

Creative Industries, Situated Former Industrial Buildings in Sofia

A study of factors, which influenced the location decision of creative industries in Sofia to locate in former industrial buildings

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Abstract

The purpose of this master thesis is to discover which are the factors that influenced the decision of creative industries in Sofia to locate in former industrial buildings. The research focuses on the following three problems: what are the main characteristics of creative industries, located in former industrial buildings, what are the factors which influenced the location choice and what is the connection between the building, the creative process and the image of the creative industries?

Existing literature on the problems contributed for the creation of a theoretical framework of soft and hard location factors, which was implemented in the empirical study. The qualitative research includes five in-depth face-to-face interviews with owners/directors of organizations, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Results suggest that both hard and soft location factors were influential for the location choice. Former industrial building's material and immaterial qualities were to some extent important for the studied creative industries. The contributors also confirmed that the building and the space can stimulate the creative process and can be beneficial for the image of the creative organization.

The data are based on a limited amount of participants and is highly connected to the context – the city of Sofia. However, the current research is one of the first attempts for a more fine-tuned study of creative industries' location choice in Sofia and the former industrial buildings as a specific location choice.

Key words: creative industries; hard and soft location factors; former industrial buildings;

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Theoretical Background

Location choices of creative industries have been a major concern both for policy makers and academic researchers during the last two centuries. The contribution to economic growth and employment (Scott, 2004; KEA, 2006) of creative industries is one of the main reasons for the attention towards them. Another motive is their central role in the post-industrial city, based on a new economy driven by information, knowledge, communication and sign-value production like images and symbols (Amin, 1994; Lash and Urry, 1994). Where creative industries choose to locate became an important question, as more and more cities are trying to attract them. Researches on creative industries location choice have described different factors, which are influential for the decision. A division between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ location factors can be outlined (Dzembowska-Kowalska and Funck, 2000; Florida, 2002; Murphy and Redmond, 2009; Musterd and Murie, 2011). Hard factors represent the so-called classic (Murphy and Redmond, 2009) location qualities, which are tangible and represent the economic and physical rationale of a certain location. Soft factors, on the other hand are intangible and complex to measure. They can be the “look and feel” (Helbrecht, 1998), the atmosphere and identity (Zukin, 1989) or the aesthetic qualities of the surrounding environment (Smit, 2011).

On the other hand, cities all over the world are left with material heritage from the previous – industrial economy. Factories, mills, power stations, water towers, warehouses etc. still exist and often shape the urban landscape. Those buildings are calling for re-use and new context. Authors claim, that creative industries appreciate historical and former industrial built form (Zukin, 1989; Hutton, 2006; Heebels and van Aalst, 2010) and are aesthetically reflexive towards their working environment (Drake, 2003; Hutton, 2006; Smit, 2011). Former industrial buildings can be attractive for creative industries, not only because of their historical and aesthetic qualities, but also because of the cheap rent they can offer (Champion, 2010; Rantisi et al., 2006),

their physical configuration (high ceilings, big windows, big spaces) and the freedom for adapting the space for specific needs (Hutton, 2006).

The location choices of creative industries and factors, which influence them, have been the focus of many academic researches. However, former industrial buildings as a specific location choice have rarely been a major consideration of more fine-tuned research. Authors often pay attention to bigger scale units, like the city as a location choice (Hall, 2000; Musterd, 2006) or creative quarters and clusters (Pratt, 2000; Scott, 2000; Banks et al., 2002, Montgomery, 2003). Still, while the built form is usually analyzed as a factor or specifics of the selected unit (Montgomery, 2003) it is rarely discussed as a location choice for working environment itself. The former industrial building as a location choice of creative industries and factors which influence it is the focus of this thesis.

1.2. Research Question

Baring in mind the existing literature and concepts, the following main research question was formed:

Which are the factors that influence the choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia?

The following theoretical sub questions were formed in order to answer the main research question of this thesis.

- *Which are the main characteristics of creative industries, according to the literature?*
- *Which are the factors that influence the choice of creative industries, according to the literature?*
- *Which are the factors that influence the choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings, according to the literature?*

After reviewing existing theories, two additional sub questions were included.

- *What is the role of the building itself in the creative organization's image?*
- *What is the role of the building and the location in the creative process and how do they influence the production of a creative organization?*

The following empirical sub questions were formed.

- *Which are the main characteristics of creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia?*
- *What is the role of the building itself in the creative organization's image, according to the empirical results?*
- *What is the role of the building and the location in the creative process and how do they influence the production of a creative organization, according to the empirical results?*

1.3. The City of Sofia as a Context of this Research

The city of Sofia is an interesting setting for the current research. First of all, it is part of post-socialist southeastern Europe (Hirt, 2006) and the capital of Bulgaria, with a growing population of above 1,300 000 official citizens. It is a dynamic city with rich history, which includes 45 years of socialist regime and 24 years of democratic political system. Second of all, a recent mapping of the creative industries in the city (Tomova and Andreeva, 2011) shows, that creative industries in Sofia are responsible for 77,5% of the added value of creative industries for Bulgaria's economy. Also, 49% of the creative industries of Bulgaria are located in the capital city. 6,7% of all working people in the capital are laboring in the sector. This equals 3,4% of all employed in the national economy. Although the contribution of creative industries to Sofia's economy was already proved to be significant, more fine-tuned research on their location choice is still absent.

Focusing on the city's industrial heritage, there are two types of former industrial built form in Sofia. First are the pre-war period properties, situated in the present city center, or the neighboring areas. Second are the big industrial landscapes and buildings, constructed during the socialist period, usually in the edge of the city and engaged in heavy industry production. According to data collected until 2001, the percentage of industrial areas in the compact city was around 13% and in the metropolitan up to 20%.¹ After the central government fell in 1989, industries were either closed or privatized. Re-use of these buildings is a big question mark. However, there are creative industries, which chose former industrial buildings as their working environment.

The current research will make an attempt to show if the existing literature on western cities and settings is applicable on Sofia and its creative industries. Furthermore, we will make an attempt to bridge the gap in qualitative research on location choices of creative industries in Sofia. Narrowing down the focus on former industrial buildings as a location choice, which are the factors that influenced creative industries to make this choice?

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

In order to answer the main research question of this thesis, a qualitative research was conducted. It consists of five in-depth face-to-face interviews with owners/directors of creative organizations in Sofia, situated in former industrial buildings. They were identified after a desk on-line research in January and February on the population of this research – creative industries, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Chapter two of this master thesis presents existing literature on the problem and answers the theoretical sub questions. Its first part deals with main characteristics of creative industries. Narrowing down the focus, the third part describes problems with former industrial buildings addressed in theory and the connection between creative industries and industrial built form. The last part of the literature review presents location factors, discussed in existing literature and is essential for building the theoretical framework, used for the purposes of the empirical research.

Chapter three makes a thorough introduction to the case of Sofia. The first part describes general characteristics of the city like history, population and main problems. The second part focuses on creative industries in the city, followed by a description of the general situation of former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Chapter four presents the methodological framework of the research, with a description of data collection method, unit of analysis and limitations of the research.

The fifth chapter of this master thesis introduces the results of the empirical research. The first part presents main characteristics of studied creative organizations, while the second focuses on factors, which influenced their decision to locate in former industrial buildings.

The final chapter six of this master thesis concludes the research. With answering all of the sub questions it eventually presents the answer of the main research question. It also reflects on the reviewed literature and presents limitations and avenue for future research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This literature review will begin with a general characteristic of creative industries, according to existing literature. After the main specifics of creative industries are outlined, the focus will be narrowed. Literature concerning creative industries in former industrial buildings will be presented in order to sketch out the connection between the built form and creative industries. The main focus of this master thesis are the factors, that influence the decision of creative industries to locate in a former industrial building, the chapter will continue with presenting different theories on location factors. The factors will be categorized in the following way: hard factors building and location and soft factors building and location. The literature review will be finalized with a description of two interesting theories of Drake (2003) and Smit (2011) on the connection between the location and built form's aesthetic qualities on the one hand and the image of creative organization and the creative process on the other.

2.2. Creative Industries

This part of the literature review will try to define the unit of my research – creative industries, according to existing literature. It will make an attempt to answer the question: what are the creative industries, what are their activities and their main characteristics? The definitions reviewed will help to identify the objects of the empirical research of this master thesis.

2.2.1. Cultural and Creative Industries

In the past two decades, there has been an increasing attention towards creative industries. Their contribution to the economic growth, urban development and competitiveness of cities has been in the center of an academic and political debate. Scott (2004) claims that their production accounts for a “substantial share of incomes and employment in a wide arrange of countries” (p.482). It is challenging to find a universal definition of creative industries. According to The Department of Culture Media and Sports in the United Kingdom, they are “Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (KEA, 2006, p.47). This definition also indicates the transfer from the term cultural to creative industries. The scope of the definition has been expanded and despite strictly ‘high – browed’ cultural activities, ‘low-browed’ and mass cultural production has also been included. Several authors (ex. Pratt, 2005; Grahnam, 2005) criticized this shift from cultural to creative industries, as a political trick for attracting more public funding, by expressing the importance of these industries in the new economy (O’Connor, 2007). O’Connor (2007) also stresses, that it brought further puzzlement in defining exactly which activities and industries were included in the definition. Even though it is still a blurry notion, the KEA Report (2006) sets a useful framework for industries that fall under the classification in the European cultural economy. The report separates the industries on “cultural” and “ creative” sectors. Putting the “core art field” in the center and separating the rest of the industries in three additional circles allows for further categorization. The core plus the first circle around it

represent the cultural sector; while the second and the third circles belong to the creative sector (see Figure 1, p. 11).

Defining cultural and creative industries is not the main focus of this thesis. However, the classification is important to identify the units for the empirical research. The KEA Report gives a rather complete picture of all the economical activities that fall under the definition and this definition will be used for the purposes of this thesis. As a creative industry will be considered any company (for profit or nonprofit), operating in the following sectors: visual arts, performing arts, heritage, film and video, television and radio, videogames, music, design, architecture, advertising without the related industries (PC manufacturers, MP3 players manufacturers, mobile industry etc.) (KEA Report, 2006, p. 3).

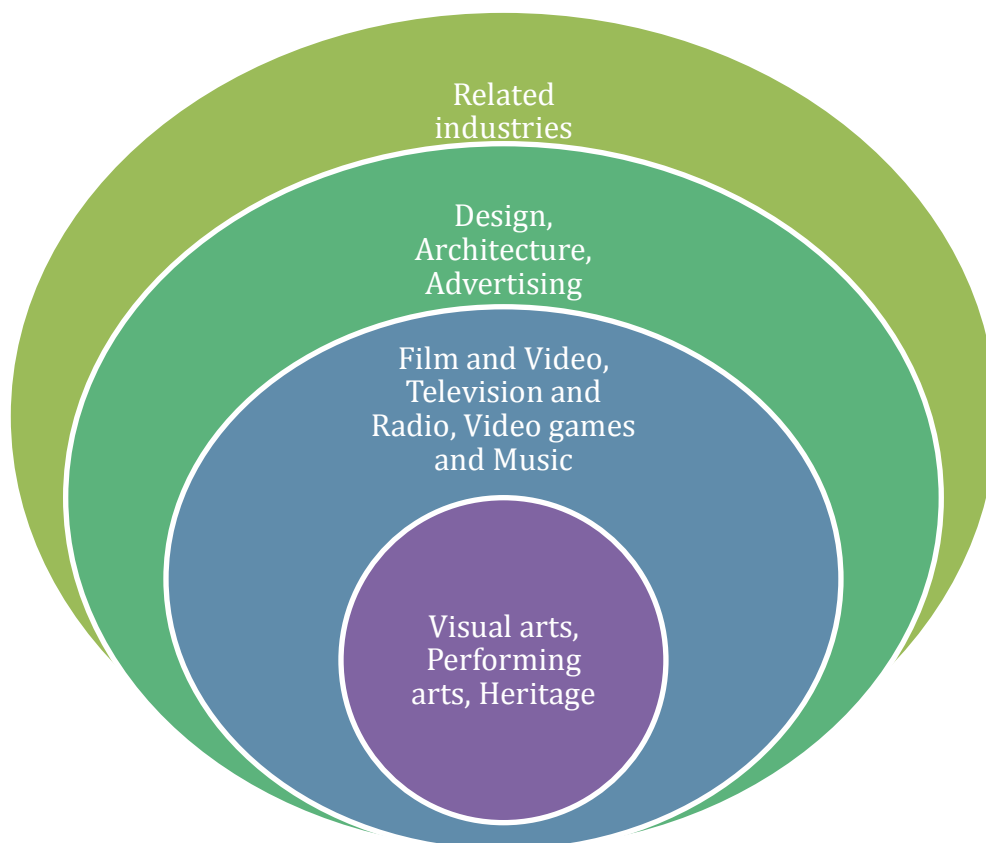


FIGURE 1: CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS ACCORDING TO THE KEA REPORT

Source: KEA Report, 2006, p.56.

2.2.2. Creative Industries, Aesthetic Reflexivity and the Urban Space

In the post-Fordist world, the economy is now based on innovation, knowledge, technology and communication. It also actively involves the tools of flexible manufacturing systems, marketing and design (Amin, 1994). Objects are more and more aestheticized and the design becomes a main component of the value of products. This new 'sign value' characterizes post-industrial production, its material content is not important anymore (Lash and Urry, 1994). This "other way" (Lange et al., 2008, p. 534) of defining creative industries was first addressed by Hirsch in 1972. According to him creative industries are those, which are "producing cultural products that means nonmaterial goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an aesthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function" (Hirsch, 1972, p. 641).

The shift in the economic paradigm also affects the social and cultural aspects of people's lives. The concept of a post-modern city emerges – the new place, where culture and aesthetics are strongly interconnected with urban commodities and where cultural industries take the leading role (Amin, 1994). This new place has its 'new core' and the social life it entitles increasingly involves culture in everyday life. According to Lash and Urry (1994), towns and cities become centers of exchanging not material goods, but "information, knowledge, images and symbols" (p.220). creative industries production has highly aesthetic added value; their products are images, symbols and signs, outcomes of the creative process. This is why it is reasonable to assume that creative industries (and people working in them) are more responsive to aesthetics and intangible values. Furthermore, they are 'urban creatures' – attracted to the city as their working place. According to Hutton (2006, p. 1839): "Place is demonstrably a defining feature of the new production economy of the 21st century... and 'place' in this context ineluctably comprises both concrete and representational features."

In "Loft living" (1988), Zukin discovers an interesting relationship between former industrial loft buildings and artists. The appreciation of New York artists towards these types of built form is described as a statement – these creative people are different from past generations, traditional consumption and behavioral patterns. The

places they choose to live and work in are special with their historical and aesthetic qualities and their urban context. Place is noticeably a main driver for creative industries, and an important factor for their development. Although, historically creative industries tend to locate in city areas in economical decline (Champion, 2010), there are also other key characteristics. In a research, based on interviews with employees in the “creative services” sector, Helbrecht (1998) draws some interesting conclusions. She suggests, that “the look and feel” of urban environment is much more important for creative industries than expected.

"The layout and design of space matters a great deal to them because it is part and parcel of their personal and professional vision. Creative people are „space people" who resent living or working just anywhere.... In order to attach the material world of consumer goods with aesthetic values and meaning, they thrive on very specific notions of urbanity, embodied with emotions and aesthetics." (Helbrecht, 1998, p.16-27)

Although Helbrecht’s research was limited to only advertising and design workers, it uncovers a special connection between the aesthetics of the space and the city and creative workers. The author also argues that these creative people have strong relationship with the urban context, which boosts their visual reflexivity. Another interesting and recent research focuses on the book publishing industry in Amsterdam. According to its author – Heebels (2012), built environment and urban landscape stimulate the industry in a multifold way, but what is new – they are crucial for the reputation of book publishers. This further examination proves that urban environment is an essential element of creative industries and their production.

Aesthetics and the urban environment affect creative industries and people, working in them. The sensibility towards intangible qualities and symbolic values is a characteristic of creative industries. Having this in mind, it is interesting to understand the location choice of these units and elaborate on the factors, which influence this decision. This leads the literature review to the next subchapter, which will further identify the former industrial buildings as a location choice for creative organizations, according to existing literature.

