qualified workforce in the software industry (Evren and Enlil, 2012), for whom, in particular, the city shows great potential. From the perspective of economic shares, the software industry has a share of 33.25%, architecture 23%, and advertising 19.76% among all creative industry sectors (Aksoy and Enlil, 2011). The results of the focus category in this study explicitly revealed this trend in Istanbul. Software is the top sector in CWSs, while the most supported project area in ICs is ICT. All of the following most common sectors involved in CHs are also from creative industries. The relationship between the professions involved in CHs and the creative industries also explains the membership makeup of the CHs, who are mostly freelancers, entrepreneurs, micro SMSs, and start-ups owned mainly by young professionals and newly graduated individuals from Generation Y, as discussed above in the structure section.

This study confirms that most of the professions involved in CHs fall under the umbrella of the creative sectors. The main focus of these creative workers is to develop their projects and ideas with effective and flexible rather than rigid and distracting solutions. While the mostly project-based structure of creative jobs provides flexibility for their working conditions, it also causes insecurities in creative labour conditions. The results of this study support the conclusion that firms and individuals in creative sectors tend to look for flexible and cost saving solutions, such as flexible rent options and serviced infrastructure, which is a benefit of sharing the same infrastructure with other members. As discussed in terms of the values category, the main two reasons for establishing a CH from the founders' perspective were illuminated by these needs: CH leaders in their past experiences developing projects or starting a business felt similar necessities (low cost and flexible working spaces and the presence of like-minded people). Moreover, these leaders desired to bring similar minds together by creating a shared physical or virtual space.

These values explain the primary motivation behind the emergence of CHs. Their emergence is also associated with the sectors in which CH leaders and members operate. These new sectors, specified as creative sectors in this study, require new and different forms of work and solutions that cities had not previously required. CHs respond to this emerging need caused by the shift in urban economies. In this sense, CHs differentiate themselves from other workplaces with the services that they provide for their members. Moreover, these services respond not only to physical needs, but also to social needs such as networking and socialising. As discussed in the service section, such social services (i.e. soft services) are the distinctive features of CHs, providing an environment for the exchange of tacit knowledge. CHs also provide physical facilities and the so-called hard services, such as flexible rent options and serviced infrastructure, which offers

the benefit of sharing the same infrastructure with other members, emphasising the importance of the sharing economy. These services are crucial for the users of CHs. Considering all the aspects of CHs (structure, services, focus, values) these spaces have emerged as a new form of workspace and business operation in the creative economy era, taking the form of new landscapes in the post-industrial city (Gospodini, 2008), compact forms that signify the epicentres of activity in the inner city.

The proliferation of CHs over the last 5 years has shown that there is a demand for this new type of organisation in the city. It is also a result of the changes in the urban economy. The number of CWSs and ICs is significantly higher than that of labs and makerspaces in Istanbul. This finding provides insight into the great potential for a creative workforce and the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the city. This information can be used to develop policies aimed at the development of those workplace organisations by local authorities. And even in the presence of government support, more efforts are needed to make labs and makerspaces more accessible to city dwellers. However, considerably more work will need to be done to investigate other aspects of CHs in Istanbul. A greater focus on the location patterns of CHs in the city could produce interesting findings that provide a more detailed account of their development. Nevertheless, detailed research on the members of CHs would be a favourable area for further work for a better understanding of these institutions from the members' perspectives.

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