2.3. Creative Industries in Former Industrial Buildings

“We drive into the future, looking into the rear view mirror of the past” (MacLuhan, 1967)

Former industrial buildings are the material remains of an era, which had a big impact on the social, economic and cultural life of people. Urban landscape was changed significantly during the industrialization. Many cities were transformed into industrial centers with high level of production employment and major infrastructural projects, shaped under the demand of heavy industries. Factories, warehouses, transportation depots, power plants, silos etc. were modeling the city landscape. However, every era comes to an end, and inevitably the end of the industrialized world also came. Despite, the shift from industrial to service and cultural production, discussed in the beginning of this literature review, changes became visible in the city setting. According to Savitch (1988, p.5): “Post-industrialism should be seen as transformation of the built environment”. The structures, left from the industrial era were to decay or be reinvented, reconstructed – given a new context. The regeneration by turning former industrial buildings and quarters into cultural consumption and production spots is one of the possible paths.

The location choice of creative industries has been in the focus of many researchers. Some of them put the accent on the city as a place (Hall, 1999; Musterd, 2006), others focus on a smaller scale – the creative quarter or cluster – (Pratt, 2000; Scott, 2000; Banks et al. 2002; Montgomery, 2003). Still, while the built form is usually analyzed as a factor or specifics of the selected unit (Montgomery, 2003) it is rarely discussed as a location choice for working environment itself. The former industrial building as a location choice for creative industries is the focus of this thesis.

Several researches, which show interest towards the built form and its influence on the decision, have left significant mark in the existing literature. Zukin’s “Loft Living” (1988) is a close-up investigation of the attraction of former industrial loft buildings, for artists in New York. “... in many ways industrial spaces are more interesting than ‘postindustrial’ offices, apartment houses, and shopping centers. Their structure has both solidity and a gracefulness that suggest a time when form still identified ‘place’ rather than ‘function’ ”(p. 59). Furthermore, in her following work,

the author (1995, p.37) claims that: “there is evidence to suggest that many people working within the creative industries are concerned about their working environment and seem to like working in historic environments: exposed brick wall, high ceilings, and tall iron frame windows”.

Zukin is not the only author underlining artist’s special fascination for old industrial building. A much more recent study of Heebels and Van Aalst (2010) on Berlin’s quarters Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg also confirms that the: “Inner-city locations and industrial buildings are preferred by creative workers, because they value old industrial buildings and feel connected to their historical meanings.” (p.351). In another research on Manchester’s North Quarter Champion (2010, p.17) stresses the key role of built form for a quarter’s development as a creative area:

“Value was also provided by the physical landscape of the area, with a wide diversity amongst the building types in the area. There are terraced townhouses from the late 1700s, Victorian and Edwardian industrial buildings and warehousing and large-scale former market buildings... This distinctive architecture has been seen as an advantage in the regeneration process.”

However, Champion, Zukin and Heebels and Van Aalst’s researches have a different major focus and not the building as a location choice for creative industries. Addressing built form directly, a significant work is Hutton’s (2006) studies in Singapore, Vancouver and London. The author is actually concerned with the connection between built form in the inner city and creative industries location choice and development. Hutton acknowledges the work of Markus (1994), a research on the design and built form and their social life. Markus (p.27) claims that although building forms “were produced at a historical moment, their meaning was, and would remain, universal and accessible for all time to intelligent and sensitive subjects”. The core idea is that when re-use of industrial sites takes place, their original purpose is still visible by their external features. As an example, Hutton (p. 1832) gives the Tate Modern Gallery of Modern Art in London - “...what the building ‘was’ (a large power-generating station) is as evident to observers as is what the building ‘is’”.

The results of his study confirm that historical built form is highly attractive for creative firms and workers. The author’s close examinations of the changing meaning

of industrial built form settle the connection between these buildings and creative industries.

Over the past two centuries, the industrial building has evolved from a 'box' for enclosing production labor within a semi penal social environment, to an engineered 'machine' for accommodating more skilled labor, and, more recently, to a 'seductive space' of aesthetic amenity for privileged professionals and creative-industry workers. (Hutton, 2006, p. 1837)

2.4. Location Factors

Former industrial buildings definitely attract certain kind of organizations to situate and work in them. This particular relation to the built form can be studied by identifying the factors, which influenced the location decision of firms. The following and final part of this literature review will describe these factors, according to the existing literature in order to design the empirical research in the next chapter.

2.4.1. Hard and Soft Factors

In studies on location choices of creative organizations and workers, a division between soft and hard factors is often used (Dzembowska-Kowalska and Funck, 2000; Florida, 2002; Murphy and Redmond, 2009; Musterd and Murie, 2010). In his work, Landry (2005, p.2) addresses the combination between these two groups of factors as “creative infrastructure”. The right mix can lead to the successful building of an environment, which is attractive for creative industries.

Focusing on hard location factors, they are basically objective and can be easily measured. Those factors are also referred to as classic (Murphy and Redmond, 2009) as they represent what is already there, the economic and physical rationale, when an organization is making a choice for its settlement and working space. The hard factors have an immediate effect on the production process and the choice of a location for creative industries. Soft factors, on the other hand, are characterized with subjectivity and are difficult to be measured in monetary terms (Dzembowska-Kowalska and Funck, 2000). They include the atmosphere, the “look and feel” (Helbrecht, 2004), the aesthetic qualities of built environment and the “spirit” that a place carries. These factors have been in the center of academic debates, as researchers argue that that play a major role when creative industries choose their location.

While the ‘hard’ and more classic location factors are still very important in explaining the location patterns of companies, the academic debate has shifted towards a growing emphasis on ‘soft’ location factors... Many associate this potential shift in location preferences of companies from ‘hard’ to ‘soft’ with the global transformation from a Fordist, production-based economy to a post-Fordist, knowledge-based economy. (Musterd et al., 2007, p.17)

Both hard and soft factors need to be tested in order to understand their influence on an organization’s location choice, as neither of these groups should be considered less important than the other (Musterd and Murie, 2010; Dainov and Sauka, 2010).

2.4.2. Location’s Importance

Although, this master thesis’ focus is on the former industrial buildings as a location choice for creative industries, the importance of the place of the property in the city cannot be denied. A research based solely on the qualities and factors of the building would be too isolated from the real context. The results of such research would be too remote and abstract. Context is indeed significant – the location of the building in the city has to be taken into account when the study is conducted. One needs to take into consideration not only the importance of “space”, but the one of “place”.

According to Kamp (2004), in general, entrepreneurs are most likely to locate where they are in the most advantaged position to connect to employees, suppliers and customers. Scott (2000) also acknowledges the proximity to these resources as essential for creative industries. Furthermore, Scott (p.16) stresses an important fact related to the location choice of these enterprises. “Many kinds of cultural goods and services are relatively immobile in the sense that they must be consumed close to their point of production.” Naturally, these creative industries need to be situated where their customers/visitors are most likely to be.

Narrowing down the focus to creative industries, in “Accommodating creative knowledge. Literature review from European perspective” the report authors summarize some assumptions in the literature regarding the location choices of creative industries: “Proximity to city centers and transport links/meeting places are important.” (Mustard et al., 2007, p.23). The assumption that a central city location is important for creative industries is also addressed by other researchers (Markusen, 2006; Scott, 2007; Evans, 2009). The location and its factors have to be taken into consideration in order to understand the decision of creative industries.

2.4.3. Hard Factors Building and Location

One of the most important hard factors that influence location choice of creative industries is the price of accommodation (rent or price per square meter). “Underlying this is the idea that cheap space and corresponding cultural diversity are vital ingredients for developing creative businesses. Low-cost space offers opportunities for flexibility and grow-on space, which is especially important in high-risk, undercapitalized industries.” (Champion, 2010, p. 14). Rantisi et al. (2011, p.1791) also argue that “low rents nurture creativity”, as creative firms tend to choose cheap spaces for their location in order to be more adaptable. The price of accommodation as a hard factor can be determining for the location decision and is one of the physical space characteristics (Trip and Romein, 2010).

As former industrial buildings have been constructed to serve different types of production process, another hard factor to be taken into account is the reconstruction price and the adaptation to the needs of a creative organization. According to Feilden (1994), when reconstructing an historical building there are three kinds of values, which have to be taken into consideration. They are carriers of emotional, cultural and use values. The first group is the ephemeral qualities of the building, which can be wonder, identity, continuity, spiritual and symbolic. Cultural values, on the other hand, are strongly defined by the socio-temporal context – documentary, historic, archeological, townscape, landscape and technology. The third group outlines the purpose of the building – functional, economic, social, political and educational values. The question when renovating an historic building is to what extent does it

lose some of these values. This problem stands along with other, more technical reconstruction challenges. Adaptive reuse prepares the building to meet the new conditions and standards (Bullen and Love, 2009). In a study of sustainable reuse of vacant industrial buildings, Ball (1999) recognizes the role that refurbishment price plays as a factor. Ball (1999), and later Douglas (2006) and Kohler and Young (2007) argue that the price of adaptive reuse is lower than the one of building a new workspace from scratch or demolishing the old building. The price of reconstruction has to be included in the list of factors; as it is an item in the budget, which creative industries take into consideration.

Ball (1999, 2002) describes one more factor in his research, which is specific for old buildings – the access limitation. Although, it depends highly on the individual case of the building and its situation, old industrial buildings imply that there is a high possibility for access to be limited, either by authorities or by other obstacles, like advanced destruction or lack of road infrastructure.

In his study, Hutton (2006) stresses that older building structures are attractive for new industrial enterprises with their “physical configuration, durability and embedded construction qualities” (p. 1834). Furthermore, he specifies the two physical (hard) qualities that account for the “material attraction”, which are “external building scale and style” and “ internal building configuration” (p.1834). Those two factors express the solid visible qualities of the former industrial buildings and this is the reason they are part of this theoretical framework.

The last hard factor, concerning the building is the municipal taxes or available subsidies for the building (Kamp, 2004, p.38). Kappers (2009) includes it in the conventional location factors group. Any financial stimulus (tax reduction or subsidy) from the municipality could play a role in the decision making process of creative industries. Dzembowska-Kowalska and Funck (2000, p.3) claim that “factors directly diminishing costs or reducing the prices of products in a region (such as building grants, rent subsidies, reduced land prices, interest rate reductions, export subsidies etc.) should be considered as elements of the set of hard location factors.”

When referring to the location of the building, there are three suitable factors which were found in existing literature. The first one is proximity to the city center. It seems

to be of a great importance, according to several authors. In a more recent paper, Hutton (2009) addresses the adaptive re-use of industrial buildings in the inner city as a factor, which shapes production economy in the inner city area. Proximity to the city center is also discussed in Sykora and Bouzakovski (2012) in relation to the post-communist urban transformation rationale. The development of central urban locations is a result of foreign investments and growth of the tertiary sector and the service economy. Other authors also discuss central city location (Mustard et al., 2007, Evans, 2009; Markusen, 2004; Scott, 2007), which makes it an important factor in existing literature.

The other two location features, part of the hard factors group are accessibility by public transport and basic surrounding infrastructure. In a research on location choices of SMEs (which includes interviewees from the creative industries) Noort and Reijmer (1999) emphasize these two location factors. Although, the research is not focused purely on creative industry workers, it represents what is important for the location choice of firms operating in the service economy.

2.4.4. Soft Factors Building and Location

Creative industries are the ones, which appreciate the soft qualities of their working environment more than other sectors. “Usually but not always they (cultural industries) are located in central or inner city districts with some historical built environment and aesthetic qualities in the physical fabric and overall urban realm;” (Mustard et al., 2007, p.23)

Hutton (2006) focuses on the assets of “amenity, aesthetics, identity and freedom as a domain of attraction, associated with older buildings” (p.1835). These buildings are easy to distinguish and their authenticity is important for a creative organization, which chooses to locate there. Helbrecht (1998) also stresses the central role of these factors, which make these buildings attractive for creative workers in Vancouver. “... four blocks of distinctive warehouse architecture. The open architecture with bricks, high ceiling...makes it a very special place in Vancouver” (p.23). These, rather typical for industrial architecture, characteristics make the built form full of

“identity”. Zukin (1989) also finds these distinguishing styles appealing to artists and creative workers, and she articulates these characteristics as “identity”, “individuality” and “ a sense of ‘place’ instead of ‘space’ ”(p.68). This group of factors is part of the soft qualities of the built form, the ones which cannot be quantified as they evoke feelings, senses and are irrational.

In his work, Hutton (2006) puts an accent on the freedom which these buildings offer. He entails that the employees have the opportunity to adapt the space to their needs, which is not typical for traditional office structures. This is another soft factor which is included in this theoretical framework. In his study on cultural quarters, Montgomery (2003) groups three types of indicators which can define a cultural quarter. One of these groups is the built form and the author points out the importance of a building’s adaptability if it is to be suitable for cultural production/consumption. Those have to be buildings with different room sizes and easily adjustable spaces. Former industrial buildings often offer diverse types of rooms and floor configuration.

The last soft factor of the built form which will be reviewed in this literature chapter, are the historical and heritage values that it carries. Going back to Feilden (1994), old buildings represent the past and carry memories and other values attached to it. Focusing on former industrial buildings, existing literature proves these values to be an important location factor for creative industries. “Their facades are often adorned with archaic emblems and sculpture, apparently showing the equally archaic skills of masons and carvers” (Zukin, 1989, p. 59). These structures are special, because they have an interesting past and are important part of many people’s lives in the recent past. The fact that the industrialization era ended quite recently does not change its importance as a part of human development. Churches, castles and temples have been kept and preserved like regional, national or international heritage. However, impressive industrial sites have long been ignored as part of the collective human memory. Luckily, during the past few decades the concept of the industrial heritage has emerged and has been included in the conversation of preservation and regeneration more often.

Authorities on national and international level have began to understand the economic and touristic potential of former industrial sites and their social importance. Almost twenty years ago UNESCO included the industrial heritage into its agenda, as the first

industrial monument was recognized by the organization in 1994. Twenty years earlier than that, The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) was founded in Ironbridge, England. In The Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage from 2003, TICCIH define the concept of industrial heritage in the following way:

Industrial heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural or scientific value. These remains consist of buildings and machinery, workshops, mills and factories, mines and sites for processing and refining, warehouses and stores, places where energy is generated, transmitted and used, transport and all its infrastructure, as well as places used for social activities related to industry such as housing, religious worship or education. (TICCIH, 2003, p.2)

There are more organizations on national and international level, which also deal with different aspects of industrial heritage promotion and preservation. Worth to mention here are the network of European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH), the Europa Nostra network and on national level – the UK Association of Industrial Archeology and the Research Centre of Industrial Heritage in Prague (Antic, 2009).

The last group of factors to be discussed in this literature review is the soft factors, which are connected to location. The aesthetic qualities of the surrounding area are as important as those of the building itself. In her research in three cities in The Netherlands, Smit (2011) emphasizes the importance of the visual qualities of a district for creative entrepreneurs. She undertakes an exploratory study of 63 interviews with self-employed or managing a team up to nine workers, which proves that the “visual distinctiveness” of the surrounding area has been overlooked by researchers.

Another quality of the location is its image and character. After Helbrecht (1989) other authors (Musterd et al., 2007; Heebels and van Aalst, 2010) acknowledge that creative organizations are sensitive to the “look and feel” of the surrounding area. Smit’s (2011) findings prove that the neighborhood, in which creative industries

choose to locate, is important for their decision. There were several points, which characterized the attractiveness of the location for the interviewees. “A sense of history” (p.178), distinctive visual appearance, “district’s visual character” (p. 180) – all these characteristics were essential for creative industries, studied by Smit.

2.4.5. The Role of the Building and the Locality in Creative Industries Image and Production

All these soft factors are part of the ‘invisible’ connection between people working in the creative field and the place they choose to realize their production. They underline the fact that there are characteristics of the building and the space, which are important not only for the aesthetic satisfaction of the people working there, but also for the outcome of their work. As Newman and Smith (2000, p. 10) claim: “place can also be the raw material of cultural production, a text of signs that are open to reinterpretation”. A significant research in this direction is Graham Drake’s paper “‘This place gives me space’: place and creativity in the creative industries”. The conclusions of this research are based on interviews with workers in small and medium enterprises within the creative industries in UK. Focusing on two subsectors (digital design and craft metal work), the empirical research attempts to find out in what way does the location influence individual creativity under the form of “signs, ideas and prompts” (Drake, 2003, p.517). The results suggest that there is relation between localities and individual creativity in terms of aesthetic inspiration and stimulus. The influence of the place over the creative production is another factor, which determines creative industries choice to locate in a certain building. The relation shows that creative workers are also sensitive towards the “spirit” of the building, the atmosphere it offers and it’s aesthetic qualities. Although this research taps on the connection between place and individual creativity, it proves the existence of this relationship. It is also confirmed in Helbrecht (1998):

The visual orientation inclines employers and employees in the creative services to consider the physical environment as nothing less than fundamental for their personal and professional well-being. Advertisers, graphic designers, and interior decorators want a lot from space and they try to build a space around them that facilitates their creativity. In order to attach the material world of consumer goods with aesthetic values and meaning, they thrive on very specific notions of urbanity, embodied with emotions and aesthetics. (p.27)

Molotch (2003) likewise considers built environment as influential to creative production. The author investigates how designers perceive the “look and functionality of the city” (p.187) and his findings are positive about the relation between production and built environment.

Two of the already discussed researches prove that there is a special connection between built form, the image of creative industries and their production. Those are Drake’s (2003) in-depth examination of two subsectors of creative industries (digital design and craft metal work) and Smit’s (2011) extensive study on three districts in major cities in The Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Groningen) and creative entrepreneurs situated in them.

Smit’s findings on the way in which visual form influences the creative process are really interesting and are challenging to be tested in different contexts. First of all, the creative entrepreneurs included in the interviews stated that the visual qualities of the district they are situated in help them with their connection with clients. If the customers liked the area and were inclined to visit it, it meant (for more than 25% of the interviewed) that they would also like the production and ideas of the creative entrepreneurs. Second of, all Smit (2011, p.178) claims, that almost all of her interviewees stressed that the “distinctive visual appearance...enhances the creative image of their firm and their products”.

Drake’s research is also focused on three different cities, but in the United Kingdom (London, Birmingham and Sheffield). However, it is different from Smith’s analysis,

as it focuses on only two subsectors and their connection to the 'locality'. The author finds that there is a strong relationship between the locality and the creativity of the interviewees. A big part of them confirmed that there is a special connection between the "locality as a resource of visual raw materials and stimuli" and "locality as a brand, based on reputation and tradition" (Drake, 2003, p. 518-520). This research confirms that creative workers tap strongly on the locality for inspiration for their production. Furthermore, they use the locality as a brand and image of their work. "Motivation and inspiration is derived from the need to 'live up to' the image of the place and to be a credible part of that locality's reputation."(Drake, 2003, p. 520).

Both studies (Drake's and Smit's) discover a specific relationship between creative industries and their location. This relationship will be included in the theoretical framework of this master thesis and tested in the context of Sofia during the research.

3. Conclusion

This literature presented the general characteristics of creative industries and their definition according to existing literature. This was necessary to identify the units of the empirical research of this thesis and answer the question: *Which are the main characteristics of creative industries, according to existing literature?*

The reviewed theories showed that, although creative industries are complex to be defined precisely, a definition could be extracted for the needs of the research. The KEA Report's definition gives a useful classification (see Figure 1). However, the literature review goes beyond defining creative industries, to present more narrowed characteristics, concerning the aesthetic reflexivity and the importance of urban environment for creative industries and people working within them.

Focusing on the location factors, which influence location decisions of creative industries, two main groups of factors were found in the literature – hard and soft factors. They were further separated on hard factors – building and location and soft factors – building and location. This was necessary, as most of the reviewed researches referred to the location of the building in the city as really important for the decision. The table below (Table 1, p. 28) summarizes the factors found in the existing literature.

The first group is hard factors, also described as 'classic'. They represent the physical rationale of the building or the location (external building scale and style, internal space configuration, basic surrounding infrastructure, proximity to the city center), the financial aspect (rent, price per square meter and possibility to extend accommodation, municipal taxes and available subsidies) or some downgrades, which can influence the decision (access limitations to disused buildings and accessibility by public transport, car or other modes of transportation).

The soft factors represent more intangible qualities, connected to the aesthetic, historical and cultural qualities of the building and the location. In the reviewed literature, this group of factors are argued to be really important for creative industries, because of their aesthetic reflexivity and sensibility towards historical and heritage values of the built form.

	HARD FACTORS	SOFT FACTORS
BUILDING	Rent, price per square meter and possibility to extend accommodation.	Distinctiveness and authenticity.
	Price of reconstruction and adaptation for the needs of the organization.	Identity and former context.
	Access limitation to disused buildings.	Historical and heritage values.
	External building scale and style.	Place stimulates creativity.
	Internal space configuration.	Inspiration.
	Municipal taxes, available subsidies or funding for the building.	Freedom that the space offers.
LOCATION	Proximity to the city center.	Aesthetic quality of the surrounding area.
	Accessibility by public transport, car or other modes of transportation.	Image and character.
	Basic surrounding infrastructure.	Creative/cultural atmosphere.

TABLE 1. HARD AND SOFT FACTORS - BUILDING AND LOCATION

The literature review concludes with two researches on the connection between the aesthetic qualities of the working environment and the built form and the creative process and the image of creative industries.

Chapter 3 - The Case of Sofia

3.1. General Characteristics

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria and its most populated city with 1 241 396 citizens, living in it. It became the first capital of liberated Bulgaria in 1878, after the Ottoman domination. Since then, the city has been through several major stages of development. The first dates from 1887 until 1944, between the liberation and the end of World War II. The second – Sofia as capital of The Socialist Republic of Bulgaria was between 1944 and 1989. The third stage dates since 1989 – Sofia, as part of post-socialist southeastern Europe (Hirt, 2006). All of these stages left a mark on the face of Sofia and made it the city it is now, so it is worth briefly going through the history of the capital.

Between 1878 and 1944 Sofia's landscape was vastly improved. One of the main reasons for this was the rapid growth of its population – from 30,000 in the beginning of the stage to 300,000 until the end of World War II (Staddon and Mollov, 2000). Parallel to this, transport infrastructure was widening and improving, trams began running, water and electricity supply systems were installed. Sofia's architects were strongly inspired by Western European examples and the city's landscape was a proof of that. European movements like Art Nouveau were often used from planners in the early 1900's and Sofia was turning to be an equivalent capital to Western European cities like Wien and Paris. In the 1930's, due to the influence of the Axis ally, Italian-German neo-classical buildings like the National Bank and the Ministry of Defence emerged. (Staddon and Mollov, 2000; Dainov et. al., 2007).

World War II led to unfortunate consequences for Bulgaria, as it was part of the Axis ally. Sofia's industrial zones in the south and east were bombed and destroyed. The center of the city, however, was kept from demolition. After army coups in 1923, 1934 and 1944, the Bulgarian Communist Party took control over the state and the communist regime was established. The Party started building Sofia for its future of "political, economic and cultural capital of a rapidly industrializing nation" (Staddon and Mollov, 2000, p.383). Central planning and communism made Sofia a typical

socialist city. French and Hammilton (1979) describe the socialist urban landscape:

When traveling out from the city center one can observe the following zones: (1) the historic medieval or renaissance core; (2) inner commercial, housing, and industrial areas from the capitalist period; (3) a zone of socialist transition or renewal, where modern construction is partially and progressively replacing inherited urban or relict-village features; (4) socialist housing of the 1950s; (5) integrated socialist neighborhoods and residential districts of the 1960s and 1970s; (6) open or planted 'isolation belts;' (7) industrial or related zones (8) open countryside, forest, or hills, including tourist complexes. (p. 227)

One of the communist regime's characteristics was the big scale of industrialization and factory building. The pace was determined by non-economic factors, which were main drivers of production. "This favored the totality and 'gigantism' in the organization of space and physical planning, as well as emphasizing the significance of symbolic meaning." (Kostinskiy, 2001, p.451). Central government was the only actor, deciding and forming the urban built form during the communist era. For example, one of the resolutions of the Bulgarian Communist Party's 5th congress was: "to begin systematic struggle against modernism and formalism of the art in Bulgaria; as well as against the adulation of contemporary Western European bourgeois art; to support the realism tendencies in creating works with high artistic value..." (Dainov et al., 2000, p. 29)

The industrialization of the city and the loss of private property rights of people in the province resulted in doubling the population of the capital from 1946 until 1956. This determined another main characteristic of the urban landscape of Sofia - the "living districts" (number (5) in French and Hammilton's citation). They were constructed by big prefabricated concrete housing estates, erected one next to each other and were planned to be self-sufficient, separated from the center of the city. They were a desperate attempt to solve the housing problem of Sofia in the 1970's and 1980's.

After the communist regime, Bulgaria was crashed by a major economic political and social crisis. Until the 1998, inflation rate per year was in the range between 40% and 100%, population shrank by 12% due to mass immigration, social polarization was growing vastly (Hirt, 2006). The political system changed to pluralist, after the single party regime during the communism. Real estate, land and manufacture factories became available for reclamation from their previous owners – restitution. In the same time a boom of private enterprises and businesses, mainly retail ones, took place. Employment in manufacturing went from 42% to 16% between 1990 and 2002, while the one in the tertiary sector went to 80% from 54% (National Statistic Institute, 2003 in Hirt, 2006). The construction of residential buildings also became a territory of the private sector. Because of the existing associations with the socialist past, public planning was seen as a violation of private initiative. Many of the housing properties were legalized after they were built, which was a common practice of the corrupted administration. This led to large diversification of the built form in Sofia, with no common planning or future vision for the city. Another problem was property privatization, which resulted in disagreements of ownership and led to major complications for city planning later on. In the last 23 years, Sofia has been growing and changing without almost any regulations and planning from the public sector, which made the city look the way it does now. “Increasingly desperate – and, until the end of the century, desperately under-funded, city administrations did not address urban planning in any serious or systematic way, claiming lack of money and concentrating on a string of ‘crises that hit a city both expanding and with degenerating infrastructure and amenities” (p.30). The first planning attempt took place in 2006, when the city had its first Urbanization Plan since 1946. Dainov et al. (2007, p.6) compares the path of development of Sofia as “creation out of chaos”. On paper, there were four urban plans during this period of time, but none of them was either based on realistic forecasts for the growth of Sofia or implemented in practice.

Today, Sofia is a European Union capital and its rapid characteristics are changing, due to the dynamic economic, cultural and political situation. Although its official population is 1,3 million people, the reality is different. The residents of the city are around 1,9 million people, however those numbers are different during working days, as many people come to Sofia to work from the surrounding cities and villages. During weekdays the city fosters up to 3 million people, which is about 28 % of the

working population of Bulgaria (Dainov et al., 2007).

Despite the fact that all administrative institutions are concentrated in Sofia, it is also the cultural capital of Bulgaria with its large network of cultural institutions. 25% of the theaters and 9% of the libraries are situated there. In addition there are 28 museums, over 60 art galleries, 31 cinemas, over 120 cultural centers and 73% of the publishing houses are situated in the capital city. Sofia is also one of the greenest European capitals with its parks (over 10 000 acres) and its proximity to Vitosha Mountain.

3.2. Creative Industries in Sofia

As in many other contemporary big cities, creative industries are now playing a major role in Sofia's economic development. Researches in the sector however, are scarce and their scope needs to be expanded in the future. One of the most significant studies in the contribution of creative industries to the city economy is the "Mapping the cultural and creative industries in Sofia, 2011". It is a result of the cooperation between the Cultural Economy Observatory and the Municipality of Sofia. The research is based on the following indicators: added value, employment, turnover, number of enterprises and FDI and a special methodological framework, which separates the sector in 3 subsectors and 13 different segments (Table 2, p. 33). The results of this study (based on data collected by the National Statistics Institute) show that cultural and creative industries (CCI) have major contribution to Sofia's economy. In terms of employment, 6,7% of all working people in the capital are laboring in the sector. This equals 3,4% of all employed in the national economy. For the period from 2008 until 2009 there has been employment growth of 6,6% in the sector.

In terms of number of enterprises, every one of ten organizations in Sofia is part of the CCI. Their quantity is 9846, having in mind that there are 20 139 in total for Bulgaria, this means 49% of the CCI is situated in Sofia. The majority of these organizations are micro enterprises or single artists, who have registered their activities. Most of the enterprises are part of the private sector.

In conclusion, the mapping shows that the CCI create 4,1% (2008) and 3,7% (2009) of the added value in the national economy of Bulgaria. Furthermore, the added value for the economy of Sofia for the same period of time is 7,5% (2008) and 6,6% (2009). Sofia city creates 77,5% of the added value of CCI for Bulgaria's economy (Tomova and Andreeva, 2011).

	SUBSECTORS	SEGMENTS
ARTS, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	ARTS AND HERITAGE	VISUAL ARTS
		PERFORMING ARTS
		ART CRAFTS
		CULTURAL HERITAGE
	CULTURAL INDUSTRIES	MUSIC INDUSTRY
		BOOK PUBLISHING
		PRINTED MEDIA
		FILM INDUSTRY
		RADIO, TV AND NEW MEDIA
		SOFTWARE AND VIDEO GAMES
		CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
	ARCHITECTURE	
	ADVERTIZING	
	RELATED ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES IN CULTURAL TOURISM

**TABLE 2. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR, ACCORDING TO THE
FRAMEWORK OF THE CULTURAL ECONOMY OBSERVATORY**

Source: Tomova and Andreeva, 2011 “Cultural and creative industries – factor for sustainable development and economic growth – 2011”, <http://president.bg/docs/1352301215.pdf>

The results of this mapping clearly show that the creative industries in Sofia deserve to be the subject of much more attention. Their contribution to the economy and the dynamics of their development are interesting to investigate and understand. There has been another important research in the CCI sector, but its focus is on creative class and its location choices, and the creation of creative-knowledge cities. A research team from Sofia becomes part of the ACRE report project - Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union. Although the study has a big scope and is aiming to be comprehensive, it excludes interviewees from essential creative industries like architecture, design, publishing and arts. This fact is significant, as the results of this research are obviously not as far-reaching to draw the complete picture of the creative industries and their employees in Sofia. Furthermore, the researched population includes knowledge-based industries employees, which alienates the results from the core creative industries even more.

It is obvious that the creative industries sector in Sofia needs to be further researched and studied. Its contribution to the national and city economy is a good reason for more attention, not only from academic researchers, but also from policymakers. The fact, that statistical information cannot be found on the website of the National Statistics Institute shows the underestimation of the importance of creative industries by public authorities.

3.3. Former Industrial Buildings in Sofia

There are two types of former industrial built form in Sofia. First are the pre-war period properties, situated in the present city center, or the neighboring areas. Second are the big industrial landscapes and buildings, constructed during the socialist period, usually in the edge of the city and engaged in heavy industry production. According to data collected until 2001, the percentage of industrial areas in the compact city was around 13% and in the metropolitan up to 20%.ⁱⁱ After the central government fell in 1989, industries were either closed or privatized. This led to major problems with the ownership and the maintaining of the former industrial buildings. Most of the



PICTURE 1. ZAHARNA FABRIKA IN 2002. SOURCE: WHATA.ORG

properties were returned to families that previously owned them, who were incapable of taking adequate care of the building. No actual help was offered from the state for the maintaining and saving these inherited industrial buildings. The situation of these old built forms in Sofia is now critical and in most cases neither the

state nor the owners give adequate care to the properties.

In Bulgaria, industrial heritage is recognized as part of cultural heritage in the national law of cultural heritage from 2009. This means that registered industrial sites are part of the national system for preservation of cultural heritage. However, the only building, registered under industrial heritage with national value – Zaharna Fabrika has been left to decay and destruction in the past few years. Although the case has drawn the attention of many non-government and civic organizations and the issue was highly commented in the press, neither the government nor the municipality of Sofia had an adequate reaction.

The building was constructed 114 years ago as a sugar factory from a Belgian company. It is the biggest industrial property for its time and is a symbol of pre-war industrial Sofia and Bulgaria. According to archives, it stopped being used as a factory in the 1926 and since then it has been a warehouse for different private and later state companies. It has been actively exploited like a warehouse until 2003. After its privatization in 1998 its ownership changed three times. Although the building is registered as national cultural heritage site, the state could not prevent its destruction. Because of complications with implementing the national heritage law and other limitations, this national heritage site was left to decay. The incompetent and obviously helpless behavior of the public authorities had a major echo in blogs and social media, as well as among the non-profit sector, interested in public space preservation.



PICTURE 2. ZAHARNA FABRIKA COMPLEX. SOURCE: WHATA.ORG

Although, there were a lot of suggestions on how the complex should be reconstructed (living lofts, contemporary art museum) from the non-profit sector, there were no adequate reactions from the public sector or from the private owner. This case is interesting

because it became a byword for how buildings and sites of national importance are taken care of in Bulgaria. It is used as a negative example and is still mentioned when problems of old buildings are addressed from organizations, interested in alternative public spaces. The photos below show the complex in 2002 and after its destruction in 2010.

In conclusion, several points have to be made in order to understand the situation of former industrial buildings in Sofia and Bulgaria. The significance of these buildings is still not fully recognized. Although good practices from Europe and the US are mentioned in strategies and planning documents, valorization is still to be conducted.

The historical, social and cultural values that these objects carry are at stake, but their preservation has not met any state support by now.

Usually, successful redevelopment of former industrial sites is a result of cooperation between the civic, public and private sector. The public authorities play an important role and when they do not present any actions or opinion, no common valorization or integration of this type of properties can be developed.

The main problems recognized in Bulgaria are: lack of public support in the processes of research, development of the concept of industrial heritage and valorization; no



PICTURE 3. ZAHARNA FABRIKA NOW. SOURCE: WHATA.ORG

public stimulation of revitalization processes and private investments; extensive problems with ownership of the buildings, inherited by the privatization processes in the 90's; no stimulation of public debate and sporadic

answers to concrete questions from the civic sector; no preservation or at least security manners addressed.

The lack of interest of public authorities has its reasons, which can also be found in the society itself. Often, industrial sites inherited by the communist regime are left to decay or destroyed on purpose. They are not wanted as part of the collective memory, because of the total denial of the socialist past. This is a major problem, as not only industrial buildings, but also monuments and giant flagships all over the country are abandoned like they have never been there. This problem does not exist only in Bulgaria, but in many other post-communist countries, where collective memory is not ready to recognize and accept its past yet.

3.4. Why is Sofia Interesting for This Research?

The case of Sofia is a unique context for conducting the research for this master thesis, for three main reasons.

First of all, research in creative industries and their location choice in Sofia are scarce. The ACRE research team addresses some of the location factors, including the ones, connected to the soft infrastructure. However, this study focuses only on some creative industries and includes knowledge-based industries like financial and law services, which makes the studied sample not representative for creative industries in Sofia. Furthermore, the ACRE team focuses on creative and knowledge workers and not on the industries and organizations.

The mapping of the creative industries in Sofia, conducted by the Cultural Economy Observatory is comprehensive and based on data, collected by the National Statistics Institute, which makes it reliable. However, it shows that CCI have major contribution to the economy of Sofia and are stable source of employment, but does not examine the factors, which influence their location choice. A research on creative industries location choice has not been done in the context of Sofia.

Second of all, although the overall situation of the former industrial built form reuse in Sofia is still a big question mark, there are organizations that choose to locate in them. There are creative industries, which develop their projects there and make them their working environment. Examining the factors, which influence their decision in combination with the already proven contribution of the sector to the city economy, might result in higher attention towards these buildings from public and private parties.

Third of all, although it is a post-socialist city, Sofia's creative industries development is dynamic and interesting setting to be examined. It is a complicated situation, because of the lack of statistical data, blurry policy making and no actual planning.

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have attempted to do a thorough review of the existing literature. It was essential to define the concepts of cultural industries and former industrial buildings in order to focus on the potential subjects of this research. The literature review also helped to build a theoretical framework of location factors that are influential for the decision of cultural industries to situate their business in former industrial buildings.

The context was also addressed – the case of Sofia, which is an interesting and challenging setting for this research. The main reason we have chosen Sofia is the lack of academic studies, dedicated to the city and the creative industries in it. The mapping of the cultural and creative industries, show that the sector is an important contributor to the city economy. A more fine-tuned investigation on location choices of the creative industries has not been conducted for now. The ACRE project focuses on the location factors, but excludes a major part of creative industries from the research population, while including some knowledge-based industries, which are not part of the creative sector.

Another reason is the fact, that former industrial buildings have been seen as attractive for creative industries, according to the existing literature (Zukin, 1989; Evans, 2004; Hutton, 2006; Heebels and Van Aalst, 2010). It is interesting what makes this particular kind of built form attractive for creative industries in the context of a post-socialist capital city like Sofia. The factors, described in the literature are to be tested in a different, challenging setting, which can contribute to the existing research both on creative industries location choice and on post-socialist urban setting.

The Methodology chapter will begin with presenting the aims of this thesis and the main research question, adding two sub questions, which emerged from the literature review. The next paragraph will describe the methodology and will continue with

defining the unit of analysis. The chapter will continue with the data collection and data analysis methods. A table of the hard and soft factors will be incorporated, necessary to structure the interview guide. The chapter will finish with description of the research's limitations.

4.2. Aims of the Thesis and Main Research Question

The major focus of this thesis is the factors, which influenced the location decision of creative industries, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia. In the literature review, we have attempted to define the factors, according to existing literature. The aim of this thesis is to understand whether the factors, found in the literature are valid for creative industries in Sofia and how they influence the location decision of the studied creative organizations. The main research question is – *Which are the factors that influence the choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia?*. (A table, summarizing the factors found out in the literature will be implemented in the data collection subchapter.)

When revising the existing researches on creative industries and their location choice, two sub questions emerged. They are based mainly on the studies of Drake (2003) “This place gives me space” and Smit (2011) “The influence of district visual quality on location decisions of creative entrepreneurs”. Both of the authors’ findings prove that there is a special relationship between built form and the creative process. Although Drake’s research is focused on the building itself, and Smit’s on the district it is situated in, both of the studies show an interesting connection between the creative industries, the creative production, the image of the organizations and the built form. In order to test their findings in the context of Sofia and this research, we have formed the following sub questions:

- 1) *What is the role of the building itself in a creative organization’s image?*
- 2) *What is the role of the building and the location in the creative process and how do they influence the production of a creative organization?*

4.3. Methodology

For our research, we have chosen a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is most suitable for the aims and objectives of this thesis, as it allows obtaining in-depth information about the exact choices of the studied people. The research question – *Which are the factors that influence the choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia?* – Implies that the perspective of the organization's owner/director is important, regarding the time when the location choice was made. This is why we believe the character of the qualitative research fits best my aims. As Snape and Spencer (2003) argue, this character includes: “aims which are directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories.”(p.3).

Furthermore, according to Bryman (2004) qualitative research emphasizes on two manners – context and process. The context is really important for the qualitative researcher, because it is essential for the “contextual understanding of social behavior” (p.281). The current research is strongly connected to the context – the city of Sofia and this is one of the reasons qualitative methodology is the most suitable for it.

As last reason to choose qualitative, rather than quantitative approach in the current study, we imply that most of the studies, which are concerned with location factors of creative industries are qualitative (Drake, 2003; Hutton, 2006; Musterd et al., 2007; Heebels and van Aalst, 2010; Smit, 2011). This makes us confident, that the chosen methodology for this master thesis is adequate.

4.4. Unit of Analysis

In order to do the research properly and effectively, we have to identify the population and the sample that we are going to study. The unit of analysis of this master thesis is creative organizations, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia. By creative organizations, we understand every organization operating in one of the sectors, defined in the KEA report, discussed in the beginning of Chapter 2. Those are visual arts, performing arts, heritage, film and video, television, radio, video games, music, design, architecture and advertising. Having in mind the context, we also include the framework that the Cultural Economy Observatory and the Municipality of Sofia used to conduct the mapping of the cultural and creative industries in Sofia – visual arts, art crafts, cultural heritage, music industry, book publishing, film industry, radio, television, new media software, video games, design, architecture, advertising. Bearing the main research question in mind, the criteria, which were determinant for the studied population, were three.

- 1) The context – Sofia, Bulgaria. The studied organizations have to be located and operating in the city of Sofia.
- 2) The activities – creative industries. The core activities of the organization have to be part of the fourteen creative industries categorized by the Sofia Municipality or the KEA report framework. Neither the legal structure nor the size of the organizations, were implemented as criteria when defining the population of this research. None of them were of any significance to the research.
- 3) The building – former industrial context. The location of the studied organizations is essential for the purposes of this research. They have to be located in a building, which was initially made for industrial production. The main activities of the organization have to be conducted there.

Following these three criteria I narrowed down the population to all the organizations, part of the creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia, which are seven in total. One last consideration had to be taken into account. The location choice is usually a decision taken by the owner or the director of the company. This is

why it was important, that the interview was conducted with a person of such position in the organizations, which were part of the study sample.

4.5. Data Collection Methods

In order to choose the proper research method, one has to determine what kind of information does he aim to obtain. As the focus of our research are factors that influenced a decision, made several years ago, the most suitable way of revealing them would be an interview with the owners/directors of these organizations. There are different variations of the interview as a research method. For the purposes of this research, an in-depth face-to-face interview was chosen. According to Lewis (2003) the in-depth interview allows to reveal information about motivations and decisions. The personal focus also helps to discover impacts and outcomes of the phenomenon explored. If we use the categorization of Patton (2002), the type of interview I have chosen is the “interview guide, or the topical approach” (Patton in Marshall and Rossman, 2010, p. 144). Its characteristics are 1) the preliminary set topics of the conversations and 2) freedom of the participant’s way of answering the questions and unfolding his perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

All the organizations, which fell under the population definition of this research were contacted via e-mail in March 2013. Their number was seven, six of them responded and agreed to meet me for an interview. The interviews were conducted in May 2013, one of the organization dropped out as they did not further answer to my e-mails or phone calls. The research consisted of five in-depth face-to-face interviews (See Appendix 1 for information about the interviewees). Each of them lasted between 40 and 70 minutes, and took place in the office of the organization. There was one exception – the Water Tower Art Fest, which uses the building only during the festival and do not have a permanent office. All the interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed immediately after the conversations.

In order obtain comparable information, the interview guide had to be structured carefully. It was essential to get the information needed to answer the main research question and the sub questions that emerged from it. According to Warren (2001) designing is the second stage of qualitative interviewing. The author recommends that the interview questions are not more than twelve, used to guide the conversation. However, the interviewer has to remain flexible as some of these preliminary questions can become irrelevant during the actual interview (p.86-87).

Following Warren’s recommendations, I attempted to use the theoretical framework examined in the literature review, in order to structure the interview guide. It consisted of three main topics. Starting with an introduction part in the beginning, which aimed at comforting the interviewee. He/she was asked to introduce himself/herself and the organization. A follow up was the first group of questions, related to the building and its importance for the organization’s location choice and image. Then the interviewees were asked to describe the connection between the building and the creative process. The last part of the conversation aimed to understand how the two groups of factors (hard and soft) influenced the decision of the organization to locate in a former industrial building. There were no preliminary questions structured, only the list of factors in the table below, was used.

	HARD FACTORS	SOFT FACTORS
BUILDING	Rent, price per square meter and possibility to extend accommodation.	Distinctiveness and authenticity.
	Price of reconstruction and adaptation for the needs of the organization.	Identity and former context.
	Access limitation to disused buildings.	Historical and heritage values.
	External building scale and style.	Place stimulates creativity.
	Internal space configuration.	Inspiration.
	Municipal taxes, available subsidies or funding for the building.	Freedom that the space offers.
LOCATION	Proximity to the city center.	Aesthetic quality of the surrounding area.
	Accessibility by public transport, car or other modes of transportation.	Image and character.
	Basic surrounding infrastructure.	Creative/cultural atmosphere.

4.6. Data Analysis Method

Notes were made after each interview, in order to help generate concepts and categories (Bryman, 2004). The collected data – recorded qualitative interviews was coded right after it was transcribed, as suggested in Bryman (2004). This led to reducing the available data and separating under categories and themes. The transcripts were read multiple times, while keeping notes and coding. No qualitative data analysis software was used, as it was possible to code the interview material without it.

4.7. Limitations

The qualitative research has its critiques and some of their points need to be mentioned here. Quantitative researchers argue that there are problems with generalization and objectivity of the qualitative methods. The findings depend too much on the researcher's point of view of what is important and what is not. As for generalization, qualitative research methods often employ much smaller sample than quantitative. There are doubts to what extent the research findings are representative. Furthermore, qualitative methods of data collection are difficult to replicate in different settings, because of their unstructured nature (Bryman, 2004, p. 284). All these limitations are part of the nature of the qualitative method. However, I believe it is the right one for this research, for two main reasons. The first one is that a quantitative method would not let me understand and explore in-depth the main factors, that influenced the location decision. My aim is not to measure any concepts, emergent from the theory, but to find out about a connection between the built form and the organizations studied. The second reason is the importance of the context and the building for my research. According to Bryman (2004), the emphasis on context is one of the main characteristics of qualitative research. I believe that the setting, on which the interview takes place, is essential for my research. The importance of the building's qualities, values and its influence would be much easier for the interviewee to explain and describe if the conversation takes place in it.

There are several problems with this research, which are worth mentioning. First of all, the literature review helped with structuring a theoretical framework of location factors. Although, they are all part of researches on creative industries and their location choice, the factors had to be adapted to focus on the building and its location in the city. The adaptation could lead to some problems with communicating the factors to the interviewees and explaining their possible influence for the location choice.

The second fact, that could have led to bias in the data collection process is the language. The context of the interviews was Sofia and all of them were conducted in Bulgarian. I had to translate the recordings in English, which could have resulted in some loss of the original meaning of the answers. However, I have personally

conducted all the interviews and transcribed them immediately afterwards in English. This makes me confident about transferring all the thoughts of the interviewees in their original meaning, or the closest possible to it. Furthermore, I believe that the mother language is always a predisposition for a more full-bodied and rich conversation, and if the interviews were conducted in English, it could have resulted in loss of valuable data.

The third problem of this research is the sample. I have found and contacted the subjects of my research through on-line sources. Two of the organizations did not answer to my request and I was able to conduct only five interviews. This is a small sample even for a qualitative research. However, in the case of Sofia, the creative organizations, situated in a former industrial building are seven in total. This makes me confident, that my sample is suitable for a qualitative research and is representative for the situation in Sofia.

Chapter 5 – Results

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 of this master thesis will present the results from the empirical research – in-depth qualitative interviews with the owners/directors of five creative organizations, who chose to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia. The chapter begins with description of the main characteristics of the studied organizations. A map of their location in Sofia will be incorporated, also photographs showing the interior space and qualities of the buildings. The chapter will continue with presenting the results, connected with the special relationship between the environment and the creative process (Drake, 2003) and the image of the organization (Smit, 2011). The second part of this chapter will focus on the soft and hard factors for the building and the location and how they influenced the location decision of the studied organizations.

5.2. Creative Industries in Former Industrial Buildings in Sofia

5.2.1. Main Characteristics - Size, Employees, Structure

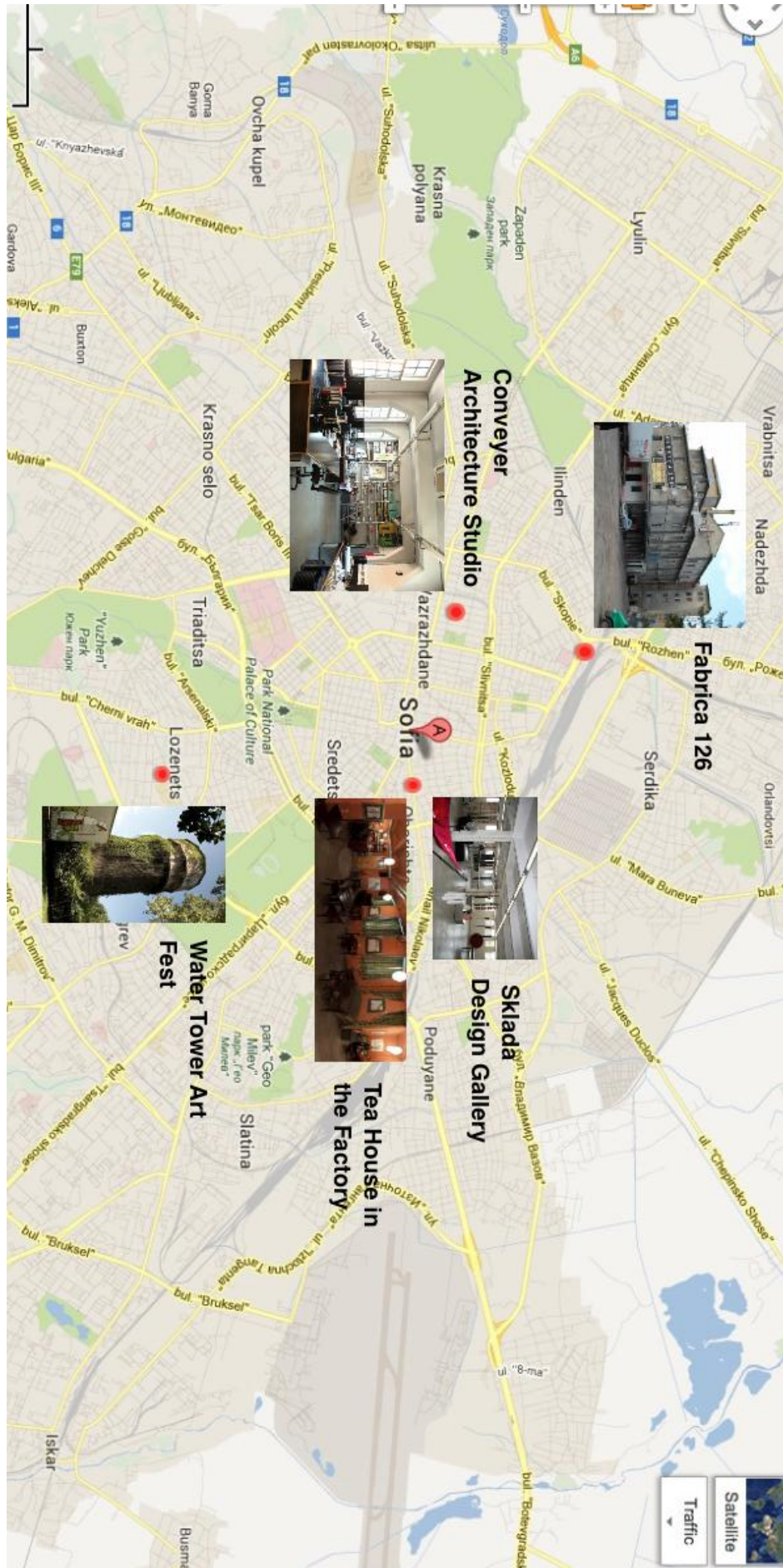
The empirical research consists of five in-depth interviews with the owners/directors of the studied organizations. They are as it follows: a design gallery/studio in former paper house (Sklada); a tea house (Tea House in the Factory), organizing cultural events in the same building; an architecture studio (Conveyer) with an office in former sugar factory; a non profit creative organization (Water Tower Art Fest), responsible for one of the most popular contemporary art festivals in the city, using an old water tower as a main venue; and an advertising agency and studio (Fabrica 126) in a former mill. The map on p. 50 shows the studied organization's location in Sofia. They all moved to the former industrial buildings in the past 6 years, Fabrica 126 is the most recent case, they are in this building since the fall of 2012.

The size of the studied organizations differs, but they all fall in the small enterprise category (from 1 to 10 employees), which is not surprising, having in mind Sofia's CCI mapping results. According to the research, more than 90% of the cultural and creative enterprises in Sofia have 1 to 10 employees (Tomova and Andreeva, 2011). The advertising agency is the largest with seven regular employees; the smallest is the art festival with four project – based people, working for it.

The organizations structures are predominantly flat, with no strict organizational culture. This could be explained by the small size of the studied enterprises, but also by the choice of their location. The building often is representative of the organizational structure, its way of operating. All of the interviewees were positive, that the building plays a major role in their employees' perception for the working culture in their organization.

“The space is really close to what we are trying to do in our work. Not only production wise, but also for the working process of the team. We wanted to be together, to work like a team and everybody to feel equal to every member of this team. We also wanted to share ideas constantly and this was not possible in a

PICTURE 4. MAP OF THE STUDIED CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS IN SOFIA



building with many small offices and corridors. Our space is open, our ideas are common.” (Conveyer)

The respondents were asked to describe how their personnel felt about the building, and if it matters in any way for them. One of them (Conveyer) described the space as significant for the hierarchy in their organization. As their work is project-based and the team varies, they wanted to stimulate the freedom of sharing ideas through the space.

All of the respondents (except the art festival director) articulated the bigger space and the freedom it offers in compare to ordinary office buildings. They all expressed clearly the difference between them (as creative industries) and the rest of the enterprises, who choose to locate in business parks and traditional office buildings.

“It is complied, and the atmosphere is important for them too. The space, I mean.... The newer type of buildings is lower, it makes you feel smaller, suppresses you...”(Tea House)

“Our employees feel better here, we all do. The space is really nice, we did not want a regular office... it is just not the place for us.” (Fabrica 126)

5.2.2. Aesthetic Reflexivity and the Importance of Urban Space

All of the organizations are situated in the inner city of Sofia, two of them – Tea House and Sklada – in the compact city center, the rest in districts, neighboring the compact center. All of them are part of what Lash and Urry (1994) refer to as ‘sign value’ production industries, and are operating in a mega polis – the city of Sofia. The aesthetic qualities of the urban environment and the building, the studied organizations are situated in, both proved to be important to a certain extent.

“I have always liked the old buildings. I also like contemporary architecture. Furthermore, the buildings that have history are more expressive, evoke richer emotions... I have more to say in my conversation with them. Also, what can be a better place for contemporary design than an old building? The contrast just adds more value to the contemporary.” (Sklada)

The respondents, also proved to be sensitive towards the 'look and feel' (Helbrecht, 1998) of the space they are situated in. They all stated, that the aesthetic and design qualities of the building were one of the reasons they moved into it. The respondents talked about "bauhaus atmosphere" and the "industrial pre-war spirit" (Conveyer). The Tea House owner claimed, that when they organize jazz concerts and art exhibitions, the creative people they invite "feel the space in a different way" (Tea House). Historical and aesthetic qualities are clearly important for the studied organizations in Sofia.

5.2.3. The Importance of the Building for Customers/Visitors

According to all of the respondents, the building has a strong influence on their customers/visitors attitude and perception of the organization. As these properties are not a common choice for a working place, the clients and visitors react differently on the space. Their reactions often serve for the creative organization as an indicator if they will get along with the customers/visitors.

"I think it makes a big difference. This building calls for respect, but also is really cozy and hospitable. Some of the clients just cannot accept it and this creates a natural selection, which always helps us in our business. Many people think that the building is poor and ugly. This is their archaic attitude towards luxury and wellbeing."(Sklada)

"We have the best results with people who like this space. We judge a lot of them according to their reactions to the space. If they like it, we know that we will be able to work together and speak in the same language with them." (Conveyer)

"About the clients, many of them were skeptical in the beginning, but later on whoever liked the place stayed with us... I mean, if they like it – we will also be able to offer them good service. There was this shiny banker's party a couple of weeks ago... the guests just did not fit... they don't see this as a luxury party place, but just as derelict old building."(Fabrica 126)

The answers above also show that the building and the space are not just important for the customers, but also for the organization. The impression that the building gives is

part of the customer selection process of the organization. This is also as a business card of the organization, as the property serves to represent its aesthetical and creative values.

1.3.1. The Building and the Image of the Organization

The collected empirical data shows that the organizational image is pursued as a really important item by the interviewees. One of the respondents (Fabrica 126) said it was “everything”, especially for the creative business. All of them believed they have a strong public image, based on their qualities and activities. When asked about the connection between the image of the organization and the building they are situated in, all of the respondents claimed there is a strong relation between the two.

“This question has a simple answer. We rented and made the place this way because of the image we wanted to have. We demanded to create an image by the character we gave to our office.” (Conveyer)

The quotes above show strong connection between the building’s aesthetic and historical qualities and their importance to the image these organizations are trying to construct. As these firms production (design and architecture) has high aesthetic added value, they look up on the building and the space as their business card, as an impression of their taste and work.

Other two (Water Tower and Fabrica 126) of the interviewees described the building more as a symbol of their organization, and not their production. Both of them used the building as part of their stylized logos and said they are consciously exploiting the property as a visual element of their organizational image. It is important for creative organizations to be situated in building, which has identity and is ‘special’ in a way.

5.2.4. The Building and the Creative Process and Production

Bearing in mind the theories of Drake (2003) and Smit (2011), the interviewees were asked if there is any connection between the buildings where they are situated, the

creative process and their production. All of the respondents confirmed that there is such a relationship. The owner of the design gallery described this connection in the following way:

“The building is part of our criteria for design values. It is a true expression of the aesthetics of a time past long ago, but is in the base of the contemporary postulates. This loft cannot bare falseness. Every fake and artificial object stands ridiculous in this place. The space alone rejects these impure and capricious items.” (Sklada)

This respondent also claimed, that if the organization was not situated in this loft, it would not have become a design gallery, but something else. Another interviewee, the owner of the Tea House, also states that:

“Another place would mean different activities, other context, different production”(Tea House).

All of the organizations confirmed, that their production and creative ideas tap strongly on the location, they work in. The interviewees believe that the place stimulates the creativity of their employees (or in the case of the art festival, the participating artists). Furthermore, all of them connected the place to their production and their creative ideas. The respondents were convinced, that the building and the space are actually special, and are part of a unique creative atmosphere, which inspires certain activities and reject others:

“Some things can happen only on certain places. I don’t have the formula which places evoke what, but I am pretty sure that the human is affected by its environment.” (Sklada)

All the respondents said that the place they have chosen stimulates the creative process of their organization. The building and the space it offers play a major role for the working atmosphere and also for the inspiration of the team. For example, the owner of the design gallery’s answer was:

“I am completely convinced that the place has a major significance for the creativity, the inspiration and the sensitivity.”(Sklada)

5.3. Factors

	HARD FACTORS	SOFT FACTORS
BUILDING	Rent, price per square meter and possibility to extend accommodation.	Distinctiveness and authenticity.
	Price of reconstruction and adaptation for the needs of the organization.	Identity and former context.
	Access limitation to disused buildings.	Historical and heritage values.
	External building scale and style.	Place stimulates creativity.
	Internal space configuration.	Inspiration.
	Municipal taxes, available subsidies or funding for the building.	Freedom that the space offers.
LOCATION	Proximity to the city center.	Aesthetic quality of the surrounding area.
	Accessibility by public transport, car or other modes of transportation.	Image and character.
	Basic surrounding infrastructure.	Creative/cultural atmosphere.

The results of this research are supposed to answer how and why each of the factors above influenced the decision of the studied creative organizations to move in former industrial building. The interviewees were asked to talk about the factors and to describe the reasons for them to be situated in former industrial buildings. This chapter will review the collected data, in order to understand in-depth their influence on the decision of the location of the organization. The review will start with the hard factors, connected to the building and its location. Although the main focus of this thesis is the building and its importance in the decision, we believe it could not be separated entirely from its location in the city. The review of the factors will continue with the soft factors for the location and the building.

5.3.1. Hard Factors – Building and Location

The hard factors usually play a major role in the decision making process as they represent the infrastructure, the material conditions of the built form, what is already there. Also, the financial aspects like rent, price of reconstruction and taxes. All these conditions and their influence were discussed with the interviewees. The results are described in the following subchapter.

Rent, price per square meter and possibility to extend the accommodation proved to be really important for the creative organizations for their location choice. Four of the interviewees referred to the rent as “one of the most important factors” which influenced the decision to move to a former industrial building. As these buildings in Sofia are usually untended and there is low interest from the private sector, the spaces offered by the owners can be rented cheaply. One of the respondents stated that:

“The rent was the most important factor in the beginning... It was really low... So low that we just decided to take the place with no idea what to do with it.” (Fabrica 126)

The low rent was pointed out from one of the respondents (Fabrica 126) as the primary reason to choose this particular building. For other three (Conveyer, Sklada, Tea House) it was not a major motivation, but played an essential role in the decision making process. The Water Tower Art Fest case is different, as the building’s ownership is a complicated matter. The festival director does not have to pay rent, just the electricity bills.

Although, the cheap rent was initially a major reason to locate in this kind of buildings, two of the organizations remark that later this factor turned up to be “false” or “illusion”. The reason is the price of the reconstruction, which was not estimated correctly at the beginning, when the decision was made. This leads the results review to the next factor - price of reconstruction and adaptation for the needs of the organization. All of the interviewees except one (the architecture studio) admitted that they did not consider the real price of the reconstruction as an important factor. On the question how and why this factor influenced their decision, the owner of the design gallery answered:

“The price of the reconstruction did not have any influence on our decision. I regret that now. The renovation of this loft was too expensive and now I am about to lose my property, which I mortgaged for the bank loan... that’s it. The risk was and is totally mine.”(Sklada)

Other two respondents also realized that this would be a major item in the budget post-factum. Clearly, the reconstruction and the changes, that had to be made in order for the building to be adapted to the needs of the creative organization, were underestimated budget wise. Two of the interviewees (Tea House and Sklada) admitted, that their location decision would have probably been different if this factor was considered more carefully.

The organization that has taken into account the price of the reconstruction in advance (Conveyer) still does not see it as an influential reason for the decision. As, the organization is an architecture studio and, they were fully aware of the expenses of the reconstruction. However, they were searching for a place, which is suitable for them to realize their creative idea for “the perfect working environment” and the price of making this space, was not an important factor. Overall, the financial matters, as expected, are really important for the location decision of the creative industries, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Hutton (2005) refers to the external building scale and style as part of the “material attraction” of the built form for new industries. The answers of the interviewees really confirm that they were attracted to the building because of its external qualities. Only one (Fabrica 126) of the interviewees admitted that they were “more of a bonus” than influential for the decision. When asked to talk about them, the other four respondents were clearly excited and had a lot to say about this factor. The art fest director described in details the external qualities of the building.

“Really important! The most beautiful thing about this building is the facade, covered with ivy. It was never renovated before, and is unchanged by the time passed. The building was impressive for its time and it still is. “(Water Tower Art Fest)

Another of Hutton’s “material attraction” factors, the internal space configuration also had strong influence on the organization’s decision, according to the interviewees. All of them described the internal space configuration as “important” and “ really

influential”. The architecture studio owner claimed that it was one of the most important factors:

“The most important for us. We are located in former industrial building because of the atmosphere and the size of this space. We wanted to work on this kind of place and we made it. We arrived in the right moment. After we knew that the space was suitable for us as a size (7 meters wide, 14 long and 4 meters high), we also liked the Bauhaus atmosphere of the factory.” (Conveyer)

All the interviewees described the internal configuration of the building in detail to us, which shows that they were really interested in this aspect of their working space. For the owner of Factory 126, the internal space configuration was essential, as the building is used for multiple purposes (company office, events venue, photo studio, advertising materials cutting rooms). Clearly the organization benefits not only the high ceilings and the big spaces, but also from the fact that all the rooms were with different parameters, and could be adapted individually.

Two factors were included in the theoretical framework of this master thesis, adopted from Ball (1999) and discussed in the literature review chapter. First one was the price of the reconstruction, and the second is the access limitation to disused buildings. This factor turned out to be out of the consideration of all the five respondents. Their answers and reaction to the question showed that the access limitation was not a factor, which influenced their decision. Four of them (Sklada, Tea House, Fabrica 126, Conveyer) admitted they have not even thought about it before they moved into the building. This can be explained with the fact, that none of the four buildings’ access was limited neither from authorities, nor from decay reasons.

The art festival director however confirmed to have had some access problems with the water tower. First of all, the yard around the tower needed to be cleaned, as it has been polluted and “was occupied by shrubs and plants as high as a person”. Second of all, the last floor of the tower is still closed for visitor, because of safety problems. However, this did not influence the location decision of the organization in a negative way. On the opposite, the director turned this downfall of the location into an advantage by organizing a citizen’s cleaning initiative for the space around the tower, which was how the festival began.

“So, I decided that I have to make a civil initiative to clean the place and regenerate with the tools of art. In this case – not just one form of art, but sitespecific art. Back then we only had the opportunity to make audio-visual performance outside where we cleaned. And year after year, it started developing, we entered inside the tower.” (Water Tower Art Fest)

The last factor from the hard group concerning the building – municipal taxes and available subsidies for the building resulted in negative reactions from all of the respondents. Three of the organizations (Sklada, Conveyer, Fabrica 126) never made attempt to get any public funding for the building or their activities in it. One of them, the art festival, is in the cultural calendar of Sofia Municipality since 2010, which means there is public funding available for them. The Tea House owner claimed, that they tried to get subsidies from the municipality for two years, but gave up after the two unsuccessful attempts. The answers of all the interviewees included sharp criticism towards public authorities as a whole and in particular towards the policy (or its absence) related to old buildings regeneration. The design studio owner’s answer was:

“I think that the public sector does not care at all for these buildings. It even is wondering how to get rid of them. The moment of realization that these buildings have special values and can be used effectively for culture and art is yet to come.”(Sklada)

Furthermore, when asked about this factor, all of the organizations owners responded that it was not important for their location choice, as they did not expect financial help or tax reductions from the public authorities at all.

“I need to say that the word authorities is absent in the Bulgarian language, also the word society. What is normal for other countries here is different. We are different. We are not an organization that is interested in communicating with the authorities.” (Conveyer)

The results of this factor deserve to be discussed more in depth, as the reactions of the respondents prove, that the context plays a major role of what is important for the location choice of creative organizations. Here, the ACRE team’s findings on the context of Sofia (Dainov et al. 2007) can be implemented for further understanding of the current research’s results. First of all, the fact that three of the organizations never

tried to get public funding aligns with the statement, that public authorities are highly mistrusted in Bulgaria. Second of all, the case of Zaharna Fabrica (described in Chapter 3) was brought up from all of the interviewees as an example for the lack of interest from the public authorities towards former industrial buildings. This topic revealed the total disconnection of four of the studied organizations with the Municipality. Although the art festival receives public funding, the director clearly stated, that the public authorities in Bulgaria “speak a different language and think in a totally different way” from the creative organizations.

Turning the conversation towards the hard factors concerning the location of the building, three of the interviewees (Sklada, Tea House, Conveyer) saw the proximity to the city center as a determinant for their location choice. It was especially important for the design studio and for the Tea House, as one of their activities is to organize cultural and creative events and workshops.

“It was important that it was in the center of the city. For our kind of business, it is essential. Otherwise we would not cope without additional subsidies.”(Tea House)

“It is situated in the center of the city in a specific zone, connected to prosperity and urban development in the past. Sofia is not a city in which you can start revitalizing the suburbs. We are not yet in that phase of our development.”(Sklada).

The other two organizations (Fabrica 126 and Water Tower Art Fest) are not situated in the city center, however, they admit that they were considering this fact as a downgrade of the location and were thinking how to compensate for it. For both of these organizations, another factor prevailed for the location choice. Fabrica 126’s owner was attracted from the cheap rent and the fact, that it was not situated in the compact center of the city was less important. The building was what fascinated the festival director, also the location was important for her, as it is in the neighborhood she grew up in. So, the proximity to the city center is overall important for the creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

The last factors in the framework were both seen as unimportant for the location decision from the interviewees - accessibility by public transport, car, other modes of transportation and basic surrounding infrastructure – parking, sidewalks, streets conditions. Usually accessibility is essential for organizations in the creative sector, as

they often combine the production and consumption space in one. Surprisingly, none of the respondents of this research have considered these two factors as a determinant factor for their location choice. All of them were even surprised by the question. Further discussion on the topic showed that none of them considered Sofia as such a big city for this to bother them. As for the parking, it is either free in the city fringe or rather cheap in the center. However, the owner of Factory 126 had a different view. Even though it was not a factor that was determinant for their location decision, the area around the building was renovated right after they moved in.

“In the beginning we did not have any good sidewalks, or bike lanes or whatever. We were lucky that the new metro station opened nearby and the prime-minister decided to cut the bow here (laughs). The Municipality made everything look perfect, every piece from the sidewalk... The bike lane... we ourselves started cycling here, you can have a couple of whiskies after work (laughs). What I want to say is that the infrastructure is really important; it changes the way people think about coming to the city fringe.”(Factory 126)

This quote shows that, although the accessibility and the surrounding infrastructure were not a main factor for the location choice, it is important for the organization afterwards.

5.3.2. Soft Factors Building and Location

Soft factors are hard to measure and are usually the intangible qualities of the building and the location. They are seen as more and more important (Mustard et al., 2007) for the location choice of creative industries. After reviewing the existing literature on the matter, a framework was developed in the Methodology chapter to serve the purposes of this research. In this subchapter, the results of the interviews, connected to the soft factors will be presented.

The distinctiveness and authenticity of the building was often mentioned as an important amenity for creative industries in the reviewed literature (Helbrecht, 1998; Hutton, 2006; Smit, 2011). However, for two of the studied organizations (Fabrica 126 and Tea House), it was not important for the location choice. The interviewees

understood that it was a plus for their organization, but it was not as important as other factors (rent, space configuration etc.). The other three (Conveyer, Water Tower Art Fest and Sklada), saw it as determinant for the decision to move into this exact building.



PICTURE 5. SKLADA INTERIOR

“It was really important; we were searching for exactly this kind of building - old industrial from the pre-war period.”(Conveyer)

“Really important. The Water Tower became our symbol, as I said. We are recognizable because of it.” (Water Tower Art Fest)

An interesting fact is that all of the organizations tried to reconstruct the place with the smallest possible changes in the interior. Brick walls, iron window frames and beams and columns were kept when possible. This desire for keeping the space as authentic as possible can be recognized in all of the studied organizations.



PICTURE 6. TEA HOUSE INTERIOR

The former context of the building was significant only for one of the organizations (Water Tower Art Fest), but it did not have a major influence, when the decision was made. The other four interviewees stated, that it had no difference to them, as they did not use the former context for advertisement and promotion of the company. The respondent, situated in the old sugar factory said that the only sign of the previous context was “the smell of waffles”(Conveyer). As for the identity, the organizer of the festival in the Water Tower also connected it to the image of the organization and the artistic values they wanted to promote. All of the respondents stated, that the identity of the building was important for them, but it did not influence the location choice, as other factors were essential.

On the other hand, the historical and heritage values of the building were of big importance for the interviewees. Only Fabrica 126’s owner stated, that these factors were not considered at all during the decision making process. The other four took it into account, and one of them (Sklada) stated it as a major factor for the location choice.



PICTURE 7. FABRICA 126 INTERIOR

“The industrial loft is a symbol of the modern industrial culture and civilization; this mattered a lot to me. The buildings, which have history are more expressive, evoke richer emotions... I have more to say in my conversation with them.” (Sklada)

All of the respondents described the history of the building and its transformations during the years in details. They all tracked down what was the exact history of the building they are located in. They were all glad to be situated in an old building with rich history. As for the heritage qualities, this topic also evoked some negative reactions; as cultural heritage is considered something, connected to public regulations. The case of Zaharna Fabrika (see Chapter 3) was again mentioned as a negative example in this direction:

“Here, the old buildings are not a priority. It is uncommon for these buildings to be kept and reconstructed. Transformed as museums or other cultural places as abroad. Here we do silly attempts like the Museum for Contemporary Art in Sofia. Or Zaharna Fabrika... I have the feeling that if a building is declared to be cultural heritage it is doomed to be left to decay, so something new can be built on its place.” (Conveyer)

However, the Tea House owner said the heritage value of the building added value to it and was good for the organization.

“It was important. The facade of this building is a cultural monument, and this is not a coincidence. This is the lowest type of protection in Bulgarian law of cultural heritage, but it is something.” (Tea House)

All of the interviewees took into account the freedom that the place offered and the when the decision was made. The freedom factor was especially significant for one of the interviewees (Fabrica 126), and had no significance at all for two of them (Sklada, Tea House).



PICTURE 8. CONVEYER OFFICE INTERIOR

“We can do anything here, and we do it, those are our ideas turning into reality. It was really important for us.”(Fabrica 126).

The director of the art festival noticed, that the artists, who were invited to make their installations in the Water Tower also appreciated the freedom, which the space offers. She claimed, that the flexibility and the possible adaptations of the space are really important for artists and usually the old industrial buildings can offer these qualities.

This group of soft factors, concerning the location resulted in similar answers from all of the interviewees. They all admitted that the 1) Aesthetic quality of the surrounding area, 2) the Image and character of the location and 3) the Creative/cultural atmosphere of the neighborhood were not determinant for the location decision. All of

the interviewees were positive, that the building and the space it offers were what attracted them, the qualities of the surrounding area was never part of the major factors.

“This neighbourhood is a ghetto, although it is in the center of the city. Its renovation will take decades, there are some attempts for regeneration, but they are very weak. From this point of view, the neighbourhood is not working for our image, but we have accepted it as a compromise. And it is deffinetely not changing.”(Conveyer)

This answer shows that the aesthetic (and not only) qualities of the area were something that had to be compromised with for this respondent, and not an attractive factor. Another interviewee (Sklada) also found the surrounding area more like a negative factor, as it was not developed sustainably and with a common vision. There were all kind of cheap shops with different signs and lights, which made the area, look “cheap and trashy” (Sklada). The organizer of the Water Tower Art Festival had different problems, as the people living near the place, were suspicious towards the activities in the beginning. This made it especially difficult, because of their constant reports to the police. As a whole, the soft factors for the location had no influence on the decision of the creative organizations in Sofia to move into the chosen former industrial building.



PICTURE 9. INSIDE THE WATER TOWER

5.4. Conclusion

The main characteristics of the studied organizations were not surprising – small creative enterprises, flat organizational structure and relaxed working culture. For all of the respondents, urban context was essential. They also proved to be influenced a lot by aesthetic and intangible qualities, both of the built form and the urban environment.

The results also confirm that there is a special relationship between the place and the creative process, according to the respondents. Furthermore, the interviewees also confirmed that there is connection between the building and the image of their organization.

Hard factors had certain influence on all of the studied organization's decision. An interesting distinction can be drawn from the described results. There are three factors that were totally ignored and did not determine the location choice in any way. The reasons are different for all of the organizations. However, a tendency could be distinguished – all of the interviewees had no expectations for financial help from the public sector, so they did not consider it as a determinant factor for their decision. As for the price of the reconstruction, this factor was not important in the beginning when the location choice was made, but it was maybe a result of inconsideration of its influence in future. Significant is the fact, that the only organization, which considered the reconstruction price as a factor was the architecture studio, as they have experience in construction and material price ranges.

The other half of the hard factors, concerning the building were considered determinant for the location decision of the studied organizations. The rent was a main consideration, as expected. However, the internal space configuration and the external building scale and style, proved to be the most significant from this group of factors. Both are descriptive for the attitude of the owners towards the built form and its dimensional qualities. The architecture studio specified, that if the internal configuration did not match them perfectly, they would have continued their search for a suitable building. The external scale and style was what attracted the art festival organizer in the first place. However, there is an exception, as the advertising

company were interested in the building only because of the low rent in the first place.

The empirical results show, that only three of the soft factors for the building were considered important by the studied creative organizations. The respondents, confirmed, that the distinctiveness and authenticity was an attractive factor for them to locate in a former industrial building. All of the organizations tried to reconstruct the place in a way, which will preserve the interior of the space and will accent its industrial characteristics (despite the Water Tower Art Fest, as they did not do any reconstruction). The authentic industrial built form was overall an important soft factor, concerning the building.

Other two soft factors, which were considered important for the decision to locate in a former industrial building, were its historical and heritage values and the freedom, which the space offers. All of the interviewees were proud to have their organization in an old building with rich history and heritage values. They were all very descriptive about the story of their location. Freedom was also an influential soft factor, as it was important for the respondents to develop and express their ideas easily.

All soft factors, concerning the location were seen as not important for the location choice of the studied creative organizations. The empirical results show that the respondents did not find their surrounding environment to have any impact on their work or location choice.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions

This chapter will give an answer to the main research question and the two sub questions, stated in Chapter 4. It will also link the empirical research results of this study with the reviewed theory, by answering the theoretical and empirical sub questions, stated in the Introduction chapter. It will reflect on whether the findings of this research on creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia can be explained by the broader theoretical notions on creative industries and their location choice. The Conclusions will finish with limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.

The main research question of this thesis is: *Which are the factors that influence the location choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia?*

In order to answer the central research question, the main characteristics of creative industries, located in former industrial buildings had to be outlined.

6.1. Main Characteristics of Creative Industries, Located in Former Industrial Buildings in Sofia

We first reviewed the existing theories on creative industries and answered the question: *Which are the main characteristics of creative industries, according to the literature?*

Although, the question above was already answered in Chapter 1, we will revise it shortly here. According to the literature, creative industries operate in one of the following sectors: visual arts, art crafts, cultural heritage, music industry, book publishing, film industry, radio, television, new media software, video games, design, architecture, advertising. Their production has ‘sign value’ and is highly aestheticized (Lash and Urry, 1994). They are very dependent on design and intangible characteristics like image, and customer attached value. Their central activity is “producing cultural products that means nonmaterial goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an aesthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function” (Hirsch, 1972, p. 641).

As creative industries are involved in aestheticized production, they are expected to have certain aesthetic reflexivity, especially towards the place they choose to locate in. They are often attracted by the ‘look and feel’ of urban environment. They are also sensible towards the intangible values (historical, emotional, design qualities) of urban environment (Helbrecht, 1998).

There are many theories on creative industries location choices. However, researches which focus on the former industrial building itself as a location choice, are scarce. This is the gap that the current master thesis is attempting to fill. Built form is usually analyzed as a factor or specifics of bigger scale researches (creative cluster, creative quarter, city). However, there are studies on creative industries and their fascination by old industrial buildings. These theories show that creative industries often prefer “working in historic environments” (Zukin, 1995) and they “value old industrial buildings and feel connected to their historical meanings” (Heebels and Van Aalst, 2010, p. 351).

The next question to be answered is: *Which are the main characteristics of creative*

industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia?

All the studied creative organizations operate in one of the creative industries sector – design, architecture, visual arts and advertising. The Tea House and the Fabrica 126 are also dealing with event management and organization of cultural events like art exhibitions, concerts and poetry meetings. Part of them are involved in the creation of products with ‘sign value’ attached to them, for which aesthetic qualities are essential – advertisement materials and videos, buildings and design objects. The other part is focused more on cultural production with intangible qualities and meanings attached to it – exhibitions, art festival, musical concerts, and creative workshops.

The empirical research proved that creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia are attracted by the ‘look and feel’ of the old built form. They are also highly reflexive towards aesthetics both of the built form and the urban environment. Creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia meet the expectations, drawn from the literature for their main characteristics. This leads us to the next and main part of the Conclusions chapter – the hard and soft factors.

6.2. Factors that Influenced the Choice of Creative Industries in Sofia to Locate in a Former Industrial Building

The literature review led to development of a theoretical framework of the influencing factors for the location choice of creative industries. This framework was adapted from studies based on different approaches towards the problem in order to serve the empirical research of this thesis, which is focused on former industrial building as a location choice. Factors concerning the location of the building in the city were also included in the framework. Nine hard and nine soft factors were extracted from the existing literature and adapted to serve the empirical research.

The research in Sofia shows that some of the hard factors are really important for the location choice of the studied organizations. The most important of the group were rent, external building scale and style and internal space configuration. The empirical data shows, that those are some of the main reasons for creative industries in Sofia to locate in former industrial buildings. Cheap rent was considered a major factor of attraction for creative industries in the existing literature (Zukin, 1989; Rantisi et al.; Champion, 2010), so the empirical research confirms the expectations drawn from the theory. Hutton's (2006) concept on the "material attraction" of the external building scale and style and the internal space configuration is also confirmed by the results of the current study. Those factors were important for all of the studied organizations and were influential for their location decision.

Two of the hard factors concerning the building were found not important from the empirical results. Those were extracted from Ball's (1999) research and are the price of reconstruction and the access limitation to disused buildings. The outcomes of this study point out that these factors had none or minor influence on the location decision of creative industries, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Proximity to the city center was found to be really important, according to the empirical results. This aligns with the theories in the literature review which found this factor important for creative industries (Markusen, 2006; Mustard et al., 2007; Scott, 2007).

An interesting finding is that, none of the hard factors, connected in any way to the public realm or public authorities motivated the location choice of the studied organizations. Neither of the three – municipal taxes or available subsidies, accessibility by public transport and basic surrounding infrastructure – had any influence on the decision of creative industries to locate in the chosen former industrial building. Although the empirical findings reject the theory, described in the literature review, they can be explained by the context. Former industrial buildings are still not recognized as important for preservation and re-use from public authorities in Bulgaria. Some of the problems, associated with old industrial buildings in Sofia are: no public stimulation of the revitalization processes and private investments and extensive problems with ownership of the buildings, inherited by the privatization processes in the 90's. The results show that public authorities are still considered to be inefficient and unhelpful. This can be further understood by the answers of two of the interviewees (Conveyer and Fabrica 126), who said that the best they can expect from the municipality is not to stand on their way. As for the access by public transport and the basic surrounding infrastructure, they were not considered influential for the location decision of the creative industries, located in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

The empirical findings show that three of the soft factors group, influenced the location decision of the creative industries, situated in former industrial buildings in Sofia. The distinctiveness and authenticity, historical and heritage values and freedom that the space offers all were considered as essential qualities of the chosen buildings and were implemented when the location decision was made. This confirms Helbrecht's (1998) concept of the attraction of creative industries towards the authentic built form and Hutton's (2006) findings on the importance of the freedom that the place offers. However, the empirical results reject that the aesthetic quality, the image and character and the creative/cultural atmosphere of the surrounding area are significant for creative industries in Sofia. The conclusions on inspiration an place stimulates creativity factors, will be described in the following subchapter, while answering the two sub questions, which emerged from the literature review. They were not influential for the location choice, according to empirical results.

The main research question of this master thesis is - *Which are the factors that influence the location choice of creative industries to locate in former industrial buildings in Sofia?*

The empirical findings show that the main factors that influence the location decision of creative industries in Sofia are: rent, external building scale and style, internal space configuration, proximity to the city center, distinctiveness and authenticity of the building, historical and heritage values of the building, and freedom that the space offers. All other factors, included in the framework were rejected from the empirical results. The table below summarizes and categorizes the factors that influence the location choice of creative industries in former industrial buildings in Sofia.

Hard Factors	Soft Factors
Rent, price per square meter	Distinctiveness and authenticity of the building
External building scale and style	Historical and heritage values of the building
Internal space configuration	Freedom that the space offers
Proximity to the city center	

TABLE 3. FACTORS, WHICH INFLUENCED THE CHOICE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN SOFIA TO LOCATE IN A FORMER INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

6.3. The Role of the Building in the Creative Organization's Image, Creative Process and Production

Two sub questions emerged from the literature review, based on the theories by Drake (2003) and Smit (2011):

1) What is the role of the building itself in the creative organization's image?

and

2) What is the role of the building and the location in the creative process and how do they influence the production of a creative organization?

The empirical results confirmed Smit's theory on the connection between the image of the creative organization and the built form. The image of all the studied organizations in Sofia is strongly linked to the building they are situated in. First of all, the creative organizations use the building and the space, they have reconstructed like their portfolio, showing the aesthetic and creative values they have. This is especially true for the architecture studio and the design gallery. They use the space and the building like a first impression for the customers. Second of all, the creative organizations use the building as a visual element of their image – under the form stylized logos and the names of their organizations (Factory 126; The Warehouse; Tea House in the Factory; Water Tower Art Fest).

The empirical findings also confirm Drake's theory on the connection between the space and the creative process and production of creative industries. All of the studied organizations tap strongly on their working environment for creative ideas and inspiration. The results confirmed that the place stimulates creativity and can be inspiring for certain decisions, like the choice of the design shop to turn into design gallery and exhibition place for design objects.

6.4. Limitations and Avenue for Future Research

There are some limitations, which need to be discussed in conclusion of this research. First of all, there is lack of studies, focused on the building as a location choice of creative industries. This, on the one hand is a benefit of the current research, but on the other can cause limitations, when the theoretical framework was developed. The model, which served the empirical research adapted different theories and concepts on location choices of creative industries. The literature review is compound of researches with different approaches towards the location choice problem. The adaptation of these theories and concepts for the empirical research of this thesis, focused on the building as a location choice for creative industries, could have resulted in certain problems for the theoretical framework.

Second of all, the collected qualitative data was smaller, than it is usually expected from a master thesis research. We are aware that this might cause limitations for the research to be transferable and the results to be reliable. However, the current research depends a lot on the context it was made in. Although Sofia is a city with a big number of creative industries, only seven of them are located in former industrial buildings. Those are special cases and this fact is one of the main motives of this research – what makes former industrial buildings in Sofia attractive for the studied creative organizations. The sample of the research is five organizations out of seven, which makes the study reliable.

Creative industries in Sofia are a really interesting topic for future research. The sector in the city has not been a focus of a lot of academic attention. Despite the mapping project and the ACRE project, not much has been done in the research of the creative industries in Sofia.

Another interesting avenue for future research is the relationship between creative industries and public authorities on the one hand and the valorization of old industrial buildings from public authorities, on the other. The empirical research pointed out some major problems with the trust in the public sector and its contribution to the work of creative industries or the preservation of old industrial buildings. A study of

the connection between the official public policy and its practical implementation might have some really useful results both for the public and the private realm.

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Conveyer.bg

fabrica126.com

teahousesofia.com

watertowerartfest.com

whata.org

Appendix

I. Interview Transcripts

Interview 1 – Galina Dzannatto, owner and manager of Sklada – design gallery.

Part 1

Q: Please introduce yourself.

My name is Galina Dzannatto. I am the owner, together with my husband Julianno Dzannatto of the company SKLADA NSM. I am 50 years old and have a bachelor in Italian language from the University of Sofia. I live in Sofia.

Q: Please, describe your company.

My company's primary activity is interior design and furnituring. The difference between SKLADA and the rest is that we proclame and want to introduce in Bulgaria sertain attitude towards design and contemporary art. Design is a contemporary expression of culture in our society. In a situation, where the consumerism is extreamly high, design gives us teh opportunity to distinguish what is tully beutyful from what is fake and dillusional. Things, which posses emotional and creative qualities enricher our environment and make us more sensitive. The oposite of the things that are made with the only pourpose to make us buy more and more. We decorate private and public buildings, we consult and give interior desicions. We also organize exhibitions and seminars, connected with design and creativity. Our aim is to offer a complete service, as we maintain our level of information and competency very high. We give our clients not only consultations and advices, but also maximum information about the products that we offer. As to our technical activities we offer interior desicions, delivery and installation of the furniture, furniture design and furniture manufacturing in Bulgaria.

Q: Do yo consider your organization part of the creative industries?

We are the first design-gallery in Bulgaria. Our exponats are both connected to history and contemporary ideas. We organized several exhibitions, which we consider very important for the development of certain awareness towards this kind of activities in Bulgaria. One of our most successful events was the exhibition "Prodjetto Domestico" by Vinchenzo De Kotys in 2009 for the first edition of Sofia Design Week.

Q: When was your company established?

In 1993.

Q: How many employees do you have?

8. I am the manager and take care for all the activities and the order. Leyla is the Sales manager and takes care everybody to feel welcome and willing to buy our goods. Plamen is the Project manager. He draws all kind of projects, while adding his own ideas to them. We also have drivers, Martin is taking care of the bar, when we organize events. Julianno is in charge of the website.

Q: Who are your clients?

Our clients are ordinary people with high social status. The thing that makes them different is that they are modern thinking and have sence for the contemporary understanding fo luxury.

Q: How important is the image for your organization?

We do not try to build a fake image. Our real values and criteria is what stands behind our name and vision. We are opened, loyal and we love the simplicity. This is also our image.

Q: What is the role of the building in this image?

The building is part of our criteria for design values. It is a true expression of the aesthetics of a time past long ago, but is in the base of the contemporary postulates. This loft cannot bare falseness. Every fake and artificial object stands ridiculous in this place. The space alone rejects these impure and capricious items.

Q: Does the building have any significance for your employees and your customers?

I think it makes a big difference. This building calls for respect, but also is really cozy and hospitable. Some of the clients just cannot accept it and this creates a natural selection which always helps us in our business. Many people think that the building is poor and ugly. This is their archaic attitude towards luxury and wellbeing. However, sometimes they are right, because the owners of the building just do not care about it. You can tell this by the looks of the common parts. This is also the reason that will make us leave this place. This is also a big problem of our society – we do not care, because we live in mediocrity and ignorance. The only way I can describe the attitude of the owners towards the building is pure ignorance.

Q: When did you move to this building?

2008. Before we were situated in a shop on 6th September str.

Q: Tell us more about the building.

The building was made in the 20ties and later on has been added to. It was a printing house. The space is 450 square meters. We renovated it and saved its identity completely. You cannot tell that anything at all was changed by us. The owners of the building are the former managers of the printing house Madara-print.

Part 2

Q: Please, describe how this factors influenced your location decision.

Most important for us where: The typical Sofia architecture style from the past century. It is situated in the center of the city in a specific zone, connected to prosperity and urban development in the past; The industrial loft as a symbol of the modern industrial culture and civilization; The space, with a lot of light and a beautiful view of the urban sky; Affordable price (which later on appeared to be false).

I already said a lot about the main reasons, but I have not said how the place asked me to take care of it. Another reason is that it is situated in the center of the city. Sofia is not a city in which you can start revitalizing the suburbs. We are not yet in that phase of our development.

The place has an exceptional significance. The building was made in the 20ties of the past century and is a former printing house. This is not so important as the fact that it was built according to the aesthetics of its time and is part of Sofia's architectural heritage. We call for the preservation of this heritage. Not only because of its architectural qualities, not even because of some kind of nostalgia. The reason is that there is a feeling of identity loss, of belonging to nothing and nowhere, which has grown into sickness in Bulgaria. Imagine a person, who has lost his memory and does not know who his parents are, where he is now or how he got into that place, not even why he is named in some way. This person is not capable to create, to build or to establish harmony between him and the rest of the world. This is what is happening to Bulgaria. Our modest contribution is to show that the old is not always bad and useless, that the past can be helpful, can teach and give opportunity to become contemporary, to live now and today and understand the values of our time.

I have always liked the old buildings. I also like contemporary architecture. What is a pity in the case of Bulgaria is that nothing contemporary is happening at all. We are not talking about the lack of money. The main problem is the mediocrity and ignorance, also the lack of responsibility. Enough with the hate. There are amazing buildings from the near past, which are really exciting. They are made by Bulgarian architects, so I am not anti-Bulgarian at all. Furthermore, the buildings that have history are more expressive, evoke richer emotions... I have more to say in my conversation with them. Also, what can be a better place for contemporary design than an old building? The contrast just adds more value to the contemporary.

I found it pretty odd and accidentally. I entered in a small shop for Indian stuff on Shishman str. and saw a brochure of the Tea House. I got interested, as for a while I have been asking myself why there is no place to drink tea in Sofia. So, I went to visit the Tea House and I saw it. Beautiful, tumbled-down and dirty building with only one loft on the highest floor. I went up and fell in love. That's it.

Almost immediately, I knew that we are going to move there. I had to consult my husband and with my consultant architect Glebova, also with some pretty disturbed by the idea people. The strange thing is that nobody was against. I think the building just enchanted us and we could not see the forthcoming problems, which came with it later on.

Q: If you had the opportunity to move back in time, would you choose another place?

I don't think so. The only problem that stays on my way is that the owners just don't understand its value. I cannot afford to be its only supporter. Unfortunately, this is the situation with most of the old buildings, which is also connected to wrong political decisions.

Q: How does the building influence your creative work?

I am completely convinced that the place has a major significance for the creativity, the inspiration and the sensitivity. The building, the neighbourhood and the people that inhabit it... it is all connected. Some things can happen only on certain places. I don't have the formula which places evoke what, but I am pretty sure that the human is affected by its environment. The opposite is also true. We, the people can create our own environment and this is part of the miracle called human nature.

Q: Is your production influenced by the space and the building?

Absolutely. It was the place that provoked us to develop from a furniture shop to design-gallery.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local authorities, other inhabitants or third parties when realizing the project?

There were no problems, but there was also no help and that is enough. They were indifferent, there was no help at all and that was enough. The renovation of this loft was too expensive and now I am about to lose my property, which I mortgaged for the bank loan... that's it. The risk was and is totally mine. I think that the public sector does not care at all for these buildings. It even is wondering how to get rid of them. The moment of realization that these buildings have special values and can be used effectively for culture and art is yet to come. However, people who work in the public sector are just bureaucrats and we cannot expect them to be really into the problem. It is more important that the society asks for the change in attitude. What is more disturbing is that the people are just getting used to live in destruction and without culture.

Q: Do you think that more creative organizations will choose to locate themselves in former industrial buildings?

Definitely. As long as they can afford it.

Q: Do you have anything to add?

I can only add, that when you want to destruct something old, you have to be very carefull. What is new is not always what is better, especially in Bulgaria. The old is carrier of memory and gives the feeling of security and immortality. People live better, when they know that the street will look the same tomorrow, their house will be there and the sun will come up again. I hope that we helped at least a bit for the understanding and acceptance of the old buildings. Our contribution is extremely small. The effect would be stronger if there was a wide social debate about the closer past, we have to put our finger in the wound and clean it from the dirth, otherwise it will never heal. SKLADA, with our activities try to give an example, which is good, unobtrusive and speaks the language of the contemporary age.

The problem is both economical and cultural. First comes the concept of the environment as a factor in the civilizational development of the individual. How to be more self-conscious, more sensitive towards the aesthetics, more interested in being in harmony with the surrounding world. We live in an environment made of destruction, no memories, fakeness and ugliness. We cannot expect of the person who grew up in this kind of environment to be highly civilized. The only thing, which saves the Bulgarian from this destruction, appears to be the contact with the pure/wild nature. This is why the Bulgarians are so sensitive towards the wild nature, its future and building up. However, the refugee into the wild is not the answer of the problem. The cities are our future. The population is growing and we are going to be more and more concentrated in higher spaces, not in wide fields and forests. It would be better for us to realize that the city is our living space and we have to learn how to build it according the laws of beauty. Here coms the best part of the revitalization of old industrial spaces. They give an answer of the problem how to turn the ugly duckling into a white swan. The industrial spaces are very interesting in different aspects – they have big and spacious rooms; their architecture is minimalistic and clean, so they are more adaptable for different activities; they are already built, so we don't need to concur new land in order make a new building. However, there are also some shortfalls – the resources for the revitalization of such spaces are significant; another bad moment is that these buildings are often situated in the peripheries of the city, which are derelict and are not safe.

Interview 2 – Ognyan Enev, owner and manager of Tea House in the Factory.

Part 1

Q: Please, introduce yourself.

My name is Ognyan Enev and I am owner and manager of the Tea House in the Factory.

Q:What is your business?

Our business is this. We offer tea and we organize events here.

Q:What kind of events?

Live music, jazz and fusion, ethno projects, also literature and poetic readings. Some exhibitions, children workshops.

Q:Do you consider your organization to be part of the creative industries?

We do not have to consider what we are, we are doing this things. It does not matter what we think we are, others have to tell. We just like what we are doing and what is going on here. However the situation is really hard, the economic situation. We are filling a niche, we are doing what state cultural houses have to do. We are a contemporary type of cultural house. It is a pity, there are many good spaces, but they are not reformed and are not used adequately.

Q: So, there is demand for what you are doing?

Yes, there is.

Q: When was it established?

2007

Q: Since when are you situated in this building?

Since then.

Q: Tell me more about the building. What is its type, when was it built, has it been renovated before? How much square meters it is?

The facade of this building is a cultural monument, this is the lowest type of protection, but it is something. The building was constructed by a jewish family in the thirties. Than it was nationalised, and was expanded during the communism period. This is part of the expanded space, it was paper storage room.

Q: How many employees does your organization have?

10

Q: Who are your clients?

We have the full specter. But more women, definetely – between 25 and 40 yers old. Their standard is higher than the avarage, working people. Also, they are loyal, they know how to find us.

Q: How important is the image for your business?

The image is important for every business, we cannot compromise with that. But it depends on the quality of the product. We don't have any additional finances to invest in PR or any special advertising.

Q: What is the role of the building in this image?

The building is the space that it offers, the high sealings. It is just comfortable for the things we do, nothing more. Also, there is this atmosphere here, due to the fact that the building is a former factory.

Q: Does the building have any significance for your clients and employees?

I don't think it is the most important thing, it is more like a subcouncious stimul for our clients.

Q: What about your employees?

It is complexed, and the atmosphere is important for them too. The space, I mean.... The new type of building is lower, it makes you feel smaller, suppresses you...

Part 2

Q: When did you decide to move/ establish your organization into this building? How did you find it?

I found it accidentally... Just saw it, and than I looked trough the window and saw the space. I thought it is relly suitable for what we wanted to do. So, we just started. It has some dissadvantages... we miss a garden. It is a major problem for us in the summer.

We were searching for such place, initially we wanted to make educational workshops for adults... it is a niche, nobody does courses for adults. We wanted to renovate the space for this purpouse, but it was impossible. So we just made this space.

Q: If you had the opportunity to move into another building, would you do that?

Only because of the garden. The place is great and it is our signature, it is part of what we do. Other place would mean other activities, other context, different production. Just won't be the same.

Q: Please, tell me how the following factors influenced your location choice:

I wan to say two things about the rent. First of all, there is no regulation in any way... Second of all, most of the times it is not adequate of the economic situation.

These kind of activities have to be supported by the authorities. We don't have any financial help from the public sector, although we tried to get some. I don't know... maybe they are not interested.

Many things popped out in addition when we started the reconstruction. However, the owner gave us two months for free, so we could make the reconstruction. We also used stuff that was left here, this cupboard... this table, that we used for the making of the bar.

Things like transportation, parking and stuff were not important for us in the beginning. It was important that it was in the centre of the city. For our kind of business, it is essential. Otherwise we would not cope without additional subsidies.

Sklada and what they do, yes... We help each other a lot. The people that go there are our potential clients, and vice versa. It helps a lot. I think this space had to be adopted with a better vision. Something like a cluster, because it has this kind of synergy. But there is no vision, also for the neighbourhood. It has the potential to become a cultural, bohemian quarter. It would attract tourists, investments etc. But this is not happening.

There is this atmosphere, the acoustics, we make this events... Creatives feel the space in a different way.

The owners also do not have the vision, that if they take care more of this building they will receive more revenues in the future. They just don't view it this way. But it also come from the Municipality. There should be more interest in preserving these buildings, they are the face of Sofia. They also offer the conditons for certain activities to happen inside. I mean cultural activities...

The Municipality has the ambition to make the city European Capital of Culture in 2019. But they are supporting some sham things... You can tell about it just from seeing what is happening. People that were willing to help with the bid and were intending to be active, they just gave up. (The organizers of Sofia Architecture Week, Sofia Design Week, Sofia Dance Week). Maybe people who deal with culture in the Municipality have to be replaced.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local authorities, other inhabitants or third parties when realizing the project?

We had no problems with the local authorities, but they did not help us at all too. The amount of beuraucracy was incredible, soo much things and the Municipality did not compromise at all, because of what we wanted to do. Nobody cares, they are just there to administrate... It took us 1 year to make thinggs legal, to register us and what we did. If we knew this before, maybe.

Q:Do you think that more creative organizations will choose to locate themselves in former industrial buildings?

Yes, I do.

Q: Do you have anything to add?

The Municipality has to have a clearer and complex image of how to help and activate creative organizations. Also how to use them for regeneration and revitalization of these kind of buildings. We have to be included in the desision making process. Also the civic sector should be involved actively.

The city spaces belong to everybody... The things are just on paper...However, I believe that sustainable urban planning has to be planned by everybody... Aslo, the culture plays a majore role the sustainable development.

This psychology that we are together and we have to work together is absent. We are treated like different, just because they don't understand us. That's it, they think like mices, we are a threat and not help.

Interview 3 – Architect Angel Savlakov, partner in Conveyer Architecture Studio.

Part 1

Q: Please, introduce yourself.

My name is architech Angel Savlakov. I am a partner in the company Conveyer.

Q: Can you explain your business?

We are an architecture company, situated in Sofia. We are partners with architect Andreev. Our interests are many and we try to work in all these spheres – urban planning, ublic and private buildings, interior design of places, but also design of different goods for mass production.

Q: Do you consider your organization to be part of the creative industries?

Yes, I do. We really wanted the factory to become a creative cluster. We wanted to have more organizations here with us, to make events to develop a cultural center or something...

Q: When was your organization established?

2007, this is when we were officially registered as an architecture company Conveyer.

Q: Since when are you situated in this building?

Since 2008.

Q: How many employees does your organization have?

Our team variates depending on the tasks we have. We work on projects.

Q: Who are your clients?

We judge a lot for them according to their reactions to the space. If they like it, we know that we will be able to work together and speak in the same language with them.

Q: How important is the image for your business?

This question has a simple answer. We rented and made the place this way because of the image we wanted to have. We demanded to create an image by the character we gave to our office.

Q: Does the building have any significance for your clients and employees?

Yes. We have the best results with people who like this space.

Q: When did you decide to move/ establish your organization into this building?

How did you find it?

We wanted to find a place like this. We were searching a lot, went to the place where SKLADA are located now, also to an old factory on Slivnitza blvd. We found this place by accident and when we did

Q: If you had the opportunity to move into another building, would you do that?

No, I don't think so. We still like the place, it still fits us.

Q: Tell us more about the building.

This is the old sugar factory "Lilyana Dimitrova". I will show you what we found when we came... There were these brick walls, which we took out. We wanted to open the space... and leave it like this. This building was made on two stages. The first part was built in 1927... The second one in the 60ties. It is a big complex, situated between two streets. In 2007-2008 the owners have started a big reconstruction in order to turn it into rental offices. We arrived in the right moment. After we knew that the space was suitable for us as a size (7 meters wide, 14 long and 4 meters high), we also liked the bauhouse atmosphere of the factory. The spirit of the pre-war period was also what grabbed us. So, we agreed with the owners that the interior of this part of the building will be different than the others and what was planned – standart office.

Part 2

Q: Please, explain to what extent have the following factors influenced your decision.

This old sugar factory is located in the city center. This was really important. There are two types of industrial buildings in Sofia. Those, which were built in the 20ties and early 30ties and those built during the communism. The second type are big industrial structures and complexes, which offer really big spaces. You can get lost there, and they are all outside the city center.

About the private sector, not everybody likes this kind of space. It is a matter of feeling, people are searching for standard shiny offices and prefer to locate their organizations there. However, the private sector is the only from where people have any interest in former industrial buildings. About the public sector, it is absent. No interest. We are not an organization that is interested in communicating with the authorities.

This neighbourhood is a ghetto, although it is in the center of the city. Its renovation will take decades, there are some attempts for regeneration, but they are very weak. From this point of view, the neighbourhood is not working for our image, but we have accepted it as a compromise. And it is deffinetely not changing.

I think good European practices can be easily transferred here in Sofia. Here, the old buildings are not a priority. It is uncommon for these buildings to be kept and reconstructed. Transformed as museums or other cultural places as abroad. Here we do silly attempts like the Museum for Contemporary Art in Sofia. Or Zaharna Fabrika... I have the feeling that if a building is declared to be cultural heritage it is doomed to be left to decay, so something new can be built on its place.

I want to sum up the conversation. We are located in former industrial building because of the atmosphere and the size of this space. We wanted to work on this kind of place and we made it.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local authorities, other inhabitants or third parties when realizing the project?

I need to say that the word authorities is absent in the Bulgarian language, aslo the word society. What is normal for other countries here is different. We are different.

Q: Is your production influenced by the place that you are workin in?

The space is really close to what we are trying to do in our work. Not only production wise, but also for the working process of the team. We wanted to be together, to work like a team and everybody to feel equal to every member of this team. We also wanted to share ideas constantly and this was not possible to make in a building with many small offices and corridors. Our space is opened, our ideas are common.

Q: Do you have anything to add?

No.

Interview 4 – Nia Pushkarova, founder and director – Water Toer Art Fest, contemporary art festival.

Part 1

Q: Please, introduce yourself.

I am a painter. I acciured my diploma in England, than I came back to Bulgaria. Because of known and unknown surcomestances, I could not find an artistic environment, which was ready to accept me. So I did not have any invitations to exhibit my works. I understood that people in this field do not communicate here. This is why I fond creative people with openmided views and created a NGO.

Q: Please, describe your company?

We are a NGO, I created it as I wanted it to have the lightest legal form possible. We had to have an institution, to represent our ideas and activities. We were creative people, not all of them artists. Just people interested in art, however I was the engine of all this. NGO – we were five in the board, I was the chairman. Now these people have different interests, but I remained the engine. I found other people, who think like me but I have not changed the structure of the organization. The board is still there, but they do not function... I am the executive. The NGO and the Water Tower Art Fest are basically the same thing. I rely a lot on a bunch of young people, who are always beside me – coordinator, runner and designer. Also, a project coordinator, with whom we write the projects... also an accountant. All of them are project-based paid. We don't have an office, a "base camp".

One of our main goals it to create a resident art center, at least on one of these location we use. We need this to have any kind of sustainability, we will be able to work together, even live together. This will contribute a lot to the quality of our production.... Well, I cannot explain this at all to this people, they don't understand us... the administration I mean. We use different kind of cultural conversation, people here do not understand the Western European cultural language... This is why we need to start learning this language, the administration also, we need help for that. We need examples.

Other thing I want to say.... There are artists who come from abroad for our festival. They see something special in this places we have, and this is that they are abandoned and nobody is interested in them. This is inspiring and also a great stimol for their imagination. In these developed countries, this places are gone, they do not exist. Everything is possessed, no empty and abandoned places. Here, you can do whatever you want, these spaces are what make artists come here.

Q: When was it established?

2004

Q: When did you decide to] establish your organization into this building?

How did you find it?

I am born and raised in Lozenetz. I knew about this Tower, it was not a new place for me. After I went in England for my education and came back I had the different perspective and I remembered about the Tower. Lozenetz is not in the center of Sofia, but this spot makes it part of the cultural map of the city now.

Q: How important is the image for your organization?

We are artist-run initiative, we depend on our artists. We also are trying to make this spaces more popular, to regenerate them, to make them part of the city talk again... also to find a different Sofia through them... also to change their context, their function. We try to make all of this with the tools of art.

Q: What is the role of the building in this image?

The Water Tower is our symbol.

Q: Tell me more about the building.

I was passing through the place, there were trees, grass as high as me and unimaginable amount of dirt and litter. So, I decided that I have to make a civil initiative to clean the place and regenerate with the tools of art. In this case – not just one form of art, but site-specific art. Back then we only had the opportunity to make audio-visual performance outside where we cleaned.

And year after year, it started developing, we entered inside the tower. After that we found the bath in Bankia, it is almost gone... but really beautiful and also there is a mineral water spring. We also found other locations, secret and hidden. People started recognizing me, they knew I was searching for this kind of places and started calling me. I realized that Sofia is full with this kind of jewels, they are even the face of the city. However, nothing was happening with them or in them. Total ignorance, as everybody is blind, terrible conditions... and I don't even want to talk about the legal part – the situation there is like a black hole... And the main reason for that is the ownership problem, they change all the time, the Municipality transfers illegally the ownership etc.

I have been trying for 7 years now to legalize the Water Tower and register it as an art center, so reconstruction can be made. It is impossible, although I spoke to every single mayor, regional mayors, architects.... Frankly speaking, the Water Tower is already well known as an artistic hot spot... I turned it to this kind of place and hardly anybody will be able to change this context.

Q: Who is the owner?

Nobody. It is not even in the registers of the Municipality. It is not in the architectural plan... It was owned by the State Water Authorities, it is 102 years old, built by an architect from Vien. It was supposed to bring water to the higher parts of the city, this is why it was built on the highest spot in Lozenetz. The building itself has four platforms, pointing the North, South, East and West. It has an amazing labyrinth-like stair. In the middle is the big water way and on the top is the water tank. The highest part is not opened, it is not secured yet. The most beautiful part is the facade, covered with ivy. It was never renovated before, and is unchanged by the time passed.

Part 2

Please, describe how these factors influenced your location decision.

The Water Tower is a public artistic space now just because of me. I saw it, I saw its potential, it is beautiful, I understood that it was possible to realize my vision for it. So, the place transformed into what it is now. I repeat, we do not have the financial power to make it our own art centre, reconstructed by a famous architect... We don't have this. But, it is now working in people's minds, it is there and further development is just a matter of time.

In 2010, we made the festival on several spots – including one outside Sofia, a public bath in Bankia. This is when we became part of the cultural calendar of the Municipality, and since then we have their regular support.

The civic sector has given up a long time ago, they don't care... Rarely, we have some kind of civic consciousness which leads to results. About the public authorities, Zaharna Fabrika is a great example for what their regard is to these kinds of buildings. There was a great project, but nothing happened. The administration is just not interested... they are incredibly stiff. We are talking about complied problems, because we live on a certain place... We deal with culture, we use the art as our media, but we need to understand that we are surrounded by other people, society...

My art has social aspect, I am trying to change people's point of view towards the problems. I see the things I do, this regeneration of the derelict spaces as a piece of art. This is why I am frustrated when the administration treats me as a mechanical unit, not interested in anything outside of it.

Q: Do you think that the district have changed after you moved in this building?

Yes, I think so. Now people are looking forward to this summer event, neighbours put their new clothes and come to celebrate. People come from different parts of Sofia, they want to see what we are doing, how we changed the function.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local authorities, other inhabitants or third parties when realizing the project?

I had a big struggle with the neighbours, trying to convince them that we are not junkies or hippies, who want to take their children and make them sectants. It takes me a year to organiza a three day lasting event... In the first couple of years I had to spend more time dealing with the police than helping out the artists. We had every kind of permissions, however I had to tell personally to every grandmother in the neighbourhood what we do here. Now we are friends, but it took time.

Interview 5 – Tsenimir Chapanov, partner at Factory 126, advertising agency and event venue.

Part 1

Q: Please, introduce yourself.

My name is Tsenimir Chapanov and I am an owner of the company Sign Business Ltd. I am owner of the company and also am manager of Fabrica 126. I have matematical and economical education from Bulgaria.

Q: Can you describe your business?

Advertising in any form. Now Fabrica 126 is different thing, we rent it out for events and photoshoots.

Q: Do you consider your organization to be part of the creative industries?

Yes, I do.

Q: When was it established?

Our company is 7 years old, I deal with advertising for 14 years now.

Q: Since when are you situated in this building?

It opened a year ago. Before we were situated in an office in the centre of Sofia.

Q: How many employees does your organization have?

We are not more than 10 people.

Q: Who are your clients?

Our clients are the one we made before, while we were dealing with the magazine... Now we have more organizations which want to make events here... Artistic and creative organizations, but also major liquor brands make their promotions... We also offer space for exhibitions, we have a Korean art exhibition coming up... As we made the place multifunctional, it is suitable for basically anything.

Q: How important is the image for your business?

Well, it is basically everything.

Q: What is the role of the building in this image?

Although we did not expect it, it contributes a big deal to our image, it became our brand, you can see it on the business card I gave you.

Q: Does the building have any significance for your clients and employees?

Our employees feel better here, we all do. The space is really nice, we did not want a regular office... it is just not the place for us. About the clients, many of them were sceptical in the beginning, but later on whoever liked the place stuck with us... I mean, if they like it – we will also be able to offer them good service. There was this shiny banker's party a couple of weeks ago... the guests just did not fit... they don't see this as a luxury party place, but just as derelict old building, haha.

Q: Tell us more about the building.

The building is an old mill, built in 1929 from two Macedonian brothers. It was the regional mill of all of Sofia, situated near the train station and in the city fringe. Then it was nationalised by the communists and an expansion was made... Then it was given back to the owners...and here we are. The owners are just a random family, they did not know what to do with this place...rented it out piece by piece... When we came and told them, we want to rent the entire place with the parking and the silos, they were ok with everything we did. They did not see the perspective we had. My partner found it and called me: "Do you want to rent this place, it is really cheap we can use it as production space." I was ok with that, we were thinking that we were going to have our office in the center and we could cut the advertising materials here... Then I forgot about it, three months later I came and saw it... We moved the production, but after the crisis it was not affordable to have the company in two places... So we decided to move also the office, then we made a big party here... And people started asking us, why didn't we make something for events here... they really liked how it worked out. We also did... so we changed the concept and started reconstructing the place bit by bit. After this party... we talked and just decided to give it a try.

Q: If you had the opportunity to move into another building, would you do that?

Well, no.

Part 2

Please, describe how these factors influenced your location choice.

We were really tempted by the rent.

We had the freedom to do anything we want here, to reconstruct the place according to our vision. Also, the rent was really low... I know it is outside the city center, but we see this as a plus. When people come here, they stay... they don't have this temptations to go elsewhere, like when you throw a party in the center.

In the beginning we did not have any good sidewalks, or bike lanes or whatever. We were lucky that the new metro station opened nearby and the prime-minister decided to cut the bow here, haha. The Municipality made everything look perfect, every piece from the sidewalk... The bike lane... we ourselves started biking here, you can have a couple of whiskies, haha. What I want to say is that the infrastructure is really important, it changes the way people think about coming to the city fringe.

If we talk about the public sector, their awareness cannot be raised in any way basically... They are numb, look at what happened to Zaharna Fabrika. If the owner cannot deal with his property and it has some value for the Municipality, it has to help out. The civic sector, it is enough that they are interested in what we do here. About the private, they are starting to realise the benefits of these kind of buildings.

This district is like out of Sofia, nobody comes here. We brought creative people to work and make their events here. It makes a difference.

Q: Did you have any problems with the local authorities, other inhabitants or third parties when realizing the project?

We did not have any problems. It was ok that nobody interfered with what we were doing here. This is why I was ok with the Municipality, they don't care – we neither for what they do.

Q: Is your production influenced by the place that you are working in?

Well, yes.

II. Interview Guide

List of topics:

Introduction

General characteristics of the organization

Image of the organization and the role of the building in this image

Creative process and the building

List of Factors

Hard Factors - building; location;

Soft Factors – building; location;

- External building scale and style
- Internal building configuration
- Rent of the building and the possibility to extend accommodation
- Price of the reconstruction
- Financial support - taxes, subsidies, incentives;
- Access limitation to disused buildings
- Accessibility by public transport/ by car/ parking
- Creative/cultural atmosphere
- Basic surrounding infrastructure
- Location – center, fringe, outskirt

- Distinctiveness and authenticity
- Image/ character of the building
- Historic and heritage value of the building
- Place and creativity
- Freedom that the space offers
- Inspiration
- Aesthetic quality of the surrounding area
- Image/character of the neighborhood
- Creative/cultural atmosphere

ⁱ Data from the National Statistics Institute, collected and structured by Hirt (2008)

ⁱⁱ Data from the National Statistics Institute, collected and structured by Hirt (2008)